

Is the Proposed New 'Official' Ethnicity Classification suitable for the 2011 Scottish Census?

A Review of the Evidence.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the evidence for the proposed new 'official' ethnicity classification suitable for the 2011 Census has been conducted by the authors in collaboration with a group of other concerned Africans, and with the support of race equality experts, a cross-section of professional data users, members of other minority ethnic communities as well as indigenous Scottish communities who are concerned about the colour-coding of ethnicity in the Scottish census.

Scotland is a country of communities with many different ethnic origins. The Census is the main method of collecting statistics on an all-Scotland basis. It provides a source of information for all communities regarding their size and location. It assists in monitoring the relative position of these ethnic groups in different parts of Scotland, including vital statistics as well as relative advantage and disadvantage. It therefore provides a rich source of information not just for the communities themselves, but also as a guide for service providers in allocating resources according to need.

The 2001 Census was criticised and considered flawed on the grounds that the question on ethnicity contained an uncomfortable mixture of colour-coded questions (for Europeans, Africans, and Caribbeans) and ethno-geographic questions (for Asians). On the advice of the Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF), set up by the Ministers of the day, a review was held to modernise the questions for the 2011 Census and to remove the vestiges of racial notions, and thus give Scotland a non-colour-coded census framework.

Since 2001, a range of research studies, focus groups and reports have been commissioned to provide evidence of what would be an acceptable framework. In that time, The Scottish Government and the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) acknowledged that consistency in the collection of ethnicity data is not possible, while meeting the demands of all the consultees. The accompanying paper provides a depth analysis of the data from the range of consultations.

The census categorizations should accurately capture data about the people of Scotland. It should do so in an inclusive rather than divisive manner. Our concern is that the current proposed framework for the 2011 Census continues to colour-code some groups and not others. Additionally, it continues to maintain a hierarchy of categories which is reinforced by the order in which they are listed. Thus 'White' is listed first and the other categories follow according to how common they are expected to be. The rationale provided is that this assists the majority of people filling in the form. However, as complying with the Census is not an option but a requirement, this rationale is weak. It would make logical sense to list the categories in alphabetical order, and this would also send a strong message to all that there is no hierarchy.

We consider that the Scottish Government and the Registrar General have made a mistake and moved equality issues in Scotland backwards by reintroducing the colour-coded descriptors of 'white' and 'black' into the classification of the 2011 Scottish Census. We therefore would like to petition the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament to take

advantage of the remaining time between now and the actual Census to revert to the more principled and accepted non-colour-coded approach which was trialled in the 2006 Census test and for which there was evidence of support.

We understand that the 'white' category is to be reintroduced because some people of non-European origin chose to write in the 'European' box that they were Asian or African (amongst others). The Scottish Government is determined that these self-identifiers should be counted in the proper box (e.g. Asian or African) and have therefore excluded them from the European box by stipulating that they must be 'white'. However if Asian people consider themselves to be European or indeed European Asian then it should be recorded accordingly and statisticians should not tamper with such data. That people have categorised themselves in such a way is perhaps indicative part of the ever evolving discourses around 'race' into the 21st century.

The 'black' option appears to have been reintroduced to respect the views of those who wish to be identified as 'black' either because they, presumably, see 'black', their skin colour, and ethnicity as synonymous, or because they identify with a presumed 'black culture' or music. While we fully respect that for some respondents, 'black' as a definition is wider than skin colour and encapsulates a historical, political and cultural definition, the problem remains that some people are being colour coded while others are not. Respecting such views should not result in a framework that is discriminatory. Another solution requires to be found. These are perhaps insignificant issues on their own, but given the history of racism, slavery, Nazi Germany and Apartheid, and considering the life chance impact of such categorisations, it is a tragedy that the 2011 Census draws its ethnicity framework from 19th century labels.

Others are concerned that the loss of the category 'black' will also lead to a loss of data on whether discrimination on the grounds of colour exists. We suggest that the ethnicity question is not the framework upon which to determine levels of discrimination on grounds of colour. If the Census is to be used to determine levels of discrimination on the basis of colour or any other form of discrimination, then a question that specifically asks for that data should be included.

The evidence gathered over the last eight years clearly indicates that people of African origin, and who are the majority ethnic group who are negatively affected by the proposed colour-coded framework, were neither widely consulted nor clearly informed of the nature and purpose of the census. Those who did understand what the census was about did not wish to be identified by colour, but preferred instead to be identified on the basis of their ethno geographic background. The reversion to the 2001 Census approach does nothing to recognise or integrate these concerns, since African, Caribbean and 'Black' are lumped together as one homogenous group. This is an injustice to the African community in Scotland and an affront to their cultural heritage, as well as their human rights which are clearly enshrined under Scottish, UK, European laws and UN charters and conventions.

We call on the General Register Office to review again their decision to reintroduce colour-coded labels in the Scottish census and implement the conclusions they reached during the eight years of consultation. If justification for further consultation is required, it can be demonstrated from the critique above that the reintroduction of these labels was never properly tested on the public. They were not included in the 2006 Census Test and appeared in the cognitive testing rounds which only involved a small number of unrepresentative respondents. These respondents were never in any case given a chance to consider

questions without 'white' and 'black'. The contractors who conducted the cognitive testing tried many minor variants but 'white' and 'black' were treated as givens and no radical approaches to ordering were considered.

We consider that the proposed 2011 ethnicity question fails to answer the concerns first expressed by members of the African Community. We believe that it would be unfair and unjust to ignore these concerns, especially given the fact that they are supported by the overwhelming evidence collected between 1999 and 2008.

We therefore call on the Registrar General, the Scottish Parliament and the Cabinet to consider the paper submitted with this summary and to further consult on the ethnicity question and with the African as well as the Caribbean communities in Scotland so that the matter of colour labels/descriptors in the Scottish census can be resolved.

Africans and Caribbeans have a lot in common. However, given the growing, diverse, and heterogeneous African population in Scotland, we do not believe lumping the two communities together, especially under colour coded labels in the census, is a helpful way of capturing this diversity or meeting the two communities' different service needs.

*Accordingly, if the service needs of the African community in Scotland are to be addressed, it is critical that they have parity of treatment which reflects their continental and national origins in the same way as their Asian and Arab counterparts, rather than be colour coded. In particular, members of the African community are asking for their own Section in the Ethnicity Question marked **African**, with a 'write-in' section (with clear guidance such as "e.g. Nigerian, Ghanaian, Somali etc."); or with **tick-boxes** for regional geographic descriptors, such as Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, etc., and a 'write-in' box for 'any other African origin'.*

We must ensure that the 2011 Census enables us to collect reliable data, using a clear, consistent, fair and acceptable ethno-geographic framework which provides us with a firm basis for effective monitoring of our changing demographics and for design and delivery of appropriate public services for all members of the diverse communities in a forward looking Scotland.

Name	Ethnic Origin
Bertha Yakubu	Nigerian
Mercy Yaor	Nigerian
Dr Sumtende Chaba	Nigerian
Joyce Onuonga	Kenyan
Norman Chipakupaku	Zambian
Rev. Dr. Lukas Njenga	Kenyan
Dr Davis Yakubu	Nigerian
Chief Suleiman Chebe	Ghanian
Apolo Temu	Tanzanian

Dr Ajee Mamman	Nigerian
Dr Joseph Somevi	Ghanian
Sarah Kimuyu	Kenyan
Sam Kwei Sowah	Ghanian
Lukengo Diansangu	D R Congolese
Tamara Mhura	Malawian
Eunice Sinyemu	Zambian
Mukami McCrum, MBE	Kenyan
Dr Fumen Gamba	Nigerian
Bernard Kamy	Ugandan
Dr Stephen Ajei	Ghanian
Dr Joe Ibojie	Nigerian
Dr Mustafa Osman	Somali
Rev Akin Akinlabi	Nigerian
Dr Ehab El. Fattah	Egyptian
Dr El Tijani Elias	Sudanese
Sumaya Salih	Sudanese
Dr Gamal Maadi	Sudanese

Other Supporters

Barney Crockett	Scottish
Jeanie Felsingner	Scottish /Sri Lankan
Ephraim Borowski	Jewish
Vickie McKenzie	Scottish
Dr Rowena Arshad	Indian/Chinese
Hanzala Malik	Pakistani/Scottish
Dr Jim Repper	Scottish
Dr Stephen Townsend	English
Dr Grundeo Saluja	Indian
Alan Grant	Scottish

Alan Findlay

Scottish

Dr Ruth Payne

English

Desmond Byrne

Irish/English

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper reviews the work from 1999 to 2008; highlights the evidence-based progress towards an ethnicity, as opposed to a race-based, classification made between 1999 and 2007; and highlights the break which occurred in 2007 - after which all the previous evidence and direction of question development was ignored with a reversion back to the 2001 framework.
2. The 2001 Census 'ethnicity' question and classification was criticised because it used an inconsistent mix of colour and geography. Further problems have been raised since – that better disaggregation of minority ethnic communities was needed and new migrant communities and their needs should be identified.
3. The proposed 'ethnicity' classification for 2011¹ does not solve these problems – indeed perpetuates them as it is the same inconsistent mix of colour and geography i.e. of race and ethnicity – as 2001. There is no further disaggregation of minority ethnic communities other than for 'White', which now has an extra 5 categories, 'Arab' and a confusing 'Black' sub-category within the African and Caribbean category. It also maintains a hierarchical, bi-polar racial structure with 'White' as the dominant first entry labelled 'A', and 'Black' within the last main category 'D', labelled 'African, Caribbean or Black'.
4. The overwhelming weight of evidence collected, the community views expressed and the stakeholder requirements submitted, pointed towards an ethno-geographic rather than 'colour-coded' classification. Therefore, it is hard to understand the grounds on which the Registrar General's and the Chief Statistician's recommendation - to maintain the inconsistent 2001 colour-coded framework - was based.
5. Given the recognised risks of institutional racism, it is hard to understand why statistical and cognitive evidence appears to have been ignored. It is also hard to understand why, since the sharp break and change of direction in 2007, there hasn't been effective consultation with communities, especially Africans and people of African descent - who are potentially the most affected by the proposed classification framework.

¹ Scotland's New Ethnicity Classification, July 2008, The Scottish Government and the General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh (Cited as Macniven & Wishart 2008)

HISTORY

REAF

6. The Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) was set up by the Scottish Ministers in July 1999². It was chaired by Jackie Baillie, the then Minister for Communities. Its remit was to:
 1. Advise the Scottish Executive (SE), on the preparation of a race equality strategy
 2. Develop detailed action plans to tackle institutional racism and promote race equality and
 3. Advise the SE on consultation with, and for, minority ethnic communities.
7. The Forum was established to work in parallel with a Steering Group set up to oversee implementation of the SE's action plan in response to the inquiry chaired by Sir William MacPherson into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The Steering Group was chaired by Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice Jim Wallace, QC, MSP.
8. In the summer and autumn of 2000, the Forum, whose members represented a cross-section of minority ethnic communities in Scotland, were divided into 4 working groups and held consultative events to discuss the Forum's emerging ideas.
9. At these events, the Forum members were able to hear from both practitioners and communities about the main perceived problems and barriers to race equality in Scotland. Community members could also suggest solutions. Through these events the Forum hoped to create action plans for the SE and the whole public sector which reflected minority ethnic communities' real needs and concerns.
10. The process of dialogue with minority communities, voluntary organisations and the wider public was valuable as it kept the public sector informed at all stages and provided opportunities to test the emerging ideas and recommendations on the public sector. It helped the Forum to target its recommendations more effectively.
11. While the action plans were being developed, the Forum members continued to meet in a series of plenary sessions chaired by the Minister for Communities. These sessions gave the members the opportunity to discuss and debate issues which did not fit neatly into the different working group remits. One of these issues was the 2001 Census. In particular the Forum expressed concerns about the 2001 Census classification and recommended the need for its improvement in consultation with minority ethnic communities.
12. The Forum accepted the point of view that the 2001 Census treated Africans differently from Asians and members of other ethnic communities. There were a number of related

² Race Equality Advisory Forum Report 2001. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/society/equality/reaaf-00.asp> (Cited as REAF 2001)

issues – not all from the Census but prompted by the ‘Black and White’ 2001 classification:

1. The racially hierarchical nature of the 2001 Census classification
 2. The bipolar nature of ‘White’ versus ‘Black’ and
 3. The use of the term ‘Black *and* ethnic minority’ which leads to two problems. It allows the homogenisation of Africans, Caribbeans and Asians under a presumed ‘Black’ political label, but it differentiates among these communities in a manner that ultimately ascribes colour identities to Africans but ethno-geographic identities to Asians.
13. The Africans in the Forum, as a matter of principle, objected to the hierarchical and bipolar nature of the Census - having ‘White’ at the top and ‘Black’ at the bottom and tagged from ‘A’ to ‘D’. They also objected to conflation, the inconsistent use of colour and geography/race and ethnicity and, in particular, the use of colour/race as a proxy for ethnicity for Africans and people of African descent - while ascribing ethno-geographic identities to Indians, Pakistanis and other Asians, including Chinese, without qualification. Hence the objection to the use of ‘Black and Ethnic minorities’ to refer to all ethnic minority communities.
14. Underlying the Africans’ concerns is that the use of racial stereotypes undermines African ethnicity and culture and perpetuates dehumanisation and discrimination of Africans and people of African descent by continuing to promote crude colour-coded labelling which was born out of slavery, colonialism and Apartheid.
15. The Forum not only welcomed these objections and accepted the underlying arguments; it also began implementing them in their report and called for their full implementation in their recommendations to the SE for use in the public sector (REAF 2001, p4). The SE (now the Scottish Government) have in fact implemented this recommendation, and have ceased to use the term “BME”.
16. As a study of the reports dealing with the ethnicity classification in Scotland show, Africans were not the only people to condemn the inconsistencies inherent in the 2001 classification. Others found the colour coding including the term ‘white’ misleading. There were further examples from the cognitive research carried out in 2008.³ In fact, as we show, most organisational responses to the many consultations before 2008 recognise the validity of this point, in their preference for an ethno-geographic framework.
17. The Forum identified the need for improved disaggregated statistics on Scotland’s minority ethnic groups (REAF 2001, p10). It noted previous failures to involve ethnic communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of research. It therefore also laid out the principles for developing a more inclusive, non-discriminatory framework on ethnicity for use in all data collections and to underpin the mainstreaming of race equality (REAF 2001, p11).
18. Those principles are:

³ Cognitive Question Testing Scotland’s Census Ethnicity Classification 2008. Homes, A and Murray L, Ipsos-MORI, Scotland <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/13131959/0> (Cited as Homes and Murray 2008)

1. Be clear, coherent and consistent
 2. Recognise and reflect so far as practicable diversity within categories
 3. Allow individuals to identify with their own ethnic descriptors
 4. Not to be hierarchical (i.e. avoid references to colour-coded categories)
 5. Not to be seen, or perceived to favour any group over any other
 6. Not to be divisive
 7. Focus on ethnicity rather than “race”
 8. Be open to redefinition and change
 9. Not have direct resource implications
 10. Contribute to opposing racism and eliminating racial discrimination.
19. The Forum stated ‘It will be important that any necessary developmental work for a future Census, the reporting framework from the output of the 2001 Census and all public sector data collections disaggregated by ethnicity comply with these principles and reflect members of communities’ own views on identity. This will enable policy makers and service providers to meet needs in a non-discriminatory and culturally sensitive way using inclusive language (REAF 2001, p12).

