The Social Construction of Race

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U.S. racial system complications

✓ The U.S. racial system has focused on the white-nonwhite dichotomy
  - 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.
   □ Yes, Puerto Rican
   □ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
   □ Yes, Cuban
   □ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino — Print group.

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 American, or Negro
   □ American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe
   □ Asian Indian
   □ Chinese
   □ Korean
   □ Guamanian or Chamorro
   □ Filipino
   □ Samoan
   □ Other Asian — Print race
   □ Hawaiian/Pacific Islander — Print race
   □ Some other race — Print race

History of census categories

✓ 1860: three categories: white, black, mulatto
✓ Mulatto split into three (octroon, 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

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: 868,365 (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
- White, black & Asian: 11,320 (0.1%)

Five races: 8,637 (0.1%)-6 combinations
- White, black, Indian & Asian: 2,181 (0.0%)

Six races: 823

Source: 2000 Census

U.S. vs. Iowa

U.S. racial composition
- White: 75.1%
- Black: 12.3%
- Other: 5.5%
- Hawaiian/PI: 0.1%

Iowa racial composition
- White: 93.9%
- Black: 2.1%
- Indian/AN: 0.3%

Source: 2000 Census