

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE



# Just data representation for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: A critical review of systemic Indigenous erasure in census and recommendations for psychologists

Steven M. Sasa<sup>1</sup> | Aggie J. Yellow Horse<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Counseling and Counseling Psychology, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA

<sup>2</sup>School of Social Transformation, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA

## Correspondence

Steven M. Sasa, MA, PhD Student, Department of Counseling and Counseling Psychology, Arizona State University, P.O. Box 870811, Tempe, AZ 85287, USA.

Email: [smar@asu.edu](mailto:smar@asu.edu)

Aggie J. Yellow Horse, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Social Transformation, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85281, USA.

Email: [ajnoah@asu.edu](mailto:ajnoah@asu.edu)

## Abstract

The decennial Census survey marks the emergence of federal classifications of race and ethnicity by which the U.S. government has historically conflated Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI, hereafter) as “Asian or Pacific Islander.” This conflation amplifies health injustices and inequities of NHPis through multiple mechanisms because it masks the complex and heterogeneous experiences of NHPis, whose positions and relations with the settler state are qualitatively and substantially distinct from Asian Americans. This critical review examines federal documents and research to examine how the panethnic categorizations are often sustained through scientific inquiry and methodologies. We found that self-determination and self-identification for NHPis are impeded by settler-colonial relations between U.S. colonization of parts of Oceania (e.g., Hawai'i, Sāmoa, Fiji, and Guam) and the forcefully imposed categorization that continues to be in use to legitimize the domination of Indigenous Peoples through race misclassification. Specifically, Census data collection fails to capture accurate and reliable data due to serious methodological limitations. These implications for psychological research compel us to make several recommendations for psychologists: (1) engage *with* NHPI community partners in all research processes; (2) critically examine Census research design and consider oversampling NHPI households to ensure just data representation; (3) meaningfully engage when, whether and how to aggregate Asian Americans with NHPis; and (4) use Indigeneity as a critical framework.

## KEYWORDS

census, colonialism, data sovereignty, Indigenous erasure, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

## Highlights

- Self-determination and self-identification for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are impeded by settler-colonial relations.
- U.S. colonization of parts of Oceania (e.g., Hawai'i, Sāmoa, Fiji, and Guam) included forcefully imposed categorization by the U.S. government.
- Race misclassification continues to be used to legitimize the domination of Indigenous Peoples.
- Psychologists are complicit in race misclassification through scientific inquiry and methodologies.

## INTRODUCTION

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Peoples<sup>1</sup> (NHPI, hereafter) commonly refer to individuals whose ancestry are the original inhabitants of the Pacific subregions in Oceania

known as Polynesia (e.g., Hawai'i, Sāmoa, and Tonga), Melanesia (e.g., Fiji and Vanuatu), and Micronesia (e.g.,

<sup>1</sup>The use of plural “Peoples” is intentional to respect multiple sovereign Nations in the Pacific.

Guam and Chuuk) in the U.S. context (Kaholokula et al., 2019). This umbrella category largely comes from the use of the official term “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” (NHOPI) as a *racial* category by the U.S. government (i.e., the Office of Management and Budget [OMB]); yet it is critical to acknowledge that this U.S. centric term fails to fully capture the complex identities and relations in the transnational context. For example, Māori (first peoples of New Zealand) may fit the description of NHPI as Polynesians, but would likely not identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander in non-U.S. contexts (Sonn et al., 2019). Furthermore, with our focus on NHPIs in U.S. Census and contexts, we use the OMB’s official U.S. centric categorization “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander,” but we refer to Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as “NHPI” rather than NHOPI. We omit “Other” due to its contested meanings of implied hierarchy; and to be aligned with multiple sovereignties of NHPI Peoples for multiple processes of self-determination and self-identification. Thus, we only use “NHOPI” when specifically referring to the Census category.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there are approximately 1.6 million “NHOPI alone or in combination individuals” in 2018, making up about 0.5% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). The NHOPI alone or in combination population was also the second fastest growing racial group in the country since 2000, only after the Asian alone or in combination population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). Due to their relatively small population size, NHPI persons and communities are often rendered invisible in discussion of racial and ethnic inequities and social injustices in national policy debates. However, many NHPI groups have experienced a deeply contentious history with the United States, including structural violence steeped in imperialism, colonization, exploitation, and trauma that has contributed to a growing list of health-related and sociopolitical dilemmas in the community (Mcelfishfish et al., 2017, 2019; Spickard et al., 2012).

