

Anthropology in Action:

Eleanor Gerber's Contribution to the
Operationalization of Race and Ethnicity

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The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and no sensitive data were identified.



Internal and External Race and Ethnicity

Self-identity

- “Self-identification is the preferred means of obtaining information about an individual’s race and ethnicity.”
- “Do not tell an individual who he or she is, or specify how an individual should classify himself or herself.”
- “Do not establish criteria or qualifications (such as blood quantum levels) that are to be used in determining a particular individual’s racial or ethnic classification.”

External Guidelines

- **White** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
- **Black or African American** – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- **American Indian or Alaska Native** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

Semi-structured Conversations

- 9 informants including:
 - Coworkers
 - Friends
 - Scholars
- ≈ 60 minutes

Lessons from Eleanor

- People use different approaches to make sense of their world.
- Culture is everywhere and no group is monolithic.
- Ask questions and carefully listen to answers.