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Ethnic Classification in Global
Perspective: A Cross-national
survey of the 2000 Census
Round

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ETHNIC CLASSIFICATION IN
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:
A CROSS-NATIONAL SURVEY OF THE
2000 CENSUS ROUND

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Tie to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Goal 10: “Reduce inequality within and among countries”

10.2: “By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, **race, ethnicity, origin, religion** or economic or other status”

Political and Academic Debate:

Does ethnic disaggregation promote inclusion?

- Rallu, Piché and Simon (2004) find different state approaches
- Loveman (2014) tracks Latin American nations’ experiences: removing ethnic categories does not eliminate ethnic inequalities

Research Questions

How do different nations enumerate their populations by ethnicity?

- How many—and which—countries collect ethnicity information on census?
- How do ethnicity questions vary?
- How do response formats vary?
- How do these census features vary by region of the world?

Data

- **Census questionnaires from 162 nations**
- **Fielded in 1995-2004 period (the “2000 round”)**
- **Primarily from:**
 - **United Nations** (Statistical Division, Demographic and Social Statistics Branch)
 - **U.S. Census Bureau** (International Programs Center), Project sponsor

Results published in: Morning, Ann. 2008. "Ethnic Classification in Global Perspective: A Cross-National Survey of the 2000 Census Round." *Population Research and Policy Review* 27:239-272.

TABLE X. COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN STUDY

	N. America		S. America		Africa		Europe		Asia		Oceania		TOTAL	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Included in Study	30	81	12	86	21	37	36	73	39	78	24	96	162	70
Missing Questionnaire	5	14	2	14	24	43	1	2	7	14	0	0	39	17
No Census Planned	2	5	0	0	11	20	12	25	4	8	1	4	30	13
TOTAL	37	100	14	100	56	100	49	100	50	100	25	100	231	100
% Censuses Covered	86		86		47		97		85		100		81	

What is ethnicity?

Ethnic groups “entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or customs or of both, or because of memories of colonization and migration...”

- Max Weber (1978[1956]), *Economy and Society*
- Hollinger’s (1998) “communities of descent”
- See also work by Andreas Wimmer (e.g. 2008 in *Amer J Sociology*), Mara Loveman, and Rogers Brubaker arguing for “ethnicity” as a broad umbrella term including notions like “race,” “tribe,” “nation”

What is ethnic enumeration?

Share of censuses enumerating ethnicity that use the terms:

	<u>First term</u>	<u>Second term</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>
Ethnicity	53	5	58
Nationality	17	2	19
Race	3	16	19
Indigenous status	7	7	14
Ancestry / Descent / Origin	5	3	8
Cultural Group	2	2	4
Community / Population	3	1	4
Color / Phenotype	3	0	3
Caste	2	0	2

TABLE 1. SHARE OF COUNTRIES STUDIED USING ETHNIC ENUMERATION, BY REGION

Countries Enumerating Ethnicity:	North America	South America	Africa	Europe	Asia	Oceania	<i>TOTAL</i>
Percent	73	83	44	44	64	83	61
N	22	10	8	16	23	20	99

TABLE 2. CENSUS ETHNICITY TERMINOLOGY BY REGION

<i>Share of ethnicity- enumerating countries using term:</i>	North America (n=22)	South America (n=10)	Africa (n=8)	Europe (n=16)	Asia (n=23)	Oceania (n = 20)	TOTAL (n = 99)	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N
Ethnicity	64	30	50	56	52	80	59	58
Nationality	0	0	13	56	35	5	19	19
Race	55	10	13	0	0	25	19	19
Indigenous/Tribe	9	70	13	0	0	20	14	14
<i>% Ethnicity- enumerating countries covered by 4 terms above:</i>	86	90	63	100	87	95	89	88

Language of ethnic enumeration

SELF-IDENTIFICATION:

“How does [the person] classify himself/herself?”

(Philippines)

“In your opinion, which of the following best describes your ancestry?”

(Bermuda)

SUBJECTIVITY:

“To what ethnic group do you think you belong?”

(Saint Lucia)

—as opposed to—

“To what ethnic group do you belong?”

(Guyana)

Ethnic enumeration response formats

1. Closed-ended (checkboxes, code lists)
2. Closed-ended with open-ended “Other” option
3. Open-ended (i.e. write-in)

(For information on how multiple-ethnicity responses are collected worldwide, see Morning, Ann. 2012. "Multiraciality and Census Classification in Global Perspective." Pp. 10-22 in *International Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Mixedness and Mixing*, edited by Edwards. Rosalind, Suki Ali, Chamion Caballero, and Miri Song. London and New York: Routledge.)

TABLE 3. CENSUS ETHNICITY RESPONSE FORMATS, BY QUESTION TYPE (Top 4 Ethnicity Terms Only)

<i>Response Format:</i>	Ethnicity	Nationality	Indigenous	Race	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Closed-Ended (e.g. checkbox, code list)	34	12	56	50	33
Closed w/“Other” Write-in Option	36	35	33	50	36
Open-Ended (i.e. write-in blank only)	30	53	11	0	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<i>N</i>	56	17	9	6	88

Key considerations for ethnic enumeration and data disaggregation

1. To disaggregate or not? What linkages to inclusionary law and/or policies?
2. If so, how should group categories be selected or constructed? How participatory a process?
3. Self- or external identification?
4. Which measure(s)? E.g. ancestry, identity, phenotype, language, etc.
5. Depict categories as subjective or objective?
6. What response format to offer? Closed? Open-ended?
7. How will results be tabulated, disseminated, analyzed, and applied to inclusionary policies?

“Race” vs. “Indigenous” Classification

Ethnicity Items on Censuses in the Americas, 1995-2004

Indigenous Status:

Argentina

Chile

Paraguay

Ecuador

Bolivia

Suriname

Venezuela

Panama

Mexico

Race:

Anguilla

Antigua and Barbuda

Bermuda

Dominica

Grenada

Jamaica

Saint Lucia

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Turks and Caicos

United States Virgin Islands

Puerto Rico

United States

Brazil

U.S. Compared to Major Immigration Source Countries

Top 10 Legal Permanent Resident Nationalities, 2012	2000 Round Census Ethnicity Item?
1. Mexico	Indigenous status
2. China, People's Republic of	Ethnic group write-in
3. India	Scheduled caste, scheduled tribe
4. Philippines	"Ibaloi, Kankanaey, Mangyan, Manobo, Chinese, Ilocano or what?"
5. Dominican Republic	None
6. Cuba	Skin color write-in
7. Vietnam	Ethnic group write-in
8. Haiti	None
9. Colombia (2005)	"cultura, pueblo, o rasgos físicos" checkboxes
10. Korea, South	None

LPR Data Source: Monger, Randall, and James Yankay. 2013. "U.S. Legal Permanent Residents: 2012." in *Annual Flow Reports: Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics*.