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A. Event Structure and Goals

On February 17, 2021, the Society of Forensic Anthropologists (SOFA) hosted a virtual conversation on race and ancestry in forensic anthropology that was open to anyone interested in these topics. Moving the field forward around this subject will require a range of perspectives from students, practitioners, and researchers. The goal of this event was to create a space for contemplation and discussion of our forensic anthropology community's questions and concerns. While we tend to have these conversations within our own networks, it will take productive discussions between old and new perspectives to facilitate community-wide change. This event was a starting point for facilitating such conversations. Importantly, the event was driven by attendee interest--registered attendees used a shared google document to write questions and topics of interest to discuss during the virtual conversation. These questions and topics were organized by the SOFA committee into goal oriented conversation topics with multiple parts. During the event, group conversations began with small-group, goal-oriented chats around attendee-proposed topics/questions/concerns, then ended with group sharing of the major outcomes of these conversations. At the end of the event, the final product was proposed as this virtual document, highlighting the attendee-developed ideas and conversations (anonymized) that came out of the event. It is our hope that these conversations/ideas will serve as a nexus and foundation to anyone who wants to continue to build on them to improve practice, research, and climate in forensic anthropology.

B. Event Takeaways

Participants were asked to provide their feedback regarding the event in an anonymous survey. The survey data will be referenced throughout this report and is provided in its entirety at the end of this document. We had 25 participants provide feedback.

i. Overall Impressions

The first survey question asked participants to summarize what the most important thing was that they took away from the event. The responses demonstrated recognition that the colleagues in the field are willing to engage and think about difficult/complex topics around race, ancestry, and diversity, and that the key to moving forward are having ongoing discussions that allow us to think and listen. There was also considerable recognition that people may have more similar opinions about these topics than differences. Here are the unedited answers, in the order in which they were received:

Listening is critical

Colleagues are interested in diversity within forensic anthropology

That people are willing to thoughtfully and respectfully engage in dialogue about issues in the field

There's a lot of work to be done, but there's also a lot of people up to the task.

That where we work and the purpose of our analyzes greatly influences how we think about and approach estimating ancestry (if we do at all).

That almost everyone is on the same side here, and we have to work hard to make sure that small differences of opinion don't get in the way of the big picture goals.

It's important to understand diverse experiences within the field.

I learned that there is much more that needs to be discussed to improve diversity in our field beyond how we conduct ancestry estimations

The need to have discussions like

This was an excellent beginning to what needs to be a long-running conversation, followed by concrete actions.

That active group discussion is a vital component of communication in our field.

Multiple perspectives from diverse participants is key to any progress on anything.

That SOFA is a much safer and more inclusive space than AAFS, especially for young, underrepresented individuals.

That we can all come together and have these important conversations and learn from each other.

Our organization recognizes the ineffective ways Diversity has been discussed and researched and strives to make an effective, inclusive, and thoughtful difference.

That it is possible to have structured conversations that are productive, and that there might be more common ground than we think.

Current problems of the elephant in the room for forensic anthropology

Honestly, that even though this is (and will remain) a difficult topic in the field, there are so many people committed to engaging in dialogues about the issues and brainstorming potential solutions.

We need more data about the use and perception of ancestry estimations

The fact that people were willing to work together to make changes and that we could hear from so many people in a single event

The most important thing I took away was that ancestry estimation will continue to play an important role in human identification. We have much more work to do, but the discussion was a productive one overall.

Knowing that as a group, a lot of us were on the same page with a lot of these issues

The most important that I took away from the event was that the ability to have a frank conversation was not hindered by the AAFS

ii. Event Improvement

The exit survey also asked participants how they would improve the event, and we received a range of responses, which are summarized here, but the exact responses can be viewed in the exit survey section of this report. Many indicated that they were pleased with the event as it was. Suggestions included having more of these events, less questions, more time for discussion (both in small and large groups), more targeted questions/topics, producing actionable items in response to the discussions, including speakers. While the majority of these suggestions make sense within the context of this event, while some are outside the goals/scope of this event. We look forward to considering all of this feedback to help us with the setup of future events.

iii. Future Event Themes

The exit survey asked participants what other themes they would like covered in future SOFA events like this. Many respondents indicated that they would like to see similar themes or themes that emerged out of the first event continued (race, ancestry, diversity), but other ideas included, for example: professional development/careers, ethical/legal/social implications of forensic anthropology practice and research, US vs. international approaches to race and ancestry. The comprehensive list of responses can be viewed in the exit survey section of this report.

C. Event Logistics

i. Attendees Demographics

Over 80 participants registered for this event, who practice, research, teach and study forensic anthropology. Participants came from 24 different U.S. states, as well as Canada. We came from over 45 different institutions, including state police labs and federal forensic labs, colleges and universities, medical examiners and coroners offices, national institutes and museums, and international centers.

Attendees were state and federal lab supervisors, students, professors, forensic practitioners, postdoctoral researchers and more.

ii. Event Format and Schedule

The event was a virtual format that required pre-registration in order to provide registrants their Event Packet, which included the necessary materials and group organization options prior to the event. An example of the Event Packet can be found [here](#).

The bulk of the event was scheduled to play out in small breakout rooms, with the goal to facilitate experiences and thoughts around the group's assigned prompt. Groups of participants were generated with five members each, and with 80 participants in total, resulting in 16 groups for this event. After informal discussions for approximately 45 minutes, each group took 15 minutes to generate summaries of their discussions around their prompts. The groups were then all brought back together and the summaries were shared from each group. We found that the 45 minutes in the group were generally long enough to make it through most of the prompts, although many participants stated in the exit survey that they would have liked more time in the breakout rooms, and that their experiences were very positive. We had allocated five minutes for each group to provide their summaries, and we found that almost every group was able to easily meet this time limit. A bar chat followed the SOFA Event, but this informal chat was not overseen by the SOFA event organizers and was not part of the event.

iii. Group Organization Strategies

It was SOFA's goal to create safe spaces for all participants, as well as promote conversations across a variety of perspectives. We created the five person groups in an attempt to place people in groups with people that they do not commonly work with (e.g., work at the same institution). We also tried to balance the makeup of the groups between practitioners, academics, and students so that each group had at least one participant from each of these categories. We were able to draw on the basic information we requested at the time of registration, such as institutional affiliation and the description of their position within their institution. We provided the assigned groups within a week of the event date, so that if anyone wanted to request a group change, we could accommodate these prior to the event, no questions asked. A very small number of individuals requested a group change. We also made group changes based on maintaining adequate group numbers as individuals had to cancel their registration. Again, this was limited, and we tried to notify each group as these changes were made in advance of the event.

Participants were asked to comment on the composition of the small groups in the exit survey. People in general acknowledge the regional and professional diversity helped facilitate conversations with different perspectives. Others mentioned there was a lack of racial and ethnic diversity among the groups, and there was concern about not having that representation in their groups. One respondent stated that they were the only person of color in their group, but they felt comfortable sharing their opinions. Some respondents recognized that lack of diversity in their groups reflects the composition of the field as a whole and likely couldn't be avoided in the group

setting. The SOFA planning committee intentionally did not take race or ethnicity into question during the group organization for several reasons. First, the committee did not want to make assumptions about how any participant may or may not identify. Second, even if racial or ethnic identity were known, the planning committee did not consider placing a single person of color into each predominantly white group as a solution, given that this could produce uncomfortable expectations or burdens on the persons of color. The planning committee recognizes that there is no simple solution to this topic, but will be more deeply considering different approaches and their implications for future events.

iv. Safe Event Approach

In the Event Packets, we provided explicit guidelines for safe conversation strategies, and required that each participant virtually sign their commitment to adhere to these guidelines, with the understanding that participants would be asked to leave the event by SOFA facilitators if they consistently undermined these expectations. During the event, we provided several strategies and opportunities for participants to directly and discreetly reach out to the virtual moderators (See Event Packet example above for more details). The moderators consisted of five SOFA members who were part of the event planning committee. Prior to the event, all moderators underwent an approximately 30-minute session led by a trainer for the Center for Civic Reflection, who provided examples of strategies for successful interventions in group communications, if needed.