One critical yet underexplored aspect of interrogating the methodologies and assumptions in community psychology research is to examine the systemic erasure of NHPIs in data representation. Systemic erasure of NHPIs in data in Census—as the function of institutional violence and unequal power (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008)—contributes to invisibility of NHPI in social justice work, as well as community psychology research and praxis. Furthermore, Census played the central role in reimagining NHPIs as “Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders” through its imposed categorization (Panapasa et al., 2011). While NHPIs are often lumped into the broad monolithic pan-racial categorization of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI, hereafter); many come from island Nations that have distinct and deeply contentious sociopolitical contexts of “incorporation” to the United States through American imperialism and colonization throughout the Pacific (e.g., Hawai’i, Sāmoa, Fiji, and Guam, etc.; Spickard et al., 2012). Such forcefully confined pan-racial categorization provides important opportunities for

coalition building and political solidarity, yet this aggregation also in turn legitimizes the misconception of homogeneity among AAPI (Hollinger, 2006). Furthermore, an AAPI category leads to the missed opportunity for appropriately centering Indigeneity as a critical analytic point for assessing NHPIs’ experiences (Tiongson, 2019), and U.S. settler colonialism as the fundamental cause of health and social inequities for NHPI (Phelan & Link, 2013). In turn, systemic erasure of NHPIs in data leads to invisibilizing the complexities and social justice concerns of NHPI persons and communities. Thus, we argue that Census is simultaneously a site of epistemic tension where social justice advocacy contests the imposed and conflated categorizations (Hall, 2015).

Census is integral to community psychology. Census data has *direct* implications for how psychological measures are collected and interpreted, and informs research design for many psychological studies. Census estimations often serve as the foundation for survey sampling design procedures in federal surveys and other national-level surveys such as National Health Interview Survey (NHIS; National Center for Health Statistics, 2020). For example, NHIS uses a multistage probability sampling to ensure that the findings from the survey are representative of the U.S. population based on Census estimates. Then, NHIS provides the national estimates about mental health in the United States including mental health status, health care access and utilization, and others (National Center for Health Statistics, 2020). These national-level estimates are used to assess the psychological needs of the U.S. population, and as the benchmarks for which the results of psychological studies are compared to and interpreted. Such use of Census in survey design also applies to other psychology studies. In addition, the issue of systemic erasure of NHPIs in data representation in Census spills over to the current practices in the American Psychological Association. For example, the 2018 report from the American Psychological Association Center for Workforce Studies, *Demographics of the U.S. Psychology Workforce*, omitted information about Indigenous Peoples (Lin et al., 2018). In this way, psychologists are complicit to systemic erasure of NHPI and Indigenous Peoples without critical attentions to Census as a dominant ideological pillar for categorizing racialized and minoritized groups in the United States. Thus, the critical reflection of both current praxis and research is essential to “repowering” Indigenous communities (Rua et al., 2021), and for a systemic paradigm shift in community psychology to disrupt harmful legacies of colonial structures (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

Meaningful action toward intentionally including Indigenous Peoples in research studies, and affirming Native ways of knowing, would constitute actual change and foster solidarity within a field that has historically highlighted the perspectives of White editors, researchers, and study samples (Roberts et al., 2020). The act of decolonizing and liberating the methodologies of psychology, however, requires a critical understanding and dismantling

of the preeminent Eurocentric assumptions that inform its research and practice (i.e., structural change vs. performative solidarity; Smith, 2013; Sonn et al., 2019). Therefore, grounded in Indigenous research paradigms which articulate the need for Indigenous Peoples to resist the oppression found within research (Hart, 2010; Smith, 2013), this paper provides a comprehensive review for challenging the unjust representation of NHPI Peoples in Census as a contemporary and ongoing epistemological issue. In particular, Indigenous epistemology and methodology acknowledge a respect for both individuals and community and are considerate of the diversity they bring (Wilson, 2003). Psychology researchers may ignore the diversity by engaging with representative heuristics that not only misrepresent NHPIs (e.g., using sample categories such as AAPI), but further psychology's engagement with Eurocentric perspectives on Indigenous Peoples. Thus, our paper will make the theoretical connections to argue the importance of Census for liberation of NHPI persons and communities through social justice activism and advocacy—framing Census as a site of epistemic injustice for Indigenous Peoples.

The paper is organized as follows: first, we clarify what it means to advocate for Indigenous data sovereignty (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016) in the context of ongoing colonial dominance where sovereignties of Hawai'i and Indigenous Nations in the Pacific are denied or disrespected by the U.S. colonial state. Second, we discuss the central role of Census in the systemic erasure of NHPI persons and communities in data representation and its implications. Third, we review the remaining problems in contemporary Census by discussing key barriers for accurate and just representation of NHPIs in Census and in community psychological research and praxis. Lastly, we provide recommendations for actions toward eliminating unjust representation of NHPIs in Census and other data collections; and specific calls for psychologists in facilitating just representation of NHPIs in data through a decolonizing framework based on self-determination and self-identification. Currently, data sovereignty for NHPI persons and communities is impeded by the forcefully imposed Census categorizations, which legitimizes the domination of Indigenous peoples through race misclassification.

