

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

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EXAMINING NATIVE HAWAIIANS SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND POLITICAL RELEVANCE: INSIGHTS FROM THE 2020 COLLABORATIVE MULTICULTURAL POST-ELECTION SURVEY NATIVE HAWAIIANS OVERSAMPLE

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DOI:10.1017/S1049096524000428

The goal of the Native Hawaiian oversample for the 2020 Collaborative Multicultural Post-Election Survey (CMPS) was to survey 1,000 Native Hawaiians across the United States (Frasure et al. 2021). This article discusses the data-generation process, initial findings, and sample limitations.

Sample Relevance To Studying Political Science

The goal of the CMPS sample was to enhance data disaggregation of Native Hawaiians. They comprise a group that often is categorized as either (1) Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), a frequently used term to capture all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Pratt, Hixson, and Jones 2015); or (2) Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI), a term used to separate Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders from the more extensive Asian category (Morey et al. 2020; Sasa and Yellow Horse 2022). Because NHPI also includes a person who originated from the Indigenous Peoples of Hawai'i, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands, the goal of the CMPS sample was to disaggregate Native Hawaiians from other Pacific Islander groups. Researchers often overlook the distinctions between Native Hawaiians and other ethnic and racial categories, thereby missing opportunities to study Indigeneity and Native Hawaiian lived experiences (Kana'iaupuni 2011; Sasa and Yellow Horse 2022, 344).

Data disaggregation amplifies the lived experiences of Native Hawaiians. Separating Native Hawaiians from the broader AAPI and NHPI categories provides insight into the intragroup and intergroup differences among Native Hawaiians compared to other AAPIs. For example, political and legal status differs within the Pacific Islander category. Nativity and citizenship in the United States for those born in Hawai'i, American Samoa, and Guam are automatically considered. Conversely, those from Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Western Samoa, and Tonga are not native to the United States through birth (Harris and Jones 2005). Pacific Islanders also include the Federal States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau—all of which have a unique relationship with the United States as a result of the Compact of Free Association (COFA). COFA gives the United States exclusive use of land for bases and military strategic positions in the Pacific in exchange for travel, legal residence, and work in the United States without requiring a visa (Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum 2021). Because there is great diversity even among Pacific Islanders, studying Native Hawaiian samples independently from the AAPI and NHPI categories has significance for political scientists and policy makers.

Complications Of Collecting Survey Data On This Population

Collecting survey data from Indigenous populations, including Native Hawaiians, presents numerous challenges, including mistrust of outsiders and cultural protection mechanisms that contribute to the lack of survey participation. Indigenous communities often are deemed “hard-to-reach” populations (Rotondi et al. 2017). Even data collected by the US Census Bureau and other state and federal agencies (Cross et al. 2004; DeWeciver 2010; Freemantle et al. 2015; Langwell, Helba, and Love 2007; Todd 2012) can underestimate the number of Indigenous individuals. Rainie et al. (2017, 2) echoed these concerns, highlighting inconsistency, irrelevance, poor data quality, mistrust, and external control in survey data collection. All of these challenges apply when researchers attempt to sample Native Hawaiians.

The political and legal status of Native Hawaiians with the United States presents another set of challenges and complications when collecting survey data. Native Hawaiian activists within the sovereignty movements in Hawai‘i may abstain from participating in US Government surveys as a form of political resistance (Phan and Lee 2022). Another challenge is that many Native Hawaiians are multiracial and multiethnic, and their self-identified affiliations may vary depending on the political and social context. Finally, Native Hawaiian survey participants are difficult to recruit due to geographic and cultural reasons. Geographically, within Hawai‘i residents are located across eight major islands, which makes it difficult for survey researchers to navigate. Outside of Hawai‘i, Native Hawaiians are located across the entire US continent, yet they comprise only a small proportion of the population, which makes them difficult to reach.

Preliminary Findings From The 2020 CMPS

Despite these challenges, the 2020 CMPS survey recruited 137 Native Hawaiian respondents and disaggregated Native Hawaiians living in the United States and Hawai‘i from AAPI categories. Table 1 summarizes the responses for each survey question.

Table 1 presents data on self-identified Native Hawaiians’ responses to various questions about race, ethnicity, ancestry, and racial categorization. When they were asked about their race or ethnicity, 137 respondents indicated Native Hawaiian, and 100% of those individuals considered Native Hawaiian as their primary race or ethnicity when they were required to choose only one. However, when they were asked about their primary ethnicity or family ancestry, the total response decreased to 133; 117 (88%) self-identified Native Hawaiians considered Native Hawaiian as their primary ethnicity or family ancestry.