A week after the event, we sent out an anonymous exit survey to provide all participants with a chance to provide feedback, with safety being a key component to that survey. None of the survey respondents reported any safety issues during the SOFA event, and also reported that the breakout group conversations were respectful and went well, although some acknowledged that this may have been a result of similar perspectives among group members. When different experiences and opinions were reported, participants mentioned that strategies for civil conversations really helped them out. In one instance, a survey respondent mentioned that some individuals felt overrun by the agenda of people in their group. While the SOFA planning committee anticipated this, and explicitly asked that people try to not come with an agenda, it clearly did occur in some groups.

One unexpected change to the event is that approximately 10% of participants canceled last minute due to the winter storms, and also had several last minute (within an hour of the event starting) requests to participate from previously unregistered individuals. We were able to provide these individuals with the guidelines for safe conversation and acquire the virtual commitment prior to the event. However, by placing new individuals into groups not previously known to other group members, we risked creating a space that felt unsafe to participants. While no issues were reported in the exit surveys, we recognize that we will need to reconsider this kind of last-minute additions in future events.

D. Event Prompts

i. *Prompt Development*

In keeping with the goals of this event, SOFA developed the themes of the prompts for this event by drawing on the interests of the registered participants. Furthermore, we wanted to ensure that everyone had a chance to contribute and that they could pose their discussion question ideas anonymously. Several weeks prior to the event, we provided the opportunity for registrants to anonymously submit questions, concerns, comments or ideas around the current state of race, ancestry, and diversity in the field of forensic anthropology. This document served as the basis from which all event themes were developed.

ii. *Participant Anonymous Questions/Comments*

Contributions to the prompt themes were submitted using an anonymous virtual document. We provided guidelines and examples for the document. We found that on the whole, individuals did submit questions, but others simply made comments, or responded to others questions. The anonymous document provided insight into what individuals in our field are wanting to discuss around race, ancestry and diversity. The anonymous document can be accessed and viewed [here](#). The contents have not been changed, other than being grouped into themes by the SOFA committee once all submissions had been completed.

iii. *Integrating and Identifying Themes from the Virtual Document*

The SOFA event committee spent over 12 hours working on synthesizing the themes among these anonymous posts, and crafting the final group questions in a format that would allow us to hear each other's perspectives, as an alternative to attempting to establish right and wrong. In no way would the allotted time for the event be enough to address these questions, but the purpose was to get people talking to other people, new people, and feeling like they didn't have to be isolated or alone when attempting to grapple with these complex ideas. The exit survey asked participants about whether they thought the final prompts developed by the SOFA committee adequately reflected the questions/comments proposed by the registrants, and the responses consistently state that the prompts indeed reflected the participant's ideas. Participants also generally felt that the questions facilitated open conversation.

iv. *Group Responses*

An important part of this event was for all groups to document the ideas, questions, and perspectives that emerged from their conversation. Each group was assigned their own Google document for their conversation notes. All group members could access and contribute to it during the time in their breakout group. [Here](#) is an example of that document. We requested that each group use their document to organize their group's conversation, and develop the summaries to be shared during the summary session at the end of the event. After the event, each group's document was de-identified and organized by the SOFA committee to be included as part of this present report. The point of sharing these documents was to ensure that conversations, research, and contemplation can continue beyond the event.

PROMPT 1: Climate/Biases/Diversity

A. Define “white privilege.” List the ways that white privilege factors into ancestry estimation research, methodology, casework, and reporting.

Group A Notes

- Sociological concept referring to unknown or unrecognized inherent advantages that are taken for granted by whites that cannot be similarly enjoyed by people of color in the same context.
- Research: history of ancestry research- hierarchical structure
- Can we separate/divorce the research from its roots?
- Casework and reporting: default is often European ancestry; anything else needs to be much more thoroughly documented and justified
- Accuracy rates higher for white/European due to more individuals in documented collections are of European descent
- Difference in priority (in some jurisdictions) based on ancestry if known or assumed
- Majority of FA are white individuals- would the categorizations be as simple as they are if we had greater diversity? Most of the people presenting on complex or mixed ancestry are individuals who have complex ancestry themselves

Group B Notes

- Relates to which samples are collected and who is collecting them.
- African american and Latino bodies don’t seem to get the level of investigation
- White privilege bestows more respect in the field than if the anthropologist is a person of color. POC have more to prove, or have to work harder than white practitioners.
- When you submit these proposals that don’t study white people you have to justify why you are studying the population, whereas you don’t have to do this for research on white populations
- In ME’s office in (the south), there is one forensic pathologist of color. Working mostly in rural counties with LE comprised of white males. Collaborators in the field are coming from more of a white/male perspective.
- Wording or choice in topics to be researched has an attached agenda, a lot of embedded white privilege that impacts the money available to research these questions
- This assumption or benevolent obliviousness that POC need things explained to them
- Not reporting right away or going outside of the system (white status quo) turns authorities against victims, makes them seem difficult so blaming them or their family for lack of progress
- Status quo is defined by white privilege, deviations from that status quo are branded deviant
- Colonial pattern of bodies/subjects being largely POC, researchers/”experts” mainly white

B. List the ways forensic anthropologists address, or should address white privilege in the field?

Group A Notes

- Currently do address in academic settings (conversations in classrooms)
- Work on fostering a more supportive, safe, inclusive environment

- Whenever the choice is there: choose diversity
- If you are white- seek out writings or other information from BIPOC that detail what support they need in different contexts (student, professional, etc.)
- Should address: diversity support, professional support, set aside resources & financial support
- Have discussions with other professionals in FA and connected discipline- want to avoid missing where we are biased
- Moving away from having only academic meetings/forums- include all segments of anthro community

Group B Notes

- It is not the responsibility of POC
 - How does the field address white privilege?
- Scariest question on the list!
 - The problem of “guy-paling around” and how to protect/educate students
 - A lot of pressure of not rocking the boat, or accepting the status quo
- (As a lone practitioner in the division) there is a lot of pressure to speak up or make corrections when you’re standing alone with law enforcement or criminologists or technologists. Feel a lot of responsibility, but you’re also walking a fine line of alienating people in your workplace.
- Maybe a AAA-style statement on race and ancestry from Forensic anthropologists?
 - Difficult to speak up/call out in a professional environment as opposed to thanksgiving dinner table
- Hard to hear that AAFS didn’t want to include any nod to Black Lives Matter because there are LE in the section
 - We wouldn’t be able to corral a consensus, because we can’t do so in terms of a statement against police brutality
 - How much would it help, considering we already have AAPA & AAA statements
- Complete consensus means it will be bland and meaningless
 - If we can’t say that we are against police brutality, what can we say??
 - If we are supposed to
- Ethics complaint to AAFS resulted in complainants being told they needed an ethics class
- But what even happens if AAFS finds an ethics violation?
- The seven Principles of Professional Responsibility in the AAA Statement on Ethics are: 1) Do No Harm; 2) Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work; 3) Obtain Informed Consent and Necessary Permissions; 4) Weigh Competing Ethical Obligations Due Collaborators and Affected Parties; 5) Make Your Results Accessible; 6) Protest and Preserve Your Records; and 7) Maintain Respectful and Ethical Professional Relationships. Each principle also includes a page of discussion.

