The Social Construction of Race/White Privilege

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http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134
Question 5—2000 Census

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? Mark X 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.
6. What is this person's race? Mark \(\times\) 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
- [ ] Native Hawaiian
- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] Korean
- [ ] Guamanian or Chamorro
- [ ] Filipino
- [ ] Vietnamese
- [ ] Samoan
- [ ] Other Asian — Print race.
- [ ] Other Pacific Islander — Print race.
- [ ] Some other race — Print race.
History of census categories

- 1860: three categories: white, black, mulatto
- Mulatto split into 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, 1980-90)
- Mexican added 1930, then dropped; Hispanic *ethnicity* added 1980
- Other race added in 1910
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%)

Latino: 35,305,818 (12.5%)
Not Latino: 246,116,008 (87.5%)

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

Fives 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%
- Two or more: 2.4%
- Other: 5.5%
- Asian: 3.6%
- Hawaiian/PI: 0.1%
- Indian/AN: 0.9%

Iowa racial composition

- White: 93.9%
- Black: 2.1%
- Two or more: 1.1%
- Other: 1.3%
- Asian: 1.3%
- Hawaiian/PI: 0.0%
- Indian/AN: 0.3%

Source: 2000 Census
White privilege

White privilege: term coined by Peggy McIntosh to describe “an unearned package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious”

• I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
• I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind and more.
• I can be reasonably sure that my neighbors will be neutral or pleasant to me.
• When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
• Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance that I am financially reliable.
• I can swear, or dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
• I can be reasonably sure that if I ask to talk to “the person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my race.
• I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested of self-seeking.
• I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s magazines featuring people of my race.

Whites can act as though they are “colorless” (not having a race)

• Racial transparency: tendency for the race of a society’s majority to be so obvious, normative, and unremarkable that it becomes, for all intents and purposes, invisible (p. 397)