Race of the Minority Parent and Racial Identity of Children of Intermarried Couples

Zhenchao Qian

Department of Sociology
The Ohio State University
300 Bricker Hall
190 N. Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43220
Tel: (614) 688-8612
Fax: (614) 292-6687

Email: qian.26@osu.edu

Preliminary Draft

Paper to be presented at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America, Boston, MA, April 1-3, 2004. Support for this research was provided by a grant (1 R01 HD43035-01) from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Race of the Minority Parent and Racial Identity of Children of Intermarried Couples

Abstract

For the first time in the census history, Americans were able to mark one or more racial categories in the 2000 Census to classify their race. How do intermarried couples identify their children's race? Using data from the 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 U.S. Census, I examine how African American-White, Asian American-White, and American Indian-White couples identify their children's race. African American-white and Asian American-white couples are more likely to identify their children with two races rather than with one race. However, among those who identify their children with one race, African American-white couples tend to classify their children black while Asian American-white couples tend to classify their children white. Intermarried American Indian-white couples are least likely to identify their children with both races. In addition to race of the minority parent, sex of the minority parent, whether the minority parent is the householder, whether the minority spouse is biracial, and whether intermarried couples live in metropolitan areas strongly affect their children's race.

Race of the Minority Parent and Racial Identity of Children of Intermarried Couples

For the first time in the census history, Americans were able to mark one or more racial categories in the 2000 Census to classify their race. This change, in part, responds to a growing number of children born to couples of interracial marriage. Results from the census show that 2.4% of the population classified themselves with two or more races. The percentage rose to 4% among the population under age 18 (Jones and Smith 2001). The emergence of this two or more race classification represents a significant change in racial statistics and the treatment of this population may affect race-based policies in the United States (Goldstein and Morning 2000).

Prior to the 2000 Census, the classification of two or more races was not possible because race was considered mutually exclusive so children of intermarried couples had to choose only one race. When intermarried couples must mark one racial category for their children, their answers may depend on their experiences on race relations and views on racial stratification. Saenz et al. (1995) and Xie and Goyette (1997), examining racial identification of children with one Asian parent, found that racial identification of children depends on parents' socioeconomic status and demographic characteristics. Qian (Forthcoming) compared racial identification of young children of all intermarried couples. Race of the minority spouse is a strong predictor. In addition, racial identification of children of intermarried couples depends on sex and nativity status of the racial minority parent, education, and neighborhood racial compositions.

To be sure, racial identification of children of intermarried couples is not a random choice. Intermarried couples may make special efforts to instill a racial identity into their children. Children formulate their own racial identities in response to their physical looks, socialization, and others' perceptions towards them at different stages of their lives, but racial

identity instilled by their parents from their early age provides a solid foundation. The 2000 Census opens a new way to classify children's race for intermarried couples. Intermarried couples are supposed to fill out both their races for their children. However, some children born to intermarried couples are identified with the race of one parent rather than the races of both parents. Is this a random choice? Or is it a choice that parents made to reflect their racial experiences and their understanding of racial dynamics in American society?

This paper uses data from the 2000 Census to explore who among intermarried couples are likely to identify their children with one race rather than two races. I include intermarried couples in which one spouse is white and the other spouse is African American, Asian American, or American Indian. Intermarried Latino and white couples are not included in this study because Latinos, an ethnic group, can belong to any racial group. Table 1 shows that children's racial/ethnic identification for intermarried Latino-white couples are indeed complicated. Less than a quarter are classified as white and no Hispanic origin while less than three quarters are classified as a combination of Hispanic origin and white, other, or multiracial.

(Table 1 about here)

One objective is to examine differences in children's racial identification by race of the minority parent. In addition, I focus on how the characteristics of intermarried couples affect their children's racial identification. The specific goals for this paper are: (1) compare for each racial combination the likelihood of children born to intermarried couples identified with the minority race, the white race, or the races of both parents; (2) examine the impact of intermarried couples' individual characteristics (race of the minority parent, sex of the minority parent, nativity status of the minority parent, educational combination, etc.) on their children's racial

identity; and (3) explore how much the variation in differences in racial identification of children by race of the racial minority parent can be explained by couple-level characteristics.

PREVIOUS LIETERAUTRE

Interracial marriage is viewed as the final stage of assimilation for racial minorities (Gordon 1964). One central perspective of assimilation is the assumption that there is a process that diverse minority groups gradually come to share a common culture, gain equal access to the opportunity structure of society, and gradually desert old cultural and behavioral patterns (Park and Burgess 1969). Thus, intermarried racial minority individuals may lose their own identities or at least become indifferent about their children's racial identification. However, previous literature shows that children born to minority and white couples are likely to be identified with a minority race (Qian Forthcoming; Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997). Marital assimilation does not indicate the loss of minorities' racial identities. In contrast, racial awareness may heighten because of their direct contact and competition with mainstream society (Olzak 1983; Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson 1995).

