

THE CASE FOR THE MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN CHECKBOX ON US FEDERAL FORMS: AN UPDATED ANALYSIS

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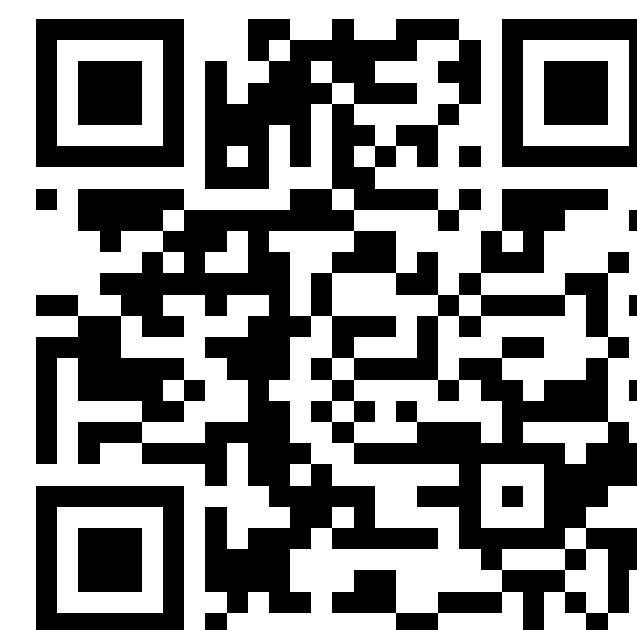
Introduction

- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has proposed new data collection efforts to describe the racial/ethnic diversity of individuals living in the United States
- From January to April 2023, the OMB requested public comment on potential changes, including the addition of a separate checkbox for Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Americans since they are defined as White
- However, research shows that MENA Americans' overall health and lived experiences often differ from White Americans from European ancestry
- The comment period yielded 20,255 public comments
- An initial review of 6,700 comments (see QR code) indicated strong support for the addition of a MENA checkbox with a wide range of countries and transnational communities in the region represented in the comments
- In this poster, we provide an updated analysis with 12,205 comments

Objective

1. To determine the proportion of comments that mention the inclusion of a MENA checkbox
2. Describe countries listed in comments supporting rationale for the need for a separate MENA checkbox

Publication



Methods

- Public comments posted on the Federal Registrar's website were compiled in Microsoft Excel
- Filtering was used to search for specific terms and comments were reviewed to determine whether they mentioned MENA or specific countries or transnational communities
- Future analysis will review will provide an update on whether the comments indicated support for a MENA checkbox and whether it was for health-related reasons.

Results

Figure 1. Countries/nationalities and transnational communities mentioned n=9,167 comments

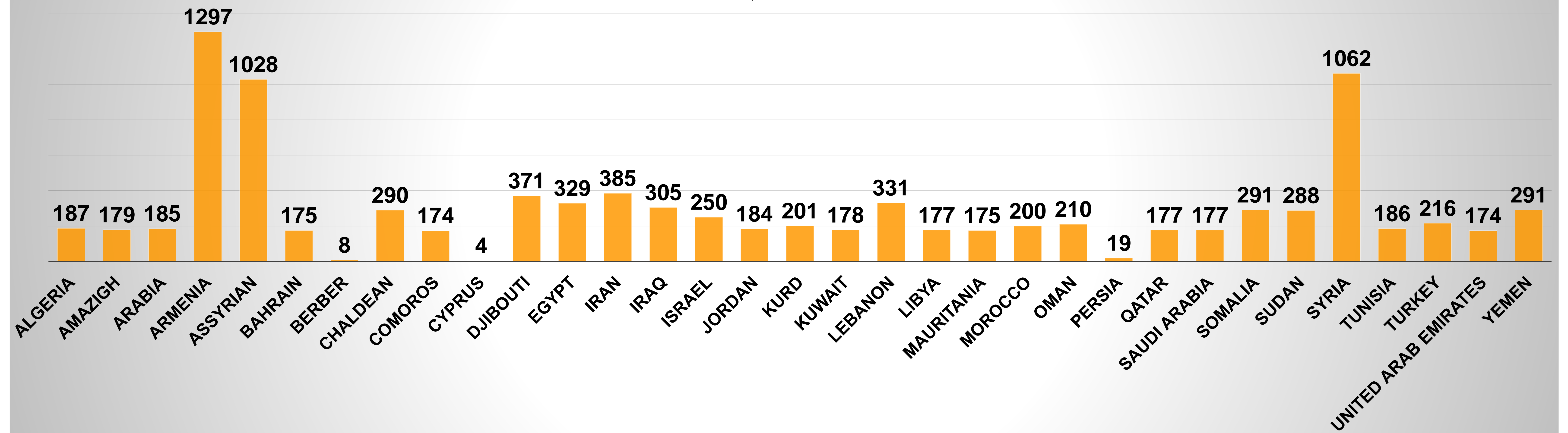


Table 1. Description of Comments, n=12,205 N (%)

Comments Mentioned Addition of MENA Checkbox	N (%)
No	3,038 (24.89)
Yes	9,167 (75.11)

Box 1. Current race/ethnicity categories

What is your race or ethnicity?
Select all that apply.

White

Hispanic or Latino

Black or African American

Asian

American Indian or Alaska Native

Middle Eastern or North African

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Box 2. Current race/ethnicity categories

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

No, not Hispanic or Latino

Yes, Hispanic or Latino

What is your race? Select one or more.

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Discussion

- Our analysis included 5,505 additional comments since the last review in July 2023
- Most (75.11%) mentioned adding a MENA checkbox
- Top countries and transnational communities mentioned were Armenia, Assyrian, Iran, Djibouti, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria
- This study contributes to the evidence to be used by the US Census Bureau for determining whether changes should be made to how race and ethnicity data are collected in the US going forward
- Undergraduate and graduate students will continue to review comments, with the hope of compiling all 20,255 comments by the end of Spring 2024
- Further analysis will be conducted to analyze themes related to health outcomes and social determinants of health