## **CENSUS AS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUE: THE ROLE OF CENSUS IN ADVOCACY FOR NHPI**

As Indigenous Peoples to the colonial state of Hawai'i and U.S. territories in the Pacific—it is estimated that four out of five NHPI Peoples are Indigenous—(White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders [WHIAAPI], 2012), NHPI Peoples' relationship with Census and other official statistics are complex. On one hand, Census and population statistics are the tools of colonial settler state that are used to “manage” Indigenous Peoples (Kukutai et al., 2020), and they have historically

been used as the basis for exclusionary and discriminatory policies that fueled the oppression of Indigenous Peoples (Kukutai et al., 2020). On the other hand, inadequate data representation of NHPIs in Census contributes to further marginalization through multiple interconnected mechanisms—leading to systemic erasure and invisibility of NHPIs in social justice discourse and public policy. While Census and other official statistics are mistakenly conceptualized as objective scientific inquiry, Indigenous research frameworks reject such notion by highlighting the power of the settler state in deciding how to define, categorize and exclude Indigenous Peoples (Kukutai et al., 2020; Taylor, 2009). That is, data are artifacts of the sociopolitical and institutional contexts in which they are collected. In this light, we frame Census as a site of ongoing epistemological knowledge production, whereby researchers should continually contest the imposed and conflated categorizations of NHPIs (Hall, 2015) as well as advocate for just representation of NHPIs in data because Census has concrete implications for representation of NHPIs in Western science.

Census affects NHPI persons and communities through three mechanisms: representation, resource allocation, and research. Census is directly linked to representation and recognition (Arfken, 2013) as census data is used in congressional reapportionment to determine how many representative seats communities will get at all levels of government every ten years (Bullock III, 2010). Then, data are used for redrawing their legislative and congressional districts through the redistricting process. These processes directly influence how many representatives the communities can elect; and whether or not the communities can elect the candidates of their choices—influencing how NHPI communities can be represented politically. In some places, accurate and reliable data are needed to undo the legacies of gerrymandering that marginalize the communities of color. Furthermore, Census is linked to resource distribution, and it is critical for achieving distributive justice (i.e., equitable distribution of resources and power; Rowse, 2012). The final Census enumerations determine the allocation of several hundred billion in federal funding (Reamer, 2017). This funding is distributed to each individual state and county for education, health care, transportation and more social service programs planning (including Medicaid and Medicare). Historically, White people and more middle- and higher-income people tend to be overcounted or duplicated, whereas minorities often make up the majority in district areas that are considered “hard to count.” Every one person not counted can result in a net loss of about \$1500 per person each year (George, 2020; Krisberg, 2020). Since NHPI are at a higher risk of being undercounted, this results in a loss of funding for public health programs they utilize at higher rates (Morey et al., 2020; Zelaya et al., 2017).

Accurate representation of populations and reliable estimates in the Census are essential for research and public policy (Mays et al., 2003). Inaccurate data and statistically significant margins of error prevent meaningful

comparisons among communities more at risk of health and social inequities (Korngiebel et al., 2015). This impedes efficacy of theory that may promote the development of models, frameworks, and interventions that can adequately address health and social inequities; and promote community wellness and other public health and social priorities. At the national level, NHPIs have been historically marginalized and underrepresented by the U.S. decennial Census and other large “nationally-representative” surveys (Galinsky et al., 2019; Kana'iaupuni, 2011; Panapasa et al., 2011). This is in part because Census estimations often serve as the foundation for survey sampling design procedures in other federal surveys and national-level surveys. Such systemic underrepresentation could lead to inadequate assessment of the current health and future health trajectories of NHPI persons and populations, masking the needs of NHPI persons and communities. In addition to governmental and policy use of Census data, Census data is also used in many local-level community advocacy work.

Inadequate and unjust representation of NHPIs in data through systemic undercount is particularly harsh for NHPI communities (and other “numerically-small” populations including Asian Americans, American Natives and Alaskan Native Peoples) because any one person not counted represents a larger proportion of the community as a whole, and a larger share of money deserved but not received. Furthermore, although the new Census data collection effort to survey a small subset of U.S. residents annually—for example, American Community Survey—was instituted in 2005 (U.S. Census, 2006); the deleterious implications of inadequate and unjust representation of NHPI persons and communities in Census and its impacts on representation, resource allocation, and research are likely to last at least until the new decennial Census is conducted.

## THE ROLE OF CENSUS IN HISTORICAL SYSTEMIC ERASURE OF NHPI PEOPLES IN DATA

While the panethnic identity of Asian Americans is simultaneously the ascribed categorization through racialization and racial formation (Le Espiritu, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1986), the achieved self-identity by Asian ethnic groups is based on collective struggles through social and political movement (Zia, 2000). Yet, the emergence of the AAPI category is largely through the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity by the U.S. government (Humes & Hogan, 2009). NHPIs were not represented in Census until the 1960 decennial Census despite the annexation of Hawai'i in 1899 (Humes & Hogan, 2009). Before 1997 when the OMB implemented a revision to its standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity and finally separated NHPIs from Asian Americans (OMB, 1997), NHPIs were hidden within a monolithic “Asian or Pacific Islander” category in Census since

the 1980s (OMB, 1977). This change was officially implemented by the U.S. Census Bureau with its 2000 decennial survey for the very first time in the survey's history.

Such aggregation in the AAPI category legitimizes the misconception of homogeneity among AAPIs (Hollinger, 2006), and can mask important and meaningful heterogeneities within both communities (Hall, 2015). That is, despite the frequent conflation of NHPIs with Asian Americans as AAPI, their relations to the United States and their experiences fundamentally and substantially differ from Asian Americans (Hall, 2015; Tiongson, 2019). For instance, while Asian Americans' “incorporation” to the United States have been predominantly “controlled” by series of racist nativism that shaped exclusionary immigration laws (although U.S. imperialism also contributed to “push” factors for Asian immigration; Lee, 2015); NHPIs have been “incorporated” into the United States as a result of American imperialism and colonization throughout the Pacific, beginning with the United States' acquisition of Guam, Sāmoa, and the Marshall Islands after the 1898 Spanish-American War (Spickard et al., 2012). Hawai'i was annexed in 1899 and it became a state in 1959, and the prominence of the U.S. military in the Pacific resulted in migration to the mainland in the United States due to economic and intimate relations (Spickard et al., 2012). Such differences in sociopolitical contexts provide critical nuances for how NHPI Peoples are categorized, how the Census is collected using the categorization, and how results from data should be interpreted. Furthermore, when NHPIs are conflated into AAPI, it contributes to the missed opportunities to center Indigeneity and U.S. settler colonialism in understanding complex experiences of NHPI persons and communities, and their social justice concerns from the communities (e.g., Asian settler colonialism in Hawai'i; Kauanui, 2005; Tiongson, 2019).

Self-determination and self-identification as NHPI Peoples (and other preferred political categorization) through disaggregation allow explicitly naming settler colonialism as the *fundamental cause* of health and social inequities for NHPIs (Phelan & Link, 2013). Identifying settler colonialism as the fundamental cause means that settler colonialism remain persistently associated with health and social inequities for NHPIs over time despite changes in risk factors and interventions. That is, even if the mechanisms contributing to unjust representation of NHPIs in data are to be eliminated (e.g., better counting homeless NHPI); justice and equity cannot be achieved without directly eliminating how settler colonialism influences the prevalence of homeless NHPI persons through dispossession of lands and displacement<sup>2</sup> of Indigenous Peoples.

<sup>2</sup>We use the term “displacement” generally to indicate the common experience of relocation among NHPIs; yet we recognize that “displacement” is technically inaccurate as U.S. settler colonialism is mostly in Hawai'i, and relocation from other islands within the U.S. Empire is due to colonization and militarism.

Disaggregated data shows that NHPs—as a racial category—have significantly higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantages and disease burden than Asian Americans (Narcisse et al., 2018; Srinivasan & Guillermo, 2000);<sup>3</sup> and when the AAPI category is used, the relatively advantageous profiles of Asian Americans and their relatively larger population size conjointly overshadow the specific health profiles and needs of NHPs (Noah, 2018). In fact, existing disaggregated data conclusively documents the disparate issues in behavioral and mental health, access to health care, substance use, and inequalities in social determinants of health for NHP communities across other racial/ethnic groups including Asian Americans (Braun et al., 2015; Morisako et al., 2017; Nadal & Kuramoto, 2016; Wong et al., 2004; Yamada et al., 2019). NHP persons and communities suffer from profound health inequities spanning physical, behavioral, and mental health compared to all other racial/ethnic groups except for American Indian and Alaskan Native Peoples (Chiem et al., 2006; Kaholokula et al., 2019; Morisako et al., 2017; Moy et al., 2010; Tauili'i et al., 2013). They have some of the highest rates of diagnosed cardiometabolic conditions and cardiovascular diseases in the world (Chan et al., 2014), including disproportionate rates of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and cancer (Bitton et al., 2010; Kaholokula et al., 2018; Mau et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2008), and are least likely to have visited a doctor in the past 12 months (Schiller et al., 2012). Not only do NHPs have high reports of mental health symptoms and lower mental health professional access, they are also likely to experience significantly more psychological distress from their poor physical health (e.g., diabetes; Fernandez & Spencer, 2020), in part due to stigma (Kaholokula et al., 2020).

Another source of erasure of NHPs in data representation is through race misclassification. In addition to disaggregation of NHPs from the AAPI category, the 2000 Census also added the ability for NHP persons to select more than once race where they can select “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone or *in Combination*.” Previously, individuals who checked more than one racial category were automatically assigned to an “Others” and/or “Multi-racial” category. For example, according to 2018 American Community Survey, there were 582,718 individuals who selected “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone” but 1,362,875 individuals who selected who selected “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone or In Combination with One or More Other Races.” This policy change ultimately improves the accuracy of NHP representation in data and allows researchers to make meaningful comparisons across racial groups but

also within NHPs. Although more than two decades have passed since disaggregation of NHPs and more accurate counts of multiracial NHPs were introduced, there is a general consensus among prior studies and federal reports that there has been insufficient progress in accurate data representation of NHPs as the “old practices” are still in praxis—continuing inaccurate and unreliable representations of NHP Peoples (Kaholokula et al., 2019; Panapasa et al., 2011).

## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN CENSUS AND KEY BARRIERS FOR JUST REPRESENTATION OF NHP

### Systemic undercounts and flawed postenumeration adjustments

Moving beyond the historical and ongoing systemic marginalization of NHP persons and communities in just data representation through aggregation and race misclassification, Census still has problems that lead to erasure of NHPs in data representation through systemic undercounts and flawed postenumeration adjustments. For the decennial Census, the U.S. Census Bureau first begins its enumeration process by asking all residents in the United States to fill out a Census form. However, from this onset, communities of color—including NHPs—are systematically undercounted because they are less likely to fill out the Census form on their own.

While many people in the United States do not fill out the Census due to concerns about data privacy and confidentiality, a lack of efficacy (e.g., feeling like being counted does not matter), and belief that completing the Census could not benefit them personally (McGeeney et al., 2019); the hesitations to fill out the Census for Asian Americans and NHPs are deeply rooted in systemic historical injustices. In the 2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey, conducted by U.S. Census Bureau to identify barriers preventing the participation in the Census, Asian Americans reported the highest *fear of repercussions* with nearly 41% of Asian Americans indicating they were “very concerned” and “extremely concerned” that Census can be used against them compared to only 16% of non-Hispanic White persons (McGeeney et al., 2019). Similar to the role Census played as a “roster” in Japanese Internment during WWII (Seltzer & Anderson, 2007), about 34% of Asian immigrants feared that Census can be used against them. Although NHPs are erased in this survey as they are conflated with American Indian and Alaskan Natives as the “non-Hispanic small-sample race,” Indigenous groups reported the highest *distrust in all levels of governments* for not completing the Census. Nearly 63% of Indigenous Peoples reported that they do not trust the federal government “to do what is right” (McGeeney et al., 2019). To reduce and eliminate such undercounts, Census Bureau employs the Nonresponse Followup Operation (NRFU)

<sup>3</sup>The critical need for data disaggregation is also substantial for different Asian ethnic groups within the pan-ethnic Asian Americans categorization (Nguyen et al., 2013; Srinivasan & Guillermo, 2000). Arguably, given the larger variations in socioeconomic and demographic profiles of Asian ethnic groups, the need for data disaggregation may be greater for Asian Americans. In our discussion of across-group comparison, our use of “Asian Americans” does not negate the importance of data disaggregation for Asian Americans.

by knocking on doors of non-responding households in person. Yet, communities of color remain systemically undercounted. In the 2010 Census, NHPIs were undercounted by 1.3%, compared to a 0.8% overcount for non-Hispanic White persons (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a).

Once the NRFU is completed, the Census Bureau utilizes two-step Demographics Analysis (DA) and Dual-Systems Estimates (DSE) programs to correct the estimates by imputing the missed cases (“who are not counted”), which it relies on for providing reliable estimates when assessing for Census coverage and accuracy. These programs for postenumeration adjustments are inherently finite in their ability to accurately produce estimates for some groups, especially NHPIs and other numerically small populations, in part because of pre-existing unjust representation in data and problematic assumptions (O’Hare, 2019). First, the DA essentially interpolates the imputed estimates based on vital statistics, net international migration and Medicare (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a). However, the fundamental flaw in the DA is the use of “Black” versus “non-Black” binary race categories for imputation. Even though the Census Bureau began considering the expansion of these categories to include “Hispanics” versus “non-Hispanics” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a), the DA estimation systematically discriminates against racial/ethnic groups that have historically been made invisible. Since the DA does not currently account for racial categories beyond “Black” and “non-Black,” the Bureau uses the DSE to produce estimates for NHOPI. The DSE is similar to the DA but uses the second enumeration (i.e., usually a postenumeration survey [PES]) to draw information for imputation (Cantwell & Ikeda, 2003). The DSE shows net undercount rates for specific subgroups of NHOPI when broken down by a combination of characteristics, including age and sex. Although the overall net undercount of NHOPI alone or in combination in the 2010 Census is measured to be at 1.3%, the highest net undercount experienced for NHOPI when broken down by age and sex is for males age 18–29, at 8% (O’Hare, 2019). This affirms that NHPIs are not only undercounted as a whole, but different subgroups with NHOPI experience greater marginalization at the intersection of sex, age, and other observed and unobserved factors.

## STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO COUNTING NHPI IN THE CENSUS

Although the 2020 CBAMS Survey was conducted to assess barriers preventing participation in the Census, it only focused on individual-level factors such as perceptions and distrust (McGeeney et al., 2019). This is highly problematic, as the focus on individual-level barriers places an emphasis of responsibility on individuals rather than critically engaging in identifying and eliminating structural barriers. Targeting structural barriers aligns with explicitly naming settler colonialism as the fundamental cause of

unjust representation of NHPIs in Census, as settler colonialism continues to affect unjust representation of NHPIs in Census through its effects on multiple interconnected mechanisms (Phelan & Link, 2013). Here are several remaining structural barriers for being counted in the Census that are specific to and profound for NHPIs. Particularly, the lasting legacies of settler colonialism and its effects on dispossession of lands and displacement of Peoples.

### NHPI peoples in the military

NHPI persons are more likely to be recruited by the military and be overrepresented in active duty military as well as U.S. veteran populations (Whealin et al., 2017). American Sāmoa, for example, has an army recruiting station that has remained number one in recruitment worldwide out of the 885 Army recruiting stations and centers under the United States Army Recruiting Command; it also has the highest poverty rate of any U.S. state or territory, which is exploited by recruiters (Chen-Fruean, 2017; Leong, 2021). NHPI persons are also overrepresented in the U.S. Army by 249%, compared to 43% of African American, 44% of White and 53% of American Indians and Alaskan Native persons (Kane, 2005). In fact, the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that there were 1,000,994 NHPI civilian veterans, accounting for nearly 7.6% of the total NHOPI population. Such disproportionately high participation in the military stems from the role of militarization in the dispossession of *‘āina* (land) in Hawai‘i, Sāmoa, Guam, and more island Nations; and the military-driven development to promote industrialization after WWII as the consequences of U.S. settler colonialism (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008; Lutz & Enloe, 2009). For example, there are 161 military installations in Hawai‘i, occupying more than 6% of the total land area (e.g., on O‘ahu, the military controls more than 22% of the land; Lutz & Enloe, 2009).

The disproportionately high participation in the military among NHPIs translates to systemic undercounts of NHPIs through inaccurate enumeration and lack of appropriate coverage in the PES. For example, the Census Bureau announced a new change for counting deployed military personnel in the 2020 Census, which would count them as residents of the bases or ports they were temporarily assigned away from (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b). However, a new internal memo from the Census Bureau to the Department of Defense's Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) outlined new guidance where the DMDC will no longer report on currently deployed service members to the Bureau (Wang, 2019). Troops that are temporarily deployed to war zones and other locations make up about 15% of all overseas service members, and these guidelines put NHPI military personnel at risk of being undercounted. Furthermore, PESs traditionally exclude military living in group quarters, such as barracks or on ships, as part of its sample and analyses (Hogan & Robinson, 1993). Precluding the

military from the PES is yet another mechanism where NHPI are erased in data.

### Homeownership and homelessness

Homeownership and homelessness are other key factors in being counted in Census where renters and homeless individuals have been systemically undercounted in Census because enumeration occurs at the household level (O'Hare, 2019). For example, only about 40.7% of NHPI persons owned their own homes compared to 59% of Asian Americans and 69.3% of non-Hispanic Whites in the United States in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). In Hawai'i, about 44.1% of NHPI-owned their homes compared to 70% of Asian Americans and 54% of non-Hispanics Whites in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). In the 2010 Census, this has translated to a net undercount rate of 3.7% for NHOPI alone or in combination individuals who were renters, which was statistically significant from zero, compared to a 0.9% overcount rate for non-Hispanic White renters (O'hare, 2019).

Although other reasons like systematic discrimination in NHPI Peoples' experiences in housing availability, inspections, financing assistance, and agent encouragement contribute to lower rates of homeownership for NHPIs (Turner & Ross, 2003); such high levels of renter status and homelessness are also direct consequences of settler colonialism to erase Indigenous NHPI Peoples through Indigenous dispossession (Grandinetti, 2019). Through exclusionary urban development policy, luxury real estate development boom and extreme cost-of-living crisis lead to gentrification and displacement of Indigenous Peoples (Grandinetti, 2019). Nationally, the proportion of NHPIs in the homeless population is more than 6.5 times higher than the proportion of the general U.S. population (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2018). Due to the rise in the cost of living and high rates of unemployment in Hawai'i, many Native Hawaiians are homeless on their own ancestral homeland—going “from the Indigenous to the indigent” (Lyons, 2011, p. 140). Such “expropriation of land the concomitant elimination of natives from the land are the hallmarks of settler colonialism” (Lyons, 2011). A rising homelessness problem within the NHPI community that shows little signs of being ameliorated only furthers the gap between NHPIs and an accurate count in the 2020 Census.

### Colonial criminology, systemic racism, and incarceration

Colonialism does not simply engage in dispossession of lands and displacement of Peoples through structural acquisition, but also through ideological formations that legitimize domination through racism and other ideologies about power (Bosworth & Flavin, 2007; King, 2017; Said, 1993). Using violence—the tool used in colonizing practices—colonizers remove Indigenous Peoples from

their lands through systemic racism and incarceration (King, 2017; Veracini, 2010). In fact, Hawai'i alone has one of the highest imprisonment rates even when compared to other *countries*, with an incarceration rate of 487 per 100,000 population, compared to Canada (114 per 100,000) the United Kingdom (139 per 100,000) and the United States with the highest (698 per 100,000; Prison Policy Initiative, 2018). These rates only serve to notably disadvantage Native Hawaiians, who make up the largest proportion (32%) of people admitted to prison for drug related offenses in 2009 (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2010). However, these rates are perplexing given Native Hawaiians do not use drugs at widely dissimilar rates compared to other races or ethnicities (State of Hawaii Department of Health, 2004). These imprisonment trends and disproportionate rates demonstrate the racism of the U.S. prison system and contribute to the overrepresentation of NHPIs in the U.S. prison system. Nationally, the amount of NHPI prisoners increased 22% between 2002 and 2010, a rate higher than average (8%) and higher than any other racial group except for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, another group influenced by legacies of settler colonialism through systemic racism and incarceration (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011).

While the 2020 Census will now count military personnel as residents of their bases or ports rather than their address provided at enlistment, the U.S. Census Bureau has decided that incarcerated individuals will still be counted as residents of their correctional facilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b). Despite an overwhelming majority of comments from the public urging the Bureau to count prisoners as residents of where they lived before they were incarcerated, the Bureau maintained through its definition of “usual residence” that incarcerated individuals be counted at their respective facilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b). This Census practice contributes to what the Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) refers to as “prison gerrymandering” (PPI, 2018). For NHPIs, who are overrepresented in prison populations, this is a particularly gross abuse and maldistribution of political power because NHPI prisoners are transferred to out of state prisons at higher rates. Nearly 41% of prisoners that were sent to out-of-state from facilities in Hawai'i were Native Hawaiians (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2010), and most of those Native Hawaiians are sent to a private facility in Arizona—the Saguaro Correctional Facility where Native Hawaiians make up half of Saguaro's prison population (PPI, 2018). Counting Native Hawaiian individuals in Arizona rather than in Hawai'i translates to loss of congressional representation and power in Hawai'i.

### INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGIES AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

The changes in OMB's, 1997 policy in racial categorization through disaggregation of AAPI category and counting of multiracial NHPIs, and the implementation of such changes

in 2000 Census, improved visibility of NHPIs in data. Yet, using the aggregated pan-racial/ethnic categories and race misclassification of NHPIs continues to be in practice in government agencies (e.g., Department of Defense) and research—contributing to the erasure of NHPI persons and communities in data (Galinsky et al., 2019; Kaholokula et al., 2019; Panapasa et al., 2011). Such persistent marginalization of NHPIs in data representation translates to concrete and systemic deleterious consequences for NHPI communities through invisibility in representation, resource allocation, and research. By examining Census as an epistemic issue where researchers are implored to question the imposed and conflated categorizations of NHPI (Hall, 2015) as well as advocate for just representation of NHPI persons and communities in data; we articulated the need to explicitly identify settler colonialism as the fundamental cause of social inequities for NHPIs, documenting how it has lasting impacts on systemic erasure of NHPI through unjust representation in Census.

Despite the ongoing substantial and deleterious impacts of U.S. settler colonialism, NHPI communities have been resilient and persistent in resisting the systemic oppression found within research through Indigenous research framework (Hart, 2010; Smith, 2013). Indigenous scholars have partnered with NHPI community activists to use and recommend various methods in constructing a ground-level movement toward proper representation in federal data, including Census. Community-based participatory research has been utilized by numerous scholars through a NHPI lens because it engages community partners and shares ownership in decision-making, which builds trust between researchers and community members (Chung-Do et al., 2019; Kaholokula et al., 2018; Mcelfishfish et al., 2019; Panapasapasa et al., 2012). Such practice includes involving and consulting with relevant community stakeholders and leaders, especially elders, on the basis of respect within Indigenous NHPI cultural values (Panapasapasa et al., 2012). This helps to ensure adequate collaboration and community involvement that can optimize reach and potentially incentivize larger numbers of NHPI individuals to participate in Census and other national surveys. This is also reflective of the need for Census and other researchers to provide resources and research surveys in different NHPI languages. Currently, this type of advocacy is usually enacted only through community organizations like Empowering Pacific Islander Communities and Asian Americans Advancing Justice. The U.S. Census Bureau is including language services that would supposedly allow “99% of all U.S. households” to respond to the Census in their language based on popularly used language estimates provided by the ACS (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020b). These 12 languages provided by the Bureau include some Asian languages (i.e., Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Japanese) but no Indigenous NHPI languages. Yet, nearly 40.2% of NHPI Peoples speak another language at home and 12.7% of NHPIs speak English “less than very well” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a).

