2015 National Content Test Results and Recommendations

U.S. Census Bureau

Applied Demography Conference

San Antonio, Texas | January 12, 2017

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Session Overview

- Introduction and Background
- Question Format (Separate vs. Combined)
- Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category
- Evaluating Alternative Instructions and Terminology
- Overall Findings and Question Design Decisions
- Discussion

Introduction and Background

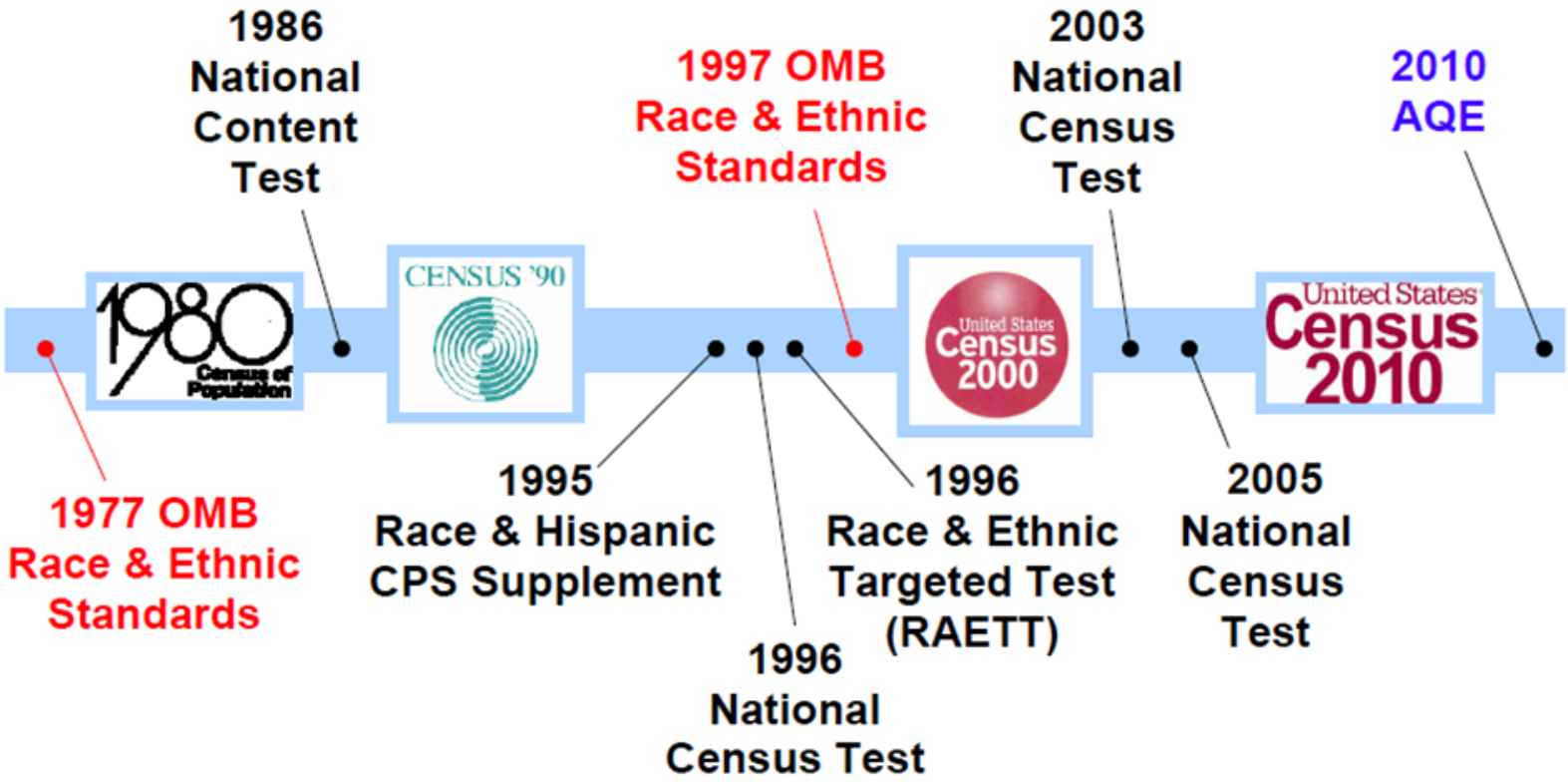
Hyon B. Shin

Chief, Racial Statistics Branch
U.S. Census Bureau

Concerns with Current Questions

- Growing number of groups find the race and Hispanic origin questions confusing
- Increasing responses of “Some Other Race”
- Campaigns and lobbying of the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Congress for changes to the race and Hispanic origin questions
- Led to the 2010 Census Race and Hispanic Origin Alternative Questionnaire Experiment (AQE)

Background on Race/Ethnicity Research



Note: OMB = U.S. Office of Management and Budget; CPS = Current Population Survey

2010 AQE Main Research Findings

Results for the Combined Question

- Did ***not*** reduce Hispanic, Black, AIAN, Asian, NHPI
- Reduced reporting of Some Other Race
- Reporting of White dropped to levels reflecting the Non-Hispanic White population
- Yielded lower item nonresponse rates
- Increased detailed reporting for most groups, but decreased reporting for others
- Reflects better self-identity, per reinterview

2010 AQE Main Research Findings

Results from the Focus Groups

- Fair, equitable treatment for all groups with a combined question
- Middle Eastern and North African participants did not see themselves in the current race/ethnicity categories and recommended a separate Middle Eastern, North African, or Arab response category

2015 National Content Test (NCT)

- Census Day of September 1, 2015
- Used large, nationally representative sample of 1.2 million addresses, including Puerto Rico
- Evaluate and compare different census content
- Refine estimates of national self-response and Internet response rates and continue testing different contact strategies for optimizing self-response
- Content reinterview with subsample of NCT respondents, to measure accuracy
- Overall response rate was 51.9%

Goals for 2015 NCT Race/Ethnicity Research

Key Dimensions to Explore

- Separate questions vs. combined question
- Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) category
- Instruction wording and terminology
- Web-based designs to improve question understanding and optimize reporting of detailed racial and ethnic groups

Question Format (Separate vs. Combined)

Nicholas A. Jones

Director & Senior Advisor,
Race Ethnicity Research & Outreach
U.S. Census Bureau

Question Format

Separate

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic ethnicity and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic ethnicities are not races.**

8. Is Person 1 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish?
Mark all boxes that apply ***AND*** *print ethnicities in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

- ☐ **No**, not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ethnicity – *Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.*

9. What is Person 1's race?
Mark all boxes that apply ***AND*** *print ethnicities in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

- ☐ White – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.*
- ☐ Black or African Am. – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.*
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.*
- ☐ Chinese ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Filipino ☐ Korean ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Asian Indian ☐ Japanese ☐ Chamorro
- ☐ Other Asian – *Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.* ☐ Other Pacific Islander – *Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.*
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African – *Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.*
- ☐ Some other race – *Print race or ethnicity.*

Combined w/ Write-Ins

8. What is Person 1's race or origin?
Mark all boxes that apply ***AND*** *print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

- ☐ **White** – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.*
- ☐ **Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin** – *Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.*
- ☐ **Black or African Am.** – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.*
- ☐ **Asian** – *Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.*
- ☐ **American Indian or Alaska Native** – *Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.*
- ☐ **Middle Eastern or North African** – *Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.*
- ☐ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – *Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.*
- ☐ **Some other race or origin** – *Print race or origin.*

Combined w/ Checkboxes

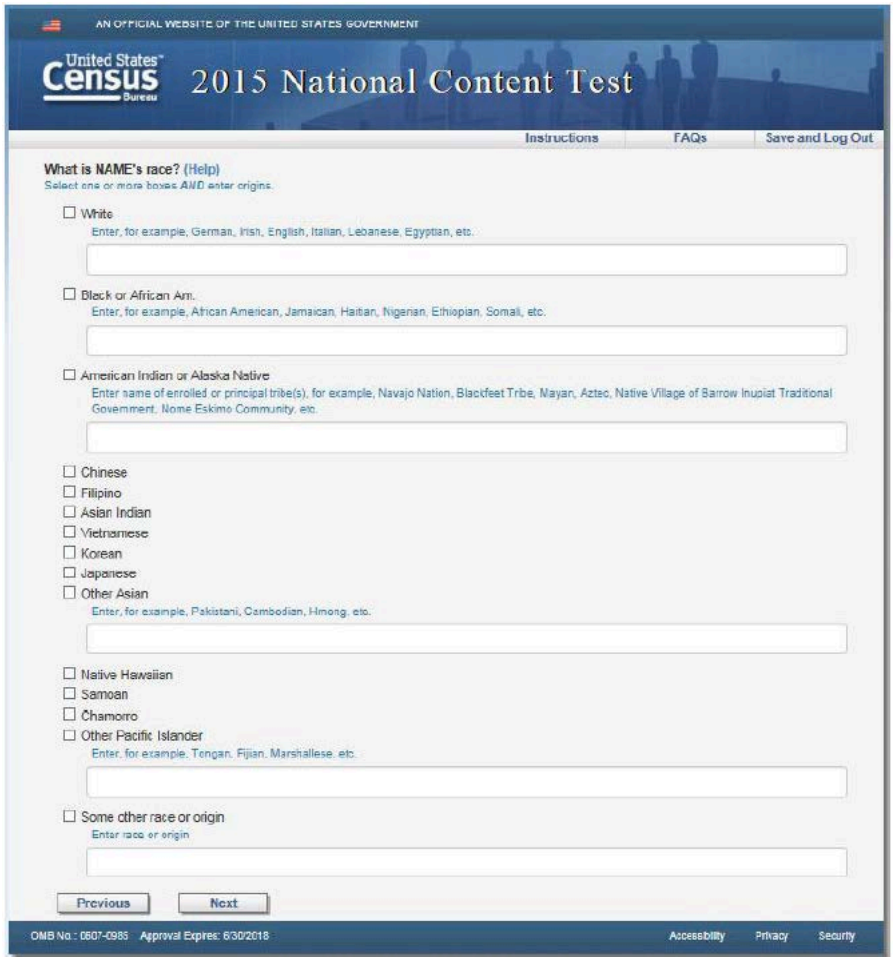
8. Which categories describe Person 1?
Mark all boxes that apply ***AND*** *print details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

- ☐ **WHITE** – *Provide details below.*
  - ☐ German ☐ Irish ☐ English
  - ☐ Italian ☐ Polish ☐ French
  - *Print, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc.*
- ☐ **HISPANIC, LATINO, OR SPANISH** – *Provide details below.*
  - ☐ Mexican or Mexican American ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ Cuban
  - ☐ Salvadoran ☐ Dominican ☐ Colombian
  - *Print, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.*
- ☐ **BLACK OR AFRICAN AM.** – *Provide details below.*
  - ☐ African American ☐ Jamaican ☐ Haitian
  - ☐ Nigerian ☐ Ethiopian ☐ Somali
  - *Print, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.*
- ☐ **ASIAN** – *Provide details below.*
  - ☐ Chinese ☐ Filipino ☐ Asian Indian
  - ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Korean ☐ Japanese
  - *Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.*
- ☐ **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.*
- ☐ **MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN** – *Provide details below.*
  - ☐ Lebanese ☐ Iranian ☐ Egyptian
  - ☐ Syrian ☐ Moroccan ☐ Algerian
  - *Print, for example, Israeli, Iraqi, Tunisian, etc.*
- ☐ **NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER** – *Provide details below.*
  - ☐ Native Hawaiian ☐ Samoan ☐ Chamorro
  - ☐ Tongan ☐ Fijian ☐ Marshallese
  - *Print, for example, Palauan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc.*
- ☐ **SOME OTHER RACE, ETHNICITY, OR ORIGIN** – *Print below.*

