

**Email to Dr. Jennifer Park, Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB); cc to Nicholas Jones, Census Bureau & Potential Sample Question Formats for 2020 Census**

**From:** Nancy Lopez

**Sent:** Sunday, October 2, 2016 12:07 AM

**To:** [jpark@omb.eop.gov](mailto:jpark@omb.eop.gov)

**Cc:** Nicholas Jones (CENSUS/POP FED); Institute for the Study of "Race" & Social Justice; New Mexico statewide race gender class consortium

**Subject:** REQUEST: Joint Meeting of Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Race and Ethnicity & IWG Gender and Sexual Orientation talked about the value added by separate questions vs. combined for interrogating inequality?

Dear Dr. Park,

Thank you for your leadership in advancing data collection that enhances equity-based policy making for marginalized communities vis-a-vis race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, disability and other axes of inequality in federal data collection and beyond. I was wondering if the IWF group on Race and ethnicity and the IWF group on Gender and Sexual Orientation (and if there is one on disability), if there were any plans for a joint meeting. If not would this still be a possibility? I'm ccing Nicholas Jones at the Census in the event he is aware of any joint meetings of these agencies.

It is my understanding that after consulting with a variety of stakeholders including scholars, researchers and advocates for Sexual Minorities, the Interagency Working Group on Gender and Sexual Orientation data collection has concluded that sex, gender and sexual orientation are analytically distinct and that separate questions are necessary for equity-based policy making and Civil rights enforcement. Is there any opportunity for a joint meeting of the Race and Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation (and potential Disability) IWGs to talk about what I call **"ethical accuracy for civil rights"** or the idea that accuracy should be assessed by how a particular question format sheds light on structural/systemic racism and other inequities in housing segregation, voting rights and civil rights uses. "Ethical Accuracy" is very different from **"aesthetic accuracy for compliance only"** or a decontextualized accuracy that is solely anchored in federal data compliance guidelines and mandates. An example of "aesthetic accuracy" would be such as ensuring that the "some other race" category disappears statistically without interrogating whether those Hispanics that check "White," "Some Other Race" or "Black" among other races experiences the same level of residential segregation and other Civil Rights related outcomes across all racial statuses.

As you know, I have been interested in learning more about how the Census National Content Test, Alternative Questionnaire Experiment (AQE) and other studies that inform the **evidence based decision making** of the Census have examined the value added by the two-question Hispanic origin and race question as compared to the combined question format for interrogating inequities in voting rights, housing, law enforcement employment and other Civil Rights Outcomes. While I understand that that the NCT and

AQE are very concerned about "equity" among different national origin groups by providing equal treatment of all groups by ensuring that all groups have a write in option to specify their ethnic origin and/or ancestry, if Civil Rights enforcement is the goal, **we should not operate under the assumption that equity means "sameness."** Sometimes equity means that we have to contextualize our data infrastructure to reflect the very different categories for data collection for Hispanic Origin Groups because of the legacy of the colonization of indigenous people and enslavement of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean by white Europeans of Spanish ancestry. As Telles (2014) book Pigmentocracy details how racial and ethnic stratification in five different countries continues in Latin American and the Caribbean and results in the very distinct treatment/experience of people by "color." After denying that there are racialized structures of inequality in many Latin American Countries, some of these countries have begun to collect this data to **make the invisible visible** and document and ameliorate racial and ethnic inequalities among different groups to achieve justice (see Dr. Camara Jones, video on the Gardner's Tale: The Levels of Racism on Youtube). **In short, ethnicity/national origin, race and ancestry are not analytically equivalent and promising research in health disparities, housing discrimination, educational inequality and criminal justice demonstrate the value added by collecting this data using different questions** (see paste below on potential questions that could potentially reveal very different categories of experience and enhance equity-based policy making).

Thank you for considering my request. Best wishes for a successful Census for 2020.

Warmest regards, Nancy

**\*\*\*POTENTIAL QUESTIONS THAT CAN CAPTURE INTRACATEGORICAL AND INTERCATEGORICAL COMPLEXITIES OF THE DIVERSE LATIN@X COMMUNITIES BY NATIONAL ORIGIN, RACE, AND ANCESTRY AS ANALYTICALLY DISTINCT.**

**Knowing that someone is Hispanic/Latino/Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban/Dominican, etc. tells you nothing about their racial status, which is often based on the meanings assigned to physical appearance. (The same is true about sex, gender and sexual orientation; know someone was assigned the sex female at birth tell you nothing about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation).**

**Racialization involves a visual, ocular dimension that is related to how meanings are assigned to physical characteristics. To acknowledge that *some* people are racialized as Hispanic does not mean that ALL people or even family members of Hispanic origin occupy the same racial MASTER status. Imagine a conglomeration of people gathered for a 4th of July Parade along fifth avenue in New York City, or Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Miami, San Antonio or any other part of the U.S.. Any of the spectators could be Hispanic origin, but depending on what they look like**

they may occupy very different racial statuses and have very different experiences with immigration officials, law enforcement, while seeking housing, seeking health care, discipline in schools, seeking employment, etc.