The sample effectively examines Native Hawaiian self-identification through individual means and ancestry, highlighting the diverse ways that this population identifies.

It is interesting that when they were asked about the racial categories they had chosen on the 2020 US Census, 326 respondents selected NHPI. Nevertheless, only 87 (26.8%) of those individuals previously self-identified as Native Hawaiian. This discrepancy suggests that many people may identify with the

Table 1

How to Identify Native Hawaiians in the 2020 CMPS

Survey Question	Total Responses	Response Rate of Self-Identified Native Hawaiian
What do you consider your race or ethnicity ? Mark one or more boxes. Response: Native Hawaiian	137	137
Even if they are all important, which of these would you consider your primary race or ethnicity , if you had to choose one? Response: Native Hawaiian	106	106
Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders come from a diversity of backgrounds. What do you consider to be your primary ethnicity or family ancestry ? Response: Native Hawaiian	133	117
Which racial category did you choose on the 2020 US Census ? Response: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	326	87
What is the race of your biological mother ? Mark one or more boxes. Response: Native Hawaiian	108	70
What is the race of your biological father ? Mark one or more boxes. Response: Native Hawaiian	119	67
Do you consider yourself to be mixed race or multiracial ? Response: Mixed Race and Native Hawaiian	111	111

NHPI category on the US Census even if they do not identify primarily as Native Hawaiian.

The percentages for the race of a respondent’s biological parents were lower compared to other self-identification questions. Of the self-identified Native Hawaiians, 70 (51.1%) reported that their biological mother was Native Hawaiian and 67 (48.9%) reported that their biological father was Native Hawaiian. This difference in parent-ancestry reporting may be attributed to the multiracial and multiethnic background of many Native Hawaiians.

Finally, when they were asked if they considered themselves mixed race or multiracial, 111 (81%) respondents affirmed this

status. They chose Native Hawaiian and mixed race, which indicates that many self-identified Native Hawaiian respondents acknowledged their multiracial identity. The response rate for each question that specified Native Hawaiian was clearly different.

Table 2

Demographics of Native Hawaiians in the 2020 CMPS

Demographics	Number of Respondents N=137
State Residency	HI (41); CA (25); WA (13); FL (6); CO (5); AZ (4); TX (4); NV (4); CT (3); NY (3); VA (3); AL (2); AR (2); MI (2); MN (2); MO (2); OH (2); OR (2); SC (2); TN (2); DC (1); GA (1); IL (1); IN (1); ME (1); MD (1); NJ (1); NC (1)
Age	18–29=46; 30–39=20; 40–49=22; 50–59=9; 60–69=26; 70+=14
Gender	Men=50; Women=84; Nonbinary=3
Education	Grades 1–8=1; Some High School but Did Not Graduate=5; High School Graduate/GED=25; Some College=36; Associates=22; Bachelors=24; Postgraduate=24
Community	Large Urban Area=32; Large Suburb Near Large City=44; Small Suburb Near Small Town or City=21; Rural Area=13
Employment Status	Full-Time=50; Part-Time=21; Full-Time Student=8; Retired=30; Unemployed=21; Homemaker=7

Table 2 presents demographic information for Native Hawaiians regarding residency, age, gender, community, and employment status. The largest age group among Native Hawaiian respondents was 18 to 29 years (N=46); the majority were women (N=84) and had pursued higher education. A significant proportion resided in large suburbs near major cities (N=44) or in large urban areas (N=32). Most respondents were either full-time employees (N=50) or retired (N=30). Survey respondents resided primarily in Hawai'i, California, and Washington, which aligns with US Census estimates. However, the sample lacks respondents from Alaska and Utah and contains few respondents from Nevada; all three of these states are small in population but have significant Native Hawaiian populations.

Including Native Hawaiians as a disaggregated subsample in the 2020 CMPS is a step forward for public-opinion research. The sample effectively examines Native Hawaiian self-identification through individual means and ancestry, highlighting the diverse ways that this population identifies. Revisions to the race category in 2024, such as replacing "Other Pacific Islander" with "or Pacific Islander," will enable further exploration of the differences and combinations of Pacific Islander identities (Marks, Jones, and Battle 2024). Although the 2020 CMPS is a starting point for identifying Native Hawaiians, further research is needed to better understand this population.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge the principal investigators of the 2020 CMPS: Lorrie Frasure, Janelle Wong, Matt A. Barreto, and Edward D. Vargas.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the *PS: Political Science & Politics* Harvard Dataverse at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/POLB30>.

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