However, whether children born to intermarried couples are classified as minority depends on the race of the minority parent. In 1990, African American-White couples were least likely to identify their children with white, followed by American Indian-white couples, while Asian American-White couples were most likely to identify their children with white (Qian Forthcoming). Although African American-white couples were least likely to identify their children with white, a significant percentage classified their children race of other. Multiracial classification available in the 2000 Census makes it possible for biracial children to belong to both racial groups. Nevertheless, it may not always be the case. Racial identities may not be just

about their own choices but also reflect perceptions of others. In the words of Nagel (1996: 21), "ethnic identity lies at the intersection of individual ethnic self-definition (who I am) and collective ethnic attribution (who they say I am)."

African American, American Indians, and Asian Americans have different histories in the United States and have experienced different kinds of prejudice and discrimination. Different histories in the past and different receptions today lead to differences in how intermarried couples classify their children's race. Historically, black-white marriage was strongly discouraged and subject to legal penalties, while American Indian-white marriage was promoted for political and economic reasons (Sandefur and Trudy 1986). Children of black-white couples were not accepted in white society, as one drop of black blood made one an African American (Davis 1991). Hypodescent – the one-drop rule – solidified the barrier between blacks and whites because no one who might possibly be identified as black could be identified as white (Snipp 2002; Spickard 1992). Thus, mixed-race individuals with part black race are traditionally labelled black. Such traditions are still practiced among African American communities and the norms are such that the communities do not even see favorably those who identify themselves with a racial group other than Black (Jones 1994). In the 1990 census, while 60% of children born to African American-white couples were identified with black, a significant percentage of children (15%) were identified with race of Other (Qian Forthcoming). This suggests that some intermarried African American-white couples may not want to follow the practices of the past, but also do not want to simply classify their children as white. We may expect more to report their children black and white in the 2000 Census and few to report their children white.

In contrast, there was no one drop rule for descendants of American Indian-white couples. American Indians have been identified by hyperdescent (Snipp 2002). Persons whose

ancestry is one-fourth or less American Indian were generally not considered Indian (Davis 1991). As a result, many of these children were classified as white (Eschbach 1995; Sandefur and Trudy 1986). However, census data in 1980 and 1990 indicate rapid increases in American Indian population because many mixed-race American Indian-white individuals reported their Indian race in response to positive views of the American public towards American Indians and social movements that have fostered American Indian pride (Eschbach, Supple, and Snipp 1998; Nagel 1995). In 1990, half of children born to American Indian-white couples were identified with American Indian and the other half were identified with white (Qian Forthcoming). American Indian-white children living in cities are more likely to be identified as white than those living elsewhere. American Indians living in cities are usually not people customarily regarded American Indians (Liebler 1996) while American Indians living in tribes usually classify themselves only American Indian for government service needs (Snipp 2002). A similar divide may happen in the 2000 census in which some children are identified with white while some others American Indian.

Asian American-white marriage is a recent phenomenon, appearing in an era of greater tolerance for racial minorities (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan 1997; Xie and Goyette 1997). There was no rule with racial identification of children born to Asian American-white couples. However, the "push" factor from Asian ethnic communities may increase the likelihood of these children identified with white. Asian ethnic communities are historically ethically homogeneous and are unwilling to include biracial children as part of the communities (Spickard 1989). Indeed, only 41% of children born to Asian American-white couples were identified with Asian and over half were classified as white in the 1990 census (Qian Forthcoming). In addition, most Asian American-white marriages involve Asian American women rather than Asian American

men. Children born to Asian American-white couples are often identified as white because men are thought to carry on family names in traditional Asian cultures.

In summary, African American-white couples are expected to be least likely to classify their children white because of the lingering effect of the hypodescent rule. American Indian-white couples may be divided in racial identification because of a greater percentage of mixed-race American Indian population and urban/rural differences. Asian American-white couples tend to classify their children as white. In addition to race of the minority spouse, couple level characteristics, especially characteristics of the minority spouse, are likely to affect children's racial identification.

Relative status between the white and minority spouses may affect who has a greater say about their children's racial identity. Sex of the minority parent is a strong predictor of children's racial identity. Intermarried couples in which the minority spouse is male are far more likely than those in which the minority spouse is female to identify their children minority (Qian Forthcoming; Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997). The child takes the father's racial identity because the child usually carries the surname of the father. This is also the case for whites with multiple European ethnic backgrounds who use surnames to justify their ethnic identification (Waters 1990).

Another related variable is whether the minority spouse is the householder. In the census questionnaire, this is the person or one of the people living here who owns, is buying, or rents this place. It could be the person who filled out the questionnaire, who had the power of making racial identification for their children. Or it could be the person who is the head of the household, who may be able to decide how their children are racially identified. We would

expect that the minority spouse who is the householder is likely to classify their children with the race of the minority spouse.

Studies on ethnic options show that well-educated whites are more knowledgeable about their ethnic backgrounds and are more successful than their less-educated counterparts in passing ethnic information along to their descendents (Lieberson 1985; Waters 1990). For interracially married couples, the effect of educational attainment may be weak because racial information is often evident and may not need to be passed along. However, highly educated individuals may be more likely to identify their children biracial than their less educated counterparts because the well-educated may be knowledgeable about the changes in racial classification in the 2000 census. Past studies also show that the likelihood of Asian identification is positively associated with educational attainment (Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997). However, how educational attainment affects children's racial identification is unclear when classification of multiple races becomes a choice.

