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in the 2000 and 2010 Census**

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September 21, 2012

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### **Abstract**

Many studies have found that multiracial identity and identification is fluid and situational (Doyle and Kao 2007, Harris and Sim 2002, Hitlin et. al 2006, Rockquemore and Arend 2003, Terry and Winston 2010). This study seeks to improve understanding of the fluid and situational nature of multiracial identity longitudinally. Utilizing race responses from matched data between Census 2000 and 2010 Census, this study will evaluate individuals who report multiple races in one census but report a single race in another despite the opportunity to select multiple categories in both censuses.

### **Introduction**

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revised Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, *Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting*. Responding to increasing criticism that only allowing single race reporting in federal data denies multiracial individuals and parents of multiracial children the opportunity to report their heritage, the new standards, the 1997 *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, instructed federal agencies to allow respondents to choose one or more races. All federal agencies were required to adopt this change by December 2002.

Many studies have found that multiracial identity and identification is fluid and situational (Doyle and Kao 2007, Harris and Sim 2002, Hitlin et. al 2006, Rockquemore and Arend 2003, Terry and Winston 2010). How a race question is asked or worded on a survey may influence reporting behavior. In the 1996 Targeted Race and Ethnicity Test, using the instruction “mark all that apply” versus “mark one or more” influenced reporting behavior for particular race groups (U.S. Census Bureau 1996). Respondents may also choose to report different identities depending on the circumstances or situation. For instance, Rockquemore and Arend

(2003) find that some multiracial individuals who have “White *and* Black” heritage and identify more closely with their White heritage will claim their Black heritage when it becomes advantageous, such as when filling out college applications.<sup>1</sup>

This study seeks to improve understanding of the fluid and situational nature of multiracial identity longitudinally for the adult population in the United States. Utilizing 2000 Census and 2010 Census data, this study will evaluate individuals who report multiple races in one census year but a single race in another census despite the opportunity to select multiple categories in both censuses. This paper will also use American Community Survey (ACS) data and will employ multinomial logistical regression to estimate how person characteristics and geography are associated with changing one’s reported race.

### **Situational and Fluid Identity**

Census 2000 represented the first opportunity for respondents to report multiple races in a decennial census. The question on race in Census 2000 instructed the respondent to “Mark one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be” (see Appendix 1). The wording of the race item changed between Census 2000 and the 2010 Census. The question on race in the 2010 Census was altered and shortened to instruct the respondent to “*Mark one or more boxes*” (see Appendix 2). The 2010 Census form also differed from the Census 2000 form by adding examples to the “Other Asian” response category and the “Other Pacific Islander” category. Together, these changes in wording may have affected how respondents considered the question, “*What is this person’s race?*” This could create an instance in which situational identity is evidenced by a change in reporting multiple races in 2000 and 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Multiracial groups are denoted by quotations around combinations with the conjunction *and* in bold and italicized print to indicate the separate race groups that comprise the particular combination.

Research has also suggested that situational identity may often be available to multiracial individuals belonging to certain groups such as “Asian *and* White” and “American Indian or Alaska Native *and* White,” where there may be more flexibility in racial identity relative to “Black *and* White” respondents (Doyle and Kao 2007). If so, then we expect to see more stability in multiple-race reporting for some groups relative to others in the 2000 and 2010 Census.

Geography can influence multiracial identification and fluidity as well. The one drop rule has dominated racial thinking in the United States overall, but has a stronger impact in the South where it was conceived (Wright 1994).<sup>2</sup> Other areas of the country that have more diverse populations such as California and Hawaii and where the one-drop rule is a less entrenched part of their history may shape multiracial identity and identification differently. Harris and Sim (2002) find that in the South, “Black *and* White” respondents are less likely to report White, which they attribute to the historic significance of the one-drop rule. However, it is unclear whether racial identification would be more or less fluid in areas where multiracial identities are more widely accepted or areas dominated by a history of the one-drop rule. In areas where multiracial identities are more accepted, it may be that individuals feel more comfortable expressing their diversity in multiple ways and have the opportunity to explore their identity, potentially resulting in fluid and changing race responses. Alternatively, we may observe less fluidity in areas that historically are more accepting of racial identities, as multiracial individuals may experience less conflict about their identities in these environments.

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<sup>2</sup> The one-drop rule was used to racially define mixed race individuals of African descent in the United States as Black, meaning that if an individual had any Black African ancestry or one drop of African blood they would be categorized as Black.

