The Social Construction of Race

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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 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. ✓
Question 6-2000 Census

6. What is this person's race? **Mark \( \Box \) 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. 

- [ ] Samoan
- [ ] Other Pacific Islander — Print race. 

- [ ] Some other race — Print race. 

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, 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

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

Iowa racial composition

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

Source: 2000 Census