Children of Asian-non-Asian couples in which the non-Asian spouse has part Asian ancestry are more likely to be identified as Asian than are those in which the non-Asian spouse has no Asian ancestry (Xie and Goyette 1997). This suggests that shared ancestry minimizes potential conflict between spouses over the child's racial identity. It is likely that shared ancestry has a similar effect for other intermarried couples. Thus, intermarried couples in which the minority spouse is biracial – part white race and part minority race – are more likely to classify their children white than those in which the minority spouse has single race identification.

Native-born minorities are conscious of racial differences in social and economic conditions and recognize the salience of race in American society (Portes 1984). In contrast, immigrants likely attribute their low socioeconomic status to their immigrant status rather than to

their racial minority status. Some are eager to Americanize and reject their cultural roots to fit in (Gans 1992; Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson 1995). As a result, intermarried native-born Asians are more likely than their foreign-born counterparts to classify their children as Asian (Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997). This nativity difference is also expected to hold true for children of other intermarried couples.

Finally, where intermarried couples live affect their children's racial identification, especially for American Indians. The large number of American Indians with mixed ancestry indicates volatility in reporting of American Indian race(Harris 1994). American Indians who live in metropolitan areas tend to be biracial themselves and weak in American Indian identity. So I expect that American Indian-white couples are more likely to classify their children for those living in metropolitan areas than for those who living in non-metropolitan areas.

CURRENT STUDY

The 2000 Census, for the first time, makes it possible for mixed-race individuals to classify themselves more than one racial category. However, for one reason or another, some mixed-race individuals may still identify themselves with only one racial group. Physical looks, socialization, and others' perceptions towards them may all play a role. Race remains to be one important factor. Historically, individuals with part black ancestry were typically identified with black while individuals with part American Indian ancestry or Asian American ancestry may have had more options. These racial differences indirectly measure minority differences in social distance with whites. This study examines differences in racial identification of biracial children by race of the minority spouse. Specifically, this paper explores who remains more likely to report single race for their children and, if so, which racial group (white or the minority

race) their children are likely to be classified. In addition, this paper examines the impact of the characteristics of intermarried couples on racial identity of their children. These characteristics include sex of the minority parent, whether the minority spouse is the householder or biracial, educational attainment, nativity status, and type of residence.

DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study come from the 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 U.S. Census. In order to have a sample of intermarried couples and their children, I limit one spouse to be the householder so his/her spouse and their children can be linked into one record. I include currently married couples in which one spouse is a native-born non-Latino single-race white and the other spouse is a non-Latino African American, Asian, or American Indian. I classify mixed-race African American-white individuals as African American, Asian-white individuals as Asian American, and American Indian-white individuals as American Indian, but create a variable to classify whether minority parents are biracial.

Children are limited to be age 5 years old or younger. I impose this age limitation for three reasons: First, census data only have information on current marriage. Biracial children cannot be adequately identified if intermarried couples are divorced. This may create bias since divorced intermarried couples may differ from those who do not divorce. Because parents of young children are less likely to divorce than those of older children, including only young children in the sample reduces the potential selection bias. Second, young children are much more likely than older children to live with their parents, so the potential bias caused by the possibility of children not living with parents is small. Third, this study examines couples' racial

identification of their children so including only young children in the sample reduces the likelihood that parents' choices are affected by children's physical looks or friend networks.

I only select one child from each couple to avoid non-independence across observations. For couples with more than one child under age 5, the youngest child is included in the sample. This increases the likelihood that the couple are the child's biological parents because census data do not have direct information on whether children are biological to both parents. In addition to select the youngest child for the analyses, I have taken the following measures to increase the chance that children are biological to both parents. First, I exclude stepchildren and adopted children of the householder. Second, I limit the sample to couples in which the wife is 44 years old or younger. Third, I exclude cases where the child's race does not match that of either parent to minimize the possibility that children are transracially adopted. These measures also reduce the likelihood that children from previous marriages are included in the analysis. Young children born to the wife from previous marriages, if any, are not included because they are stepchildren or adopted children of the householder. Meanwhile, young children born to the husband in his earlier marriages, if any, are unlikely to live with the couple given that the ex-wife usually has the custody of the children.

The analysis includes 5,378 children born to African American-white couples, 7,240 children born to Asian American-white couples, and 7,236 children born to American Indian-white couples. Multinomial logistic regressions are employed to predict the likelihood that these children have minority or white identification rather than biracial identification. I first run models separately by race of the minority spouse. Then I pool the sample together to examine how differences by race of the minority spouse can be explained by the variables in the model.

One variable included in the model is sex of the minority spouse. Sex of the minority spouse is used to test the hypothesis that a child is more likely to be identified with the father's race rather than the mother's race. A related variable is whether the minority spouse is the householder. The householder, to say the least, is the person who filled out the census questionnaire and, more likely, is the head of the household. He/She may decide or have a greater say about the child's race. I classify biracial individuals as racial minorities in the analysis but create a variable to identify whether the minority spouse is biracial or not. The hypothesis is that the child is more likely to be identified white if the minority spouse has part white race than if the minority spouse has no part white race.

