The Social Construction of Race

Nov. 8, 2006

http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134

U.S. racial system complications

✓ The U.S. racial system has focused on the white-nonwhite dichotomy
  • The one drop rule: one drop of black blood (i.e., any percentage of ancestry) makes someone black
  • Until 1967, many states had laws against miscegenation (marriage or sexual relations between a man & a woman of different races)
✓ People and groups move from one racial category to another
  • Because of the one-drop rule, many blacks throughout U.S. history have looked white enough to "pass" as white; this has resulted in a large percentage of whites with black ancestry
  • New immigrant groups, e.g., Irish, Slavs, have been successful in becoming white
✓ Census categories
  • Races: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Some other race
  • Ethnic category: Hispanic or Latino

Question 5—2000 Census

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? Mark the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
   [ ] No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino [ ] Yes, Puerto Rican
   [ ] Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano [ ] Yes, Cuban
   [ ] Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino — Print group.

History of census categories

✓ 1860: three categories: white, black, mulatto
✓ Mulatto split into three (octoroon, quadroon, mulatto) in 1890, recombined in 1900 and dropped after 1920
✓ American Indian added in 1870; tribal affiliation asked for beginning 1900, changed to American Indian or Alaska Native in 2000; (Aleut 1960, 1989-90)
✓ Mexican added 1930, then dropped; Hispanic ethnicity added 1980
✓ Other race added in 1910

Sociology Club Movie Night

The movie Lone Star will be featured at Sociology Club Movie Night, Thursday, Nov. 9, at 7 p.m. in Coover Hall 2245.
Discussion afterwards will be led by a panel of faculty members: Terry Besser, Brian Monahan, and Steve Sapp.
Dave Schweingruber is hosting.

Question 6-2000 Census

6. What is this person’s race? Mark one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.
   [ ] White
   [ ] Black, African Am., or Negro
   [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.
   [ ] Asian Indian
   [ ] Japanese
   [ ] Korean
   [ ] Guamanian or Chamorro
   [ ] Filipino
   [ ] Vietnamese
   [ ] Samoan
   [ ] Other Asian — Print race.
   [ ] Other Pacific Islander — Print race.
   [ ] Some other race — Print race.
U.S. racial composition—U.S. Census

Total pop. = 281,421,906 (100.0%)
One race = 274,595,678 (97.6%)
  White = 211,460,626 (75.1%)
  Black = 34,658,190 (12.3%)
  Indian/AN = 2,475,956 (0.9%)
  Asian = 10,242,998 (3.6%)
  Hawaiian/PI = 398,835 (0.1%)
  Other = 15,359,073 (5.5%)
Two or more = 6,826,228 (2.4%)
  White & other = 2,206,251 (32.3%)
  White & Indian = 1,082,683 (15.9%)
  White & Asian = 868,395 (12.7%)
  White & Black = 784,764 (11.5%)
  Black & other = 417,249 (6.1%)
Three races = 410,285 (6.0%)
Four races = 38,408 (0.6%)
Five races = 8,637 (0.1%)
Six races = 823

Source: 2000 Census

Multiple racial combinations

Two races or more races: 6,826,228 (100.0%)-2.4% of pop.
  Two races: 6,368,075 (93.3%)-15 combinations
    White & other: 2,206,251 (32.3%)
    White & Indian: 1,082,683 (15.9%)
    White & Asian: 868,395 (12.7%)
    White & Black: 784,764 (11.5%)
    Black & other: 417,249 (6.1%)
  Three races: 410,285 (6.0%)-20 combinations
    White, black & Indian: 112,207 (1.6%)
  Four races: 38,408 (0.6%)-15 combinations
  Five races: 8,637 (0.1%)-6 combinations
  Six races: 823

Source: 2000 Census

U.S. vs. Iowa

U.S. racial composition

White = 75.1%
Black = 12.3%
Indian/AN = 0.9%
Asian = 3.6%
Hawaiian/PI = 0.1%
Other = 5.5%

Iowa racial composition

White = 93.9%
Black = 2.1%
Indian/AN = 1.1%
Asian = 0.9%
Hawaiian/PI = 0.0%
Other = 1.5%

Source: 2000 Census