NHPI persons and communities' advocacy for adequate and just representation in data also helped establish the first Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander National Health Interview Survey (NHPI NHIS) in 2015. This was the first national health survey to use a sampling frame consisting of NHPI households—this project was a direct result of “years of advocacy by Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community organizations, leaders, and health researchers” (Panapasapasa et al., 2012; Wu & Bakos, 2017, p. 606). Although NHPI NHIS was collected a few years ago, it has contributed substantially to research on NHPIs in that it allows across-group comparisons (e.g., NHPIs compared to Asian Americans) as well as within-group comparison to further investigate the complex and heterogeneous experiences within NHPIs (e.g., Hawaiians compared to Sāmoans; Nakagawa et al., 2015). For example, NHPI adults aged 18–64 were more likely to have public health care coverage (23.4%) and less likely to have private insurance (63.8%), compared with Asian American adults (13% and 74.2%, respectively) and adults in the total U.S. population (16.3% and 67.4%, respectively; Zelaya et al., 2017). Sāmoan adults were most likely of all NOHPI subgroups to have public health insurance (28.6%; Zelaya et al., 2017).

On the basis of this review, we offer several recommendations for psychologists who are committed to social justice advocacy and working with NHPI Peoples and communities. First, we recommend the critical examination and use of Census in research design and program implementation. For example, when Census data is used to obtain the “representative sample” of the specific population at the state and/or national level, we recommend the oversampling of NHPI households to ensure just representation in data given the systemic barriers to meaningful inclusion of NHPIs in data collection. Second, we recommend that future studies extrapolate the mistakes from Census to their own studies by avoiding the use of the aggregated category “AAPI” without careful and nuanced examination of whether, how, and why the use of such aggregated category is appropriate (e.g., political solidarity, coalition building, etc.). That is, we strongly urge that NHPIs are not aggregated with Asian Americans as the “add on,” but that strong justification for the inclusion of NHPIs in the aggregated category should be provided. Similarly, we recommend inclusive survey language to include multiracial NHPI Peoples (e.g., adding the “NHPI alone or in combination” category; Panapasa et al., 2011), and providing the survey in Indigenous Pacific Islander languages. On a related note, we caution the use of theoretical and methodological frameworks and instruments to assess the experiences of Asian Americans and their heterogeneity within the pan-ethnic Asian American category for NHPIs. For example, experiences of discrimination for AAPI likely differ at the intersection of multiple social identities and sociopolitical contexts of each group. Third, when NHPIs are included in the study, we recommend that researchers explicitly use Indigeneity as a critical analytic framework (Tiongson, 2019), and U.S. settler colonialism

as the fundamental cause of health and social inequities for NHPIs (Phelan & Link, 2013). Fourth, we recommend that researchers should be self-reflective of their own positionality within and in relation to the communities they are working with (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2017), and engage with community partners by sharing ownership in the decision-making process when applicable. Lastly and most importantly, we recommend that psychologists commit to eradicating the systemic barriers for NHPI scholars by providing continuous institutional support to train and empower NHPI researchers and clinicians in psychology.

In conclusion, psychologists have much to examine in regard to Census as an epistemological issue, to ensure adequate and just representation of NHPIs in Census data and other national surveys. As direct service providers and community researchers who often work alongside vulnerable populations, psychologists have the means to provide consultation and insight for: (1) developing community-based and community informed variables and measures based on layered ecological models and (2) operationalizing race and ethnicity in research through the precision and understanding of social identity terminology (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2017). Decolonizing psychological inquiry in this manner may also help ensure its epistemic validity by addressing popular contemporary frameworks in psychology (e.g., “multiculturalism” and “cultural competence” theory; Vera & Speight, 2003) that Sue and Sue (2003) cautioned may skew toward universality; and move towards Indigenizing research and praxis. This type of contextual understanding of race, ethnicity, and identity places social and health inequity research in the context of broader structural inequalities through a decolonial framework. By adhering to these recommendations, there are opportunities to rectify the historically embedded maltreatment and incomprehension of NHPI Peoples and related issues for future psychology research; resist our compliancy to white supremacy and systemic erasure of NHPIs; and work towards liberation of NHPI persons and communities through self-determination and data sovereignty (Keli'iholokai et al., 2020; Kukutai & Taylor, 2016; Kukutai et al., 2020; Taylor, 2009).

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflict of interests.

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