Again if we are interested in identifying and ameliorating racial and ethnic discrimination, we must not make national origin and race analytically equivalent by mixing two different concepts into one question. Treating country of birth, national origin, ancestry or ethnicity as equivalent to race (e.g., the social meanings assigned to an individual's physical appearance such as skin color, hair texture, and facial feature, etc.) is a FALSE EQUIVALENCY. Different concepts require different questions. This is what the IWG on Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation has concluded about the importance about having separate questions on gender identity and LGBTQ status as they are also analytically distinct.

Below are the potential questions that would help us capture the analytical distinctions that may shed light on Civil Rights Enforcement goals. In addition, a book by Saenz and Morales (2015) *Latinos in the U.S. Diversity and Change* provides a wonderful portrait of how those Latino groups that are most likely to identify as White (Cubans and South American) have much higher wages than those who do not (e.g., Dominicans, Guatemalans, etc.) even at the same levels of education.

**\*\*\*\*\*QUESTION 1 : HISPANIC ORIGIN** (national origin referring to cultural ethnic differences as distinct from race)

1. Are you Hispanic or Latina(o) (Check all that apply):

No, Not Hispanic, Latina(o)

Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana(o)

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, Dominican

Yes, Some other Hispanic or Latino Write In \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., Colombian, Honduran, Panamanian, Salvadoran, Spaniard, etc.)

**\*\*\*\*QUESTION 2 CENSUS: RACE \*** See note/quote about race having a visual corporeal dimension that is based on meaning assigned to physical appearance and race as analytically distinct from and ethnicity (cultural and national origin difference) by Omi & Winant in their new book *Racial Formation in the U.S.* (2015) pasted below.

2. What is your race (Check all that apply)?

White, non-Hispanic

Black, non-Hispanic

Hispanic/Latina(o) White

Hispanic/Latina(o) Afro-Latina(o)

- o Hispanic/Latina(o) Mestiza(o)
- o Hispanic/Latina(o) Indígena / Indigenous Pueblo of Latin America
- o American Indian
- o Alaska Native
- o Asian
- o Native Hawaiian
- o Pacific Islander
- o Middle Eastern / Arab
- o Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*QUESTION 3: ANCESTRY (DISTINCT ORIGINS/ANCESTRAL LINEAGE)**

3. What is your ethnic origin, enrolled tribe or ancestry? (please specify all backgrounds; e.g., Mexican, African American, Jamaican, Chinese, Haitian, Polish, Irish, Acoma Pueblo, Maya, Chicana, Guyanese, Kenyan, Haitian, Middle Eastern, Guatemalan, Arab American, Vietnamese, Korean, South African, Garifuna, Samoan, German, Italian, Polish, Kenyan, Aymara, etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING RACE AS RELATED TO THE SOCIAL MEANINGS ASSIGNED TO PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS  
Racial Formation Theory. In their third edition of *Racial Formation in the United States*, Omi and Winant (2015) posit that race (just like gender) is a master status that has an ocular and corporeal dimension:

“Despite the problematic nature of racial categorization, **it should be apparent that there is a crucial and non-reducible *visual dimension* to the definition and understanding of racial categories. Bodies are read and narrated in ways that draw upon an ensemble of symbolic meanings and associations. Corporeal distinction are common; they become essentialized. Perceived differences in skin color, physical build, hair texture, the structure of cheek bones, the shape of nose, or the presence/absence of an epicanthic fold are understood as the manifestation of more profound differences that are situated *within* racially identified persons**; differences in such qualities as intelligence, athletic ability, temperament, and sexuality, among other traits (Omi & Winant, 2015:111).”

VIDEO RESOURCES ON RACE AS ANALYTICALLY DISTINCT FROM ETHNICITY OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

Note: Many of these videos are available for free on-line on YouTube.Com:

RACE THE POWER OF AN ILLUSION (2003) - Episode One: The Difference Between Us; Episode Two: The Story We Tell; Episode Three: The House We Live In; RECLAIMING THEIR VOICE: THE FIGHT FOR THE NATIVE AMERICAN VOTE IN NEW MEXICO & BEYOND (2009); BAMBOOZLED (2000); UNNATURAL CAUSES: IS INEQUALITY MAKING US SICK (2008); THE HUMAN FAMILY TREE (2010); MIRRORS OF THE HEART: RACE AND IDENTITY IN BOLIVIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI (1993); THE COLOR OF FEAR (1994); THE GREAT DEBATERS (2007); RACE: ARE WE SO DIFFERENT? A PROJECT OF THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (2011);

THE COLOR OF FEAR (1994); ETHNIC NOTIONS (1986); DR. CAMARA JONES: THE GARDNER'S TALE: LEVELS OF RACISM (2010); DR. CAMARA JONES: ALLEGORIES ON RACE AND RACISM (2010); THE GREAT DEBATERS (2006); PEOPLE LIKE US: SOCIAL CLASS IN AMERICA (2006).