Web-Based Designs

Separate Question for Hispanic Origin

Separate Question for Race



Web-Based Designs

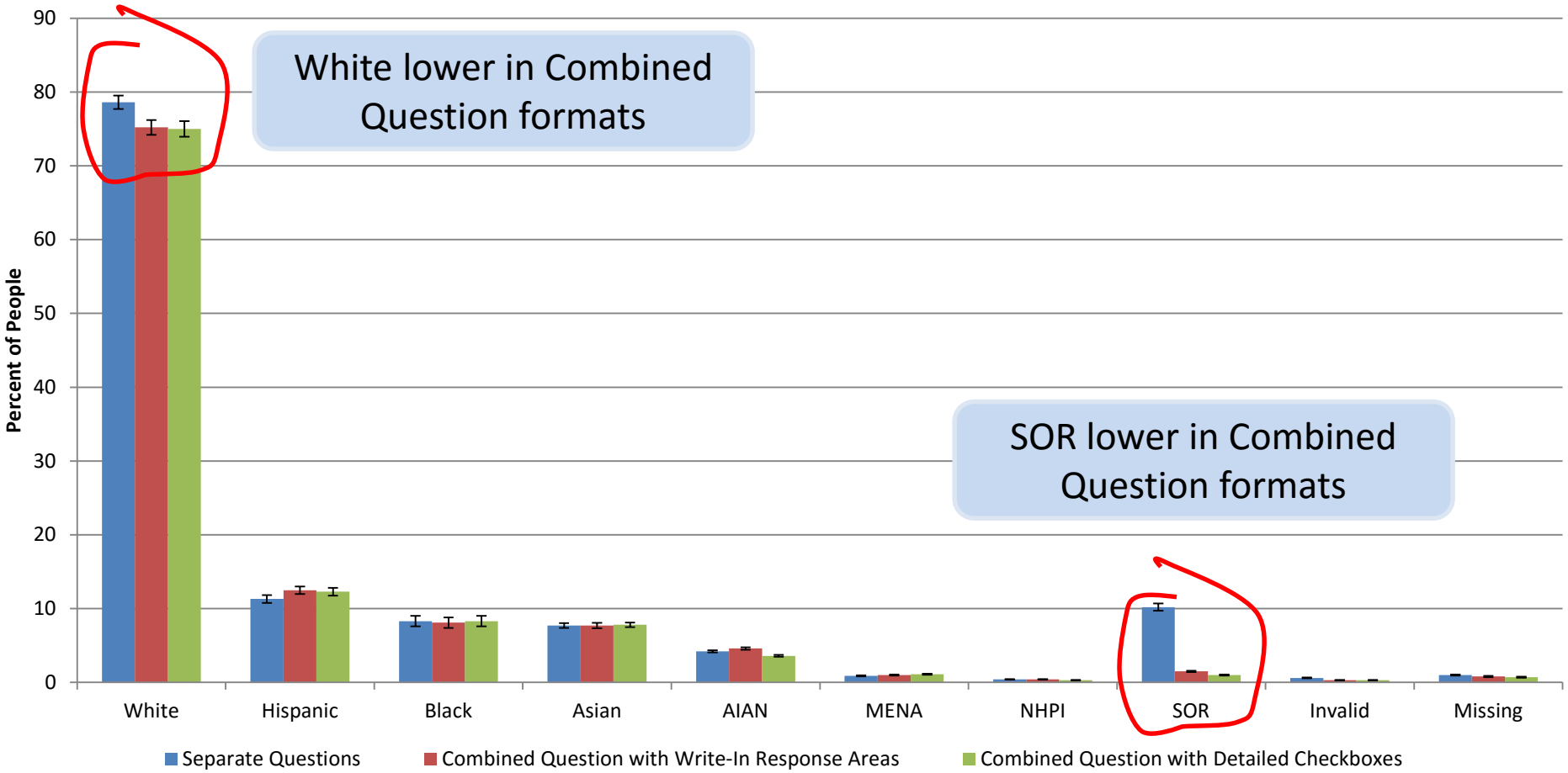
Combined Question for Race and Ethnicity with Write-in Areas

Web-Based Designs

Combined Question for Race and Ethnicity with Detailed Checkboxes and Write-in Areas

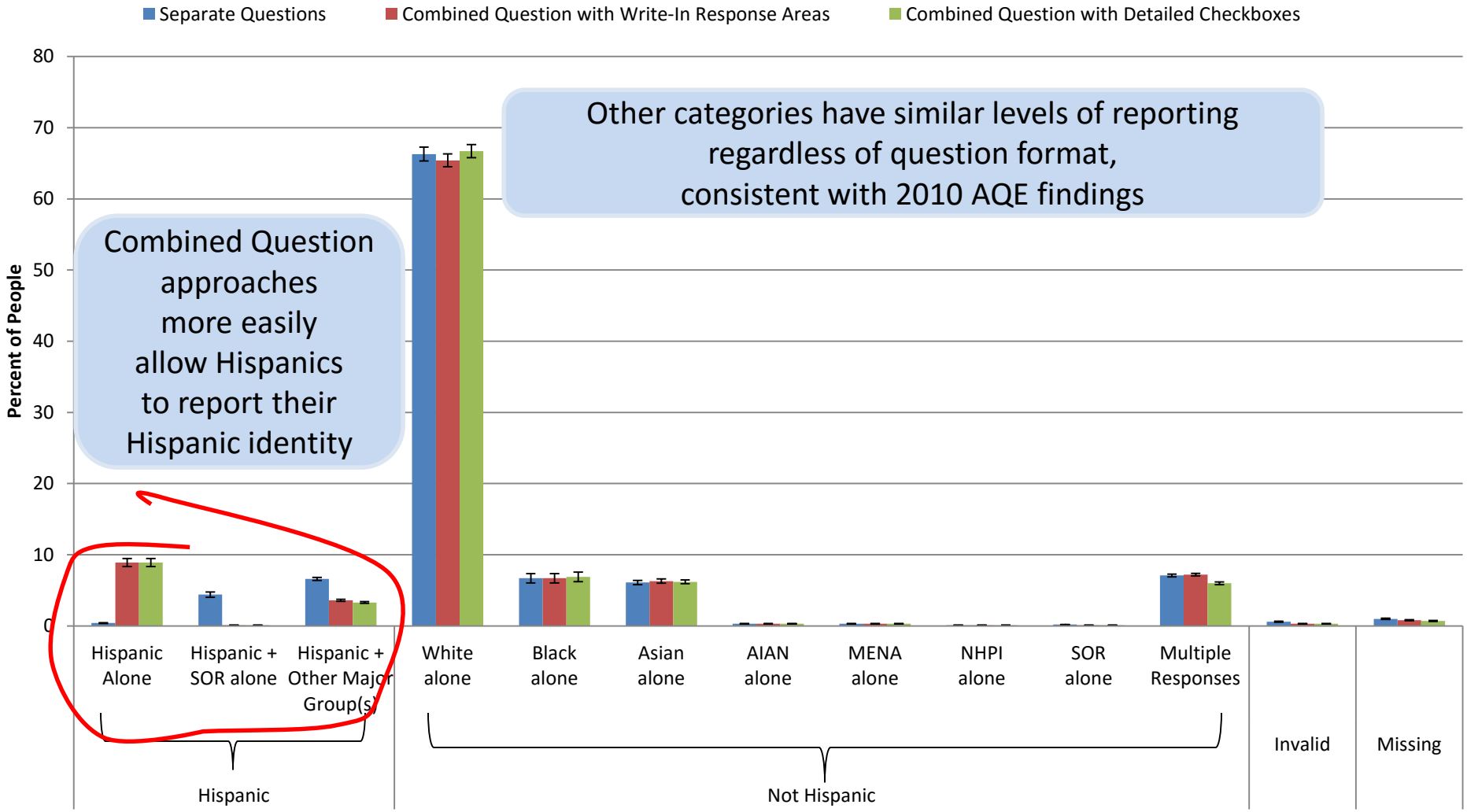
Race/Ethnicity Distributions by Question Format

(Percent Alone or in Combination)



Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Percent Distribution of Hispanic Responses and Non-Hispanic Responses by Question Format