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Ministerial response to REAF

20. In 2002, the Minister at the time (Iain Gray) accepted the findings of REAF and noted the progress made⁴.
21. In order to help inform the policy making and service delivery processes, the SE accepted the REAF recommendation that ethnicity data must be collected on a “disaggregated” basis. The SE was keenly aware of the need to improve the collection of data on ethnicity to ensure that ethnicity data was available for policy formulation and this was articulated in the Statistical Plan for 2002/03.
22. They recognised that any improvements would need to be widely acceptable which means that the surveys would have to achieve high response rates and not insult members of minority ethnic communities.
23. They also endorsed the Commission for Racial Equality’s principles that:
1. Ethnic data must be comparable with Census output data;
 2. Ethnic questions must be widely acceptable; and
 3. Ethnic data must be as detailed as possible.
24. The SE also noted that the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) had committed itself to producing outputs from the 2001 Census in a way that reflected REAF’s concerns as far as possible while maintaining the integrity of the collected data (Gray 2002, p8).

⁴ Committing to Race Equality - A response from the Scottish Executive to the report from the Race Equality Advisory Forum (2002). <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/social/ctre-00.asp> (Cited as Gray, 2002)

Work commissioned by the Scottish Executive: 'Ethnic identity and the Census'.

25. Margaret Curran, the then Minister of Communities, committed to re-evaluating the ethnicity classifications to ensure they reflected the diversity of Scotland's communities and to gather more meaningful information to better promote race equality (Macdonald et al 2005, p7).
26. A collaborative team was appointed to take this work forward consisting of members from BRMB Social Research (Susie Macdonald and Vanessa Stone), CERES⁵ (Rowena Arshad) and UHI Policy Web (Philomena de Lima). They consulted stakeholders, data users and data providers. It is difficult to do justice to the breadth and depth of their work but here is a summary.
27. Regarding ethnicity classification categories, there was a broad consensus among the qualitative sample of stakeholders that the 2001 classification was confusing and inconsistent (particularly in relation to colour and ethnicity), hid the real diversities within Scotland and did little to promote community cohesion.
28. Among stakeholders' suggestions for improvements were the removal of colour from ethnicity classifications; the more inclusive use of ethnicity for everyone and the use of broad regional headings such as 'European, Asian, African, Middle Eastern, North American and South American'.
29. Data users overall felt that the current classifications they used were useful but could benefit from being improved; they were uncertain whether their current classifications reflected 'best practice'.
30. Data providers felt that ethnicity should be identified more generally in terms of a person's background or identity. While some did mention race and colour, ethnicity was seen as more closely related to nationality.
31. In their final chapter 'Emerging Themes' there were a number of interesting conclusions.
 1. There is a greater diversity of people in Scotland now, and a "few" stakeholders felt that 'white' should be deconstructed to record the range of diversities currently masked under 'white'. It is not recorded what those extra categories should be but it is clear that they are "new" communities (Macdonald et al 2005, p 84).
 2. Stakeholders also found the conflation of characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity and colour to be "highly" problematic. They also viewed the current ethnicity question within the [2001] Census as being conceptually flawed and confusing. Data users were worried about linking nationality and colour.

⁵ CERES is the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland

32. Inevitably, in such wide ranging work, many opposing views were expressed. The elements included here represent the weight of opinion expressed, rather than the range of opinions. Nonetheless, in their last section 'Areas to focus on in future consultation' the authors leave 6 issues for consultation, including:
 1. How should issues of colour, nationality and ethnicity in ethnicity question frameworks be disentangled?
 2. That colour is a trigger for discrimination is not disputed. However, is the Census the correct vehicle to do this? If yes, can you suggest a way in which a question on colour might be included?
33. These indicate the main issues to fall out of the consultation about the 2001 census classification and to be considered for the development of a 2011 Census ethnicity classification.

REVIEW OF CENSUS ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATIONS CONSULTATION

34. Remarkably, in the Summer of 2005, the Scottish Government had two consultations covering ethnicity classifications:
1. June 2005, the Office of the Chief Statistician (OCS), 'Review of Census Ethnicity Classifications Consultation'⁶.
 2. July 2005, the General Registrar Office for Scotland, 'New and Modified Scottish Census Questions'⁷.
35. This section considers the OCS consultation and responses⁸. However it is worth considering together the ethnicity questions then under consideration and which, to the OCS and GROS, were the main development pathway of the ethnicity questions. These along with the 2001 question are shown in Table 1 below.
36. Clearly the preference, following 6 years of work and put to consultation, was for a non-hierarchical geographic-based ethnicity question and classification. One should also note the emphasis of these questions – they both focus on ethnic 'descent' and 'origin' rather than 'group'. This presumably reflects the evidence collected by mid-2005.
37. The OCS 2005 Consultation was launched by Malcolm Chisholm (Minister for Communities) and Tom McCabe (Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform). The consultation was the second stage of work following the investigations by Macdonald et al (2005) which in turn were part of the commitment made by the SE in response to REAF. The consultation paper makes it clear that it is part of this on-going process.

⁶ Review of Census Ethnicity Classifications Consultation June 2005. (Hence forth cited as OCS 2005)

⁷ 2011 Census Question Consultation and Analysis (2004-2006)

http://www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files/consultation_document_final_version.pdf (Hence forth cited as GROS 2005).

⁸ Analysis of responses to the review of Census Ethnicity classifications consultation, 2005. Granville, S. Mulholland, S and Russell K. George Street Research, Edinburgh.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/ethclassconresponses05> (Hence forth cited as Granville et al, 2005).

Table 1: The 2001 Census Ethnicity Question, the 2005 OCS Ethnicity Consultation Question and the 2005 GROS Consultation Ethnicity Question

2001 Census Ethnicity

1. Scotland's 2001 Census

What is your ethnic group?

◆ Choose ONE section from A to E, then ✓ the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

A White

Scottish

Other British

Irish

Any other White background, please write in

B Mixed

Any Mixed background, please write in

C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, please write in

D Black, Black Scottish or Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background, please write in

E Other ethnic background

Any other background, please write in

2005 OCS Ethnicity

2. What is your area of family descent/origin?

Whilst many people in Scotland view themselves as Scottish, information on family descent/origin is collected to capture the changing composition of Scotland's diverse population and to support programmes that promote equality of opportunity for everyone. Please tick as many boxes as relevant.

European Descent

Scottish

English

Welsh

Northern Ireland

Republic of Ireland

Other European descent (please specify country)

Asian Descent

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Other Asian descent (please specify country)

African Descent

Northern African

Central African

Southern African

Eastern African

(please specify country of area/s selected above)

Australasian Descent

(please specify country)

North, Central American or Caribbean Descent

North American

Caribbean

Central American

(please specify country of area/s selected above)

South American Descent

(please specify country)

2005 GROS Ethnicity

3.3 What is your ethnic descent?

◆ Choose one section from A to F, then ✓ the appropriate box to indicate your descent.

A European descent

Scottish English

Irish Welsh

Gypsy, Romany or Traveller

Other European descent, please write in

B Asian descent

Indian Pakistani

Bangladeshi Chinese

Other Asian descent, please write in

C Arab or Middle East descent

North African Iraqi

Arabian Kurdish

Other descent, please write in

D African or Caribbean descent

African Caribbean

American/Canadian

Other African Descent, please write in

E Mixed

Any Mixed descent, please write in

F Other ethnic descent

Other descent, please write in

38. The consultation expressed the usual concerns about previous ethnicity classification inconsistencies. While describing ethnicity frameworks as problematic it clearly differentiated 'euphemistic' ethnicity classifications (OCS 2005, p11) based on "race ('Black'/'White')” and recognised (following the work of Macdonald et al 2005) that one's identity could be a multi-faceted concept.
39. Therefore, to cover multi-faceted identities, the 2005 OCS consultation covered a range of ethnicity-related questions. It posed 11 questions:
1. *Should several questions be used to capture information on ethnic identity instead of one question?*
 2. *If you think the information on ethnicity could be captured using one question can you suggest categories to be used in this question?*
 3. *Should there be a separate question asking about national identity?*
 4. *Can you think of another term that captures the information described as area of family decent/origin?*
 5. *Are the world areas listed on page 22 [This is the example question shown in Table 1 above] the most helpful or would you recommend a different split?*
 6. *What do you think would be the best way to capture information on mixed descent?*
 7. *What would be the most acceptable and useful way to ask individuals about their colour or whether they are visibly from an ethnic minority group?*
 8. *Do you think the Census Language question should be extended to include community languages?*
 9. *Should a question be included on identification with a community or culture not covered by the other questions? Should this be an open question?*
 10. *What implications would there be for you/your organisation if direct comparability with previous Census data is not possible?*
 11. *What implications would there be for you/your organisation if the Census was changed to include a range of questions to capture ethnic identity?*
40. The number and overlapping focus of the questions seems to encourage the inference to be drawn that the 2011 Census would contain many identity questions and leave a complex, though rich and individualistic, picture of ethnicity which, as a consequence, would be difficult to compare with previous Census results.

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Analysis of Responses to the Review of Census Ethnicity Classifications Consultations 2005

41. Like most of the research, information gathering, analysis and cognitive investigations, the analysis of the consultation responses was placed with the private sector. For this exercise, the contract went to George Street Research Limited who reported back in October 2005⁹. They assumed their findings would “feed into the recommendations to be made to Scottish Ministers about the ethnicity classification scheme for inclusion in the 2006 Census Test”.
42. “A total of 91 consultation responses were received from a wide range of organisations and individuals with an interest in ethnicity classification”.

⁹ Analysis of responses to the review of Census Ethnicity classifications consultation, 2005. Granville, S. Mulholland, S and Russell K. George Street Research, Edinburgh.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/ethclassconresponses05> (Cited as Granville et al, 2005).

43. Given the focus of the questions, many of the responses were completely expected. Interested parties were asked whether they wanted more questions in the area of identity; 70 respondents agreed that several different questions should be used to capture information on ethnic identity.

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Family descent or origin

44. 23 respondents favoured the phrase 'family descent/origin'. A further 29 suggested other wording but each was different except for "one or two respondents". However, of these 29 at least 24 were in accord with an origins/ancestry/heritage/history focus (*ibid*, pp 19-20). So 52 respondents had no problems with the general theme of the question.
45. 1 respondent was concerned that 'descent/origin' was not 'the most appropriate way to capture ethnic identity in Britain, as some other countries who have taken this approach have had adverse experiences'. The countries were not identified so this response can't be evaluated.
46. Question 5 of the consultation was:
- Are the world areas listed on page 22 the most helpful or would you recommend a different split?*
47. The question seems to assume that that is how the main ethnicity question would move forward – in its geographic format.
48. 37 respondents were happy with the geographic categories and a few wanted additional categories but did not question the geographic framework.
49. In detail, 26 respondents agreed with the areas listed. A further 11 'also agreed' though they wanted further clarification. Others (an unspecified total number) wanted changes to the areas. 1 Minority group wanted areas to be more specific.
50. 14 felt the data was not needed, not useful or 'inconsistent' and 11 respondents favoured the wording contained in the 2005 GROS question - which itself was a variant on the geographic theme. It therefore seems as if at least 49 respondents were in favour and 14 against a geographic framework.

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Comparability

51. It is here (*ibid*, pii) that the issue of comparability with 'other data sources' was effectively raised - to become a constraint throughout the analysis, then through subsequent documents and finally in the design of the 'Ethnicity' question itself. However, it is raised here in the context of the 10 SE consultation questions, where the SE implied a complexity of ethnic identity; "Complexity" responses are not a response

to a *single* question on the design of a *single* ethnicity question. Granville et al (2005) report:

“One of the key points raised in the consultation document [i.e. not unsolicited from respondents] was the issue of comparability with previous Census data or data from other sources. The consultation document raised that moving to a system that separates out different facets of ethnicity would have an impact on possible comparison with the data collected by the 1991 and 2001 Census” (ibid, piii).

52. The issue of comparability was raised by OCS in the context of a multi-faceted ethnicity question set (see also *ibid*, p 34) - and respondents followed that lead. It was not raised in the context of ‘ethnicity’ as understood and expressed by REAF, or the House of Lords.

53. There were 2 questions on comparability:

10. *What implications would there be for you/your organisation if direct comparability with previous Census data is not possible?*

11. *What implications would there be for you/your organisation if the Census was changed to include a range of questions to capture ethnic identity?*

54. Question 10 is clearly a leading question and, worse, impacts on the possible answers to question 11. So the two together are misleading and confusing.

55. Nonetheless, 23 respondents said there would be no impact from a lack of direct comparability, 9 said the impact would be positive and 18 ‘anticipated difficulties’. As for the implications of a range of questions to capture ethnic identity, 38 respondents thought it would bring about positive outcomes and 17 adverse.