I also examine the effect of similarities and differences in spousal educational attainment on children's racial identification. The categories include: 1) the minority spouse is more educated than the white spouse; 2) the minority spouse is less educated than the white spouse; 3) both spouses have at least college education; 4) both spouses have some college; 5) both spouses have a high school education or less. Nativity status of the minority spouse has the following categories: 1) native-born; 2) immigrated before 1980; 3) immigrated in the 1980s; and 4) immigrated in the 1990s. Type of residence includes those who live in metropolitan areas and those who do not live in metropolitan areas.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents children's race by racial combination of intermarried couples. Although we expect to see, by definition, all children are classified as biracial, only over half of children born to African American-white couples (64.7%) and Asian American-white couples (56.4) were identified with two races. Of those who were identified with single race, over a quarter of

children born to Asian American-white couples were identified with white while a quarter of children born to African American-white couples were identified with black. Children born to African American-white couples tend be classified as black while children born to Asian American-white couples tend to be classified as white. American Indian-white couples seem to prefer single race classification to biracial classification for their children. One third identified their children with white while almost half classified their children as American Indian.

(Table 2 about here)

Because of the history of frequent interracial marriages between American Indians and whites, the number of couples in which one spouse is white and the other spouse is American Indian-white (3,091) is close to the number in which one spouse is white and the other spouse is American Indian (4,145). A comparison of racial identification for couples in which one spouse is white and the other spouse is white and minority shares one common theme: almost none were classified as minority (0.5% as black, 0.7% as Asian American, and 1.3% as American Indian, respectively). While close to half of intermarried couples in which one spouse is Asian-white or Indian-white identified their children with white, less than one third (29.6%) of intermarried couples in which one spouse is black-white did so. As described above, I included mixed-race individuals as part of single-race minorities in the models.

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for all variables used in the regression analyses for African American-white, Asian American-white, and American Indian-white couples. African American-white couples had the lowest percentage identifying their children with white (11.9%). Asian American-white couples had the lowest percentage identifying their children with Asian American (13.3%). American Indian-white couples favored single race identification for their children (27.8% as Indian and 41.2% as white).

(Table 3 about here)

Children with a minority father and a white mother had higher percentages being identified with minorities than children with a white father and a minority mother. Black male-white female couples identified 25.1% of their children with black but only 8.4% with white while black female-white male couples classified only 15.8% of their children black but 23.2% white. Sex differences for Asian American-white couples are smaller. More Asian American male-white female couples identified their children with Asian American than did Asian American female-white male couples (16.5% versus 11.8%). For Asian American-white couples, sex of the minority parent made almost no difference in identifying children with white. Sex differences were the smallest for American Indian-white couples in racial identification of their children. Over three quarters of the children born to African American-white couples (4100 / (4100+1278)) had African American fathers and white mothers. In contrast, two thirds of the children born to Asian American-white couples (4854 / (4854+2386)) had white fathers and Asian American mothers. This partly explains why more children were identified as minority for black-white couples than for Asian American-white couples.

Whether the minority spouse or the white spouse is the householder has a strong effect on racial identification for black-white couples and American Indian-white couples but a weak effect for Asian American-white couples. For black-white couples, children were more likely identified with black and less likely identified with white for the black spouse who was the householder than for the white spouse who was the householder (26.2% as black and 7.4% as white for the former and 17.8% as black and 19.0% as white for the latter). Same patterns held true for American Indian and white couples.

Educational combination of intermarried couples does not have much impact regardless of race of the minority spouse. The exception is that college educated black-white and Asian American-white couples were more likely to identify their children biracial compared to their counterparts of other educational combinations. Immigrant black-native white couples were less likely to identify their children with black and more likely to identify their children with white compared to native black-native white couples. The exception is for black spouses who immigrated into the United States in the 1990s. In contrast, immigrant Asian-native white couples were more likely to identify their children with Asian American and less likely to identify their children with white compared to native Asian-native white couples.

There are strong differences between American Indian-white who live in metropolitan areas and those who do not live in these areas. For those who live in metropolitan areas, 21.4% classified their children American Indian while 46.3% classified their children white. In contrast, for those who live in non-metropolitan areas, 35.1% classified their children American Indian while 35.3% classified their children white.

Predicting Children's Race by Race of the Minority Parent

To determine the net effect of each variable, I turn into the results from multinomial logistic regression models. In Table 4, the first two columns are estimated odds of the multinomial logistic regression models for African American-white couples. Children's race, the dependent variable, has three categories: biracial (the reference group), black, and white. The middle two columns are estimated odds for Asian American-white couples (Asian and white with biracial as the reference group). The last two columns are estimated odds for American Indian-white couples (American Indian and white with biracial as the reference group).