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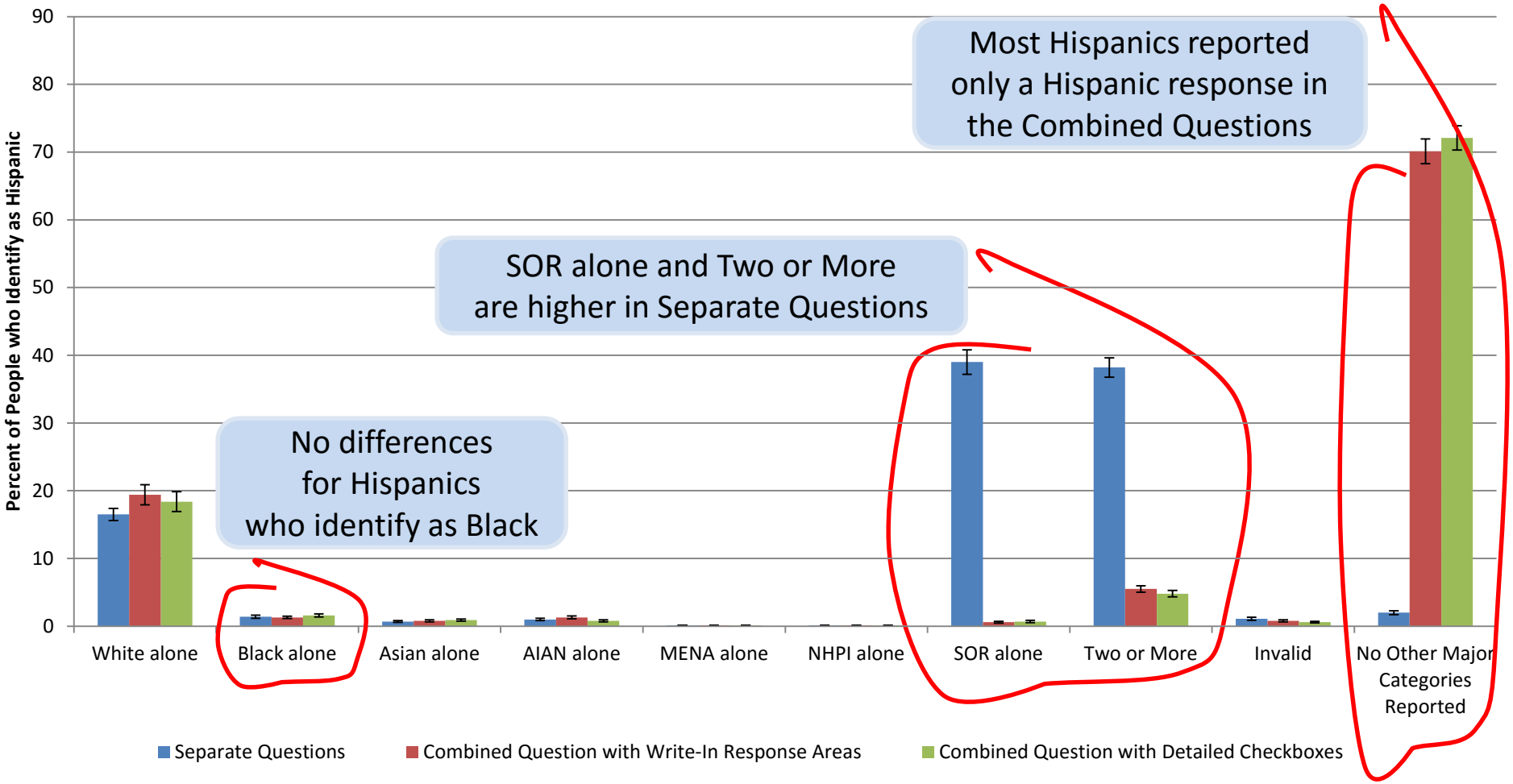
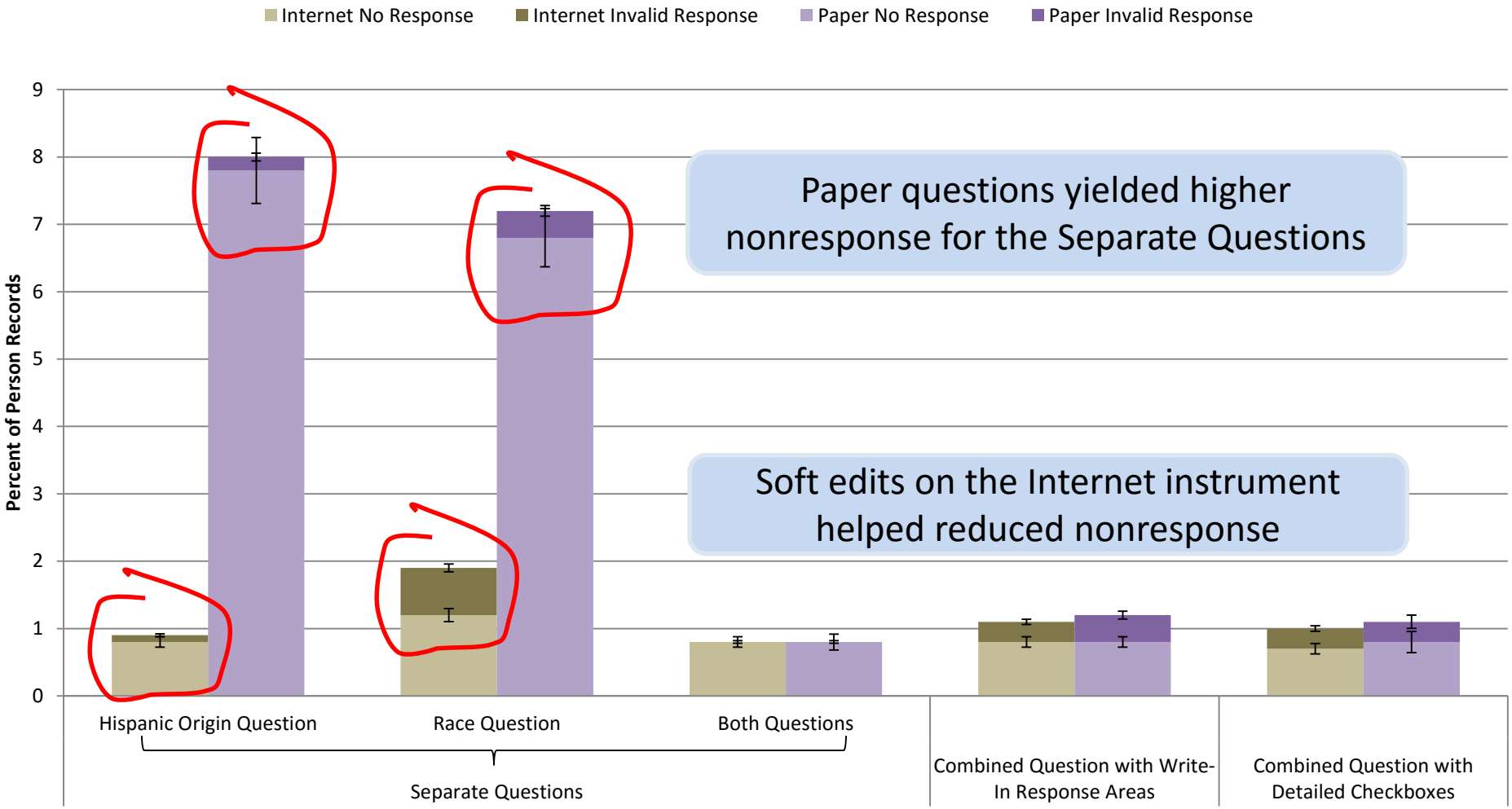
Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Percent Distribution of Race for Hispanic Respondents by Question Format



Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Percent of Item Nonresponse by Question Format



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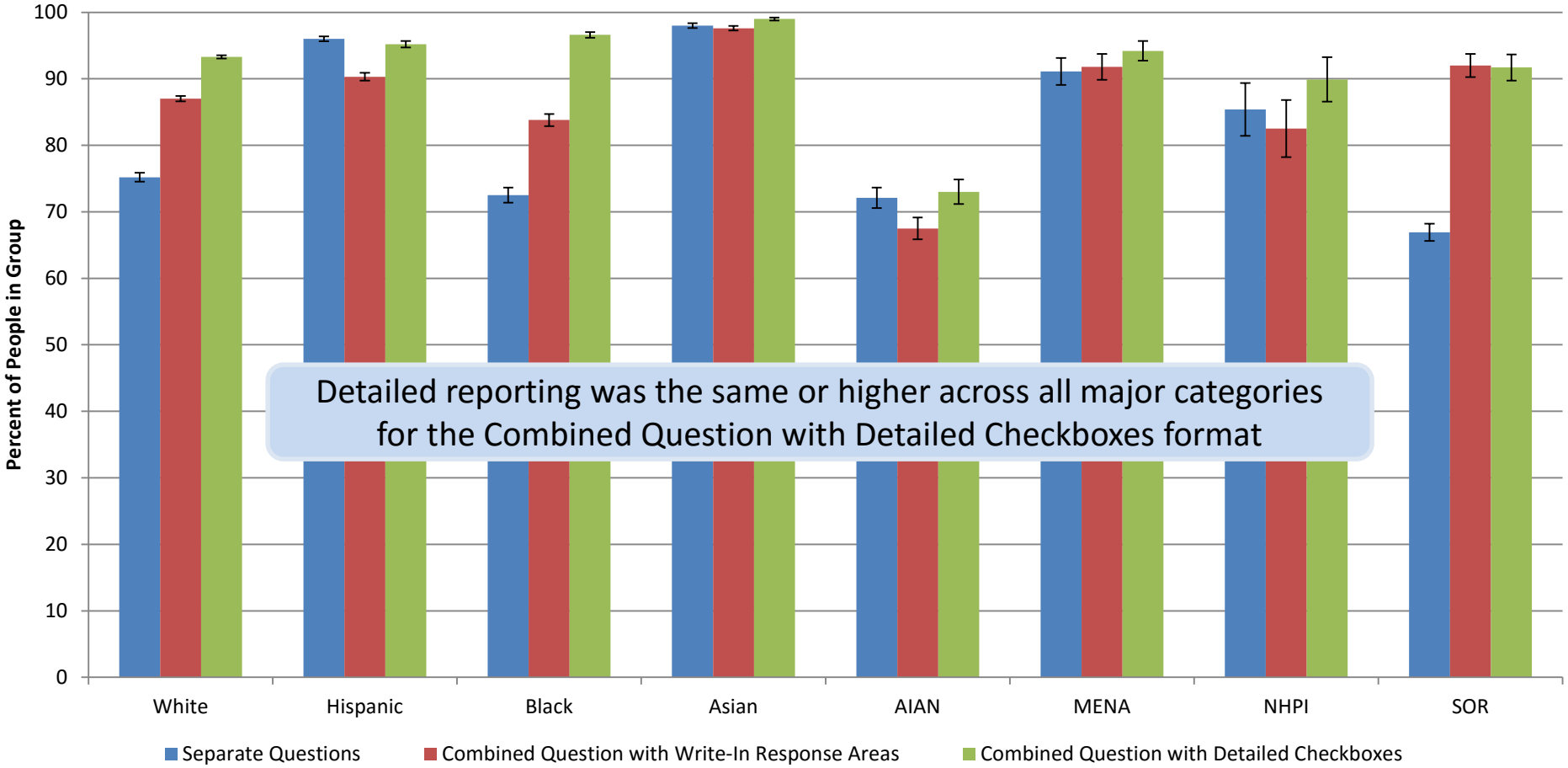
Source: 2015 NCT, Internet and paper responses

Detailed Reporting for Major Race/Ethnicity Groups by Question Format

(Percent Alone or in Combination)