The racial composition of the area that one lives in can also influence multiracial identification. Herman (2004) finds that part Hispanics who live in White neighborhoods are more likely to identify as White.<sup>3</sup> Harris and Sim (2002) similarly find that “Asian *and* White” youth who live in White neighborhoods are more likely to identify with White when asked what they would report as a single race. This association was also found among “White *and* Black” youth, but to a lesser extent. While the racial composition of where one lives may affect multiracial identification, it is less clear how it may be associated with its fluid nature. This study seeks to evaluate if the racial composition of where multiracial individuals live influences fluidity in their identification. In particular, this study seeks to evaluate whether areas that are more racially diverse promote racial stability or fluidity in identification versus those that are more homogenous. Preliminary research comparing race reporting in Housing and Urban Development data with race reporting in the 2010 Census suggests that multiracial persons living in more diverse areas exhibit more stability in reporting a multiracial identity (Rastogi et al. 2012).

Studies have also looked at how socioeconomic status affects multiple-race reporting, but the focus has not been on the fluidity of multiple-race identification, rather choices respondents make at a single point in time. For instance, looking at several socioeconomic variables, Khanna (2004) finds that father’s education increased the likelihood that “Asian *and* White” respondents report their identity as White. However, she found no relationship between multiple-race identity and parental income and mother’s education. Herman (2004) finds that neighborhood wealth as a measure for socioeconomic status impacts multiple-race reporting among Hispanics

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<sup>3</sup> The Herman study treats Hispanic origin as a race, therefore we use the terminology “race” to refer to Hispanics to describe the study’s findings. The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the Office of Management and Budget’s 1997 *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, where ethnicity (Hispanic Origin) and race are two different concepts.

who are more likely to report White if they live in a wealthier neighborhood. Socioeconomic status may also influence the fluidity or stability of multiracial identification. Doyle and Kao (2007) find that mother's education increases the likelihood of reporting the same racial response over time. They posit that increased financial resources may allow parents to choose neighborhoods and schools that are more integrated.

This paper also examines the relationship between age and fluidity of multiracial responses. Findings from Harris and Sim (2002) suggest that there is likely a cohort effect in relation to how multiracial individuals experience, view, and report their identity. They find that the experiences that cohorts have under different racial regimes affects their identification, where the experience of older cohorts is dominated by the one-drop rule racial regime and younger cohorts experience a regime that incorporates ideas about the virtues of diversity.

This paper will also evaluate how assimilation of multiple-race immigrants may be associated with fluidity of multiracial responses. Immigrants to the United States are introduced to new racial and ethnic terms, definitions, and hierarchies. Through the process of assimilation their racial identity is likely to undergo transformations. We hypothesize that immigrants are more likely to change their multiracial reporting than non-immigrants. Similarly, information about respondents' English language ability, time spent in the United States, and citizenship will all influence changes in multiple-race reports.

Past research has suggested that gender may also influence the stability of multiracial responses. Doyle and Kao (2007) found that gender is associated with fluidity of multiracial identification. They posit that men are less influenced by how others perceive them than women. However, preliminary research on multiracial reporting in HUD and the 2010 Census suggests that gender is not a significant predictor of who will consistently report multiracial status across

surveys or who will switch between single race and multi-race reporting (Rastogi et al. 2012). For this paper, we include gender as a control rather than as a variable for analysis.

As the data for this paper are longitudinal, we will measure who reports race responses for the household, and whether there was a change in who reported a person's race between 2000 and 2010. We will analyze whether this influences fluidity or stability in reporting multiracial status. It is possible that persons who report for themselves in 2010 but were reported by a parent in 2000 may exhibit more fluidity in multiracial reporting, and this itself may be affected by demographic characteristics.

### **Data and Methodology**

There were 6.8 million persons in the 2000 Census that reported Two or More Races and 9.0 million persons in the 2010 Census that reported Two or More Races. We match persons in both Census 2000 and 2010 Census to get a measure of how many people reported multiple races in Census 2000 and also in the 2010 Census, how many reported a single race in Census 2000 and multiple races in the 2010 Census, and how many reported multiple races in Census 2000 and a single race in the 2010 Census. These three categories form the dependent variable for this paper. Records are matched using name, date of birth, and address data. Data for this study consist of race response records for the adult population, defined as persons age 18 and above in the 2010 Decennial Census.

Using multinomial logistic regression, we will estimate the association of changing one's report from multiracial to a single race or vice versa with 2000 and 2010 Decennial census variables of age, who reported the race, state, and tract-level racial composition. The model will include ACS socioeconomic indicators of education, income, and labor force status and with ACS assimilation indicators of citizenship status, English language ability, and year of entry for the foreign born. Sex will be a control in the model.

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**Appendix 1. Reproduction of the Question on Race From Census 2000**

**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     Native Hawaiian

Chinese     Korean     Guamanian or Chamorro

Filipino     Vietnamese     Samoan

Other Asian — *Print race.* ↴     Other Pacific Islander — *Print race.* ↴

\_\_\_\_\_

Some other race — *Print race.* ↴

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

**Appendix 2. Reproduction of the Question on Race From Census 2010**

**6. What is this person's race?** Mark  one or more boxes.

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, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* ↘

Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.* ↘

Some other race — *Print race.* ↘

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 questionnaire.