(Table 4 about here)

Sex of the minority spouse has a strong impact on the child's race. Black male-white female couples are 47% less likely to identify their children as white than are white male-black female couples. The effect is insignificant for predicting children's black race. The effect, however, is picked up by the minority spouse's householder status given that 76% of African American men are householders. Black-white couples in which the black spouse is the householder are 32% more likely to classify their children black than those in which the white spouse is the householder. Asian American male-white female couples are 113% more likely to classify their children Asian American than are Asian American female-white male couples. However, sex of the Asian American spouse does not affect white identification of children. For Asian American-white couples, householder status does not affect racial identification of their children. Whether the minority is a householder has stronger effect on children's racial identification for African American-white couples and American Indian-white couples than for Asian American-white couples.

Whether the minority spouse is biracial has a strong impact on their children's race identification. African American-white and Asian American-white couples in which the minority spouse is biracial are less likely to classify their children only as black or only as Asian but 141% and 81% more likely to classify their children as white than those in which the minority spouse has a single race. For American Indian-white couples, being biracial for American Indians reduces the likelihood of their children identified with American Indian only and also the likelihood identified with white only. It suggests that American Indian-white couples in which the minority spouse has part white race tend to classify their children white and American Indian.

Educational attainment of intermarried couples is not significantly associated with their children's identification in the model. For black-white couples, those with high school or less are least likely to classify their children as both black and white; those with college and more are more likely to classify their children white than to classify their children black although biracial identification are the most likely outcome. Educational effect is almost nonexistent for Asian American-white couples. For American Indian-white couples, those with better education are more likely than those with high school education or less to identify their children with white; those with college and more are more likely to identify their children with white than are those with other levels of educational attainment. It is not evident that one spouse uses educational advantage to impose his/her own racial identity on their children.

Native-born minorities tend to have strong racial awareness and should be more likely to classify their children as minorities than their foreign-born counterparts. This hypothesis is partially supported. African American-white couples with the black spouse being an immigrant were less likely to classify their children black but the effect is not significant. The couples with the black spouse being a recent immigrant are 97% more likely to identify their children with black, but also 99% more likely to identify their children with white. Asian American-white couples with the Asian spouse being an immigrant are less likely to classify their children Asian American than those with a native born Asian spouse. The couples in which the minority spouse is a recent immigrant or a native-born tend to identify their children with minorities. In contrast, earlier immigrants are less likely to identify their children with minorities. They may be likely to reject their cultural roots to fit into mainstream society (Gans 1992).

Where intermarried couples live affects racial identification. African American-white couples and American Indian-white couples living in metropolitan areas are less likely to classify

their children minority than those living in non- metropolitan areas. However, African American-white couples living in metropolitan areas are 45% less likely to classify their children white than those living in non-metropolitan areas. In contrast, American Indian and white couples are 19% more likely to classify their children white than those living in non-metropolitan areas.

Predicting Children's Race, Pooled Sample

Analyses in Table 4 do not explain differences in racial identification by race of the minority parent. In Table 5, I pool intermarried couples together to examine the effect of race of the minority spouse. In model 1, Asian American-white couples are 31% less likely to identify their children with minority race but 211% more likely to identify their children with white than African American-white couples. American Indian-white couples are 155% more likely to identify their children with minority race and 629% more likely to identify their children with white than African American-white couples. This model suggests distinctive patterns of these three groups. African American-white couples tend to identify their children with black race; Asian American-white couples tend to identify their children with white race; American Indian-white couples tend not to identify their children with biracial – American Indian and white.

(Table 5 about here)

In Model 2, the effect of race of the minority spouse becomes mixed after couple-level variables are taken into account. Asian American-white couples have similar odds of identifying their children minority as African American-white couples, but the difference in identifying children with white remains unchanged. On the other hand, American Indian-white couples are even more likely to identify their children with minority than African American-white couples.

Model 3 introduces interactions between race of the minority parent and couple-level characteristics. After the interactions are taken into account, race of the minority spouse remains strongly significant. Because of the interactions, the effect of race of the minority spouse is when other variables are equal to 0 (the minority spouse is female, not a householder, has no part white race, has high school education or less, a native born, and not living in metropolitan areas). Most of the interactions are in the expected directions as described in Table 4. However, there are three significant findings. First, among intermarried couples in which the minority spouse is biracial, African American-white couples are much more likely to identify their children with white than are Asian American-white couples and American Indian-white couples. Second, among intermarried couples both with college education, Asian American-white couples are more likely to identify their children with minority race and less likely to identify their children with white race compared to African American-white couples. And third, urban/rural divide is very strong for American Indian-white couples in classifying their children's race. The effect is much stronger compared to other intermarried couples.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The 2000 Census provides opportunities to millions of mixed-race individuals to report their multiple racial identities. They no longer need to agonize over which single race fits their identities. However, not every mixed-race individual takes up these opportunities. Some continue to identify themselves with one single race. These decisions are unlikely to be personal and are constrained by their physical looks, socialization, and their receptions in mainstream society. Census data, unfortunately, do not allow us to examine who among the mixed-race individuals did not identify with multiple races. This paper attempts to answer indirectly this

question by examining how intermarried couples classify their children's race(s). Among children born to intermarried couples, who are identified with single race rather than two races? If single race, which race are the children to be identified with?