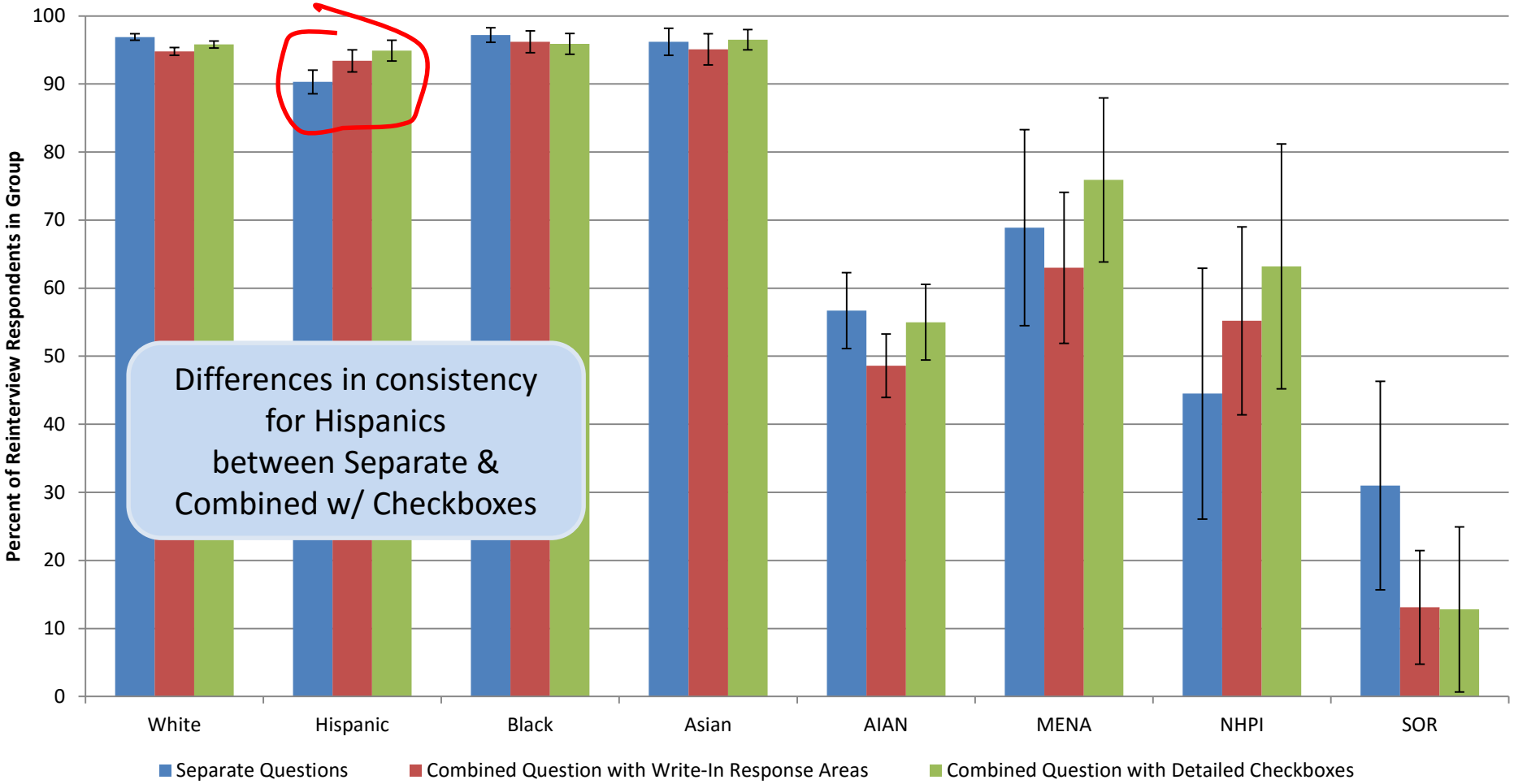


Detailed reporting was the same or higher across all major categories for the Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes format

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Consistency of Reinterview and Self-Response by Race/Ethnicity Group by Question Format

(Percent Alone or in Combination)



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Source: 2015 NCT

Question Format
Summary of Preliminary Findings

The combined question with detailed checkboxes design appears to elicit higher quality data on race and ethnicity; this is in keeping with the results of 2010 AQE

- No changes to distribution for major groups
- Decreased Some Other Race reporting
- Lower item nonresponse for the combined race/ethnicity question than for the separate race question
- Same or higher level of detailed reporting
- Higher overall consistency for Hispanics

Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category

Rachel Marks

Senior Analyst, Ethnicity & Ancestry Branch
U.S. Census Bureau

Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) Category

8. What is Person 1's race or origin?
*Mark ☒ one or more boxes **AND** print origins.*

☐ **White** – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.*

☐ **Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin** – *Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.*

☐ **Black or African Am.** – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.*

☐ **Asian** – *Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.*

☐ **American Indian or Alaska Native** – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.*

☐ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – *Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.*

☐ **Some other race or origin** – *Print race or origin.*

8. What is Person 1's race or origin?
*Mark all boxes that apply **AND** print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

☐ **White** – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.*

☐ **Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin** – *Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.*

☐ **Black or African Am.** – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.*

☐ **Asian** – *Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.*

☐ **American Indian or Alaska Native** – *Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.*

☐ **Middle Eastern or North African** – *Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.*

☐ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – *Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.*

☐ **Some other race or origin** – *Print race or origin.*

MENA Classification

- Researched MENA classifications from 15 government, academic, and non-governmental organizations

- Nationalities in more than half of classifications researched are included in the Census Working Classification

Detailed Groups for MENA Analysis

NCT Working Classification of MENA Category

- **Includes 19 nationalities**

Algerian, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iraqi, Iranian, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, Yemeni

- **Includes 11 ethnicities and pan-ethnic terms**

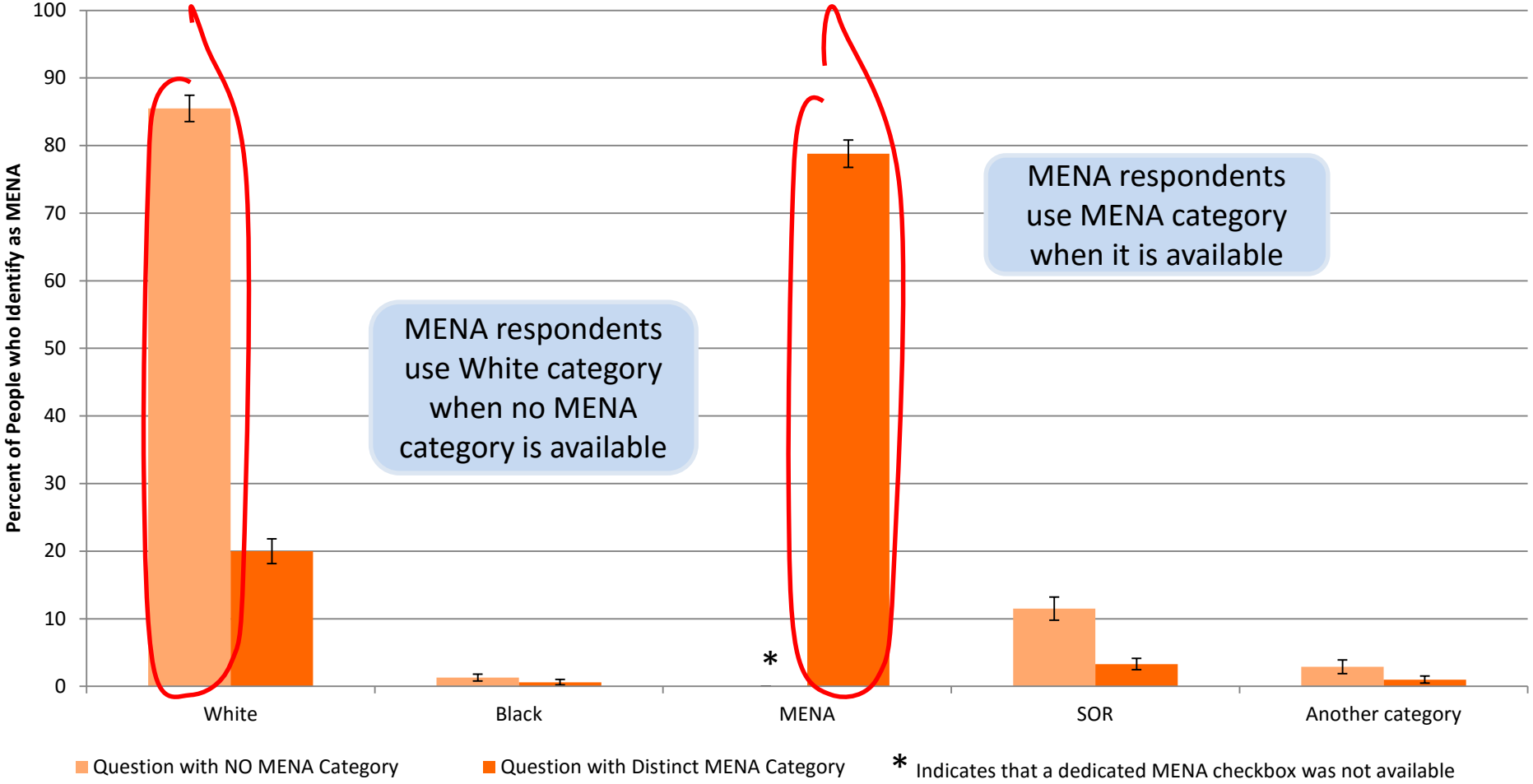
Arab or Arabic, Amazigh or Berber, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Druze, Kurdish, Middle Eastern, North African, Syriac

NCT Oversample for MENA also included

Afghan, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Cypriot, Djiboutian, Georgian, Mauritanian, Somali, South Sudanese, Sudanese, Turkish, Turkish Cypriot

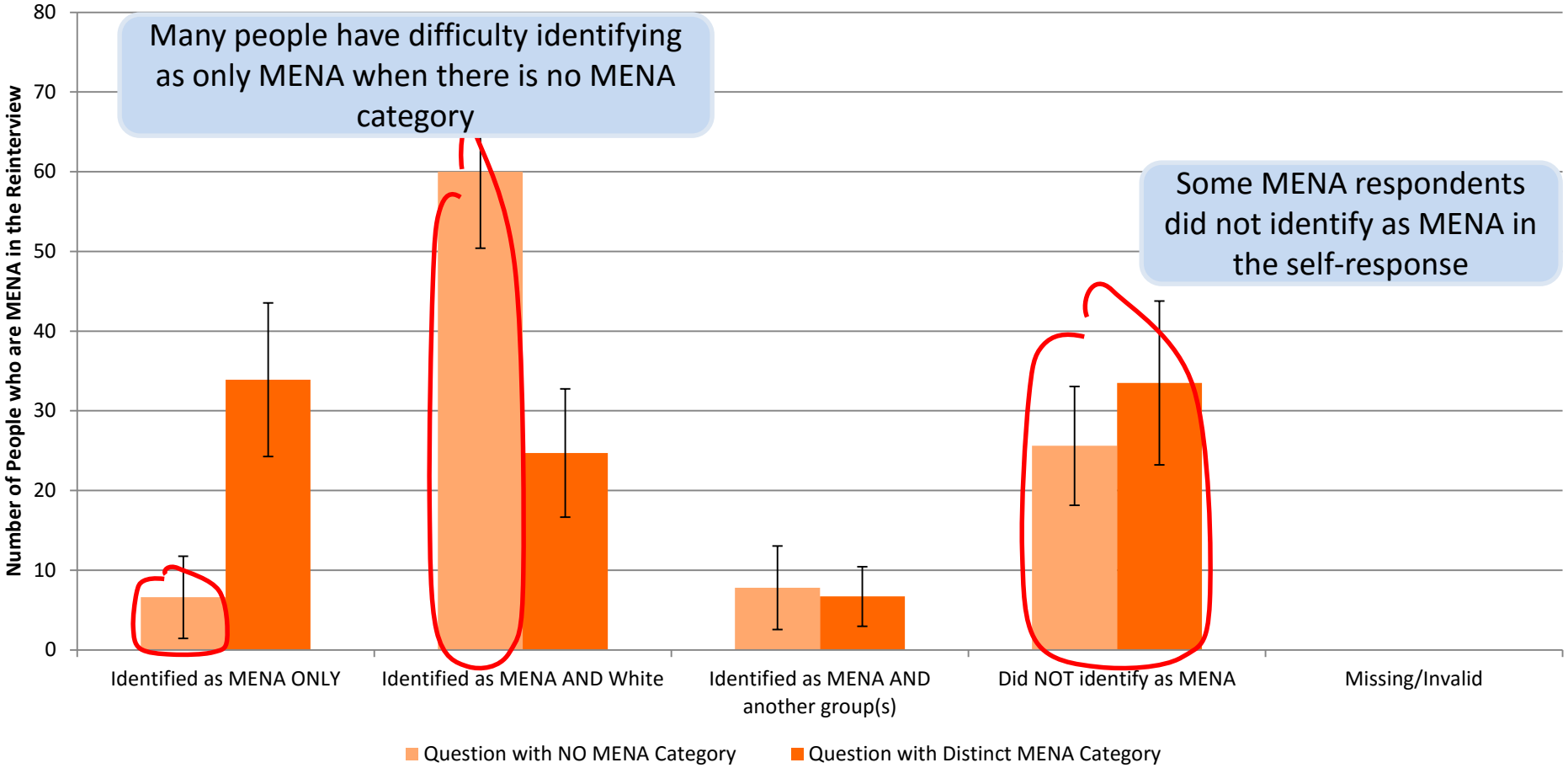
Where MENA Responses are Reported by Presence of MENA Category