56. One response makes clear the dilemma respondents were faced with in answering the consultation questions:

“Comparability is very important and at least one of the questions should reproduce or be very similar to the 2001 Census”.

57. Despite the confusing intertwined nature of Questions 10 and 11, the researchers concluded positively (Granville et al 2005, p41):

“In summary, views on the implications for respondents (either personally or corporately) were varied, with slightly higher numbers of respondents noting that this would have no effect on them.

Regardless of the impacts of this, some respondents were concerned about incomparability over time, although others felt that collecting more relevant information in line with changes to the cultures of Scottish people would outweigh any disadvantages of comparability.

Higher proportions of respondents supported the suggestion for the Census to be changed to include a range of questions to capture ethnic identity. Where there were concerns these related to the cost implications of changes to current monitoring services and a lack of comparability.

NEW AND MODIFIED SCOTTISH CENSUS QUESTION, GROS JULY 2005¹⁰

58. The question contained in this Census question consultation is shown above in Table 1. It follows the now familiar geographic framework although it was a draft question anticipating the outcome of deliberations by the Racial Equality Scheme Implementation Group.
59. The proposals for the Census Test questions also included a discrimination question which highlighted a range of grounds on which different ethnic communities could experience discrimination. It is shown in the adjacent column. This was, in the event, included in the 2006 Census Test.

5.3 Do you experience discrimination on any of the following grounds?

◆ Tick all boxes that apply

- Accent
- Age
- Colour
- Class
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Faith/Belief/Religion
- Gender
- Language
- Nationality
- Sexual Orientation

¹⁰ 2011 Census Question Consultation and Analysis (2004-2006)
http://www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files/consultation_document_final_version.pdf (Hence forth cited as GROS 2005).

2006 CENSUS TEST

60. The ethnic question included in the 2006 Census Test is shown in the adjacent column. Both the racial hierarchy and the 'A', 'B', 'C' hierarchical structure were absent and the geographic framework was maintained.

61. However, instead of asking about ethnic origin, descent or heritage, it reverted to asking about one's 'ethnic group' - as in the 2001 Census ethnicity question – despite the fact that this option was not included in the OCS June 2005 consultation paper.

62. The 2006 Census Test and 2001 Census ethnic questions were identical: 'What is your ethnic group?'

63. The 2006 Census Test areas in Glasgow were selected because they had relatively rich and diverse ethnic minority communities and so provided a good test bed for the ethnicity questions (ethnicity, language, religion, etc). The results, shown in Table 2, confirm the diversity of the test areas.

64. The results suggest that most respondents were content to identify themselves in ethno-geographic terms. In other words, they preferred to be identified in terms of their ethnicity/ethnic descent rather than race or colour. If any of these respondents had preferences for race or colour as their 'ethnicity' they could have written in such identities.

However, from a sample of 293 Africans and 8 Caribbeans, there were only 2 people of African or Caribbean origin who ticked the 'Other' box; we don't know what text they entered and, in any case, it may not have been colour-coded!

The image shows a screenshot of the '2. Scotland's 2006 Census Test' form. The question is 'What is your ethnic group?' with a note: '✓ one box which best describes your ethnic background or culture.' The form is divided into several sections, each with a list of options and a grid for writing in a response:

- European:** Scottish, English, Welsh, Other, write in, British, Northern Irish, Irish.
- Multiple ethnic groups:** Any multiple background, write in.
- Asian:** Pakistani, Indian, Sikh, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Other, write in.
- Arab:** Middle East, Other, write in, North African.
- African or Caribbean:** North African, Southern African, Central African, Other, write in, East African, West African, Caribbean.
- Other ethnic group:** Gypsy/Traveller, Other, write in, Jewish.

Each section has a 10-column grid for writing in a response, with a second grid below it for additional text.

Table 2: The 2006 Census Test Responses to the Ethnicity Question.¹¹

Response	Frequency	%
European - Scottish	34,154	73.5
European - British	4,150	8.9
European - English	1,562	3.4
European – Northern Irish	181	0.4
European - Welsh	79	0.2
European - Irish	549	1.2
European - Other	486	1.0
Multiple ethnic groups	100	0.2
Asian - Pakistani	1,026	2.2
Asian - Chinese	115	0.2
Asian - Indian	110	0.2
Asian Bangladeshi	7	0.0
Asian – Sikh	75	0.2
Asian - Other	107	0.2
Arab – Middle East	58	0.1
Arab - North African	21	0.0
Arab - Other	12	0.0
North African	5	0.0
East African	99	0.2
Southern African	52	0.1
West African	92	0.2
Central African	43	0.1
Caribbean	8	0.0
African/Caribbean - Other	2	0.0
Gypsy/Traveller	21	0.0
Jewish	21	0.0
Other - Other	26	0.1
Missing	2,099	4.5
Error (multi-ticks?)	1,234	2.7
Total	46,494	99.8

65. It is interesting to note the relatively high ratio of ‘African’ responses to ‘Caribbean’ responses (97%:3%) in the Census Test. Overall in 2001, in Scotland, there were 5,118 Africans (74%) and 1,778 Caribbeans (26%)¹². In England and Wales there were 561,246 Caribbeans (54%), 475,938 Africans (46%) with 95,324 Other Africans or Caribbeans¹³. Scotland has a different ethnic community profile from England.

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Census Test Follow-up Survey

66. There was also a follow-up survey in the summer of 2006¹⁴ which focused on house condition, income and ethnicity questions. Respondents were asked to identify their

¹¹ GROS 2006 Census Test Evaluation (this is Appendix C p24 Henceforth cited as GROS 2007) (Also in Macniven and Wishart 2008, p69)

¹² www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/47210/0025543.pdf

¹³ www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/expodata/spreadsheets/d6561.xls

¹⁴ <http://www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files1/the-census/2006-census-test-evaluation/j8566b.pdf>

ethnicity and then answer the 2001 question followed by the 2006 question. Finally, they were asked to indicate their preference for either the 2001 question or the 2006 Census Test question. There were 399 respondents. 66 were Pakistani, 4 Chinese and 1 African and 1 'Other'.

- 67. 88 respondents self-identified using a colour label of whom 87 were of European ethnic origin and used 'White' and 1 was African and used 'Black African'. The other 69 non-European - Asian - respondents used non-colour-coded terms.
- 68. When the answers to the 2001 and the 2006 question were compared, 9 respondents said they were of 'Pakistani' ethnicity using the 2001 question but that they were 'European Scottish' or 'European British' using the 2006 question. However, there were also 7 respondents who identified themselves as 'White Scottish' or 'White Other British' using the 2001 question but identified themselves as Asian ethnic groups using the 2006 question.
- 69. When asked to choose which ethnic identity question they preferred, most respondents, from both the majority (European) and minority ethnic respondents (primarily Asians in this case), preferred the 2006 question. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The Ethnicity Question Preference of Census Test Follow-up Respondents 2006.

Preference	European	Pakistani, Chinese,	African and Other	Total	%
2001	44	0	0	44	12
2006	137	33	1	171	46
None	126	29	1	156	42
Total	307	62	2	371	100

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ONS investigation of Scottish Census Test Questions

- 70. ONS staff investigated Scottish Census Test responses in a random sample of "more than 170 Scottish 2006 Census test Questionnaires".¹⁵ They concentrated "on a number of known or suspected problems", including the ethnicity question - because it differed from the England and Wales classification.
- 71. ONS found that "over 5%" of respondents answered the question wrongly. Crudely estimated, ONS may have examined 20-30 respondent errors. 89% of the Census Test respondent population was European so there might be about 17 European respondents and 3 non-European mistaken respondents – the latter perhaps in 1 household.
- 72. In detail ONS reported that:
 - 1. In "Half" of the errors the respondent didn't answer the question, i.e. about 10 respondents. It is questionable whether a different design would solve this; and

¹⁵ The Scottish 2006 Census test report: How well did respondents complete the questionnaire? November 2006

2. "Half" ticked more than 1 box. Again it is questionable whether a different design would solve this problem since it is commonly reported that people wish to aver a multiple ethnicity.
3. "It was not possible to look at what people put in the write in boxes because very few people used them".

73. However, with, perhaps, only 3 non-Europeans in the ONS sample, it is impossible to draw any meaningful conclusions from this work. In any case the errors found are not necessarily linked to the question design.

74. However, the ONS work is dwarfed by GROS's results from the 2006 Census Test. The Census Test had 46,494 respondents - of whom: 2,000 were non-European minority ethnic community respondents, a further 1,234 who were in error in some way (multiple tick respondents or respondents who just ticked with no write in within an 'Other' response area, etc) with 2,099 respondents who didn't respond to the question at all - it is clear that it provides an wealth of data which could, and should, have been used to evaluate the ethno-geographic framework, before any credible scientific or robust statistical conclusions were drawn and then used to develop an acceptable Ethnicity question.

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SPRING 2007 CENSUS CONSULTATION¹⁶

75. The purpose of this GROS consultation exercise was to update Census users on the progress made by GROS in preparation for the 2011 Census in Scotland and to seek views on a number of key issues. In the right hand column below, the then current ethnicity question is shown.

76. The document also contained information on the Review of Ethnicity Classifications (to inform the choice of ethnicity questions in the Census and other future surveys) and asked a number of key questions. Responses would be considered by the Equality Scheme Implementation Group (ESIG) in the SE and inform the next stages of the review.

12 What is your ethnic group?

◆ Tick one box which best describes your ethnic background or culture.

European

Scottish British

English Northern Irish

Welsh Irish

Other, write in

Multiple ethnic groups

Any multiple background, write in

Asian

Pakistani Chinese

Indian Bangladeshi

Sikh Other, write in

Arab

Middle East North African

Other, write in

African or Caribbean

North African East African

Southern African West African

Central African Caribbean

Other, write in

Other ethnic group

Gypsy/Traveller Jewish

Other, write in

¹⁶ <http://www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files1/stats/spring-07-census-consult.pdf> (cited as GROS 2007/1)
<http://www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files1/stats/consultation-report-v5.pdf> (Cited as GROS 2007/2)

77. It reiterated the concerns raised by community groups about the inconsistent use of colour and geography in the 2001 Census ethnicity classification and, based on the outcomes of the review to date, the Executive continued to espouse the revised ethnicity classification included in the 2006 Census Test (GROS 2007/1, p 26).
78. So, in spring 2007, the SE and GROS still accepted that an ethno-geographic ethnicity question was the best way forward.
79. At this stage another point made by the consultation document is worth noting (GROS 2007/1, p26):

'5.2.3. The 2001 ethnicity classification combined the concepts of ethnic group and national identity in a single question, whereas the 2006 classification included a question on national identity followed by a separate question on ethnic group. The national identity question yields information on a person's sense of 'Scottishness', 'Britishness' etc. and the ensuing ethnic group question yields information on a person's ethnic background/ culture. These questions are designed to be used as a set, with the inclusion of the first question helping to improve the quality of response to the second, by helping the respondent give a more rounded account of their feelings about their identity.'

80. The national identity and the ethnicity questions "are designed to be used as a set". It is a reasonable assumption that the ethnicity categories no longer need the full 'Asian, Asian Scottish and Asian British' or 'African, African Scottish, African British', etc, labels because different minority ethnic community members could affirm their Scottish or British Identity in the preceding 'National Identity' question. That seems to be why and how the ethnicity category labels were simplified in the 2006 Census Test.
81. The simplification to single word geographic ethnicity labels removes confusion between 'National Identity' and 'Ethnicity'. Someone of mixed ethnic heritage - say Indian and Scottish or African and Scottish - no longer has the dilemma of whether to tick the 'Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British' or the 'African, African Scottish or African British' tick box. With single-worded ethnicity options, people of multiple ethnic heritage have a clear single option within the multiple ethnicity section and do not have the problem of whether they are also, for example, 'Asian, Asian Scottish, etc' or 'African, African Scottish, etc'.
82. Interestingly, the 2008 cognitive research, using the colour-coded bi-polar classification, identified this problem (Homes and Murray 2008, p7):

Further confusion was based on the use of the terms "Asian Scottish, African Scottish and Caribbean Scottish" and "Asian British, African British and Caribbean British" in other sections. Several respondents believed that these terms described people from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds (e.g. one Asian parent and one Scottish parent) which made it unclear who the "Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups" section was intended for.¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/13131959/0> (p7) (Homes, A and Murray L, 2008)

Responses to the Spring 2007 Census Consultation¹⁸

83. A total of 128 responses were received from Business & Commercial organisations, Central Government, Community & Special Interest Groups, Local Government and Local Service Providers as well as Individuals. 77 responded to questions about ethnicity (GROS 2007, p10) although some of these may only have responded about the National Identity question. However only 55 respondents answered the question about needing ethnicity data and of those 5 respondents said 'No' (GROS 2007/2, p70).
84. Just over half (27) of the respondents preferred the 2006 Census Test ethnicity question, although some commented that further development of the question was needed. About a quarter (13) preferred the 2001 Census question, while the remaining 11 indicated no preference (*ibid*, p71). This is similar to the public response in the 2006 Census Test Follow-up Survey – they also preferred for the 2006 version.
85. Reasons given by the consultation respondents for preferring the 2006 question included more detailed breakdown of categories, including a better breakdown of European and African populations.
86. Again, a community and special interest group respondent noted that:
- "The 2001 Census question was an irrational mix of colour, nationality and geography, and we strongly support its replacement."* (*ibid*)
87. But there was apparently wider support for this view from more than a single respondent or respondent group (*ibid*, p72):
- "There was also support for the 2006 question on the grounds that it did not use colour terminology, with some users strongly indicating that it was inappropriate to include colour as a descriptor of ethnicity. Many respondents also felt the question contained more accepted and/or accurate terminology, with one respondent suggesting that this would be less likely to make members of minority communities feel alienated or excluded"*.
88. Though a preference for 2006 was expressed, some respondents still had caveats. The first concern raised was that:
- "Colour is still an important issue in terms of identifying discrimination. The 2006 classification, however, would not pick up the difference between 'black'/'white' South African making it difficult to directly compare with 2001 data"*.
89. However, in the 2001 Census, of the 78,150 write-ins under 'Any Other White background', 3.9% wrote in 'South African', i.e. about 3,000 people¹⁹.
90. In the Census Test there were about 2,001 users of the 'Other' response with 1,853 write-ins (Macniven and Wishart, p72) (although Table 2 above only records 733 -

¹⁸ <http://www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files1/stats/consultation-report-v5.pdf> (Cited as GROS 2007)

¹⁹ www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/47210/0025543.pdt

GROS 2006, Appendix C, p24 and Macniven and Wishart, 2008, p69). The figures, such as they are, are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: The 2006 Census test write-ins

Ethnicity	% tick only	% text only	% tick and text only	Row % total	Total write-ins (n) (ibid, p 72-73)	Total 'Others' from P69
European: Other	6	39	54	100	297	486
Multiple ethnic groups	10	27	63	100	not given	100
Asian: Other	6	32	63	100	not given	107
Arab: Other	11	61	27	100	not given	12
African or Caribbean: Other	18	56	26	100	not given	2
Other ethnic group: Other	14	25	61	100	not given	26
Total number	148	750	1,103	2,001	2,001	733

91. GROS (2007) found that:

The 'European' write-ins were the most varied (297 different descriptions were given in total). Of the most frequent descriptions, 9 were 'non-European' ethnicities (suggesting that people were identifying here because they were born or had lived for some time in Scotland or another European country or that they were identifying distant European ancestry). Of these, the most common were 'Asian' ethnicities, followed by 'African', 'Australian' and 'American' ethnicities.

