

Examples, Instructions, and Belonging: Alaska Native Social Organization and the Race Question

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Reporting Race

- Alaska Natives and American Indians grouped into same response category

American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↗

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Alaska Natives



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- People indigenous to Alaska
 - Often identified by language group or ethnicity
 - Aleut, Inupiat, Yupik Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Athabaskan
- Layered social organization
 - Family/clan
 - Ethnicity/Language/Tribe(?)
 - May or may not be a Federal tribal entity
 - Village/Council/Association
 - May or may not be a Federal tribal entity
 - May or may not be synonymous with an ethnicity, geographical area, or village corporation
 - Village and Regional corporations



Alaska Natives

- Corporations
 - Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 1971
 - 13 for-profit regional corporations
 - 200+ smaller village corporations
 - Non-profit village corporations
- Federally recognized tribal entities
 - May or may not be synonymous with village corps.

Methods

- Study 1- 2014 Focus Groups
 - Focus groups on question stem and format versions (Alaska Native n=14)
- Study 2- 2015 Cognitive Interviews
 - Cognitive interviews on instructions and examples (Alaska Native n=7)
- Study 3- 2016 Focus Groups
 - Focus groups on potential enrollment question (Alaska Native n=18)

2014 Focus Groups

8. Which categories describe Person 1? *Mark all boxes that apply AND print details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

WHITE – *Provide details below.*

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish | <input type="checkbox"/> French |

Print, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc. 7

HISPANIC, LATINO, OR SPANISH ORIGIN – *Provide details below.*

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican or Mexican American | <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuban |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salvadoran | <input type="checkbox"/> Dominican | <input type="checkbox"/> Colombian |

What is your race or origin? *Mark all boxes that apply AND print your specific origin(s) in the lines below. Note, you may report multiple groups.*

American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Mayan, Doyon, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, and so on.*

2014 Focus Groups: Race or Origin v. Categories

- Race or Origin v. Categories
 - Race
 - related to blood and blood quantum
 - biological rather than cultural question
 - imposed from outside “what someone labels you as”
 - Origin
 - “where you and family are from,” “roots,” “heritage,” invokes clan affiliation for AN
 - Categories
 - Increased reporting of multiple races
 - Not a popular option, preference for “race or origin”



2014 Focus Groups

- Print for example vs. Print name of enrolled or principal tribe/affiliated tribe
 - Issues with the term tribe
 - Tribe is more appropriate for lower 48 Indians
 - “We don’t think of ourselves as a ‘tribe,’ but as a people.”
 - The term enrolled elicits name of regional and village corporations



2015 Cognitive Interviews

FORM

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE – *Provide details below.*

American Indian Alaska Native Central or South American Indian

Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ¶

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE

American Indian Alaska Native Central or South American Indian

Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ¶

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE – *Provide details below.*

Navajo Nation Blackfeet Tribe Mayan

Aztec Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Nome Eskimo Community

Print, for example, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Taino, Orutsararmuit Native Village, etc. ¶

W1

W2

W3

Three broad AIAN detailed categories

Vs

Six specific AIAN detailed categories



2015 Cognitive Interviews

- Race/ethnicity 6 checkboxes and 3 examples
 - Checkboxes categories and examples were too specific to fairly represent Alaska Natives
- Preference for the three broad categories
 - It is fair to all AIANs, and did not use the disliked AN categories as checkboxes.
- “Provide details below” preference
 - For – 6; Against – 1

2015 Cognitive Interviews

- Examples
 - *Print for example Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.*
 - Mixing corporations, tribes, ethnicities
- **Recommendation:** Consider using broad ethnic group categories (e.g., Inupiat, Aleut, Tlingit, etc.) instead of specific categories.
 - Respondents already seemed willing to write a detailed group in the write-in space

2016 Focus Groups

- How to ask an enrollment question that works for Alaska Natives and American Indians
- Similar themes:
 - use of terms other than “tribe”
 - complex enrollment relationships
 - Enrollment elicits corporation shareholder status



2016 Focus Groups

- Testing 3 different enrollment questions
 1. Alaska Native tribe, village, or corporation
 - Simple, direct, one question for AI and AN
 2. Alaska Native Council, association or community followed by AN village or regional corporation
 - Separates concepts of AN corporations from other types of belonging
 3. “Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporation shareholder”
 - Asking for shareholder status in AN corporations

Discussion

- Alaska Native social organization is complex and distinct from American Indians
- Racial self-identification for AN groups reflects complexity of organization
- Age matters: Before and after ANCSA (1971)
- Identification and membership
 - Ties to community and/or shareholder status

Implications

- Examples could help signal appropriate layer of self-identification
 - Self-id is always layered
 - Detailed category checkboxes plus examples
 - Limitations: space, priority, opinions
- Desire to report belonging
 - Allow this reporting if possible
 - Subsequent questions can collect official status



Thanks!

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