(Percent Alone or in Combination)



Source: 2015 NCT

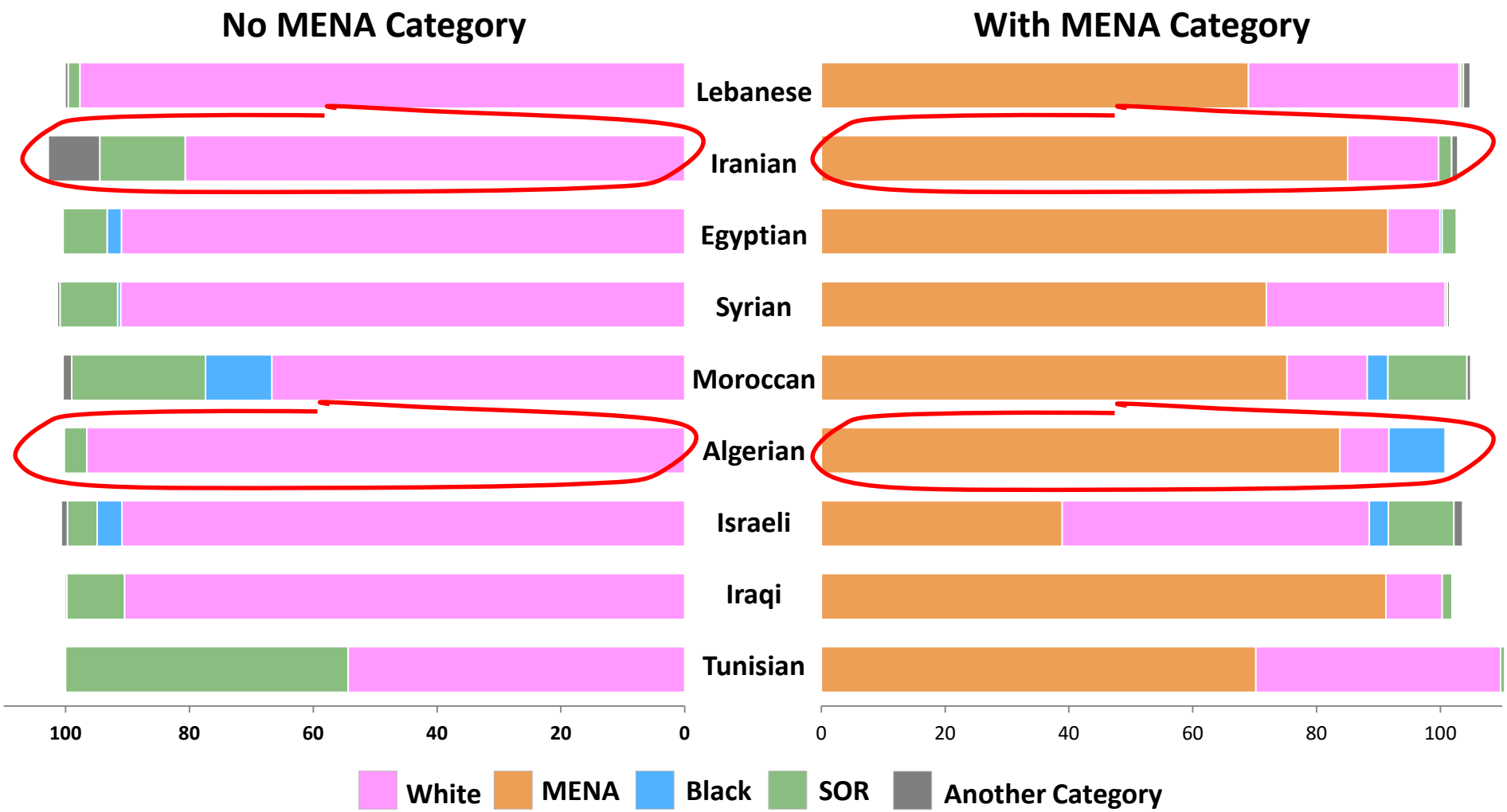
Self-Response Reporting Patterns of MENA Reinterview Population by Presence of MENA Category



Source: 2015 NCT

Detailed Reporting for Groups in the MENA Working Classification by Presence of MENA Category

(Percent Alone or in Combination)



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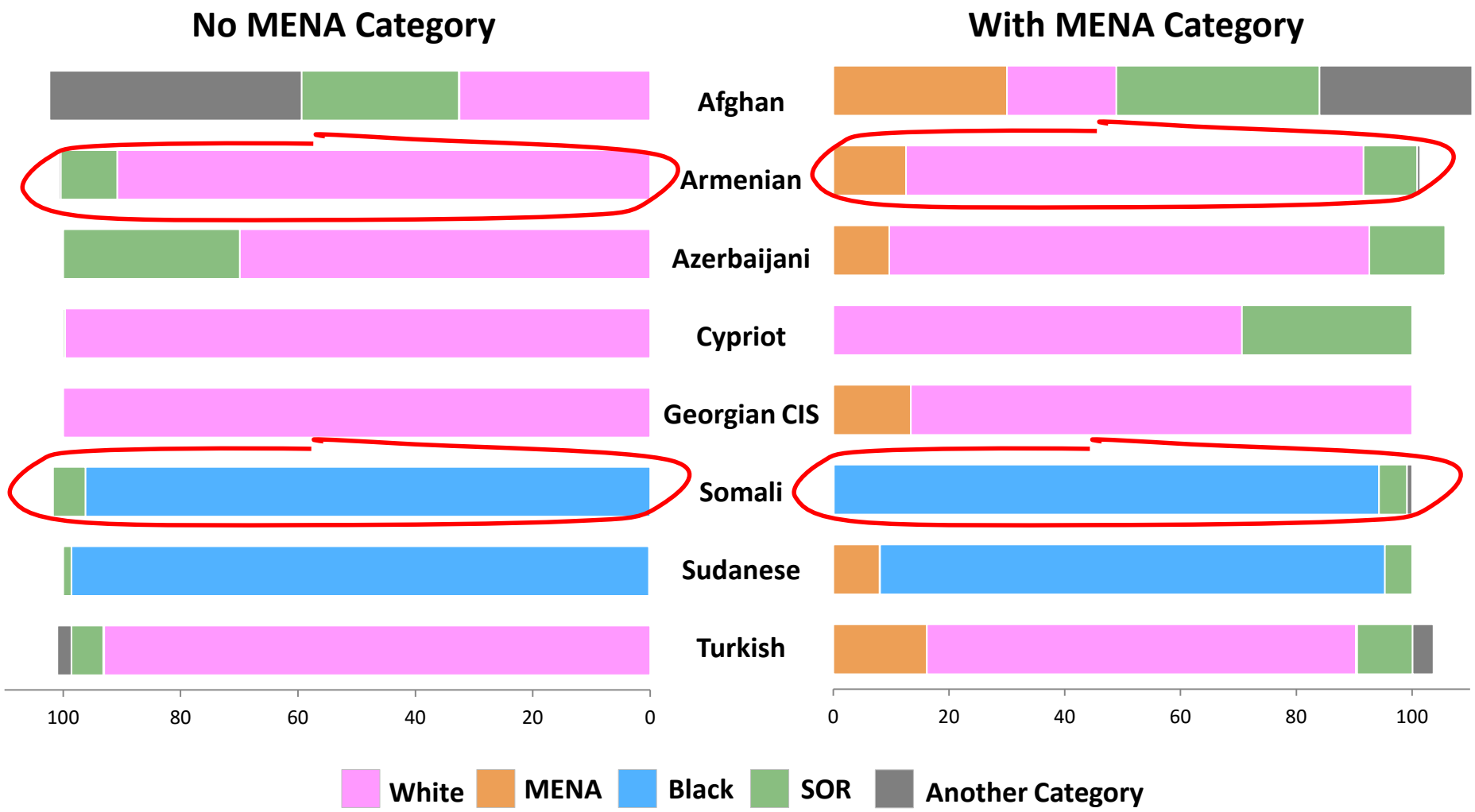
Source: 2015 NCT

Detailed Reporting for Groups Not in the MENA Working Classification by Presence of MENA Category

(Percent Alone or in Combination)



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Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Source: 2015 NCT

MENA Category
Summary of Preliminary Findings

The use of a distinct Middle Eastern or North African category appears to elicit higher quality data for people who would identify with MENA

- People who identify as MENA use the MENA category when it is available
- People who are MENA have trouble identifying as only MENA when no category is available
- The nationalities and ethnicities in the 2015 NCT working classification of MENA identified as MENA when the category was available
- The nationalities and ethnicities in the MENA oversample did not identify as MENA when the category was available

Evaluating Alternative Instructions and Terminology

Beverly M. Pratt

Analyst, Racial Statistics Branch
U.S. Census Bureau

Instructions and Terminology

Instruction Wording:

- *Mark* [***X***] *one or more boxes*.
- *Mark all boxes that apply…*

  Note, you may report more than one group.