C. *Are there attributes about our discipline - in terms of how we communicate and study race and ancestry that has contributed to the lack of diversity in our field? How has the fact that we have such limited racial and ethnic diversity influenced how we communicate and study race?*

Group A Notes

- How is it being taught? Only 1 generation away from trait lists and “big 3” categories
- Would our terminology, methodology, and language improve if we had more diversity?
- Decolonization of reading lists, classrooms, human variation from multiple perspectives

Group B Notes

- Refers back to conversation from the DOC yesterday.
- The fact that discussions about DEI became controversial...
- In terms of improving terminology and literature from forensic anthropology, anti-typologic, etc, has improved a lot. Not what is contributing to lack of diversity in the field.
- The reason is because it's a super uninviting place to enter because of the people, not the words on the page.

D. Bonus Question (If time allows): Is AAFS a place where forensic anthropologists can honestly engage in recruitment work of Queer, Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and other underrepresented minorities? Why or why not, and what can be done?

Group A Notes

- Needs to be grassroots to make substantial change- this can be especially challenging given the bureaucracy of the AAFS organization
- Possible solution- smaller groups such as the forums
- More diversity initiatives & committees could be beneficial

Group B Summary

No (AAFS is not a place where forensic anthropologists can honestly engage in recruitment work), not right now. No. And no current alternative. They have been making it clear that they don't want a different opinion. Must go through multiple filters.

PROMPT 2: Teaching and Learning about Ancestry and Race

a. Do forensic anthropology graduate programs provide adequate training in both scientific and social theory/social science perspectives on race/ancestry? Why or why not?

b. Imagine a standard education curriculum that all forensic anthropologists students should have. What courses would be included?

i. What additional courses (inside anthropology and outside anthropology) do you think would be useful to graduate students studying forensic anthropology? why?

ii. In your total list of courses, what do you think forensic anthropologists are qualified (and not qualified) to teach?

c. Given your list of courses in part b, how should their addition to forensic anthropology curriculum influence training and education in the practical application of writing case reports (as it relates to race)?

Group A Summary

The additional courses we think would be helpful include more social theory, criminology/criminal justice, and some law, perhaps a law course that is geared towards anthropologists. This is because these subjects include topics with which forensic anthropologists have to engage, and would also help us to understand the criminal justice system better. In general, forensic anthropologists are probably not qualified to teach any of these courses perhaps with the exception of social theory, depending on what we took in graduate school. We agreed that this is an educational generational problem, where if the courses start to change, then over time, today's students when they become professors would be able to teach those classes.

We think the addition of these courses would help with our own contextual, anthropological (i.e., quasi-ethnographic) understanding of who our various audiences are, and therefore with being able to increase our ability to communicate, not only the "what" we want to communicate, but the "how" it should be done (in our reports, when testifying, etc.).

We also think there are two separate forensic anthropologies - (1) forensic anthropology and (2) forensic osteology. We think this broader diversity of courses would help bolster the first and dissuade the latter. We agreed that the latter trend is worrisome, because it emphasizes practicing rather than the Anthropology which is inherent in our practice.

Finally, we think such courses would help us with the merging of thinking about the what/how of teaching forensic anthropology and how to practice forensic anthropology.

Group B Summary

Our graduate training sorely lacked content on race, racism, ancestry, and history of scientific racism. Part of this deficiency is due to the unwillingness of the faculty to address race and the uncomfortable history of racism in anthropology. In addition, the lack of diversity amongst faculty probably led to the type of graduate training we each received.

Every anthropologist should be trained in wholism, inclusive of graduate students specializing in forensic anthropology, and this should be reflected in graduate curricula. Some necessary courses we imagine include a four-field theory course on race, subdiscipline-specific theory courses that include race, critical history of anthropology and racism in bioanthropology and archaeology, death and dying and ethics with a component on cultural humility and cultural accommodations for the decedent, etc. Some courses outside the anthropology department should include population genetics, dynamics of US-Mexico border, indigenous peoples and cultures, and history of science.

Forensic anthropologists who are practitioners and/or educators must confront white fragility and should be encouraged to engage in transdisciplinary teaching and research.

Group B Notes

a. Do forensic anthropology graduate programs provide adequate training in both scientific and social theory/social science perspectives on race/ancestry? Why or why not?

- Actively avoided
- Small portion of human variation courses
- 4 field approach
- Focus on methods
- None to one POC faculty in graduate school

b. *Imagine a standard education curriculum that all forensic anthropologists students should have. What courses would be included?*

- Four field theory course on race with different applications
- Include history of bioanthropology, scientific racism
- Evolutionary theory, inclusive of human variation
- Skeletal development & anatomy with sociopolitical factors
- Ethics with cultural humility

i. *What additional courses (inside anthropology and outside anthropology) do you think would be useful to graduate students studying forensic anthropology? Why?*

- Dynamics in US-Mexico border, indigenous peoples, African Americans
- Population genetics
- History of science
- Death and dying, cultural accommodations for the decedent

c. *Given your list of courses in part b, how should their addition to forensic anthropology curriculum influence training and education in the practical application of writing case reports (as it relates to race)?*

- Address white fragility
- Cross disciplinary teaching

PROMPT 3 : Ancestry's Impact: Who should we be accountable to?

a. *List how other scientific fields perceive forensic anthropology's practice of ancestry estimation. Draw on your own experiences with colleagues, casework, readings, etc to develop your lists*

Group B Summary

Some biological and social anthropologists think estimating ancestry is racist. Social sciences have more of a belief that biological race doesn't exist and they are perplexed by what we do. Natural sciences have less of an issue with it but don't have a good grasp on what it actually is, hence racism is seen in medicine and other fields which is harmful.

b. *Now repeat part a, but for perceptions of law enforcement and society at large*

Group B Summary

When dealing with law enforcement, how do you present it? LE: Bias in policing is real, they believe that biological race is real and conflate biological and social race. The public needs to understand what we are doing. Cognitive bias probably influences the perceptions of society and scientists that were racist at the time. We need to recognize the history and address it. How we convey info to law enforcement is important but we don't necessarily have to convey that info in the report if we're worried about how it will be propagated. How we report the results to ME and LE, being transparent on likelihood or probability. Maybe we could have a disclaimer in case reports on what the difference is between the estimated ancestry and social race.

- c. *How do these perceptions align, or misalign, with our own perceptions of our practice? What is the effect of these external perceptions on our field in terms of diversity, our subfield's ability to engage with other subfields, our research and practice?*

Group B Summary

At a society level, from a human biology perspective, people experience race every day. So we have pushback from the people who experience it when it is said that race is not real. There are real biological consequences made from the embodiment of race through social constructs. Biological taxonomy sense of race doesn't exist. Race is a social concept with real world consequences. Racism is real. There is no scientific term that accurately describes human variation. The embodiment of race means racism causes damage to bodies as a result of people's social race. Structures that create differential access to various societal institutions also create differential mating patterns that perpetuate social race. There is no real panmixia. Zoning, marginalization in urban areas, laws against BIPOC maintained these separations. What do we mean by ancestry and race? There is no clear definition or consensual terminology. Race is not biological but is embodied in social structures. This needs to get this across anthro, the public, and LE. Genetic data suggest the differences are very small. The concepts of race change over space and time. The important thing is phenotypic characteristics that are associated with relative social value. These traits will inform us about the social group of the person. The terminology translates so poorly to LE and the public. The problem is also that people think that this association has value so we need to have more public outreach to avoid that.