The answer to this question is not straightforward. It depends on race of the minority spouse. In general, African American-white and Asian American-white couples are more likely to identify their children with two races rather than to identify them with one race. However, when they identify their children with one single race, different patterns emerge. African American-white couples tend to classify their children black while Asian American-white couples tend to classify their children white. This pattern resembles the results from the 1990 Census when intermarried couples must report one race for their biracial children (Qian Forthcoming). Historically, individuals with part black ancestry were typically identified black. Many intermarried African American-white couples still follow this tradition, despite their options of two-race identification for their children. In contrast, individuals with part Asian American ancestry were more likely to be identified with white because of the push factor from ethnically homogeneous Asian American communities. American Indian-white couples are least likely to identify their children with biracial – white and American Indian. However, where intermarried couples live determine which single race they are likely to identify their children with. American Indian-white couples living in urban areas tend to identify their children with white and those living elsewhere tend to identify their children with American Indian – a pattern also evident from earlier censuses (Eschbach 1995; Qian Forthcoming).

Although educational attainment does not have a strong effect on racial identification of children, highly educated intermarried couples have their unique patterns. Among intermarried couples both with college education, Asian American-white couples are more likely to classify

their children minority race and less likely to identify their children with white race compared to African American-white couples. This suggests that well-educated Asian American-white couples may have stronger minority identity, but it also could also indicate that well-educated intermarried African Americans tend to have lighter skin tone than their less educated counterparts (Keith and Herring 1991).

Children's race is more often identified with that of the father for Asian American-white couples and more often identified with that of the householder for African American-white and American Indian-white couples. These results concur with previous studies on ethnic options among whites. Whites with multiple European ethnic backgrounds have their father's surname so they identify with their father's ethnic identity (Waters 1990). The fact that most householders are male indicates that the minority spouse who is a male and/or a householder has greater say in racial identification of their children. At least, they use surnames to justify their children's minority racial identification.

Minority identity is stronger for intermarried couples in which the minority spouse is native-born than those in which the minority spouse is foreign-born. Racial awareness for the native born is strong as a result of direct intergroup contact and competition in mainstream society (Portes 1984). In contrast to European Americans whose connection to their ethnicity faded into the twilight of ethnicity, adaptation for racial minorities solidifies their racial identities. Immigrants, on the other hand, may not have racial identities that are as strong as those of their native-born counterparts. They may identify their children as white as a way to distance their children from their native-born peers (Waters 1999).

REFERENCES

Davis, F. James. 1991. *Who Is Black?* University Park: The Pennsylvanica State University Press.

Eschbach, Karl. 1995. "The Enduring and Vanishing American Indian: American Indian Population Growth and Intermarriage in 1990." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18:89-108.

Eschbach, Karl, Khalil Supple, and C. Mattew Snipp. 1998. "Changes in Racial Identification and the Educational Attainment of American Indians, 1970-1990." *Demography* 35:35-43.

Gans, Herbert J. 1992. "Second-Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the Post-1965 American Immigrants." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15:173-192.

Goldstein, Joshua R. and Ann J. Morning. 2000. "The Multiple-Race Population of the United States: Issues and Estimates." *PNAS* 97:6230-6235.

Gordon, Milton M. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Harris, David. 1994. "The 1990 Census Count of American Indians: What Do the Numbers Really Mean?" *Social Science Quarterly* 75:580-93.

Jones, Nicholas and Amy Symens Smith. 2001. "The Two or More Races Population: 2000." in *Census 2000 Brief*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

Jones, Rhett S. 1994. "The End of Africanity? The Biracial Assault on Blackness." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 18:201-210.

Keith, Verna M. and Cedric Herring. 1991. "Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community." *American Journal of Sociology* 97:760-78.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1985. "Unhyphenated Whites in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 8:159-180.

Liebler, Carolyn A. 1996. "American Indian Ethnic Identity: Analysis of Tribal Specification in the 1990 Census." Cneter for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Nagel, Joane. 1995. "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity." *American Sociological Review* 60:947-965.

—. 1996. *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Olzak, Susan. 1983. "Contemporary Ethnic Mobilization." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9:355-74.

Park, Robert E. and Ernest W. Burgess. 1969. *Introduction to the Science of Sociology. 1921 Reprint*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Portes, Alejandro. 1984. "The Rise of Ethnicity: Determinants of Ethnic Perceptions among Cuban Exiles in Miami." *American Sociological Review* 49:387-397.

Qian, Zhenchao. Forthcoming. "Options: Racial/Ethnic Identification of Children of Intermarried Couples." *Social Science Quarterly*.

Saenz, Rogelio , Sean-Shong Hwang, Benigno E. Aguirre, and Robert N. Anderson. 1995. "Persistence and Change in Asian Identity among Children of Intermarried Couples." *Sociological Perspectives* 38:175-194.

Sandefur, Gary D. and McKinnell Trudy. 1986. "American Indian Intermarriage." *Social Science Research* 15:347-371.