Question Terminology:

- "Race," "Ethnicity," "Origin"

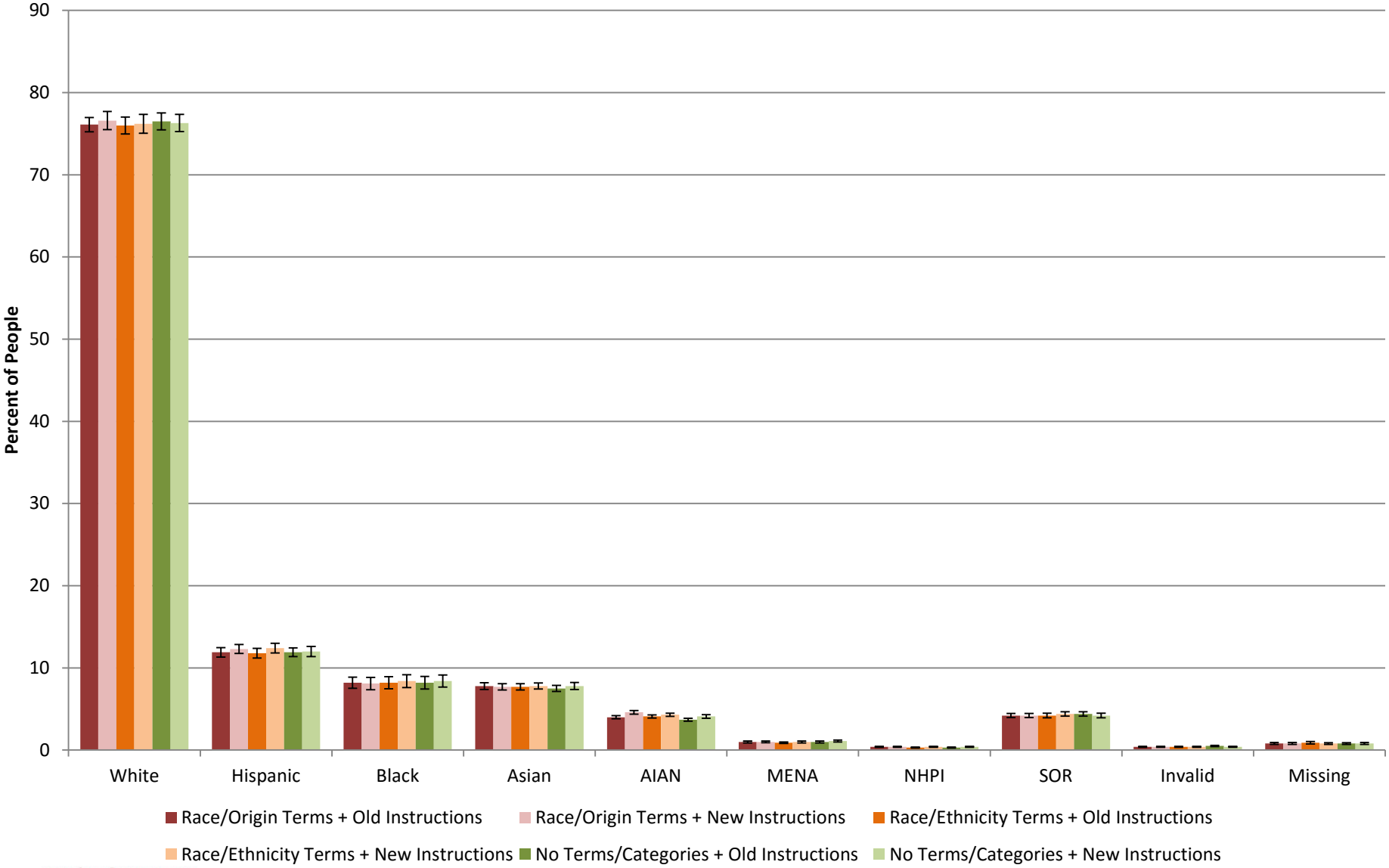
  What is Person 1's race or origin?

  What is Person 1's race or ethnicity?

- No terms = "Categories"

  Which categories describe Person 1?

Race/Ethnicity Distribution by Instructions and Terminology



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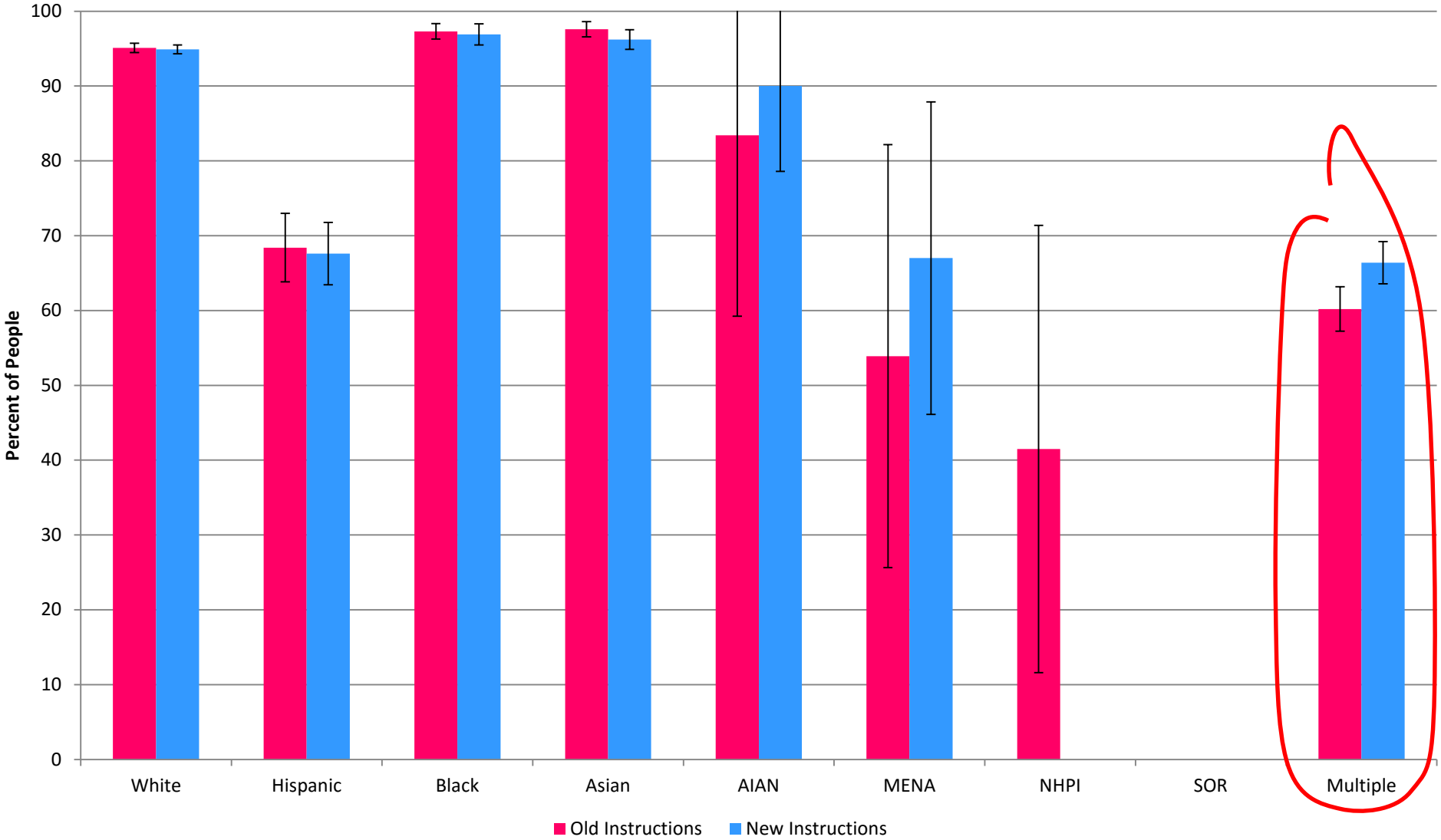
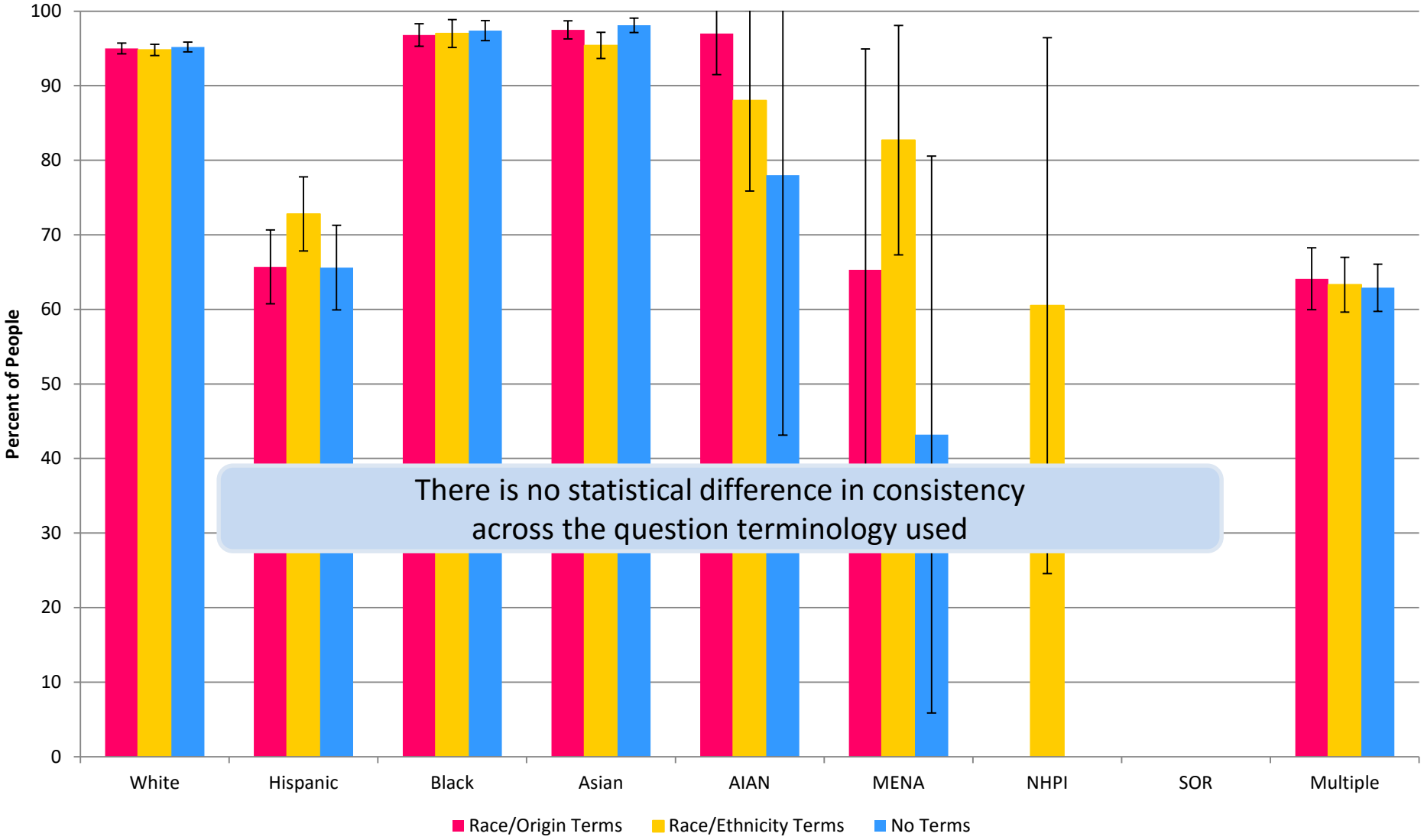
Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Consistency Between Self-Response and Reinterview for Major Race/Ethnicity Groups by Instructions



Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Consistency Between Self-Response and Reinterview for Major Race/Ethnicity Groups by Terminology



There is no statistical difference in consistency across the question terminology used

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Qualitative Research on Question Terminology

Census Bureau's Center for Survey Measurement and RTI International conducted 40 face-to-face cognitive and usability testing interviews with Spanish-speaking respondents

*¿Cuál es la **raza** o el **origen étnico** de Persona 1?*

(What is Person 1's **race** or **ethnicity**?)