Group B Notes

- Ancestry is a pathway towards identification
- Put geographic origin instead of race, of ancestry. Correct term? Example: Hispanic has 72 different meanings in NM. The more diverse the population, the more challenging it is for ancestry to be helpful.
- Does ancestry estimation work/is it accurate enough? What should we use: cranial traits, metrics, dental?
- Should we do it at all assuming it is good enough? Are we doing more harm than good? Accurate is different than harmful. Research on different identification rates based on ancestry.
- NAMUS: how ancestry and sex were related on identified or unidentified individuals. Is it harmful on our side for methodology or on LE's side to report missing persons.
- Race science, racial science, racist science...ancestry estimation is aimed at ID but could be considered as racial science perhaps?
- How we convey info to law enforcement is important but we don't necessarily have to convey that info in the report if you're worried about propagating it.
- People outside of anthropology think that biological race is real.
- Self-identity versus assessed identity. Admixture and mixture of traits, how do you present it. Statistical probabilities. Not trait list.
- Good topic on how anthros estimate ancestry, personal grasping of what's right and wrong.

PROMPT 4: Ancestry and Race Research

- a. *What is “race science”?*

Group B Notes

It is research that uses biological information to categorize groups with a label related to social or cultural identity.

- b. *Is it possible for science to conduct research on human geographic & temporal variation without invoking race? What does this look like? Draw on examples within our field and other appropriate fields as needed.*

Group B Notes

Yes, biological distance studies for geographic variation and possibly studies of secular change to look at temporal variation

- c. *Are there risks (scientifically, ethically, socially), when forensic anthropologists use similar techniques/approaches to assessing human variation as employed in historic race science (cranial measurements, trait frequencies, classifying groups of people etc.)? If so, what are the risks?*

Group B Notes

Possibly, yes to each BUT what about reality of truly unknown cases

- d. *Bonus Question (if time allows) What approaches could be taken in our practice to mitigate any risks laid out in part c?*

Group B Notes

Generate data from C/ME contexts. What percent of cases come in with a presumptive ID already

Group A Summary

Race science is the assumption that phenotypic characteristics can be used to differentiate typological classifications.

Challenges in translating anthropological classifications into law enforcement categories--“No potential match should be excluded”.

--We are showing that science is constantly testing and retesting itself (a form of self-checking).

--Problematic using the same skeletal collections/databases that have been classified based on traditional

Methods within anthropology that group based on racial categories.

--Be transparent with the error margins that exist in ancestry estimation.

PROMPT 5: Human variation, Social factors, and Categorization

- a. *How should research be performed to establish the evolutionary histories of human skeletal traits and morphologies used in forensic anthropology? What constitutes an adequate global sample to establish these evolutionary histories?*

Group A Notes

Genetic research, macromorphoscopic traits in correlation with genetic information. In medical research the genetic traits vary from person to person. It could be difficult to align genetics with continuous morphological traits. Be clear and cognizant of what we can and cannot do with our current research. Samples can be difficult to establish and be inclusive to entire groups. Gene flow, travel, etc.

Group B Notes

The term “skeletal”—but there’s more than just the skeletal histories. *Cultural* histories. DNA needs to be part of the picture (and don’t forget teeth!). Ideally, we would know in a nuanced way how people identified. So, we need pre-donors or living people. Living people are key here (skeletal, cultural, regionally nuanced aspects of identity [e.g., NC Native American individual might identify with Cherokee and be tribally involved vs. AZ Native American individual who might ID as “Hispanic”]). Living people=CTs...but who is getting CT’d? People with pathological conditions? People from WEIRD contexts who can afford it? Who are we missing?

The term “global”—what are we going for here? Full global coverage? How!? Huge sample sizes like in genetics, if we aim to approximate a genetic approach to ancestry? Or is it not really “global” that we want but micro-level, regional studies looking at particular group interactions?

The term “evolutionary”—we would need to control for social/environmental factors in order to truly suss that out. How do we know differences we see among groups are evolutionary vs. the result of embodied social inequity? Make explicit when we are talking about RACE (embodied experience of racism) and BIOLOGY (potential microevolutionary differences).

“We haven’t done anything since the 50’s”—same Eurocentrism, terminology rooted in oppressive systems...how do we MOVE on this??? Beyond just acknowledging past mistakes, beyond just more metrics, better stats, Daubert/NAS compliance...beyond just “putting lipstick on a pig.” The pig of race. Reevaluate everything. Bring in NON-FA’s!!! What do cultural anthropologists ask about the same data? What about non-anthropologists like community stakeholders? What questions do they have? What could they contribute to our discussions (e.g., about lack of diversity of donors)?

- b. *What is important to establish about the evolutionary history of human skeletal traits when being used in forensic anthropology casework?*

Group A Notes

Macromorphoscopic traits are a picture of the past environments, evolutionary relics. Modern populations have so much mixture, it is difficult to use historic samples.

Group B Notes

We are looking at PEOPLE! This is not just “if we’re doing good science, that’s all that matters.” We are doing people research, and we have to be GOOD PEOPLE.

- c. How would the criteria proposed in part b improve and/or impede our practice and research?*

Group A Notes

Be cognizant of secular change, and retesting non-metric traits to make sure they are still relevant to modern populations. Many populations are excluded from known samples, and it is difficult to apply methods on new populations. Labels incorporated in tools like FORDISC are vague and difficult to interpret.

- d. Bonus Question (if time allows): Can we draw on the approaches of other evolutionary science fields with similar research goals? If so, how?*

Group A Notes

Genetics to look at connections among groups, polymorphisms, looking at evolutionary history to discover the genetic relationships or history of certain traits. Disease related studies among populations.

Group A Summary

Any research approach should be multifactorial. Expanding research beyond osteological traits to include genetics, or other avenues of observing human evolution would improve our approach. We need to be cognizant of what we can and cannot do with our samples, and should acknowledge those things within our work.

Using well known skeletal samples pose a problem as modern populations have so much mixture. It is difficult to determine what a sample should be, as past samples are not inclusive and modern globalization has influenced modern populations. Macromorphoscopic traits are a picture of past environments, and may even be considered evolutionary relics. We must be cognizant of secular change, and consistently be retesting non-metric traits to make sure they are still relevant to modern populations. We also need to consider other issues such as labels incorporated in tools like FORDISC as they are vague and difficult to interpret. A possible avenue forward might be to incorporate information from other disciplines such as genetics to examine connections among groups, identify polymorphisms, and analyze evolutionary history to discover relationships and history of certain traits or populations.

Group B Summary

Take a step back, be anthropologists, holistic approach not only to skeletons but to cultural histories and full biologies (teeth! molecules!). Include other anthropologists (cultural, evolutionary), other specialists (DNA), and “real people” who are stakeholders from the communities we serve. What are they interested in? What questions do they want answered about their own microevolutionary histories? Foreground the possibility of biosocial differences, not just evolutionary differences, among populations. Explicitly attempt to tease out what is

actually microevolutionary (“ancestry”) and what may reflect embodied social inequities (“race”).