92. The above does not make clear exactly who these respondents were. They could have been Africans etc filling in the form wrongly or people of European ethnic descent who were born in Africa (etc). Further more sophisticated analysis of some of the other Census Test questions, for instance the discrimination, religion or family name question may have solved this problem.

93. An oddity is that the 2006 Census Test Ethnicity Frequency Table notes only *two* African/Caribbean write-ins, but the text says:

"Of the most frequent descriptions, 'Somalian' was the top, followed by 'South African'. Few people chose to write-in 'Black'".

94. A further concern respondents expressed was that "information useful in challenging discrimination on the basis of colour" may be lost. However, any cross-over effects are likely to be trivial and, in any case, an ethno-geographic classification – i.e. 'African', or 'West Africa', 'East Africa' etc, is less prone to cross-over effects than the rambling 'African, African Scottish, African British' etc style of labelling (those problems are discussed in the cognitive research findings).

95. Respondents also commented that some groups of 'Caucasian' origin such as Australasian and North Americans, who are likely not to see themselves as 'European', could not be readily identified. However, as in the 2006 Census Test, there was no direct option for such people. It seems likely they would affirm 'Other European' - as the 'write in' responses show - which maintains continuity with 2001. Their other option is the 'Other Ethnic Group'; or 'Other' write-in.

96. The write-ins of this group in the Census test were:

'Other ethnic group: Other' written responses

Of the most frequent descriptions, 'Somalian' was top, followed by 'Kurdish' 'Australian' and equally tied 'North American' and 'South American'. However, far higher numbers wrote in 'North American' in the 'European: Other' write-in box.

97. So there are some disparities, but these could be resolved by finding room for the remaining continents or indeed checking write-in responses during processing – or perhaps orienting the question towards 'ethnic origin' rather than current 'ethnic group'. Nonetheless, if the real intention of the question is to at least highlight those ethnic minority communities likely to face discrimination, the geographic question seems to move most Americans and Australians into 'Other European' which neatly equates with 'Other White' in 2001.
98. It seems likely that Americans, Australians and South Africans of European ethnic heritage who would tick 'White' in 2001 would most likely tick 'European' in 2006, and those who ticked 'Other Ethnic' in 2001 would most likely tick 'Other Ethnic' in 2006. Their position in both worlds means that they can 'vote' either way whatever the question. Using them as a lever in one direction only necessitates the use of the bi-polar, colour-coded, 'ethnic' classification framework and undermines the identity, diversity and needs of minority ethnic communities.
99. There is one other source of information. GROS linked 2001 Census results to the 2006 Census Test results and compared the ethnicity of the matched pairs (Macniven and Wishart 2008, p59). Unfortunately the results are only tantalising:

6. GROS linked people's responses from the 2001 Census ethnic group question and the 2006 Census Test ethnic group question to assess the effect of the question changes on responses. Approximately 35,000 records were linked. "Numbers of linked records for 'non-Europeans' were small and these findings are subject to error".

7. Tick boxes for each UK country (2006 question) encouraged responses away from the 'Other British' tick box (2001 question), suggesting they better reflect UK ethnicities. Over half of those identifying as 'British' in 2006 identified as 'Scottish' in 2001, suggesting that many Scots wish to identify as 'British' given the option.

8. The 'European' tick boxes in 2006 drew people who identified as 'Mixed' or 'Asian' in 2001. This may be because they were born or had lived for a number of years in Scotland or elsewhere in Europe.

9. There was movement from 'White' in 2001 to 'African' categories in 2006, suggesting that White 'Africans' identified more with the 'African' than 'European' category on the 2006 question.

100. Again, any assertions will have to be weak, especially given the lack of quantifiable figures - and their context. How many South Africans of European ethnic origin are we talking about? Are those who ticked 'White' in 2001 opting for an 'African' box in 2006 because they see themselves as 'Africans' or in order to force Africans to tick 'Black' African and thereby perpetuate the bi-polar framework in which the two communities have historically been defined especially in South Africa?

101. For any conclusion to have been drawn, GROS should have produced a simple two-way table showing ethnicity in 2001 by ethnicity in 2006. This would allow everybody to judge the evidence of the change in ethnicity framework for themselves. Reporting *'there was movement'* from 'White' to 'African' is not the depth of analysis required to make an evidenced-based decision.
102. Those in favour of the 2001 colour-coded framework often cite 'comparability' as the reason why it best meets their data needs. But we've already seen how, in the 2005 Ethnicity Consultation (OCS 2005), that the questions themselves raise doubts about 'comparability'. It gets no better here with two leading questions (GROS 2007/2, pp73-74):

Q11: If a revised ethnicity classification is used on the 2011 Census this would have an impact on the level of comparability that could be achieved with 2001 Census data. What effect, if any, would this have on your organisation?

Q12: If the ethnicity classification adopted on the 2011 Scottish Census differs slightly from that adopted on other UK Censuses this would have an impact on the level of achievable UK comparability. What effect, if any, would this have on your organisations? Please state in the box below.

103. However, surely 'impact' is related to the size of effect. Neither GROS nor SG have quantified the effect and, as discussed later, there is little effect on, or problems with, comparability.
104. Additionally, a few respondents highlighted that it was important to be able to 'monitor discrimination' on the basis of 'colour'. But what is meant by 'colour'? If by 'colour' is meant 'skin colour' then we must be scientifically correct; there must be a proper description of skin colour; European complexions tend to range from pale or light pink to light brown while Asians' and Africans' complexions vary from pale through light brown to dark brown. If it is an absolute requirement that discrimination be monitored by skin colour, then logically 'skin colour' must be ascribed to all ethnicities; otherwise the proposal is illogical and racist. We are quite clear that many people support the view, as we do, that skin colour is an important aspect in the creation of discrimination.
105. However, what the proposed classification seems to do is to use 19th century racial classifications' colour-coding as a proxy for ethnicity for Europeans and Africans but not, for example, for Indians and Chinese who are described in terms of their ethno-geographic origins only - rather than being racially coded as 'Brown' and 'Yellow' respectively.
106. As it stands, the only basis on which to see, say Nigerians as ethnically 'black' rather than simply 'Africans' (in the same sense that Indians are Asians) is to see the UK census as no more than the imposition of the South African Apartheid framework: with 'mixed' being a proxy for 'coloured'.
107. However, colour is a single and one-dimensional view of people. Clearly Indians and Pakistanis for instance have not had to be colour-coded in order to monitor the effects of discrimination against them and it is appalling that we seem to want to use racist coding rather than challenge racism in the defence of people's true needs and their human dignity which would be best promoted by a classification which reflects the

integrity, individual rights and the reality of people's origins. The 'Black and White' classification supports racism and racists' views that their paradigm is correct.

108. Discrimination on the grounds of colour is unacceptable per se. As such we would expect all service providers and employers to have in place strategies to educate and act against such discrimination. This should be a non-negotiable position and not subject to Census data.
109. In the summary, there is a comment about monitoring skin colour "which the 2006 Test classification would not allow" (GROS, 2007/2, p11). But, neither did the 2001 question for Asians or anyone else except for the bipolar, colour-coded categories of 'Black' and 'White'.
110. The final phrase in this section (*ibid*) is "categories used in the 2001 question were felt to be more clear and concise". Well 4 categories, 'White', 'Brown', 'Black', 'Other' would be even clearer and more concise but the whole point of the Census is to focus on the ethnicities of the diverse members of the Scottish population and to help meet community needs and promote equality and good community relations - not racially homogenise people through the use of meaningless high-level, racial generalisations.

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Conclusion of History before Cognitive Research

111. Despite the spectre of 'comparability over time' and across the UK - which some have raised as a problem - we have seen that the majority of consultation responses favoured a 2006 non-colour-coded ethno-geographic framework. The reasons for those favourable responses are logical, community based, service-needs oriented and ethically and morally sound and treat all communities equally; they come from the main users, individuals and community-based organisations. And those are the findings from the 2007 consultation process.

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COGNITIVE RESEARCH

112. Ipsos-MORI was hired to carry out 2 phases of cognitive testing of the ethnicity question – in June 2007 and then in early 2008. All the work over 8 years had led to the ethno-geographic framework. Obviously there were details to be ironed out including whether the word 'origin' or 'background' or 'group' should be appended to 'Ethnic' in the question 'What is your ethnic ...?': whether Gypsy/Scottish Traveller should be in the European section; whether Jews are an ethnic group, etc. However, the non-colour-coded more detailed ethno-geographic framework seemed set. This was a principled approach which was consistently maintained in the light of the REAF recommendations, and tested in the 2006 test and 2007 consultations.

113. When it came to the cognitive testing there was a dramatic change. The questions tested in Phase 1 are shown below (over 3 pages)²⁰. The terms 'white' and 'black' have been reintroduced, with 'white' again first in the list.

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What happened?

114. The SG/GROS report²¹ explains in paragraphs 5.51 to 5.53 some of the reasons that people put forward in the tests results for wanting the 'black' category reintroduced, particularly that it was an 'accurate description of their skin colour or their culture' and 'they were proud to be 'black' and so wanted the options to identify in that way.' The only problem given with having 'European' without 'white' was one of data accuracy. According to paragraphs 5.58 and 5.59 there was a danger that people with who saw themselves as European, would use the write in box to specify that they were Asian, or African, etc, rather than ticking a box under 'their' ethnic classification. This meant (paragraph 60) that 'the 'European' category did not always allow data to be collected that users require'.
115. It is accepted that some people would choose, for various reasons to call themselves 'black'. However if the term is to be used, then it would make logical sense to colour code across the spectrum. Otherwise this process simply condones apartheid classifications in 21st century Scotland; and this is not acceptable in a modern democracy. We should remind ourselves that the 100 page REAF Report and Recommendations was a result of consultation with, and contributions by, some 500 people - many of whom were professionals in their own fields - over a 2 year period, followed by a detailed Ministerial response accepting their findings.
116. Para 53 of Annex C on the Spring 2007 Census Consultation and Analysis makes it clear that a majority of consultees preferred the 2006 pilot question to the 2001 question on this issue. Para 54 to 58 of Annex C of the report, regarding the 'stakeholder meeting' in September 2007 indicates no general acceptance of the change.)
117. Regarding the reintroduction of the term 'white' it is very difficult to believe that there was no other solution to the problem of Asians or other minorities ticking the 'European' box. For example, the 'European' box could have been labelled 'European Origin' or 'European Background', also it never seems to have been considered that categories A to E could be inverted, so that the smallest group comes first, and the largest last. If people reading this very long question came to 'their' category nearer the top, rather than having to read all the others first, they would be less tempted to tick the 'wrong' box simply because they came to it first.
118. In all the range of options considered in various different version of the possible question, including the later cognitive testing variants, changing the order of the

²⁰ Cognitive Question Testing Scotland's Census Ethnicity Classification 2008. Homes, A and Murray L, Ipsos-MORI, Scotland <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/13131959/0> (Cited as Homes and Murray 2008). The second phase is only described in Macniven and Wishart 2008, pp 78-81.

²¹ Macniven and Wishart 2008

categories was tried to some extent, with the one proviso that European always came first, for reasons that are never explained, but could be read to imply an unconscious racial dominance. It appears (paragraph 5.70) that GROS discussed the category and tick box ordering with other UK census offices but apart from referring to ensuring that 'where possible, they are harmonised across UK classifications' there is no indication that a radical approach, such as the reverse order of population size, was considered.

119. In defence of GROS, it has to be accepted that there was strong political pressure to reintroduce the term 'black' (see paragraphs 130 and 131 of this report below). Macniven and Wishart explain in paragraph 5.61 that 'testing a question without colour terms prompted some people who felt strongly that colour terms should be retained to contact the review team..... it was found that views on the acceptability and need for a colour-based classification are polarised, among both data providers and data users. Some are in favour of retaining colour terms whilst some are opposed and others are ambivalent.'
120. What is amazing, is the conclusion then reported on paragraph 5.62 "Given the issues outlined above, a decision was taken to reintroduce the terms 'white' and 'black' into the classification..."
121. Paragraph 5.64 moreover quite overtly disclaims any possibility of achieving consistency in the way different ethnic groups are described. This paragraph concludes, 'SG and GROS have not imposed the terminology of one ethnic group on another in an effort to remove inconsistency, particularly where this would diminish data quality.' However two points need to be made in response to this:
 1. This present report argues that this is precisely what SG and GROS have done in reverting to the terms 'white' and 'black' in the proposals for the 2011 Census. They have imposed the term 'black' on an African population in Scotland which does not wish to be identified by this colour-coded and outdated concept.
 2. The twin pressures to do this are recognised, firstly the political pressure resulting from some spokespersons for the 'black' community strongly wishing to retain the 'black' label, and secondly the need to label 'Europeans' as 'white' in order to avoid 'non-whites' ticking the wrong box. However it is submitted that to respond by restoring these boxes is unprincipled and reverses the 8 years of progress in equality thinking achieved since the 2001 REAF report.
122. The rest of the present report will outline the stages that allowed it to appear that the new and changed ethnicity question with 'white' and 'black' restored was acceptable on the basis of the evidence, when in fact the weight of evidence, taken as a whole since 2001, would support the principled approach to dispense with these terms.
123. Following REAF, a significant piece of work was carried out by Macdonald et al (2005). Its aim was to inform the development of a classification of ethnic identity; ideally one that would meet a variety of needs. Consequently, the research explored how individuals would wish to classify their ethnic identity ('data providers'), whilst looking at the information needs of those using such data ('data users').

124. There was input from 11 stakeholders, 8 government departments followed by interviews with data providers from the public, in turn followed by a series of public meetings to discuss the findings.
125. There were then two parallel consultation processes, one from the Office of the Chief Statistician and one linked directly to the Census Development programme (OCS 2005, Granville et al 2005, GROS 2005-2007). In turn the ethno-geographic framework questions were trialled in the 2006 Census Test in the most ethnically rich and diverse areas in Scotland - with some 50,000 people and with a follow-up survey of some 500 people. Finally there was a 2007 Consultation.
126. In all of these activities, the ethno-geographic framework was readily accepted not only because it identified Africans and all other minority (and majority) ethnic communities in terms of who they are – without racialisation or stigmatisation - but also provided more detailed information about those diverse communities.

Table 5a: 2007 Phase 1 Cognitive Testing 'Ethnicity/race/colour/ National Identity Questions (1st two variants)

VERSION 1	VERSION 2
<p>What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>◆ Read the options below and then tick ONE box to indicate your ethnic group.</p> <p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white background, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>◆ Read the options below and then tick ONE box to indicate your ethnic group.</p> <p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white background, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sikh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sikh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>
<p>African, Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>African, Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p>_____</p>

Table 5b: 2007 Phase 1 Cognitive Testing ‘Ethnicity/race/colour/ National Identity Questions (3rd and 4th variants) (note A-E error in version 3)

VERSION 3	VERSION 4
<p>What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>◆ Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic group.</p> <p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sikh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>African, Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p>	<p>What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>◆ Read the options below and then tick ONE box to indicate your ethnic group.</p> <p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sikh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>African, Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p><input type="text"/></p>

Table 5c: 2007 Phase 1 Cognitive Testing 'Ethnicity/race/colour/ National Identity Questions (5th and 6th variants)

VERSION 5	VERSION 6
<p>What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>◆ Read the options below and then tick ONE box to indicate your ethnic group.</p> <p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>	<p>What is your ethnic group?</p> <p>◆ Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic group.</p> <p>A White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white ethnic group, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>
<p>Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>	<p>B Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>
<p>Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sikh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>	<p>C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sikh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>
<p>African, Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>	<p>D African, Caribbean or Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African, African Scottish or African British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black Scottish or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>
<p>Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>	<p>E Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, <i>please write in</i></p> <p style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></p>

127. In 2007, GROS held a 'road show' in Edinburgh²². The main presentation included the ethno-geographic framework as the way forward. The Registrar General was asked by one of the participants:

"[I] would like to know who first decided to change Black to African. Is this person advising the Executive? Are they paid?". Duncan Macniven [i.e. the Registrar General] pointed the enquirer to the link on page 26 of the consultation document which provides further details of the review of the ethnicity classifications.'

128. A second protagonist then said that

"[The Registrar General] mustn't take advice about such significant changes from a small group of people only". Duncan Macniven agreed to take this point on board.'

129. The Registrar General's response is very unfortunate for it gives the wrong impression - that the criticism of the bi-polar colour-coded paradigm was the work of an individual or small group of individuals.
130. What was not made clear to the objectors was that the initial objection to this framework was raised in REAF as a point of principle, with the expectation that no decisions regarding the way Africans or any other community would be classified in subsequent Censuses would be made without their consultation and agreement. As we have seen, by the time of this 2007 'Road Show', there had been years and years of work.
131. The response given did not do justice to 8 years work, the opinion of hundreds of experts, the testing on thousands of members of the public and the thousands of expert hours spent trying to ensure that the Census ethnicity classification was based on ethnicity and not race, and that whatever framework was arrived at was not only clear and consistent but a result of full and meaningful consultation with Africans and all others affected by the Census. The questioners should at the very least have been informed as to whether and to what extent members of the African and Caribbean communities had been consulted during this period.

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The Phase 1 Testing

132. It is worth noting that the ethno-geographic framework – used in the 2006 Census Test - was never tested directly through detailed cognitive research. It is also worth noting, with grave concern, that the new colour-coded bi-polar questions used in the cognitive tests were never discussed with members of the African or Caribbean communities. Both these actions fail to meet the standards asked for by REAF, agreed by Ministers and adhered to until early 2007.

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www.GROS-scotland.gov.uk/files1/the-census/edinburgh-consultation-07.pdf

133. The question design used in the cognitive testing also changed in some more subtle ways. The use of colour-coded categories ('Black' and 'White') meant that the simple wording used in the ethnicity-based classifications in 2006 became more complex. With this longer text, categories were not 'double-banked' and were placed in a single column. Also, a plethora of European categories were introduced. All three of these changes reduced the room for more detailed break-downs of non-European minority ethnic communities.
134. The questions tested contradicted the two key recommendations of REAF; that any classification framework should be non-colour-coded and should provide better detail for minority ethnic communities; it is hard to see how one could increase the 'White' categories by 5 without undermining the prospect of collecting sufficiently enhanced data which would enable the needs of the growing and increasingly diverse minority ethnic communities to be met.
135. The Introduction to the Cognitive Testing Report makes it clear that the researchers had no idea that what they were testing was not the result of the 'incrementally developed' question process - as they describe it - but a backward leap into the dark (Homes and Murray 2008, p9).
136. Also the researchers, one of whose experience included research for the Home Office on immigration and asylum, appear to have brought preconceived notions about race and ethnicity into the research process. These include their inability to think of Africans and Caribbeans in the same way they would of Asians – i.e. without ascribing colour coding 'Black' to them, and this in a way which begs for ascribing of colour coding 'White' to people of European ethnic origin (*ibid*, p15). Hence, they write:
- "However, five of the thirty Black [sic] respondents did choose 'African ...' or 'Caribbean ...' response options because they did not like the word "Black"*
137. Consequently their claim that they did not use community groups in their research 'because 'we were conscious of the politicised nature of some of the debate around ethnicity labels' (*ibid*, p16) led to their inability to recognise the 'politicised language' they themselves use, or to question the context of their research or question what was being achieved and tries to justify ignoring fundamental principles of research and consultation,
138. The testing respondent cohort of 88 people were:

15 African/African Scottish/African British	8 Polish
13 Caribbean/Caribbean Scottish/Caribbean British	2 Albanian
2 "Other Black"	2 Czech
9 Pakistani	1 Estonian
7 Indian	1 Latvian
1 Mixed Bangladeshi/English	7 White African
1 Chinese	5 White Scottish
2 "Other Asian"	5 "Other White"
7 Sikh	

139. Moving on to the testing itself we immediately discover that the question didn't work because the European ('White') section was too long (Homes and Murray 2108 , p31). Lets read what they say:

'...a serious issue emerged very early in interviewing with the layout of the [ethnic] question. Many respondents initially thought that the ethnicity question was several separate questions. They thought that the "White" section of the question was the entire ethnicity question and wrote their ethnic group (e.g. "Black African" or "Pakistani") in the "Other white ethnic group" write-in space.

They did this primarily because the write-in box at the end of the section acted as a visual break. In addition, because the "White" section was longer or a similar length to most of the previous questions, this acted as a further visual cue that it constituted a complete question.

Most had simply not registered the word "white" in the "Other white ethnic group" response option. They had skimmed over, what they thought, were the complete list of response options, not found 'themselves' and automatically written in a response in the "other" box without reading the response option carefully.

After respondents had written in their ethnicity, they moved onto what they thought was the next question. At that point they realised what had happened, looked down further, found 'their' response option and ticked it. However, even though they realised their mistake, most did not go back and delete the response written in the "White" section. This meant they had provided two responses to the ethnicity question. For example, a Black African respondent would initially write in the "Other white ethnic group" option, and then also tick the "African, African Scottish or African British" option.

140. Obviously the long 'White' section didn't work but, unfortunately, instead of going back to GROS and telling them that the layout was not working, they turned somersaults in an effort to keep the 'White' section as it stood - and to make it work.
141. They tried 5 different versions where, in each, they increased the indentations of the design. Despite this, "respondents were still making the same mistake" (*ibid*, p31). Perhaps, in fact it is the researchers who were still making the same mistakes; they are dismissing the views of their ethnic minority respondents and not drawing any sensible conclusions from the facts of what they observe.
142. The research report implies that the ethnic minority respondents spontaneously suggested using letters to precede the section headings, but the quotation used is in the past tense, so one suspects that the researchers introduced the 'A' to 'E' notation themselves. They will have seen it in the 2001 question.

"Very few 'non-white' respondents had any objection to this format The final version of the question used in the study did include lettering. However, only 9 interviews with non-white respondents were undertaken with this version of the form so it is difficult to assess the impact of the change"

143. So on the 6th attempt there was apparently some success with 9 'non-whites' but if you keep trying minor variants with small numbers of respondents, at some point the question will work but this will not be related to design. While this may seem like 'working', given the sample size, the number of times the experiment was repeated and the manner in which they went about the research, it is hard to see how their conclusion can be taken seriously or contribute to verifying and establishing a credible and acceptable Scottish ethnicity framework.

144. In 2 separate sections called 'Feelings towards the Ethnicity Question' (*ibid*, p36) and 'Section specific issues' (*ibid*, p37) there were a number of interesting responses. Again it is worth quoting:

'A few explained that they did not like answering this question because they did not feel it was relevant in the current day. They felt that identifying people by the colour of their skin was insulting and resulted in divisions in society:

"I don't like people asking me my ethnic minority because that really is hard to... [Looks uncomfortable] Why do they ask me? What's the point? What's the difference? Why do they want to know?" (Female, aged 35-44, Black [sic] African)

Virtually all White respondents were comfortable with this ['White'] section heading. However, some White Africans and Black Caribbeans were more sensitive about using colour labels:

"We try not to use you're White, you're Black, you're Coloured, whatever." (Female, aged 35-44, White [sic] African).

145. Not surprisingly, the researchers found that some people were sensitive about colour labelling, although they themselves appear not to be and so, again, nothing was made of this finding. Undoubtedly, beneath some of these reservations is the awareness that there is something wrong and dehumanising with colour-coded labelling of people (c.f. UN Charter on Human Rights).
146. Then Homes and Murray found that African and Caribbean respondents found 'or Black' misleading (*ibid*, p50) because they had 'African, African Scottish or African British' and the same again for Caribbean *and then* a 'Black, Black Scottish or Black British'. So there was confusion about whether they were supposed to answer the question using their 'area of origin or their skin colour' (*ibid*, p51).
147. Respondents also concluded that as there was a mix of colour and geography, it allowed European Africans to tick the African box (*ibid*, p51). In fact there are at least 4 pages of the Report (between pages 49-59) – too long to quote but not indicative of a successful outcome - in which African and Caribbean responses to the colour-coded questions highlight inherent contradictions in the research that gave rise to unnecessary confusion about their ethnicity, as opposed to racial identities, and how these should best be expressed in the Census.
148. Just to highlight some of these contradictions and the confusion caused by the researchers' attitudes and research methods, as well as the format of the ethnicity question, we find the following statement in the Main Findings of the Summary report²³ (2008, p1):
- There was very little objection amongst African and Caribbean respondents towards the term 'Black'.
149. However the researchers also report that most African and Caribbean respondents chose 'African or 'Caribbean' rather than 'Black'. So we think that is who they were. The researchers then asked respondents why they did not tick 'Black'.

²³ Cognitive Question Testing Scotland's Census Ethnicity Classification, 2008. Homes, A and Murray L. Social Research Equalities Research Findings No. 2/2008. The Scottish Government

“Most expressed no objection to the term but some noted that ‘Black’ referred to ‘race’. However, five of the thirty Black [sic] respondents did choose ‘African ...’ or ‘Caribbean ...’ response options because they did not like the word “Black”.

150. If this is the case, it follows that 16% of the sample objected to the use of the term ‘Black’. As it is also the case that most respondents chose African or Caribbean spontaneously rather than ‘Black’ it could then easily follow that if they had any reason to believe that they were then subsequently going to be categorised as ‘Black’, with which they might have negative connotations, they may be more seriously concerned and have expressed that negativity. However, in the context of a cognitive research event they may not have looked at the wider picture and so could easily have added to the 16% of objectors.
151. Nevertheless the way the researchers treat this information is quite telling. 1 in 6 is not an insignificant proportion, so if 16% of the sample of those who are affected do not like a word being used to describe them, one would expect to have that taken into account – not swept under the carpet.
152. What is clear is that the evidence from this work shows that when given a clear and unambiguous choice between ethnicity and race, most Africans and Caribbeans are likely to identify themselves in ethno-geographic terms - that is as ‘African’ or ‘Caribbean’ and not ‘Black’. Moreover, a large proportion of them expressly reject the term ‘Black’ and some noted that ‘Black’ was a race term.

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Conclusions of Phase 1 (i.e. main phase) of the Cognitive Research

153. Homes and Murray’s conclusions should have been that: (Homes and Murray’s summary document (SG Research Report 2/2008) and throughout their main report)
 - The ‘White’ section was too long
 - The ‘or Black’ wording was confusing
 - The mix of geography and colour with the ‘Black...’ category was confusing for Africans, Caribbeans and European origin Africans
 - A significant percentage of the respondents (Africans, Europeans and Caribbeans) found the use of the term ‘Black’ unpalatable
 - And the vast majority of Africans or people of African descent chose not to use the term ‘Black’.
154. The evidence collected showed that the question failed in more or less every way it could, but the researchers, for whatever reason, did not successfully report on the evidence they collected. It is no longer clear what is good about the question.
155. Finally, why were these results not brought into context using the Census Test results? For example, did Non-Europeans make the same mistakes in the Census Test as they did in the cognitive research with the bi-polarised question?

Phase 2 Cognitive Research Testing

156. Phase 1 cognitive testing failed to provide evidence to support the bipolar, colour-coded and confused design and framework. However, the promotion by SE and GROS of this design and framework continued into Phase 2. But, Phase 2 reinforced the problems with this approach.

157. The question used in Phase 2 is in the adjacent column. It has familiar features. It is hierarchical and bipolar. It confuses ethnicity, race, colour and national identity and at different levels in the classification. It allows that Arabs can be Scottish or British by use of tortuous National Identity labelling. 'Sikh' is dropped but 'Jewish' has survived but for them (and the Poles) no affirmation of being Scottish or British.

158. Macniven and Wishart (2008, p78) state that:

“One aim was to test some of the related questions with respondents in context, i.e. questions which are planned to sit near each other on the Census form. One of these was the ‘ethnic’ group question.”

159. It is not reported which other questions the ethnicity question was planned to sit near, but National Identity would be an obvious candidate. However, there is no mention of it, nor of any interactions which might be expected.

160. So, while the Phase 2 testing programme seems not to reflect any expectations of including a National Identity question in 2011, the record of the Cabinet response to the submission (Macniven and Wishart 2008, p13 - see below for full discussion) does:

2.5 In May 2008, the new classification and the need to ask an accompanying national identity question in the census, was endorsed by Scottish Ministers.

161. The weakness of this phase 2 work is described in the report:

“As the end of the ethnicity classifications review was approaching there was only a limited time available to conduct this testing. Therefore the number of participants was kept small”

162. Of the 26 people recruited, just three (3) were “African, Caribbean or Black” (Macniven and Wishart 2006, pp 78-79). It is not clear what this means. Is this 1, 2 or 3 people who have not asserted their

4. GROS Cognitive Question Testing (Wave 2)

What is your ethnic group?

◆ Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick ONE box which best describes your ethnic group or background.

A White

- Scottish
- English
- Welsh
- Northern Irish
- British
- Irish
- Gypsy/Traveller
- Polish
- Any other white ethnic group, please write in

B Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

- Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in

C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British

- Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British
- Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British
- Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British
- Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British
- Other, please write in

D African, Caribbean or Black

- African, African Scottish or African British
- Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British
- Black, Black Scottish or Black British
- Other, please write in

E Other ethnic group

- Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British
- Jewish
- Other, please write in

ethnicity as 'Black', and so has this label 'African, Caribbean or Black' now colour-coded respondents who chose to identify themselves solely in ethno-geographic terms. This demonstrates how the colour-coded labelling works; how someone who objects to being called 'Black' loses their ethnic identity. Either the author of the Macniven and Wishart report or the researchers - with their colour-coded linguistic paradigms – seem to have reduced these respondents' ethnicity to a meaningless colour-coded label.

163. But worse follows. This is the summary of the findings from the 3, by now colour-coded, Africans or Caribbeans (Macniven and Wishart, 2008, p81):

“Some African: Caribbean’ respondents felt that the ‘African, African Scottish or African British’ and ‘Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British’ response options were for people from ‘Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups’. Nevertheless, on balance, the contracted researchers suggested that the current wording of the response options in the ‘Asian’ and ‘African, Caribbean or Black’ section should be retained.

164. The hired researchers made an arbitrary decision where their own evidence from a small sample (either 1, 2 or 3 Africans or Caribbeans) shows yet again the confusion wrought by the mixture of ethnicity, race, colour coding and nationality. The Statistical Service is prepared to pass the buck and offend at least a large minority of African people or people of African or Caribbean descent with out weighing the evidence which here is both flimsy and contradicts the conclusion drawn.

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Other Cognitive Work

165. The Ipsos-MORI cognitive research showed that the question was confusing, insulting to members of some communities and failed to successfully collect the required data. It also documents the dangers of employing researchers who unconsciously use English racial paradigms.
166. However, some further investigative work was initiated with ONS, Edinburgh and Glasgow Councils and the NHS – using a question which was not yet the final question. The first further investigation was given to ONS.
167. It is not clear why, if SG and GROS staff were so expert (Macniven and Wishart, 2008 p13 – “*Team members were selected because they had expertise in the topic area and/or statistics or research*”), GROS and SG did not do their own small-scale field work at this critical point. Nor is it clear why an organisation from a country with another ethnicity

3. SG Cognitive Question Testing (Wave 1)

What is your ethnic group?

Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic group.

A White

Scottish

English

Welsh

Northern Irish

British

Irish

Gypsy/Traveller

Polish

Any other white ethnic group, please write in

B Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in

C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British

Pakistani

Indian

Chinese

Bangladeshi

Sikh

Other, please write in

D African, Caribbean or Black

African, African Scottish or African British

Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British

Black, Black Scottish or Black British

Other, please write in

E Other ethnic group

Arab

Jewish

Other, please write in

profile with different colour-coded paradigms was preferred. It may be part of the failure of this process that, at this critical point, field work was carried out by a new organisation - with no direct SG or GROS staff involvement with members of minority communities.

168. "SG commissioned ONS to undertake 12 focus groups (with 96 participants in all) with members of the public self-identifying as 'African', 'Caribbean', 'Black' or 'Mixed' ethnicity in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow to explore the acceptability of using colour to classify ethnicity. Due to recruitment difficulties, only the Glasgow groups went ahead (with 30 participants)." (ibid, p59).

169. One should note that 'Arab', 'Jewish' and 'Sikh' survived the bi-polar design solution for this work.

170. Notwithstanding the failure of this piece of work to proceed as designed, some results are noted (Macniven and Wishart 2008, 59-60). ONS are reported to have concluded:

12. A majority of participants felt comfortable describing themselves as 'Black' and of these many were proud of it. Those who preferred to be described by country of origin disliked the negative connotations of the term 'Black' and did not want this label imposed on them.

13. The meaning of the term 'Black' was seen as context specific and could denote skin colour, music, culture, history etc. Therefore, the acceptability of the term 'Black' was situation specific for some people.

171. So we see again that 'Black' is considered unacceptable by a proportion of the affected population. What we fear is that it isn't seen that it is unacceptable also by association and that the dislike of the term is related not just to the avoidance of such tick boxes but to the labelling generally and to the 'black and white' polarisation. However, we feel that by now GROS and SG are avoiding acknowledgement of the evidence before their eyes; and this is not an unknown phenomenon, where evidence that doesn't fit is ignored.

172. However, this evidence is impossible to assess because we know nothing of the recruitment methods, the ethnicity of the 30 respondents or what questions were asked.

173. Further exposure of the National Identity and the bi-polarised Ethnic question went ahead with Glasgow City Council, Edinburgh City Council and the NHS in November 2007. Macniven and Wishart (2008, 60) report:

Changes to the ethnic group question were generally welcomed as improvements that would help effective service delivery to communities. 'Roma' or 'Romany' people were identified as an emerging ethnic group facing potential discrimination. The need to maintain comparability with the 2001 Census was highlighted in several cases.

174. It is felt that this inclusion is potentially misleading. The Councils are welcoming improvements over the colour-coded bi-polar 2001 question. They see 'Arab', 'Sikh' and 'Jewish', 'Gypsy/Traveller' and 'Polish' boxes and the greater breakdown of the constituent countries of the UK. But the question really is, whether this was better than the ethno-geographic framework used in 2006 and used until early 2007. The report (Macniven and Wishart 2008) does not record that 'Sikh' and 'Jewish' were subsequently dropped.

175. That comparability with 2001 needs to be maintained is noted though. But no where is there any evidence that the ethno-geographic framework failed on this score? Again the question 'Is comparability important?' is raised - without saying what the effects of different questions or frameworks are. Again the seeds of doubt are raised without quantifying the problem and driving toward their pre-determined end.

176. Glasgow City Council used the question in their Annual Household Interview 'representative quota' Survey of 1,020 people. Macniven and Wishart (2008, p61) report the results:

On the ethnic group question, the largest groups were 'Scottish' (90%), 'British' (4%) and 'Pakistani' (3%). Numbers for other groups were very small, therefore findings should be interpreted with caution. However, in relative terms 'Polish' was a large group at 0.5 per cent of respondents (the same proportion as identified as 'English'). No respondents identified as 'Black, Black Scottish or Black British' or as 'Gypsy/Traveller'. More respondents identified using the 'Other [African, Caribbean or Black] write-in box (0.3%) than the 'African, African Scottish or African British' tick box (0.1%). More respondents identified as 'Indian' (0.6%) than 'Sikh' (0.1%).

177. Let's put that in numbers. About 918 respondents were 'Scottish', 41 were 'British', 31 were 'Pakistani', 5 were Polish, 6 people were 'Indian' and 1 person was 'Sikh', 3 people identified as 'Other' under the African, Caribbean or Black' section and 1 person as 'African, African Scottish or African British'.

178. The 3 'Other' in the African and Caribbean section could have identified as 'Other' because they were confused by the 'African, African Scottish, African British' or similarly the 'Caribbean' complex rubric. Nonetheless no one ascribed themselves as 'Black' although SG and GROS did so - under the 'African, Caribbean or Black' category label.

179. The report notes, as we recorded above, that "Numbers for other groups were very small; therefore findings should be interpreted with caution". Is that what the report is really are doing here when it records 1 person's result?:

"Only 0.1 per cent refused to answer the ethnicity question."

180. This is a voluntary quota sample by interview. Less co-operative people have already refused. Quota samples are used because they are cheap – typically for market research where you assume that there is no relationship between attitude and cooperativeness. You can't do that in this type of attitudinal survey. When the survey is described as representative it means that the sample reflects a predefined, population profile (e.g. age and sex or perhaps in this case the first 10 households who answered the door within a chosen census output area) - not that it is representative of the breadth of the population in any other dimension. Let us see how the data is used:

- *"Nobody ... said they objected to the colour labels 'Black' and 'White'".*
There were only 4 co-operative respondents of African descent.
- *"Nobody objected to the 'Sikh' tick box or reported that having to make a choice between 'Indian' and 'Sikh' was confusing."*
There was only 6 Indians (Were any Indian Sikhs?) and just 1 Sikh!

- *“Only 0.4 per cent objected to the category labels ‘A’ to ‘E’.”*
We are surprised that there were any – although there seem to have been 4 - who were sophisticated and alert enough to spot the implications of the ‘A to E’ notation from a show card in a quota sample.

181. It is right for the report to contain an extensive record of the SG and GROS activities, but it should also sift out the wheat from the chaff. Part of the problem with critiquing this work is the sheer weight of ‘evidence’; it is surely a statistician’s job to present the key data and then provide an interpretation of the evidence - not to hide it away.

182. It is difficult to find the critical evidence which is used to come to the conclusions reached. A lot of the evidence is from cognitive research and that is difficult to interpret but including every scrap of evidence, often without quantification and context, makes our task and the reader’s task very hard. But let us now move on to the last statement (The Registrar General and the Chief Statistician, 2008, p61) about the Glasgow work - and let the reader interpret what he or she reads of this colour-coded sub-sample, the poor response rate and let us wonder at the state of community relations in Glasgow:

22. Following its main Household Survey, Glasgow City Council carried out a further 200 interviews with residents from ‘non-White’ ethnic groups. ...the test version of the classification was used. Two results were particularly interesting. Twenty five per cent of respondents in this group did not understand the meaning of ‘national identity’ and 13 per cent refused to answer the ethnic group question.

183. The NHS reaction was much the same as the Edinburgh City Council’s reaction. The question (as laid out above – not the final one) was

“provided to key equality officials in a cross section of Health Boards. These included Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Highland, Lothian, Orkney and Tayside”.

Apparently these ‘key equality’ officials thought that ‘Sikh’ and ‘Jewish’ were confusing ethnicities although, at the same time, enjoying a bipolar, hierarchical and colour-coded classification. Most people would not find Jewish Ethnicity confusing.

SCOTLAND'S NEW OFFICIAL ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATION²⁴

184. The new classification is shown in the adjacent column.

185. The sections are arranged hierarchically from A to E with 'White' on top.

186. Two of the categories are colour-coded 'White' and 'African, Caribbean or Black'. Since the heading 'D: African, Caribbean, or Black' must mean these are alternatives, since they branch into 3 separate tick-boxes, how are we to understand 'C: Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British'? - another inconsistency!

187. The number of sub-categories rose from 14 in 2001 to 21 – a rise of 7 sub-categories. 5 of these new sub-categories are within the 'White' category. The other two new sub-categories are 'Arab' and the undefined 'Black, Black Scottish or Black British'.

188. The sub-category generalised format of 'Ethnicity, Ethnicity Scottish, Ethnicity British' is extended to the categories 'African, Caribbean, or Black' and 'Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British', but not to 'Arab' or 'White'.

189. We hope that we have built up a picture of the strength of work completed between 1999 and 2007; that it was founded on the principles of equality; that it used the methods recommended by REAF aimed at challenging institutional racism and promoting good community relations; that it sought the help required from communities to identify the best way to meet their needs and that it involved thousands of people.

190. We hope that we have demonstrated the link between the aspirations of REAF, the community working methods and outcomes from Macdonald et al (2005), the evidence collected by the 3 separate consultations carried out on Ethnic Identity between 2005 and Spring of 2007 and the ethnicity-focused 2006 Census Test and

For Scottish Official Statistics and recommended for Scotland's 2011 Census

What is your ethnic group?
 ♦ Choose **ONE** section from A to E, then tick **ONE** box which **best describes** your ethnic group or background.

A White

Scottish

English

Welsh

Northern Irish

British

Irish

Gypsy/Traveller

Polish

Any other white ethnic group, please write in

B Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups, please write in

C Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British

Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British

Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British

Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British

Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British

Other, please write in

D African, Caribbean or Black

African, African Scottish or African British

Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British

Black, Black Scottish or Black British

Other, please write in

E Other ethnic group

Arab

Other, please write in

²⁴ For ease of access the reference in full is repeated here. Scotland's New Ethnicity Classification, July 2008, The Scottish Government and the General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh (Cited as Macniven & Wishart 2008)

the natural recommendation which flows so strongly from all of this work in favour of an ethno-geographic ethnicity classification framework.

191. We cannot be sure from the Internet record how the Registrar General and the Chief Statistician arrived at the current framework. However, we have picked up what we can and found a moment of weakness where expert officials – “selected because they had expertise in the topic area and/or statistics or research” were not able to defend the outcome of 8 years work; indeed they let down all of those people who strove so hard for equality.
192. It would be important and helpful to know whether GROS and ONS conducted their research on the ethnicity classification issue with similar understanding and approach, given the difference in demographic patterns and minority ethnic community profiles in Scotland compared to England – and whether these considerations were taken into account when providing the evidence in the submission to the Scottish cabinet.
193. We feel more certain that, following the spring consultation of 2007, a flawed process was set in motion based on misinterpretations of evidence collected from a number of elements described below.
194. Cognitive research was carried out by researchers who called people ‘Black’ who had specifically objected to being called ‘Black’; they dismissed the views of 1 in 6 Africans or people of African descent who objected to being called ‘Black’ and also the views of most of their ‘African’ respondents who had spontaneously ascribed themselves as ‘African’ or ‘Caribbean’ and not ‘Black’ with the words (Homes and Murray 2008/2, p1)):

“There was very little objection amongst African and Caribbean respondents towards the term ‘Black’”.
195. The details in the Cognitive Research report makes it clear that the question did not work and is confusing; but these findings seem to have been ignored.
196. ONS staff, using colour-coded paradigms popularly found in London and elsewhere in England, were then brought in. They found 30 African and Caribbean people – far less than the design criteria - and they found some Africans or people of African descent who didn’t like the term ‘Black’ being applied to them, but this finding was ignored.
197. Staff from Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils and the NHS were then shown a different question from the final one and, apparently without recourse to communities, thought the question ‘an improvement’ on 2001. However, oddly, they did not have the chance to comment on an ethno-geographic framework - if they had, all previous work shows they would have preferred that. Did they know that minority ethnic communities had not been consulted on the colour-coded format of those questions?
198. These pieces of work are crude; they did not involve or consult African or Caribbean communities but opted to consult individuals instead. The consequence was misinterpretation, misrepresentation and confusion.

199. On the other hand, the 2006 Census Test data was not explored to any great extent and the ethno-geographic framework was not subjected to any developmental cognitive research – if any cognitive research at all.
200. Again, since the change from the ethno-geographic framework to the bipolar, hierarchical and colour-coded framework, and apart from a few individuals, who by no means could be taken as representing the views of the fragmented but increasingly large number of African and people of African descent, none of these communities have been engaged in any meaningful dialogue/consultation with the Registrar General and Chief of Statistics at the SG.
201. We have sought here to challenge both the often non-transparent and non-inclusive manner in which, latterly, evidence was gathered and conclusions drawn by government officials. By portraying their conclusions as a community-agreed ‘done deal’ and espousing REAF and all the other work carried out they have made it look as if they delivered on REAF's concerns, whereas by restoring 'white' and 'black' they have not in fact delivered on REAF's key concern.
202. The Report makes it clear (Macniven and Wishart 2008, p1) that the reasons for reviewing the ethnicity classification are understood. What isn't clear is that the review has only partially achieved some objectives and some objectives not at all.
203. The Report makes clear the amount of work and the methods used over the 8 year period. It is not made clear that the result represents a seismic break from the vast majority of that work and the evidence collected.
204. The Report claims that the classification has been ‘modernised’ (*ibid*, p9). ‘Polish’, ‘Gypsy/ Scottish Traveller and ‘Arab’ have been introduced, but this is not ‘modernisation’; the paper returns to the colour-coded, hierarchical, bipolar 2001 Census format that was rejected as the 2001 Census was running. A true modernised ethnicity classification is one which reflects the globalised reality of our society. . Adopting an ethno-geographic framework is the best way of reflecting the changes in our modern, diverse, migration-driven, globalised world in which we live.
205. Throughout the document mention of working closely with ONS is made (e.g. para 2.3 and 2.4). We cannot know how influential ONS were – especially worrying given their weddedness to the bipolar colour-coded paradigm. What is clear is that, at some point, and despite regional differences, the Registrar General and the Chief Statistician for Scotland decided to harmonise closely with ONS and by so doing undermined the prospects of achieving a classification framework for Scotland based on ethnicity rather than race. Given the irreconcilable differences between the then position in England and Scotland, this statement by the Registrar General and the Chief Statistician does not make sense (*ibid*, p13):

2.4 Representatives of the review team and the other UK census offices met in February 2008 to agree, finally, which parts of the UK classifications needed to be UK harmonised and which needed to be different in order to meet the specific circumstance of each UK country. Shortly after that, the three UK Registrars General met to agree these recommendations.

206. It was soon after this that the case was put to Cabinet (*ibid*). This is what the Registrar General reported:

2.5 In May 2008, the new classification and the need to ask an accompanying national identity question in the census, was endorsed by Scottish Ministers.

207. This means that only between the time of agreement between GROS and ONS in February 2008 and May 2008 was there an opportunity to consult with communities on the final question or on its colour-coded framework. In that short time this could not have been done effectively; and was not done at all, as far as we can tell from the official record.
208. It is also not clear what exactly the Cabinet was being asked to endorse. Was it only the 'Ethnic' Question or, as implied here, was it the 'Ethnic' Question 'and the need to ask an accompanying national identity question' which was put to the Cabinet? Obviously, the cabinet responded by asking for the 'Ethnic' question to be paired with a National Identity question - which by then had not been finalised and was not included in the second wave of cognitive testing where questions likely to be close to each other in the 2011 Census were tested together.
209. The proposed question - with its full and lush rubric - 'Ethnicity, Ethnicity Scottish and Ethnicity British' for every single Asian (each of Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Chinese) and African or African Descent tick box – looks as though it is not designed to be combined with a National identity question but rather to stand alone. Combining the two questions allows the ethnicity question to be simplified - as in the 2006 Census Test. It seems as though the ethnicity question as designed was fatally and unknowingly stabbed in the back by the Cabinet demand to pair it with a National Identity question. The Report states (*ibid*, p10):

1.12 Asking a national identity question before an ethnicity question helps to ensure that all people living in Scotland can express their national identity – be that 'Scottish', 'British' or any other national identity – without that becoming confused with their ethnic origin or heritage.

210. But, as currently designed, the ethnicity question does just that – confuses ethnicity and national identity – as well as ethnicity and 'race'. However, there is no acknowledgement of the resulting contradiction. In spite of these apparent shortcomings, the authors decided to introduce and disseminate the question, with all these contradictions, to an unsuspecting public years ahead of the 2011 census; and this without allowing time for serious questioning of these decisions or consultation with those communities who would be negatively affected by the proposed 'ethnicity' framework (*ibid*, p10).

'When the new classification and national identity question start to be used for Scottish Official Statistics from Autumn 2008 onwards, SG and GROS will start to publicise and promote their take-up by public authorities and other organisations. Towards the end of the year, GROS will publish a policy statement on the next census and this will be made available to the Scottish Parliament for consideration. It will include the new classification and the national identity question'.

211. It is not clear to us what progress has been made in taking forward the 'national identity' question and especially as regards its interaction with the 'ethnicity' question. This would have provided an opportunity for the review of the use of both 'white' and 'black' colour codings which, despite objections and alternative recommendations to

the use of these terms, were not included in the 2007 round of cognitive testing where only the 'black' colour coding was tested.

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FINAL STATEMENT

This review of the evidence for the proposed new 'official' ethnicity classification suitable for the 2011 Census has been conducted by the authors in collaboration with a group of other concerned Africans, and with the support of race equality experts, a cross-section of professional data users, members of other minority ethnic communities as well as indigenous Scottish communities who are concerned about the colour coding of ethnicity in the Scottish census.

The question has moved from an agreed approach based on a non-racial principle, raised originally by members of the African community and supported by the overwhelming weight of evidence outlined in this document, to an inconsistent and confusing approach, which has been unduly influenced by proponents of a homogenised, polarised and divisive view of society.

This report calls on the General Register Office to take the opportunity to review again their decision to reintroduce colour-coded labels in the Scottish census – with a view to reverting to a proper non-colour-coded and consistent ethnicity framework for Scotland.

If justification for further consultation is required, it can be demonstrated from the critique above that the reintroduction of these labels was never properly tested on the public. They were not included in the 2006 Census Test and appeared in the cognitive testing rounds which only involved a small number of unrepresentative respondents. These respondents were never in any case given a chance to consider questions without 'white' and 'black'. The contractors who conducted the cognitive testing tried many minor variants but 'white' and 'black' were treated as givens and no radical approaches to ordering were considered.

While this report has not been prepared by statistical or demographic 'experts', we stand ready to advise on how the ethno-geographic approach originally proposed by REAF and expanded in the executive summary of this document (and below in Annex) could be applied for the 2011 Census.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this present report is to review the evidence on which that decision was based. It shows that the methodology by which that evidence was evaluated was flawed and inconsistent with Scotland's vision to be a country where individual human rights are protected and upheld. It demonstrates that the wrong conclusion has been reached. It is a conclusion that takes Scotland backwards, rather than improving on the flawed 2001 Census' colour-coded ethnicity question.

This review of the evidence, collected over 8 years, calls for another look at the more objective and scientifically justifiable approach to the ethnicity question which was piloted in 2006. It demands that the Scottish Government and the General Register Office use this framework - which was well accepted by a wide cross section of the Scottish population, including a significant number of Africans who participated - to come up with a more appropriate *ethnicity* classification for the 2011 census.

While it is not for the authors of this report to insist on the precise form for an alternative approach, especially without consultation with members of African communities, we stand ready to advise on how a question can be framed which obtains the necessary demographic data and ascertaining the service needs (especially socioeconomic and health needs) of Scotland's African and other affected communities without using colour-coded terms. We think however that the following guiding principles will result in a more useful ethnicity framework similar to that used in the 2006 Census Test:

- 1 Clarity of design – clear geographic regions.
- 2 Clarity of tick box labels with a maximum of 3 words each but generally 1 or 2 words for each tick box.
- 3 It can be revised logically in the light of demographic and migration pattern changes.
- 4 There are no colour-coded labels.
- 5 The relationship between lower and higher level categories is obvious and logical – and based entirely on ethnicity and not race (e.g. Nigerian and then West African nestled into African or Indian and South Asian nestled under Asian).
- 6 The relationship between categories at the same level are equal (i.e. European, Asian, African - not labelled A = 'White'; D = 'Black').
- 7 It treats all communities equally – minority and majority.
- 8 The first section is not so long that form fillers are confused (as cognitive testing proved for the current design).

- 9 It should not confuse ethnicity with national identity issues; it should not confuse race and ethnicity – these issues are separate and interactions between questions on ethnicity and nationality or race should be tested.
- 10 Make efficient use of the space on the Census form, and optimise the benefits of the data collected to meet service needs.
- 11 The evidence already collected overwhelmingly supports the 2006 Census Test question ethnicity framework.
- 12 It also suggests a preference for an ethnicity question based on ‘Ethnic Origin (sometimes phrased as descent or heritage)’ rather than ‘Ethnic Group’ or ‘Ethnic Background’.

ANNEX

Advantages of and principles behind an ethno-geographic framework for the 2011 Scottish Census.

A ethno-geographic classification has the following advantages over that proposed by GROS:

1. It has clarity of design – clear ethno-geographic headings.
2. It has clarity of tick box labels with a maximum of 3 words but generally 1 or two words for each tick box.
3. It can be altered in the light of demographic changes as new migrant groups come to our shores; their place in the framework should be clear.
4. It is obvious what higher level categories should be – and they are not colour-coded.
5. It treats all communities equally - minority or majority.
6. There are no colour-coded labels.
7. There is no hierarchical structure – other than that, inevitably, someone has to go first in a list.
8. The first section is not so long that form-fillers are confused.
9. It doesn't cause confusion if placed after a National Identity question.
10. It makes more efficient use of the Census form by collecting more detail.
11. The question asks about 'Ethnic Origin' rather than 'Ethnic Group'.
 - This is a common theme throughout the years of work and through the papers.
 - It was requested by many stakeholders and users.
 - It focuses on ethnicity rather than race as it looks towards people's heritage rather than colour.
 - It breaks away from the confusion some people have between their 'ethnic' and their 'national' identity which was compounded by the inclusion of 'national identity' tags within 'ethnic' labels in the original 'ethnicity' classification.
 - It leaves a natural selection within the question for identifying people of European origin with connections to Australia, South Africa and North America, etc without colour-coded labels.

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APPENDIX 1

Race and Ethnicity

Race is a very complex concept and is very difficult to define. As Banton points out, the meanings that have been given to “race” have changed through history, though old uses often remain alongside new ones (2000:51). In previous times race was used in relation to common descent or origin (primarily in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries), to describe type or essential form (adapted from Linnaeus but notably by Cuvier in the 19th century) and to describe subspecies (adapted from Darwin but not until the 1930s) (Ibid: 52-58). In contemporary life the meaning of “race” has been influenced by all of these historical meanings. The result is often wrongful assumptions, confusions and discrimination. In her study of race as ideology in the United States, Fields highlights three common assumptions connected to race and racism. Firstly the idea that there is only one single race (i.e. “the Negro race”); secondly that everything this “race” does is racially motivated; and thirdly that any relations between people of European and those of African descent are thought of as “race relations” (Fields: 1990:97-98). Although Fields is reflecting on the particular American experience, similar assumptions seem to be common elsewhere. Race is a concept that is open to much contradiction and misuse, evidenced by the often simultaneously held view of race as *dynamic* in terms of political movements and struggle, but also as *stable and fixed* in terms of human populations (James: 2001:236).

One of the most significant (but incomplete) transformations of the meaning of “race” has been the discrediting of biological classification based on race. Ideas such as historically “pure” races have dissipated (Stephan and Stephan: 2000:542), and arguably *most* people would agree that the characteristics of groups are influenced by historical and social forces rather than genetic design (Banton: 2000:58). Unfortunately, the discrediting of biological understandings of race has not completely eradicated the presence of such views in the formation of negative connotations and stereotypes. Eriksen summarises why race is still an important issue: “concepts of race can...inform people's actions; at this level, race exists as a cultural construct, whether it has a 'biological' reality or not (1997: 34).

Broadly, the concept of ethnicity can be tied together as “classification of people” and “group relationships”, while more specifically social anthropologists view ethnicity as “aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive” (Eriksen: 1997:34). The concepts of race and ethnicity are often confused or conflated; Kertzer and Arel claim that this stems from the belief that “identity can be objectively determined through ancestry” (2002: 11).

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Race and Ethnicity in Apartheid South Africa

Ethnicity and race have clearly been crucial and controversial concepts in modern South Africa. Apartheid South Africa exemplified what has been termed *structural pluralism* (M.G. Smith's term): "where ethnic identity directly affects citizenship and the incorporation of collectivities into full membership of the state..." (Jenkins: 1997:26). Although the census played a part in reinforcing colour-coded categorisation since the inception of modern South Africa in 1911, new Apartheid legislation, such as the 1950 Population Registration Act had a great impact and further heightened the entrenchment of racial bias (Khalfani and Zuberi: 2001:167). The Act saw further efforts to separate "whites" from the rest of the population by defining Europeans as those who were in appearance white and were generally accepted as being white, and excluded those that may have appeared to be white but were not generally accepted to be so (Ibid: 167). The Act also reorganised the racial categories in a way which "reinforced the 'otherness' of Africans and other non-Europeans by eliminating some of the smaller and more miscegenised groups" (Ibid: 168).

The example of South Africa under Apartheid rule provides a very extreme example of the dangers faced in the relationships between the politics of race and categorisation. As Jenkins observes:

[Some states], most notably Nazi Germany and the Republic of South Africa, having defined citizenship in terms of 'race' – a crucial escalatory move in ethnic categorisation – have gone on, necessarily, to develop far-reaching systems of 'racial' categorisation, governing every aspect of life (and death). The role of 'expert' knowledge in the construction of those systems, and their bureaucratized administration, are a grim reminder of the repressive possibilities inherent in administrative allocation. (Jenkins: 1997:69)

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Race and Ethnicity in European Census

Throughout history the salience of the issue of race and/or ethnicity has varied from country to country. In France for example a 1978 law made it near-impossible for the state to collect data on ethnicity or race (Bleich: 2003:12-13). It has been argued that those national censuses where ethnicity and race are conflated account play a part in racial discourses by forming and perpetuating views on race (Nobles: 2002:43). Unavoidably related to such issues is the rise of fascism and Nazism in early 20th century Europe. Prior to the 1920s categories of biological race had not been relevant to nationalist discourses and had been ignored by European census-makers as inadequate in the implicit conceptions of biological descent or origins as objectively knowable facts (Kertzer and Arel: 2002:12). However, with the defeat of Nazism came the discrediting of the conflation between biology and culture and this use of race; instead analysis of 'ethnicity' became much more prevalent until 'race' later returned to official categorisations in such places as the UK (Ibid: 12-13).

Race and Ethnicity in the UK Census

Although questions relating to nationality and birthplace have a relatively long history of inclusion in the UK census (Sillitoe and White: 1992:141), questions of ethnicity and race are a much more modern feature. Significant, but unsuccessful, attempts were made for the inclusion of such a question in the 1981 census. However their attempts eventually succeeded when, for the first time an ethnicity question was included in the 1991 census. As for the reasons why such a question was initially deemed to be necessary Sillitoe and White reported that:

Information collected from sample surveys has shown that blacks and Asians in Britain tend to have higher levels of unemployment, less well-paid jobs and poorer housing conditions than other groups and that their children have greater difficulty in realizing their full educational potential at school. For these reasons and because of the need to know the extent to which equal opportunities programmes are succeeding in reducing the inequalities resulting from discriminatory practices, it is most desirable that reliable information is obtained about blacks and Asians at regular intervals (Sillitoe and White: 1992:141).

More specifically Nobles argues that the impetus for such a question was compliance with the Race Relations Act and the perceived need to collect data on racial disadvantage (Nobles: 2002:66). It was felt that the information derived from questions on nationality and country of birth were no longer able to provide accurate data. The nationality question meant that a British citizen who had migrated from within the Commonwealth, who may have been at risk of racial discrimination, would not necessarily be seen as belonging to a minority group (Booth: 1985:256). Country of birth statistics were no longer useful because individuals were increasingly second or third generation migrants (Ibid: 255).

On the other hand there were from the outset significant objections regarding the meaning and purpose of the ethnicity question itself. As Ballard points out, one of the main problems with the use of ethnicity in the UK census since 1991 is the lack of concrete meaning to the term, with some seeing it as merely a euphemism for the discredited concept of race (1996: 3). Even Bulmer who has argued that the concept of race used in the context of censuses and surveys is meant as a signifier not of objective biological origins, but as the means by which “members of a society perceive differences between groups in that society and define the boundaries of such groups, taking into account physical characteristics such as skin colour”. Part of the problem is that even if Bulmer’s argument is accepted, it would still be problematic to assume that such a meaning of racial categorisation is accepted by most of those taking part, or that official government racial categorisations would contribute to a social reality where a black/white racial dichotomy is more pervasive than it may have been otherwise. When Ballard poses the question of whether or not it would be better to think of ethnic affiliation as “a sense of self-defined social and cultural loyalty” rather than “primarily as a matter of heredity” (1997: 183), further problems with racial classification are raised. For example, does having racial categories for some groups and not others not allow those that are not racially classified to be more “free” in their right to ethnically self-identify than those that are boxed into colour-coded categories?

The UK move to classifying race and ethnicity has arguably been influenced by the racial categorisations that continue to be used in the United States (Bleich: 2003:110). Kertzer and Arel have posited that the U.S. racial classification has had the effect of giving official

government legitimation to certain ways of thinking about people (Kerzer and Arel: 2002:11). While governments clearly need to do their utmost to quash discrimination on the basis of colour (as well as other factors), the implications of reinforcing and concreting racial and ethnic group classifications should also be considered (Bleich: :2003:207). In the case of the UK the implications of reinforcing a black/white racial dichotomy are surely not insignificant. R.M White suggests that classification in legal racial terms can run the risk of encouraging an “us” and “them” dichotomy, and the more extreme dichotomy of “people” and “not people” (1979: 344).

As well as such general concerns regarding the race/ethnicity question, there were also sizeable obstacles to finding a suitable census question that would be acceptable to all groups, and especially to members of the “West Indian” community – a problem that is still to be resolved well over thirty years after initial attempts. In 1977-78, as part of the search for a suitable question for the 1981 UK census, categories such as “West Indian” (referring to people from the Caribbean) and “African” (referring to people from Africa) seemed to be the favoured option (White: 1979:334). Indeed, when such categories were used in the National Dwelling and Housing Survey's of 1977, 1978 and 1979 and the 1979, 1981 and 1983 Labour Force Survey they were said to have been “well received” (Booth: 1985:259-261). At that time, and perhaps as a result of the said tests and surveys, the British government rejected using “black” and “white” in the compulsory census and asked for a solution that categorised only in ethnic terms (Sillitoe and White: 1992:142).

However within a very short time, this proposed categorisation of people in terms of their ethnic origins rather than colour was dropped, and the search for an ethnicity question turned towards a racial direction. The reasons for this change are not entirely clear. According to Sillitoe and White (1992) one explanation is that while most of the ethnic minority groups that took part in 1991 tests seemed happy to accept and affirm their ethnicity in terms such as “Indian”, “Chinese”, or “African”, those who would be classified as “West Indian” were said to have been dissatisfied (145). Sillitoe and White further suggest that the change may have come about as a result of a specific campaign organised by “several minority organizations” (Brown: 2009:16) against the census test in Haringey in 1979 which caused fear and doubt over the motivation behind the ethnicity question. Many appear to have been led to believe that their answers to the ethnicity question would be used to change nationality laws and thus threaten the immigration status of minority groups (146). Another, and perhaps the most significant factor in the change of direction, was the change in government policy on the ethnicity question based on a report emanating from a Home Affairs sub-committee, which deeming the 1981 test on ethnicity to have failed made the following extraordinary recommendation:

The report also recommended that 'the form of questions should not compel people to define themselves solely by their own or their ancestors' immigrant origin' and that the form of question 'should enable people to identify themselves in a way acceptable to them whilst at the same time meeting the needs of users who need to measure disadvantage and discrimination'. It was accepted that the terms white and black would need to be used to devise a more acceptable and effective system of classification (148).

Implicit in this recommendation is that the failure to arrive at an acceptable ethnicity question was the fault of ethnic minorities rather than those who framed the question. As Brown points out, in the late 1970s ethnic minorities were facing two bodies of government: one being the Census Office which was attempting to come across as neutral and only interested in

gaining essential information for tackling problems of discrimination; the other being central government which had in recent times enacted a number of immigration and nationality laws that that were seen as discriminatory against ethnic minorities (2009: 19).

In spite of all these obstacles, including attempts to deny Africans of their ethnic identity and to force them into ticking “black” or “black-African” boxes, the truth is that when the purpose of the Census is clearly explained, without politicisation or spin, most Africans would prefer to be identified in terms of their ethnogeographic origin (e.g. Nigerian, Kenyan, Somali etc.) rather than “blacks” or “black-Africans”. There are several reasons for this. “Black-African” for example, is deemed not to be a relevant term for use in the UK census, especially given the heterogeneity of those with African origins now living in the UK. As Aspinall and Chinouya (2008:184) point out “While populations with origins in the Indian sub-continent are differentiated by national origin, for example, the very heterogeneity of the ‘Black African’ collectivity has meant that it has been treated like a ‘black box’, unopened and unscrutinised”. Aspinall and Chinouya have further argued that the colour terms should be dropped from the census question on the grounds that some find such terms problematic and offensive; instead they favour the GROS proposition of having five ethnic background/culture options in the African category (Ibid: 199). The use of “Black” as a descriptor of Africans and people of African descent has been strongly challenged by the founder of Ligali, Toyin Agbetu, who argues that despite the social-cultural and political use of “black” as a “*colloquial term that was fashioned as a reactionary concept to derogatory racial epithets in the 1960s*”, such a descriptor “*remains offensive and redundant when used as an official racial classification code word to denote African identity*” (August 2005: p 5). Agbetu further highlights the inconsistency and inaccuracy of the UK census framework when he rightly observes “*African People remain the only minority group in Britain to be institutionally labelled using colour-coding. This perpetuates the odious practice of cultural disinheritance imposed by British slavers and colonialists*” (ibid p 4). Klug adds weight to the dropping of the colour categories by problematising the use of the “white” category. He argues that the inclusion of this category reinforces the idea that all those that belong in this group are differentiated from all of the rest, and that it causes problems for those who are “white” but belong to a more specific cultural groups (e.g. Jewish) that have been historically discriminated against by other “whites” (1999: 10-15).

From the above discussion it seems clear that categorisation of people in any census by ethnic origins will avoid many pitfalls and historical connotations associated with of the use of race or its conflation with ethnicity. This fact has not been entirely missed in the United States. In the 1980s a group of civil rights leaders called for Americans of African descent to classified as “African-American” rather than “black” in order to highlight and emphasise the significance of their identity in terms of ethnic origin rather than focussing on the more polarising category of race (Sigelman et al: 2005:429).

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APPENDIX 2

Scientific reporting of ethnicity, age, sex and race

Editorial

The other day we were sent a survey inquiring about the makeup of our editorial team. In completing the demographic portion, we realized that the editorial “we” at *CMAJ* is an Indo-Scottish-German-(and several other)-Canadian, with partial adherence to at least 5 different religious traditions, possessing 12 x and 6 y chromosomes, with a cumulative age of 302 years and total weight of 1009 pounds, and displaying a wide range of melanocyte density. While we value the complexity of this sociobiologic equation, we rarely seek to further specify its terms. Researching and reporting on demographic variables is another matter. Take, for example, a report on a possible association between exposure to a toxic mould and a cluster of 8 cases of pulmonary hemosiderosis (see page 1469).¹ When this alarming outbreak was first reported the epidemiological net was cast wide, to capture as many variables as possible. Among these were the following: all 8 infants were black, 7 were male, 1 had been born prematurely, none were breastfed, and all lived within a 6-mile radius of the reporting hospital in Cleveland.² Most of the features reported — sex, gestational age, breast milk intake and location — have a clear meaning and are potentially relevant. But what does the descriptor “black” mean? Does it refer to skin colour, or to race? Whatever race is, does it mark a genetic susceptibility to pulmonary hemorrhage? This is unlikely: only 0.012% of the variation between humans in total genetic material can be attributed to “race.”³ Perhaps “black” indicates ethnicity. But what aspect of this slippery concept was documented? Dietary preferences? Religious practices? Migration patterns? Or is “black” simply a proxy indicator for socioeconomic status? We can only speculate on the meaning

of this variable, since the authors did not provide their reasons for including it or specify how it was defined. Although in reporting these cases the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did not follow its own guidelines,⁴ it is not the only organization that has published studies with unelaborated references to race and ethnicity.⁵ Because these vagaries of definition continue to appear in the scientific literature, the Vancouver Group (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) has strengthened its statement on ethnicity.⁶ Because the relevance of such variables as age, sex, and ethnicity to the object of research is not always clear, authors should explicitly justify them when they are included in a study report. The guiding principle should be clarity about how and why a study was done in a particular way. For example, authors should explain why only subjects of certain ages were included or why women were excluded. Authors should avoid terms such as “race”, which lacks precise biological meaning, and use alternative descriptors such as “ethnicity” or “ethnic group” instead. Authors should specify carefully what the descriptors mean and tell exactly how the data were collected (for example, what terms were used in survey forms, whether the data were self-reported or assigned by others, etc.). In all medical reporting, race and ethnicity must be carefully defined, and the use of race, ethnicity, sex and age as variables must be justified on the basis of good science. — *CMAJ*

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