"had the same meaning,"
"roots," "where you were born," "ancestry"

*¿Cuáles de estas **categorías** describen a Persona 1?*

(Which **categories** describe Person 1?)

"hierarchal listing of options in which
the ordering of the options implied ranking"

"show a pattern of respondents linking the word '*categoría*'
to a hierarchical order or ranking, rather than to a natural list of options"

"social status or hierarchy"

Instructions and Terminology Summary of Preliminary Findings

Wording of Instructions:

Select all boxes that apply …

Note, you may report more than one group.

Question Terminology:

What is Person 1's race or ethnicity?

- Only one major race/ethnicity group (AIAN alone or in combination) had a significant increase in reporting when the instructions were changed from old to new with the Race/Origin terminology; all other distributions were not significantly different
- The new instructions increased the rate of consistency of multiple-responses when compared to the old instructions; there was no difference in the rate of consistency for any of the other major race/ethnicity groups
- Qualitative research findings show that Race/Ethnicity terminology was better understood than Categories terminology in Spanish

Overall Findings and Question Design Recommendations for the 2018 Census Test

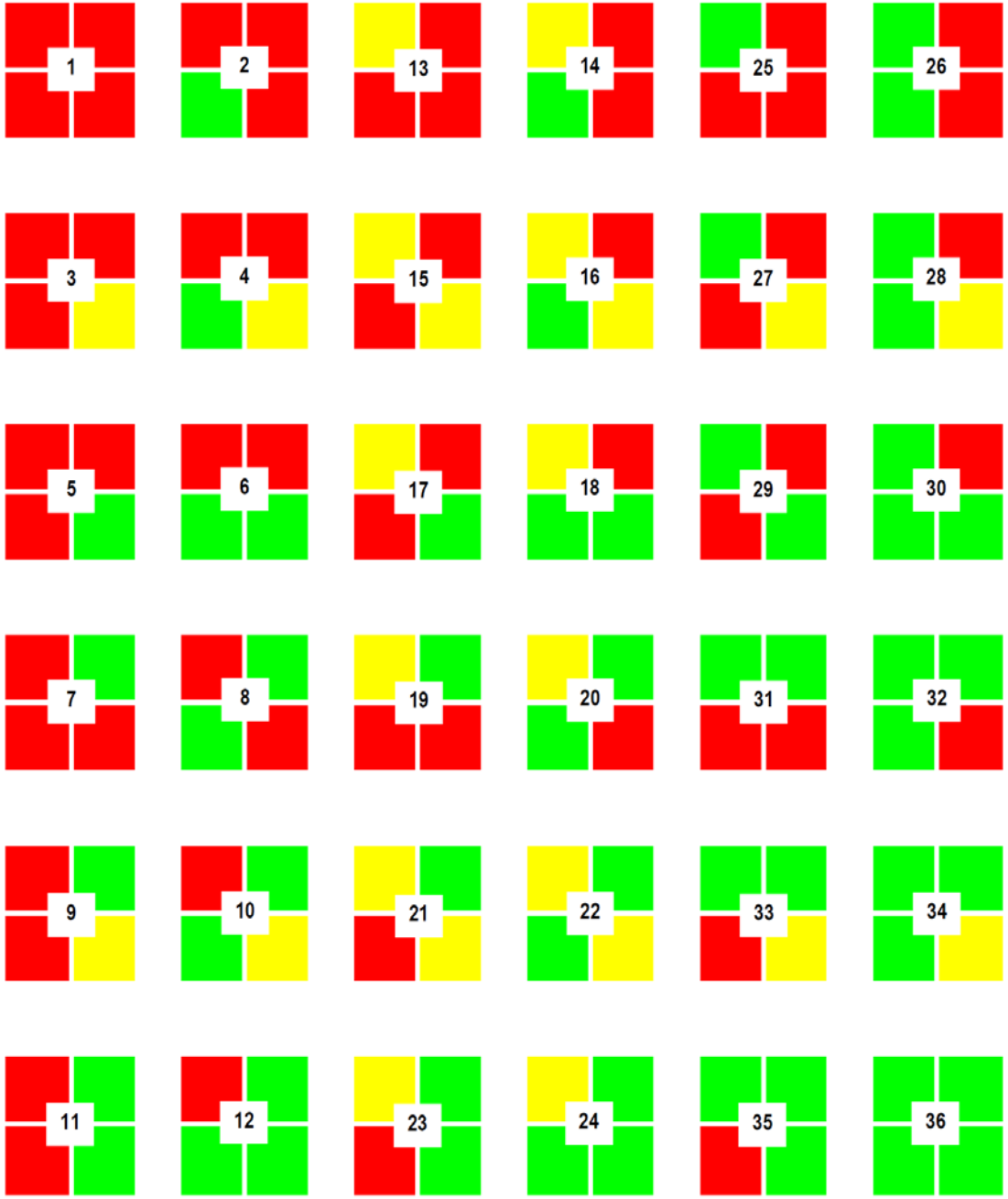
Merarys Ríos-Vargas

Chief, Ethnicity & Ancestry Branch
U.S. Census Bureau

Selecting Elements for Question Design

1	2	13	14	25	26
3	4	15	16	27	28
5	6	17	18	29	30
7	8	19	20	31	32
9	10	21	22	33	34
11	12	23	24	35	36