Schuman, Howard, Charlotte Steeh, Lawrence Bobo, and Maria Krysan. 1997. *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Snipp, C. Mattew. 2002. "American Indians: Clues to the Future of Other Racial Groups." Pp. 189-214 in *The New Race Question: How the Census Counts Multiracial Individuals*, edited by J. Perlmann and M. C. Waters. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Spickard, Paul R. 1989. *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

—. 1992. "The Illogic of American Racial Categories." Pp. 12-23 in *Racially Mixed People in America*, edited by M. P. P. Root. Newbury Park: Sage Publication.

Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

—. 1999. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Xie, Yu and Kimberly Goyette. 1997. "The Racial Identification of Biracial Children with One Asian Parent: Evidence from the 1990 Census." *Social Forces* 76:547-70.

Table 1. Child's Race/Ethnicity for Latino and Non-Latino White Couples

Child's Race	% Distribution	
White	23.1	
Black	0.1	
Indian	0.2	
Hispanic	0.4	
White and Other	2.1	
White and Hispanic	14.5	
Other and Hispanic	26.0	
Multiracial and Hispanic	31.9	
Other Categories	1.8	
Total	100%	10,448

Table 2. Child's Race/Ethnicity by Racial/Ethnic Combination of Intermarried Couples

	Child's Race/Ethnicity				
Couples' Combination	White	Minority Race	White-Minority	Total	
African American and White	9.8	25.5	64.7	100%	4,813
Asian American and White	27.1	16.6	56.4	100%	5,760
American Indian and White	33.5	47.6	19.0	100%	4,145
White-Black and White	29.6	0.5	69.9	100%	565
White-Asian and White	48.2	0.7	51.1	100%	1,480
White-Indian and White	51.5	1.3	47.2	100%	3,091

Table 3. Percentage of Minority/White Couples' Children Identified as Minority by Minority Spouses' Race/Ethnicity and Other Characteristics

	Race/Ethnicity of the Minority Spouse					
	Black		Asian		Indian	
	% as Black	% as White	% as Asian	% as White	% as Indian	% as White
Total	22.9	11.9	13.3	31.4	27.8	41.2
	(5,378)		(7,240)		(7,236)	
Sex of the Minority Spouse						
Male	25.1	8.4	16.5	30.6	29.2	40.8
	(4,100)		(2,386)		(3,617)	
Female	15.8	23.2	11.8	31.8	26.4	41.6
	(1,278)		(4,854)		(3,619)	
Minority Spouse as Householder						
Yes	26.2	7.4	15.8	30.4	30.4	39.2
	(3,293)		(2,448)		(3,678)	
No	17.8	19.0	12.0	31.9	25.1	43.3
	(2,085)		(4,792)		(3,558)	
Minority Spouse with Part White Race						
Yes	0.5	29.6	0.7	48.2	1.3	51.5
	(565)		(1,480)		(3,091)	
No	25.5	9.8	16.6	27.1	47.6	33.5
	(4,813)		(5,760)		(4,145)	
Couples' Educational Combination						
High School or Less	22.5	20.0	11.8	38.8	29.8	36.2
	(948)		(459)		(1,536)	
Some College	23.1	9.2	14.1	36.6	27.7	41.0
	(1,102)		(1,067)		(1,383)	
College and More	15.4	16.0	12.2	24.7	22.1	49.8
	(693)		(2,580)		(653)	
Minority Better Educated	22.9	11.4	14.5	32.7	29.6	42.5
	(1,455)		(1,573)		(1,721)	
Minority Less Educated	22.1	11.3	13.9	35.3	26.6	41.2
	(1,180)		(1,561)		(1,943)	
Nativity Status of the Minority Spouse						
Native Born	23.0	11.4	12.0	34.5	27.9	41.2
	(4,992)		(3,003)		(7,135)	
Immigrated before 1980	16.1	21.0	12.1	30.3	23.1	40.0
	(143)		(1,639)		(65)	
Immigrated in the 1980s	18.2	14.7	13.7	30.3	33.3	55.6
	(143)		(1,297)		(18)	
Immigrated in the 1990s	33.0	18.0	17.7	26.6	5.6	33.3
	(100)		(1,301)		(18)	
Living in Metropolitan Areas						
Yes	22.3	10.7	13.2	30.7	21.4	46.3
	(4,283)		(6,194)		(3,851)	
No	25.3	16.6	14.2	35.7	35.1	35.3
	(1,095)		(1,046)		(3,385)	

Note: Figures in the parentheses are the total for each category.

Table 4. Odds from the Logistic Regression of Minority or White Identification of Children Born to Minority/White Couples on Selected Independent Variables[1]

	Black/White Couples		Asian/White Couples		Indian/White Couples	
	Black	White	Asian	White	Indian	White
Sex of the Minority Spouse (Female = 0)						
Male	**1.10**	**0.52** ***	**2.12** ***	**1.04**	0.98	1.17 *
Minority Spouse as Householder (No=0)						
Yes	**1.33** ***	**0.54** ***	0.85	0.87	**1.38** ***	**0.86** *
Minority Spouse with Part White Race (No=0)						
Yes	**0.02** ***	**2.40** ***	**0.04** ***	**1.80** ***	**0.01** ***	**0.61** ***
Couples' Educational Combination (Both High School or Less = 0)						
Minority Better Educated	0.70 ***	0.75 **	1.04	0.87	1.22 *	1.40 ***
Minority Less Educated	0.63 ***	0.78 *	1.07	0.99	1.03	1.21 **
Both College and More	**0.48** ***	**0.93**	0.70 **	0.57 ***	**1.08**	**1.63** ***
Both Some College	0.66 ***	0.63 ***	1.11	1.02	1.14	1.23 **
Nativity Status of the Minority Spouse (Native-Born = 0)						
Immigrated before 1980	**0.79**	**2.17** ***	0.74 ***	0.96	0.80	0.80
Immigrated in the 1980s	0.88	1.12	0.83 *	1.00	1.81	3.37
Immigrated in the 1990s	2.01 ***	2.09 **	**1.12**	**0.82** **	0.06 ***	0.35 **
Whether Couples Living in Metropolitan Areas (No = 0)						
Yes	**0.80** ***	**0.55** ***	0.84	0.85 **	**0.61** ***	**1.19** ***
Number of Cases	5,378		7,240		7,236	
df	22		22		22	
-2 log-likelihood	681		707		2,647	

* p <.1, ** p < .05, *** p<.01 (two-tailed tests). Bold Coefficients indicate significance at the .01 level and underlined coefficients indicate significance at the .1 level between minority and white identificaiton.

[1] The reference category is biracial.

Table 5. Odds from the Logistic Regression of Minority or White Identification of Children Born to Intermarried Couples on Selected Independent Variables[1]

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Minority	White	Minority	White	Minority	White
Race/Ethnicity of the Minority Spouse (Black=0)						
Asian American	**0.69** ***	**3.11** ***	**1.09**	**3.31** ***	**0.64** **	**1.22**
American Indian	**2.55** ***	**7.29** ***	**4.65** ***	**6.57** ***	4.82 ***	2.07 ***
Sex of the Minority Spouse (Female=0)						
Male			1.12 *	1.02	**1.10**	**0.52** ***
Male*Asian American					1.93 ***	1.98 ***
Male*American Indian					**0.89**	**2.23** ***
Minority Spouse as Householder (No=0)						
Yes			**1.30** ***	**0.80** ***	**1.32** ***	**0.54** ***
Yes*Asian American					**0.64** **	**1.60** ***
Yes*American Indian					**1.04**	**1.59** ***
Minority Spouse with Part White Race (No=0)						
Yes			**0.02** ***	**1.17** ***	**0.02** ***	**2.40** ***
Yes*Asian American					2.02	0.75 **
Yes*American Indian					0.57	0.26 ***
Couples' Educational Combination (Both High School or Less =0)						
Minority Better Educated			0.91	1.06	0.70 ***	0.75 **
Minority Better Educated*Asian American					1.48 **	1.16
Minority Better Educated*American Indian					1.74 ***	1.87 ***
Minority Less Educated			**0.83** ***	**1.04**	0.63 ***	0.78 *
Minority Less Educated*Asian American					1.70 ***	1.27
Minority Less Educated*American Indian					1.63 ***	1.55 ***
Both College and More			**0.62** ***	**0.80** ***	**0.48** ***	**0.93**
Both College and More*Asian American					**1.46** *	**0.62** **
Both College and More*American Indian					2.26 ***	1.76 ***
Both Some College			0.89 *	1.03	0.66 ***	0.63 ***
Both Some College*Asian American					1.69 **	1.62 **
Both Some College*American Indian					1.74 ***	1.95 ***
Nativity Status of the Minority Spouse (Native-Born=0)						
Immigrant Arrived Prior to 1980			0.73 ***	0.91	**0.79**	**2.17** ***
Before 1980*Asian American					0.95	0.44 ***
Before 1980*American Indian					1.02	0.37 ***
Immigrant Arrived in the 1980s			0.79 **	0.92	0.88	1.12
1980s*Asian American					0.94	0.90
1980s*American Indian					2.05	3.00
Immigrant Arrived in the 1990s			**1.05**	**0.77** ***	2.01 ***	2.09 **
1990s*Asian American					0.56 **	0.39 ***
1990s*American Indian					0.03 ***	0.17 ***
Whether Couples Living in Metropolitan Areas (No = 0)						
Yes			**0.68** ***	**0.97**	**0.80** ***	**0.55** ***
Yes*Asian American					1.06	1.55 ***
Yes*American Indian					**0.77** **	**2.18** ***
Number of Cases	19,854		19,854		19,854	
df	4		26		70	
-2 log-likelihood	2,294		5,692		6,329	

* p <.1, ** p < .05, *** p<.01 (two-tailed tests). Bold Coefficients indicate significance at the .01 level and underlined coefficients indicate significance at the .1 level between minority and white identificaiton.

[1] The reference category is biracial.