PROMPT 6: Ancestry Estimation’s Impact on the Practice of Forensic Anthropology

- a. *In what ways could eliminating ancestry estimations impact our ability to accurately estimate other biological profile components? Do research? Track racial disparities or decedent demographic data? Make a list of the group’s perspectives on when this elimination may or may not have an impact, drawing on examples or experiences.*
- b. *Now look back through your list and consider whether each described example of an impact would have a positive, negative, and/or neutral impact. Think about your own assumptions of what a positive versus negative impact might be.*

Group A Summary

1. The past ten years has been solidly about advocating for population-specific standards in forensic anthropology and how we can get improved accuracies... but maybe those aren’t necessary in identification.
2. We don’t know what those impacts are because our data on ancestry and its contribution is insufficient.
 - a. In some contexts ancestry is not important.
 - b. But in some contexts ancestry is very helpful.
 - c. Biocultural profile versus biological profile and the context of remains can also change what we can and can’t say.
3. Our data on other methods is also insufficient.... So something about stature, as is, the methods are not great without knowing ancestry, but if we improved those methods, we could develop a method that is robust without knowing ancestry.
4. Potentially, not knowing the ancestry can lead to inaccurate results in other biological profile components but this is not equally impactful across the board for all anthropologists
5. Candid conversations about objectives of the field and maybe discordance of what we want and need versus what has been defining the field.
6. Tracking the racial and or decedent demographic data is another whole can of worms... wanting redress, the concept of embodiment of social disparity

Group A Notes

- Accuracy (from a statistical standpoint) might be affected for other biological profile components (sex, age, stature) because population-specific standards have been the focus of FA research in the past.
 - More research for certain methods might show that non-specific methods work just as well as the population-specific methods. E.g. stature estimation.

- Or even sex estimation maybe?
- What about in other contexts? Internationally, ancestry is not a super important part of the forensic anthropology analysis.
 - Considering the personal identification context, not one component is the most important.
 - Biocultural approach is sometimes more useful in casework in terms of identification.
 - Do we bias LE by identifying someone as an individual from a marginalized group?
 - In rural areas (U.S.), ancestry estimation can be immensely helpful.
 - Sometimes it can hinder investigation (?). Not super sure because we can't track that.
- Ancestry also encompasses other identities of that individual, e.g. cultural identity.
- Racial disparities and decedent demographic data can't really be tracked if ancestry is unknown.
- Our experience also shaped our view on ancestry.
 - Systematic bias can be very pervasive, a large portion of unidentified remains remain unidentified are from vulnerable populations.
 - Does bias introduced from ancestry estimation outweigh the (potential) benefits?
- Research?
 - Ancestry has shaped the way we do research in the past, can we still disentangle them at this point?

Group B Summary

Determining ancestry or race may have an impact on some aspects of the biological profile (e.g., sex/sexual dimorphism), but not others (e.g. age, stature). Eliminating it completely could potentially impact casework and identification, but are we helping or hurting? Using it could hinder investigative efforts outside of our work in other agencies (e.g., proportion of missing versus identified in NamUS). We only know when it's "working" when tracking identified cases.

For research, it depends on the hypothesis being tested. It may be unnecessary or essential to address the research question at hand, but we should be moving away from just classificatory.

How does our work get misinterpreted and misused? What can we do about this? What do our stakeholders think about equating phenotype with social race, circular reasoning, race affecting biology and vice versa.

Group B Notes

Biological Profile? Eliminating ancestry may not impact other aspects of the biological profile (e.g., age/stature), but may have more impact on estimating of sex due to variation in sexual dimorphism (e.g., if you only had the skull or mandible available).

Research? Depends on the hypothesis that you are testing and eliminating ancestry could help research. Moving away from classificatory only approaches. Relationship of factors (e.g., growth and development) to social race based on a specific research question.

Racial Disparities and Decedent Demographic Data? Our reports are not being used to track racial disparities, but can racial disparities in violence be compared to population demographics. Circular reasoning in some of other methods (e.g., Fordisc cases). Can we address our biases?

Estimating Ancestry on Modern Cases: How to report ancestry, terminology use, geographic versus social race? Our unidentified cases are not included in databases, case results, the ones we get wrong, where are we messing up and is that contributing to people not being identified etc.

PROMPT 7 : Ancestry Estimation's Impact on Investigations

- a. *Consider how ancestry estimations may directly impact the odds of an identification of missing persons, both positively and negatively. Share your perspectives from your own experience or ideas and make a list.*
- b. *How can we systematically track ancestry estimation's impact on investigations? What nuances/factors need to be studied in order to study this?*
- c. *What kinds of limitations would there be to getting the kinds of data needed to research these processes? How can we change/address these limitations in the future?*

Group A Notes

- Investigative agencies vary widely in what they request from an analysis and that has an impact on how the anthropologist is able to communicate more/less information on ancestry and how that should be used.
- An anonymous reporting system of positive ID (including ancestry) would be useful in tracking accuracy of ancestry, etc. Practitioners are hesitant to report it.
- Reporting what agencies are requesting from analysis. Specific questions from ME, Investigator, etc. How often is ancestry requested?
- Context determines likelihood of ancestry request in analysis. Ancestry may help or hinder depending on that context.
- Note concern about the use of ancestry estimations by law enforcement to NOT pursue identification measures/efforts. Can the anthropologist alleviate that concern?
- Communication/follow up in a feedback loop is necessary with agencies to know accuracies.

Group B Notes

1. *Impact on odds of identification:*
 - a. *Positives:*
 - i. Race/ancestry has the potential within the forensic anthropology biological profile to narrow the pool of possible missing person matches
 - ii. Ancestry estimation can help refine other estimates of the biological profile (increased

accuracy/precision) to inform on the above point.

- b. *Negatives:*
 - i. There are biases in prioritization of resources to investigate (including but not limited to race. Also considering economic, housing, sex-worker, citizenship, other statuses).
 - ii. Biases in resources for anthropologists to work cases
 - iii. A more precise ancestry estimation may lead to locating a missing person match for unidentified remains, however, it may be less accurate
- 2. *Systematically track ancestry impacts on investigations:*
 - a. Databases of identified cases such as FADAMA
 - b. Nuances/factors: race, economic, housing, sex-worker, citizenship, other statuses
- 3. *Research*
 - a. Limitations on research:
 - i. Privacy concerns: the decedent or their family may not want the decedent in a database
 - ii. Accountability of investigating agencies
 - b. *How can we change/address limitations:* more money for identification work, networking of forensic anthropologists for resources and peer review
 - i. The larger criminal justice and law enforcement framework that forensic anthropology case work exists in requires more education, etc

PROMPT 8: Ancestry Reporting

- a. *How do anthropologists discuss race when reporting ancestry estimations to law enforcement and medicolegal investigators? Draw on your own experiences when possible. List out all approaches shared by the group.*
- b. *Discuss the potential impacts each approach has on (1) investigation outcomes and (2) investigator perceptions around race as biology. Draw on examples from your own experience or ideas.*
- c. *What would be some best practices for anthropologists when discussing race with law enforcement and medicolegal investigators (i.e. including a disclaimer statement, having an additional conversation, etc.)?*

- d. *What needs to be taken into account when determining best practices in part c? Consider for example, possible biases of the forensic anthropologist, possible biases of the investigators, bias of the methods/reference samples, and/or the labeling and categories employed.*

Group A Summary

Many practices exist for reporting ancestry, from which groups/labels are communicated in the report, to the length of the report/report section, to whether a disclaimer or further explanation of the concept is included, to whether a qualifier such as the word “probable” in front of the group name is included. Different agencies or organizations might have different standards, requirements, or needs for how a report is written, so a one-size fits all fix such as a disclaimer statement may not necessarily work for all practitioners. Some allow for longer written reports with room for qualification, some prioritize shorter, more succinct reporting with less room for interpretation. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Written reports with qualifications about how anthropologists understand issues of race and ancestry can be useful, but may present issues in court. Shorter, more succinct reports leave room for misunderstanding or oversimplification.

The written report is perhaps not as important as how analyses and results are communicated to stakeholders (medicolegal investigators, law enforcement). Most of our conversation focused on our personal experiences and the important role of the relationships we formed with local law enforcement and medicolegal investigators. It is our responsibility to have open and honest professional conversations about issues such as: what our methods are capable of achieving, the limitations of the methods, emphasizing probability of membership to a group rather than providing absolutes, what the results mean in context (e.g., a biocultural approach that emphasizes local population history and social identity) and how the person receiving our report should understand what to do with the information. There is a need to deliver this information confidently - yet not condescendingly - and we must be willing to take the time to demonstrate how we do our work with visuals, examples, etc. However, we also uncovered some differences in how we each communicate these analyses and the terminology we use (e.g. ancestry vs. affinity, etc.) to explain these ideas informally (conversationally) and potentially in reporting. We each need to do work to make sure we can communicate these ideas effectively.

Failure to effectively communicate how results should be interpreted and used could directly influence whether a person is identified (e.g., if those reading the report limit their search of missing persons), how an investigation proceeds (bias/discrimination, but this may be context dependent), and/or could propagate misunderstanding of race as biology.

We should also realize that it is not only our written reports that have the greatest impact, it is our professional conversations explaining our reports, as well as what we say in the field/prior to analysis.

Group B Summary

Our group found that we use craniometric analysis and morphoscopic traits most of the time when estimating ancestry and a cranium is available. In the report, we typically report FORDISC results, but include other method results within our bench notes. We noted the challenges and difficulties associated with reporting ancestry, specifically,

We report one group as ‘likely’ or ‘probable’, without explaining in the report what ancestry or population affinity means. Any discussion about what ancestry means usually occurs outside of the case report as a verbal dialogue.

Most discussions about uncertainty or range of human variation and differences between biological and social constructions of race and ancestry are also typically verbal.

In reporting ancestry, we identified the potential impacts as conflating race and ancestry, and misunderstandings with law enforcement about what that means and how it impacts identification efforts on the law enforcement side of the Investigation. We noted that if we misidentify a person or law enforcement reporting is incorrect, there could potentially be misidentifications, or a lag in identification for a person.

We liked the idea of ongoing education and communication between FAs and law enforcement. We think coming to a consensus as a field with terminology about human variation could contribute to this.

E. Exit Survey and Responses

Exit Survey for the SOFA Conversation Event

Report Data Download: March 9th 2021, 11:22 am CST

Q2 - What was the most important thing you took away from this event?

What was the most important thing you took away from this event?

Listening is critical

colleagues are interested in diversity within forensic anthropology

That people are willing to thoughtfully and respectfully engage in dialogue about issues in the field

There's a lot of work to be done, but there's also a lot of people up to the task.

That where we work and the purpose of our analyzes greatly influences how we think about and approach estimating ancestry (if we do at all).

That almost everyone is on the same side here, and we have to work hard to make sure that small differences of opinion don't get in the way of the big picture goals.

It's important to understand diverse experiences within the field.

I learned that there is much more that needs to be discussed to improve diversity in our field beyond how we conduct ancestry estimations

The need to have discussions like

This was an excellent beginning to what needs to be a long-running conversation, followed by concrete actions.

That active group discussion is a vital component of communication in our field.

Multiple perspectives from diverse participants is key to any progress on anything.

That SOFA is a much safer and more inclusive space than AAFS, especially for young, underrepresented individuals.

That we can all come together and have these important conversations and learn from each other.

Our organization recognizes the ineffective ways Diversity has been discussed and researched and strives to make an effective, inclusive, and thoughtful difference.

That it is possible to have structured conversations that are productive, and that there might be more common ground than we think.

Current problems of the elephant in the room for forensic anthropology

Honestly, that even though this is (and will remain) a difficult topic in the field, there are so many people committed to engaging in dialogues about the issues and brainstorming potential solutions.

We need more data about the use and perception of ancestry estimations

The fact that people were willing to work together to make changes and that we could hear from so many people in a single event

The most important thing I took away was that ancestry estimation will continue to play an important role in human identification. We have much more work to do, but the discussion was a productive one overall.

knowing that as a group, a lot of us were on the same page with a lot of these issues

the most important that I took away from the event was that the ability to have a frank conversation was not hindered by the AAFS

Q3 - How would you improve an event like this?

How would you improve an event like this?

Have them more often

prompts were general which skirted the problem of inadequate diversity in AAFS and anthro section; would be good to have challenging discussion about racism and whiteness in forensic anthro which directly relates to ancestry estimation controversy

Not sure, I thought it was really great as it was

It was too long. My brain started melting at the end.

I think that the format was excellent. If anything, I would recommend having fewer sets of questions to leave time for discussion (e.g., breakout rooms, group summary --& questions for the group/comments, group summary --& questions/comments....)

Well, make it in person! I've been in similar events where the general categories of questions were provided to attendees in advance, and people could list their first through third preferences of areas of interest. Then, attempts were made to place people into breakout rooms they were most interested in.

I thought it was great.

I would provide a more time to the discussion groups or break this into two separate events. One event being the discussion within the groups (2 hours) and then the summary and open discussion event. Our group just became comfortable when time was about over.

I really loved the first session, but I think there needs to be another session where participants are allowed to engage on more of the topics - while we were able to address really good topics, not all participants were really able to dive into the discussion of ancestry estimation in forensic anthropology specifically

The organizers did an amazing job. I was a late addition and was only able to spend a little time in preparation, but it may be a good idea in the future to have participants work on their google doc ahead of time and then discuss to encourage more preparation.

Wouldn't, I thought it was great.

Streamline the schedule a bit more. It went nearly an hour longer than scheduled. Perhaps not have as long of initial breakout rooms.

A group moderator to keep small group discussions on track. Otherwise, it's very easy for the small groups to go on a tangent. Also, a wrap up after every group is done sharing would be helpful in getting some concrete actionable items done.

Less time in the breakout rooms so that there could be more time for a large group discussion

Maybe discuss more concrete items?

Include a speaker from outside to inform us about the issues in that field and how they are working to combat racism.

I'd love to see similar events happen more frequently, as the only negative for me was the overall length- I felt somewhat pressured to stay, since these opportunities are so few and far between that I was thinking, it's now or not for quite some time. Also it would have helped me to see the prompt plus the group summary side by side on the screen so I could follow along a bit easier with what was being said.

Have more of these exercises during AAFS or outside of meetings! Extremely successful

I thought this event was excellent. A more streamlined summary process at the end might be an improvement, if possible, because it went so long and was so late for those in the eastern half of the country.

I thought the event was organized well.

I did not attend the after discussion (bar discussion?) but heard some negative things. I think it's best to end the discussion at the end of the structured activities since there is no control over civility.

I had some technical issues accessing the event but otherwise I thought it was organized well. I was surprised by how quickly the time passed when we were in our small groups

I wouldn't change a thing

Q14 - If SOFA hosted another conversation for our field, what themes would you like it to cover?

If SOFA hosted another conversation for our field, what themes would you like it to cover?

Ethics, professional development

racism and whiteness in forensic anthro

activism vs objectivity in forensic anthro, the role of forensic anthro in regards to the state and how to navigate competing goals

Sexual harassment, bullying, and research integrity

different jobs/careers that people have, what they do, and pathways that they used to get there

We're not done with this one. Maybe some smaller, focused meetings, like teaching ancestry estimation.

Sex and gender

I would love themes on identity, certification, and what does population-specificity mean

Maybe we can base the new topics on the points brought up in our discussion on Wed - we can look over the summaries and use those points to bring up new topics

We need more conversation on this theme. Other topics may include sex/gender/trans topics, which are also related. Others, including ethics, training come to mind but it would be nice to focus on this theme first.

Current topics with unclear or divided opinions.

Professionalization and certification, and moving the field to follow the standardization in medical education.

A deeper look into each biological profile category to dig into where we are lacking the most, and where our services are the most valuable, especially in light of ever advancing DNA technology

I would like to see events involving expert witness testimony.

I'd love more on this theme. I'd also love to talk about the disconnect between US FA and FA in other parts of the world (Europe, Latin America).

What does forensic anthropology look like in practice? It was clear from this event that not everyone's actual practice/job as a forensic anthropologist is the same. The types of cases, victims seen, etc. vary quite a bit.

Discuss what FA research can do for practitioners/ method application

Ancestry part 2, isotopes, accreditation, board certification, trauma analysis, case report writing

I think that right now, given the culture outside of our field, I feel we really need to focus on ancestry and race and how we can be more proactive as a whole

strategies for FA advocacy in C/ME system regarding demonstrating our value to the medicolegal system outside of academia.

Q4 - Did the final prompt themes and questions adequately represent the anonymous questions/comments proposed by the registrants?

Did the final prompt themes and questions adequately represent the anonymous questions/comments proposed by the registrants?

Yes, I think you did a good job on those

yes

yes absolutely

Yes

As far as I could tell, they summarized them well.

I didn't see the final document from which the prompts were prepared. I added questions, but I don't know what the doc looked like at the end. I would say that I noticed some people had responded to questions within the body of the document. That seemed really like attempts to shut down conversation. I think a specific note not to do that would have been helpful.

Yes

I felt that the final prompt themes were great and clearly demonstrated the range of viewpoints of the audience.

I think, but it would have been interesting to see more of the discussion written out in that form, as some individuals provided some context for their questions

I think that they did, although I did not see the original documents until they had been considerably added to. I believe that they captured the spirit of questions that needed to be addressed.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes, I think so

I have no idea, I feel like they were.

Yes.

I think so, but I didn't have time to read all the comments fully. However my perception is that the topics were a good representation of what people are currently thinking and talking about.

Yes- good diversity of questions and group presentations of similar and different topics- great idea by the moderators.

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes, but there was a lot of overlap between the topics.

yes

the prompts were incredible

Q5 - Was the structure of the prompts framed in a way that was conducive to open conversation? Why or why not? Please give examples when possible.

Was the structure of the prompts framed in a way that was conducive to open conversation? Why or why not? Please give examples when possible.

Very much so.

small groups, two groups for the same prompt were clever strategies and I appreciated the structure

Yes, I thought they were great conversation starters within a topic that was relevant to all levels of practitioners

Yes

Overall, yes. It made sense that they were structured around themes, but some of the prompts seemed a bit heavier on the structured components than others, while others were more open ended. I think having slightly more divisions and structure within each set of questions would

make summarizing the discussion points easier and allow for greater comparison between groups with the same prompts.

I mean, they facilitated relatively open conversation. If there was anyone participating that was really against making changes to increase D&I, they would have felt shut out. Maybe that's OK.

Yes

Yes/no? I felt a few of the questions were pointed towards a specific type of response or were meant to direct the conversation a certain way. Also the other issue that came up was that the sub-questions required a lot of time to unpack and made some attends focus on trying to figure out what is being asked in the question as opposed to thinking about it in broader terms.

I believe so

Yes, having several questions that were related helped prompt more discussion.

Yes. Prompts were well written and succinct.

Yes, I think the prompts were good and thorough. Several prompts were so closely linked to each other that it resulted in a lot of repetition in feedback from groups. While this is good and necessary for overall conversation on the topic as a whole, it sets up the structure of the event to run long.

Yes, it was excellent and well thought through.

Mostly, but it would have been nice if the group at large could have had time to participate in the discussion around each prompt, rather than just rushing through each group's thoughts

Yes, we have very clear jumping off points to start the conversation.

Yes.

Yes. Asking for definitions in particular allows people to have a starting point. I thought that in particular was excellent.

Yes

Yes. There was clearly considerable thought about which prompts to include and in what order. Some of the prompts very easily flowed into each other during discussions.

Mostly

Yes

Yes, the prompts were excellent and did help facilitate discussion.

yes

The prompts provided a concise set of questions for each breakout group and a way to develop talking points during the overall discussion

Q6 - Were the available mechanisms for live reporting of issues or concerns to moderators adequate/appropriate? If you had issues were they resolved?

Were the available mechanisms for live reporting of issues or concerns to moderators adequate/appropriate? If you had issues were they resolved?

Yes, things went pretty smoothly.

I had no issues

Yes

Yes and we had no issues.

My group had no problems.

Yes

The moderators were great, they provided support when needed. Issues were resolved quickly

I did not have any issues, but feel like there wasn't as much space for individuals to report concerns anonymously (if needed), until a moderator appeared in the chat - as calling for help or leaving the discussion can make it apparent for the others in the group and not give that person the anon. space they need

Yes.

Yes. I had no issues.

yes, N/A

Yes, we had no issues.

Everything seemed to run fairly smoothly or was resolved quickly

I didn't have any.

Yes.

I think so? I didn't have any issues in my group.

No issues

N/A - I had no issues, so didn't need to pay attention to available mechanisms

NA

Yes

I believe so. We didn't have any issues, although one member dropped off when the battery in their computer died.

yes

yes

Q7 - How did you and your group members fare following the ground rules/best practices for respectful conversations?

How did you and your group members fare following the ground rules/best practices for respectful conversations?

Well, no problems

no problem

Very well, we all listened to each other and were able to ask questions without feeling disrespected or not listened to (in my opinion)

I felt our conversation went really well and was respectful.

It was relatively easy and worked well.

I think we did well. I do think the more senior members of our group probably did more talking than more junior members. But they brought useful insights, so maybe that's OK.

Fantastic

I felt like we did. I think that our group had very respectful conversations. We were more afraid to offend that we didn't speak, but this was quickly overcome.

Our group did really well!!! Everyone was very considerate of talking space and took a pause before speaking - this did limit our overall time to talk (it would have been nice to have more time, as this was the fastest 50 min of my life)

All discussions were respectful - I think it's effective to have cameras on as opposed to no face-to-face discussions.

We found it difficult not to mention our titles because they give insight to our position in the field as well as signify some of the professional challenges we incur.

Our group worked well together and no issues occurred.

My group was delightful. I did not know any of them personally but I feel like we all made strong collegial connections with one another by the end.

It went well overall

Very well.

Amazing--though I was late due to technical difficulties.

We were all fine. It helped that we were likely on the same page to begin with, but I didn't see any issues with conversation domination, disrespect, etc.

Very constructive discussions

Good. I enjoyed my conversation with the other group members. It seemed like we were all aware of each other's time, and my impression was that all group members made an effort to both provide input and ask for other's input on all topics.

We didn't have any problems

Very well, I had a great group!

It was very civil and a good discussion but our group showed a high level of agreement in perspectives.

we did well.

my group was great

Q8 - Did you feel that you could safely express your opinions and thoughts? Were you heard by your group members?

Did you feel that you could safely express your opinions and thoughts? Were you heard by your group members?

Yes

yes and yes

Yes, absolutely

Yes

Yes. We had vastly different experiences and some differing opinions, so we just had to listen, communicate, and ask questions. Trying to rephrase what each other said was a good exercise that revealed that we weren't necessarily always understanding each other (but we were trying!).

I think so. I hope others in my group did.

Yes

In the small group yes, but in the larger discussion no. I felt heard in the small group and I hope I made others feel the same way.

Yes!

Yes.

Yes and yes.

Yes and Yes

Yes and yes.

Yes

Yes and yes.

Yes!

Yes and yes.

Yes

Yes, My other group members were excellent communicators and group discussion members.

Yes

Yes

Not entirely. Some colleagues in other groups felt overrun by people in their group that had an agenda.

I thought so

yes

Q9 - Were you comfortable with the composition of your group during the event? You can address this in terms of gender, race, experience, or whatever else comes to mind.

Were you comfortable with the composition of your group during the event? You can address this in terms of gender, race, experience, or whatever else comes to mind.

Yes

I was the only POC but I felt comfortable sharing my opinions

Yes, however we lacked BIPoC people, which would have added to our discussion. I thought the regional perspective was great too, speaking with different people practicing in different U.S. regions.

Yes

Yes. We had different backgrounds and experiences, so the mix was good.

Sure. Not so diverse, but neither is the field.

Yes

The group I was in really did not have any minority representation. At first this didn't bother me but subsequent conversations since this event made me feel that I have to be apologetic that I am not considered a minority nor that I am able to be apart of the conversation of DEI, which was disappointing. I would ask that future events to make sure at least one minority in terms of race and/or identity are in each group so no one's thoughts are overshadowed by others.

Our group was composed entire of white individuals, but that is also the current state of the field and one that we are addressing as problematic. Despite this, everyone in my group was willing to engage and participate in the conversation and was very open and willing to work out these issues in the field that do benefit white individuals

Yes - we had a good group composition - more diversity is always welcome.

Yes.

Yes though the backgrounds of the majority of those in my group was closer to grad school than not, meaning that most members of the group had less experience with application of skills to casework, etc. This limited some of the conversation, particularly in relating experiences to question prompts.

Yes it was excellent.

Yes

Yes.

Yes!

Yes.

Yes. The only downside to my group was that we consisted of relatively inexperienced practitioners compared to other groups, but this also clearly resulted from weather-related cancellations from other assigned group members, so this was not an oversight by the organizers or participants.

Yes

Yes

Yes, I was comfortable.

yes

yes

Q10 - Was the time allotted for the group conversations adequate?

Was the time allotted for the group conversations adequate?

Pretty close, no time allocation will suit all groups

yes

Yes, maybe a bit longer next time

Yes

Yes.

yes

Yes

I would always love more time to discuss. I felt that another 30 minutes would have been great. Especially given the diversity in experience- this seemed to be the biggest obstacle for involvement in our group.

We needed more time!

It was an adequate amount of time.

Yes.

Probably a little excessive.

We could have used 20 minutes more.

Yes, but seemed too long by at least 20-25 minutes

Not really, we got carried away.

Our group could have used 10 more minutes.

Maybe 10 or 15 minutes more would've been great

Yes

Yes, but could have been longer

Yes it was enough time

A little longer would have been great, like 30 mins more

It was adequate but I could see more small group discussion time.

it was and it was surprising how quickly that time passed

yes

Q11 - Was the time allotted for group sharing adequate?

Was the time allotted for group sharing adequate?

Yes

too long

Yes, I thought 5 min was just the right amount of time

Yes

I was impressed with how efficient the summaries were at the end. I would have liked additional time for questions/discussion and didn't want the event to end.

yes, but with 16 groups reporting it was really long.

Yes

Yes, I felt like the group sharing was right on.

Yes! And the chat feature to keep conversation going without interrupting anyone speaking was a fantastic idea

This took a little longer - perhaps a shorter time for each with more time for discussion following?

Yes.

Time planned was adequate yet it seemed like group sharing went far longer than planned.

Yes because it would have taken forever otherwise.

It seemed so

Yes.

Yes.

Yes but that's where it got to be a bit long for me, especially with the just sharing without seeing a screen with their summary on it

Yes

Yes, but could have been condensed just a bit because of how late the event went. It was still good to hear the perspectives from all groups, though, so I understand why it was structured this way.

Yes, but the event was longer than I anticipated overall.

Yes

Yes, but next time keep it to 8 groups instead of 16. It was too long and there was much overlap.

yes

yes

Q12 - Do you think the virtual sharing of the anonymized conversation notes is a good way to share the results of the event? Do you have an alternative idea for the kinds of deliverables you'd want from this event??

Do you think the virtual sharing of the anonymized conversation notes is a good way to share the results of the event? Do you have an alternative idea for the kinds of deliverables you'd want from this event??

No, it's hard to allow people to speak freely yet still distribute notes.

anonymized notes would be good for accountability

Yes! I think the results would be very useful for informing different committes like ad-hoc anthro committees and people on the standards boards

Yes

I think that the notes will be very helpful. It might also be useful to come up with a page or so of bulleted "things to consider" or "jumping off points" that came up in multiple group summaries to use in the classroom or for future professional discussions.

I'd love a list of recommendations to discuss.

Yes

Yes the conversation notes are a good way to share for participants, but I would like to see these presented at the AAFS

Yes! I think that would be a good way to look back at our discussion - as it was very late/early for different individuals and a lot of information was discussed

I agree that it is a good way to share - I think that we should work toward action items.

Yes. No alternative ideas.

yes

This was a little difficult because the thoughts that were being shared far outpaced the ability to jot everything down in a comprehensible manner.

Yes. Also updates related to the discussion afterwards in regards to SOFA membership, upcoming events/forums, and maybe the names and contact info of any practitioners who are either open to talking to young professionals and/or those who may have internship or volunteer opportunities

I would actually love for it to be in-person.

I'm apprehensive about having our shared, contemporaneous experience published as notes. The sharing and learning was based upon that moment. Have surveys like this.

I thinks it's a great idea and can't think of an alternative right now.

Yes, except that I'm not sure how anonymous it will be depending on the format, since the names of members of each group were announced during the open discussion at the end. However, I don't have other suggestions, and this seems like the best way to share this information across participants.

Yes

Yes, I was thinking it would be good to publish a letter about the outcomes of this meeting on the AAFS website. It could inform the people who could not partiipate yesterday on what was discussed and would also be used as a measure of where we are now and what we should follow in our future research.

Yes, I but I do worry that some comments will be personally identifiable based on a subset of vocal individuals.

I like this format

yes

Q13 - Did you feel like SOFA took your safety seriously in terms of setting up groups and communicating groups changes ? If not, how can we improve?

Did you feel like SOFA took your safety seriously in terms of setting up groups and communicating groups changes ? If not, how can we improve?

Yes

SOFA did a fabulous job and remain appreciative of the special webinar

yes

Yes

Yes. This event was well-thought-out and wonderfully organized. Excellent work!

yes. I feel like this was a huge undertaking and I'm grateful to the organizers for doing this work.

Yes

Yes

Yes! And the willingness to help out individuals who needed help or to switch groups was greatly appreciated (even tho I did not personally have any problems)

Yes - great job!

Yes.

yes

Yes it was expertly organized, thank you!

Yes

Yes.

Yes!

Yes, I was impressed with how it was organized and thought out

Wonderful job!!!!

Yes. I was impressed by the level of organization and thought that went into this event. It was a good experience for me personally.

Yes

Yes

Yes

yes

yes