Selecting Elements for Question Design

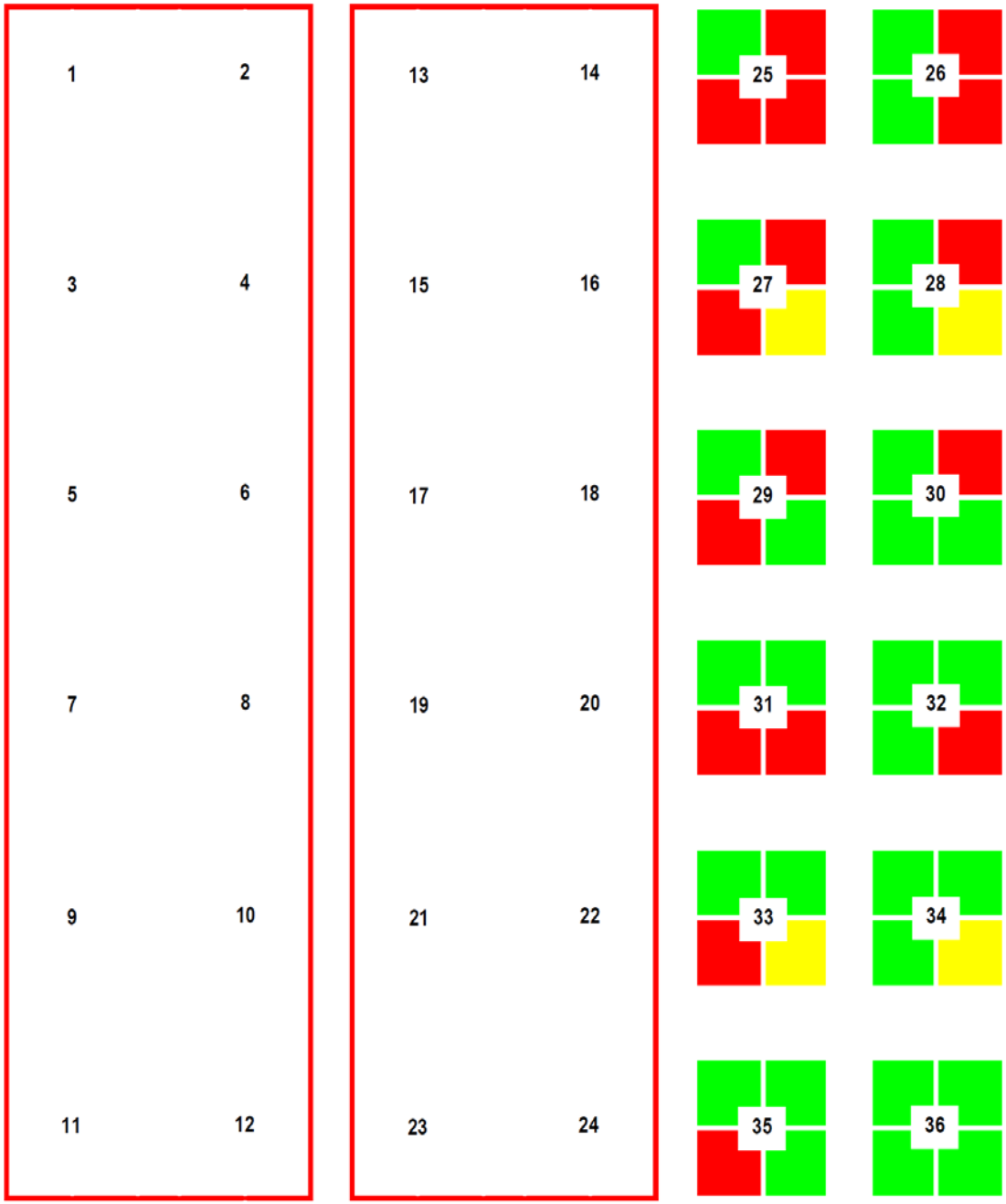


Preliminary Recommendation for 2018 Census Test: Separate vs. Combined

Use the Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes Design

Selecting Elements for Question Design

Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes



Preliminary Recommendation for Census Bureau Director

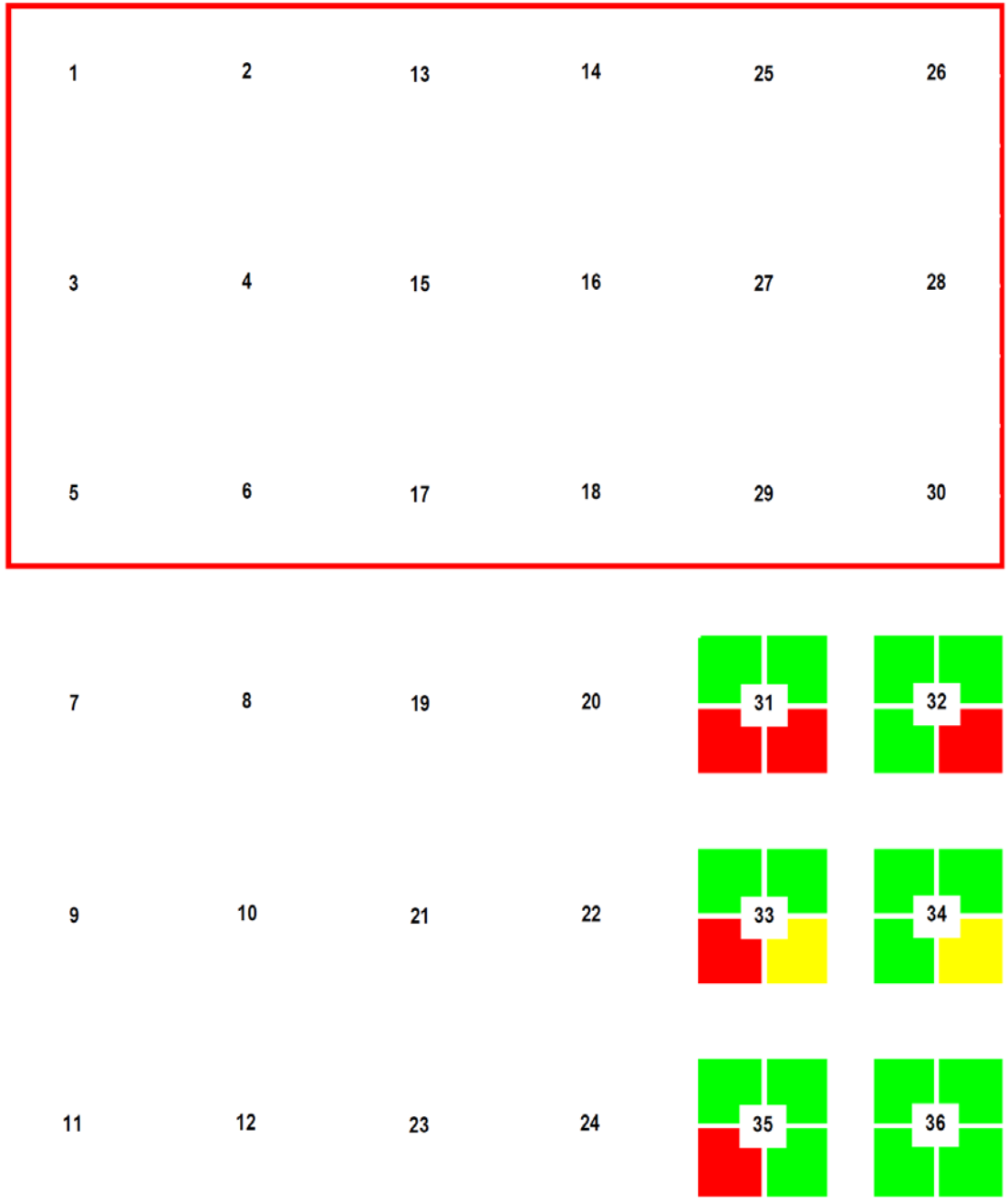
Use the Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes Design for 2018 Census Test

Preliminary Recommendation for 2018 Census Test: Inclusion of MENA response category

Include a dedicated response category "Middle Eastern or North African" (MENA)

Selecting Elements for Question Design

Dedicated MENA response category



Explore MENA Designs in 2017 Census Test & Qualitative Research

Test alternative examples and detailed checkboxes to represent the broad diversity of the Middle Eastern and North African population

☐ **MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN** – *Provide details below.*

☐ Lebanese	☐ Iranian	☐ Egyptian
☐ Syrian	☐ Moroccan	☐ Israeli

Print, for example, Algerian, Iraqi, Kurdish, etc.

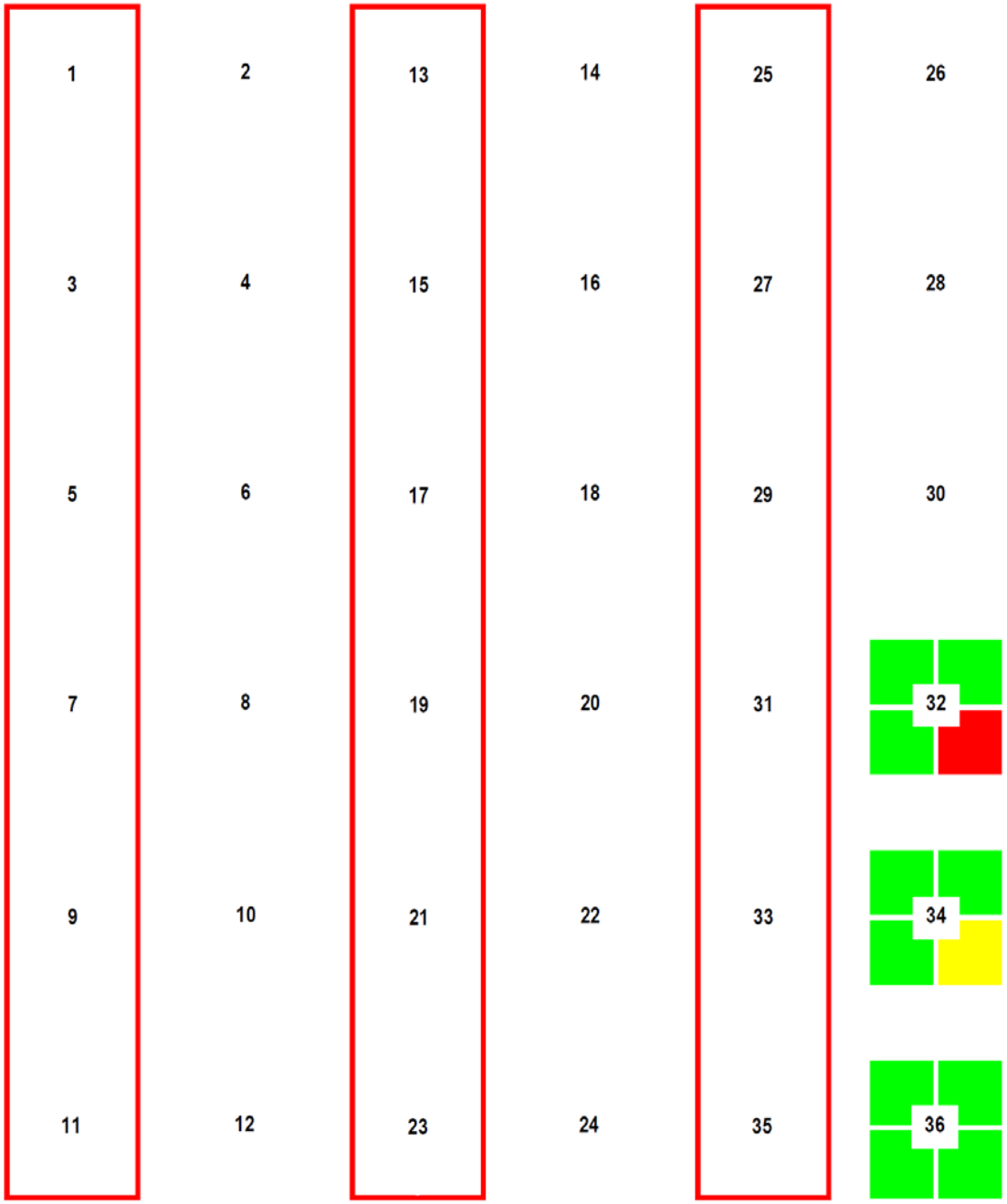
* Note: This design is proposed for testing in future qualitative explorations and the 2017 Census Test, to emphasize the diversity of the Middle Eastern and North African population.

Preliminary Recommendation for 2018 Census Test: Instructions

Use “Select all boxes that apply” (New Instructions)

Selecting Elements for Question Design

Instructions to "Select all boxes that apply"



Preliminary Recommendation for 2018 Census Test: Terminology

Use “race / ethnicity” (Terminology)

Selecting Elements for Question Design

Use

"race / ethnicity" terminology

Preliminary Recommendation for Census Bureau Director

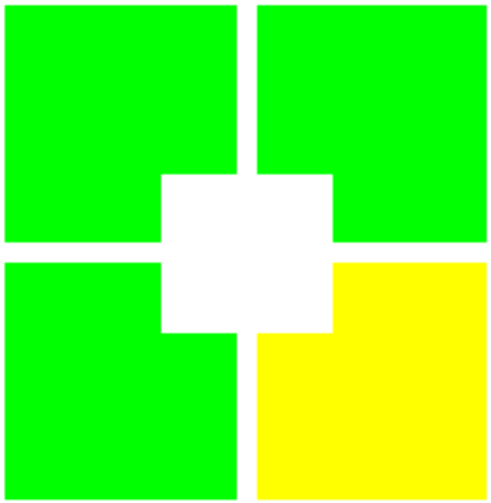
Use new instruction wording and "race / ethnicity" terminology

What is this person's race or ethnicity?
*Mark all boxes that apply **AND** print ethnicities in the spaces below.*
Note, you may report more than one group.

Summary of Preliminary Recommendations for 2018 Census Test

Use combined question with detailed checkboxes (green)

Use instructions to “Select all boxes that apply” (green)



Include dedicated MENA response category (green)

Use “race / ethnicity” terminology (yellow)

Selection of Question Design for 2018 Census Test

1. Print name of **Person 2**

First Name | MI

Last Name(s)

2. How is this person related to Person 1? *Mark ☒ ONE box.*

- ☐ Opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse
- ☐ Opposite-sex unmarried partner
- ☐ Same-sex husband/wife/spouse
- ☐ Same-sex unmarried partner
- ☐ Biological son or daughter
- ☐ Adopted son or daughter
- ☐ Stepson or stepdaughter
- ☐ Brother or sister
- ☐ Father or mother
- ☐ Grandchild
- ☐ Parent-in-law
- ☐ Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
- ☐ Other relative
- ☐ Roommate or housemate
- ☐ Foster child
- ☐ Other nonrelative

3. What is this person's sex? *Mark ☒ ONE box.*

☐ Male ☐ Female

4. What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth? *For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.*

Print numbers in boxes.

Age on April 1, 2017 ____ years | Month | Day | Year of birth

5. What is this person's race or ethnicity?
Mark all boxes that apply ***AND*** *print ethnicities in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

☐ **WHITE** – *Provide details below.*

- ☐ German ☐ Irish ☐ English
- ☐ Italian ☐ Polish ☐ French

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

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

- ☐ Mexican or Mexican American ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ Cuban
- ☐ Salvadoran ☐ Dominican ☐ Colombian

Print, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.

☐ **BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN** – *Provide details below.*

- ☐ African American ☐ Jamaican ☐ Haitian
- ☐ Nigerian ☐ Ethiopian ☐ Somali

Print, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.

☐ **ASIAN** – *Provide details below.*

- ☐ Chinese ☐ Filipino ☐ Asian Indian
- ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Korean ☐ Japanese

Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.

☐ **AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE** – *Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Tlingit, etc.*

☐ **MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN** – *Provide details below.*

- ☐ Lebanese ☐ Iranian ☐ Egyptian
- ☐ Syrian ☐ Moroccan ☐ Israeli

Print, for example, Algerian, Iraqi, Kurdish, etc.

☐ **NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER** – *Provide details below.*

- ☐ Native Hawaiian ☐ Samoan ☐ Chamorro
- ☐ Tongan ☐ Fijian ☐ Marshallese

Print, for example, Palauan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc.

☐ **SOME OTHER RACE OR ETHNICITY** – *Print details.*

DRAFT

QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION