

DIMENSIONS OF SELF IDENTIFICATION AMONG MULTIRACIAL AND MULTIETHNIC RESPONDENTS IN SURVEY INTERVIEWS

Timothy P. Johnson, University of Illinois at Chicago,
Jared B. Jobe, National Center for Health Statistics,
Diane O'Rourke, University of Illinois at Urbana,
Seymour Sudman, University of Illinois at Urbana,
Richard Warnecke, University of Illinois at Chicago,
Noel Chavez, University of Illinois at Chicago,
Gloria Chapa-Resendez, University of Illinois at Chicago, and
Patricia Golden, National Center for Health Statistics

KEYWORDS

Multiracial, Race, Ethnicity, Self-Reports

ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings from a laboratory study designed to investigate self identification among 69 multiracial and multiethnic women. Respondent reactions to two current questionnaire formats for collecting racial information, and a third version that includes a "multiracial" response option, were examined. Findings suggest that respondent's racial identification varies considerably across question formats and that persons of mixed heritage prefer a racial identification question that provides them, at a minimum, with the opportunity to acknowledge their multi-cultural background. In addition, many respondents also expressed the desire to identify each of the specific groups that constitute their racial/ethnic background.

INTRODUCTION

Despite its reputation as a cultural "melting pot," there are currently no reliable estimates of the number of multiracial persons in the United States. There is nonetheless a general consensus that the number is growing. During 1995, for instance, it is estimated that there were 200,000 multiracial births in the U.S. (Schodolski, 1996). As the racial and ethnic composition of the country continues to diversify, pressures will increase to more accurately enumerate and study this presumably expanding population. As a prelude to such research, it will be important to develop an awareness and understanding of how persons of mixed heritage identify themselves and navigate social data collection systems that only rarely acknowledge their existence.

Although ethnic identity has been proposed to form during adolescence (e.g., Elkin, 1983; Phinney, 1993), it is apparent from research that the concept of racial and ethnic identity is fluid and dependent upon context (Nagel, 1994). As such, racial and ethnic identity would appear to be more

complex than is assumed by biological models (see e.g., Harris, Consorte, Lang, and Byrne, 1993; Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman, 1992). Multiracial self-identity would appear to be even more complex (e.g., Jacobs, 1992; Pinderhughes, 1995; Stephan, 1992). (For a discussion of some of the methodological issues in research on multiracial people, see Root, 1992.) Yet, there remains little systematic information regarding how multiracial individuals identify themselves (Stephan, 1989). The purpose of this paper is to present preliminary evidence concerned with these questions. Specifically, we compare several alternative survey and statistical formats for collecting racial and ethnic information from multiracial persons and attempt to gauge respondent preferences for each. We also investigate the preferences of these individuals for alternative racial and ethnic labels that are commonly used to self-identify and classify individuals in the United States.

CURRENT CLASSIFICATION PROCEDURES

As an example of current statistical practices, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), uses information from birth certificates to publish data tabulated by the race and ethnicity of the mother and the father. Typically, birth certificate worksheets are completed either by the mothers shortly after giving birth or by the hospital staff. Racial and ethnic identity is obtained from the information provided in items on the birth certificate corresponding to open-formatted items 25 and 26 on the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth (see Form A in Figure 1). NCHS natality statistics do not tabulate the race of the newborn child; rather, statistics are tabulated according to the racial and ethnic identity of the mother. Current coding protocols stipulate that, if more than one race is reported for a parent, only the first race listed is coded. Hence, most if not all multicultural parents are classified as belonging to only a single race, based upon data likely to have been reported in an inconsistent manner.

In addition to health statistics, data classified by race are also collected and used by many other Federal agencies, such as for the decennial census, a variety of civil rights enforcement (e.g., voting, employment, housing, and education), legislative redistricting, and for program administration reporting (see e.g., Bates, de la Puente, DeMaio, and Martin, 1994; Evinger, 1995). Under current guidelines of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (Office of Management and Budget, 1977), statistics are to be presented at a minimum in four categories: "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian or Pacific Islander," "Black," or "White." Form B in Figure 1 provides an example of a survey question that conforms to the OMB racial typology. When using this format, ethnicity (i.e., Hispanic origin) is asked either as a separate question or is combined with race. There is no category of "mixed or other race." As a result, the self-reporting of race and ethnic identity in any data system is problematic in several areas.

First, many people of Hispanic origin do not distinguish between race and ethnicity; many other people of Hispanic origin do not self-identify with any of the current OMB categories. In a recent study among persons of Latino heritage living in the United States, those with Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban heritage preferred by wide margin to self-identify using their specific country of heritage, as opposed to identifying using the general term "Hispanic" (see Bowman, 1994).

Second, persons of mixed race (biracial or multiracial) believe that the OMB single race and ethnic categories do not capture their complete identity. Similarly, people of mixed ethnic origins (e.g., one parent of Hispanic origin, one White parent not of Hispanic origin) must either answer that they are Hispanic or not Hispanic. In the last decennial census where many additional racial and ethnic categories were allowed, almost 10 million people of Hispanic origin classified themselves as "Other" race. A recent study investigating the multiracial issue conducted by the Census Bureau indicates that many respondents do not understand the concept of multiracial. Moreover, in a pretest of 800 households for the Survey on Income and Program Participation, 5-6% of the respondents answered "Multiracial" and two-thirds of those were Hispanic (de la Puente, personal communication).

In 1993, the House Subcommittee on Census, Statistics and Postal Personnel, chaired by Thomas C. Sawyer (D-OH), conducted four hearings on the problems of self-reporting racial and ethnic identity. One of the proposals advanced at those hearings included adding a "multiracial" category (cf. Wright, 1994). Subsequently, in the summer of 1994, OMB held public hearings in Boston, Denver, San Francisco, and Honolulu. As a result of the hearings and the criticism of Directive 15, OMB is now considering changes to the current categories.

METHODS

The data for this study come from interviews with 69 multiracial or multiethnic women aged 18-44 who participated in laboratory thinkaloud interviews with structured probes (cf. Jobe and Mingay, 1990; Willis, Royston, and Bercini, 1991). Eligible respondents had indicated during a telephone screening interview that one of their parents was Black, Native American, Asian, or of Hispanic origin. Table 1 presents the racial and ethnic background of these respondents; because all respondents were of mixed heritage, the figures in Table 1 representing each group are not mutually exclusive. Consequently, each respondent is represented by more than one of the racial/ethnic groups listed.

Interviews were conducted in both the Chicago and Urbana offices of the University of Illinois Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) from December 1994 through May 1995. Respondents were recruited from a variety of sources using convenience and snowball methods. Recruitment advertisements were placed in more than a dozen Chicago and Champaign-Urbana newspapers serving specific community or cultural groups. In addition, over 100 community organizations in the two cities were personally contacted and asked for assistance in identifying multiracial individuals. Recruitment flyers were also posted in the neighborhoods surrounding each college campus. These flyers advertised for respondents who were female, between the ages of 18 and 44, who had "one Hispanic parent (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.) and the other parent not Hispanic or one Black, Asian, or American Indian parent and the other parent of another race." During interviews, each respondent was also encouraged to refer eligible nonrelatives who might be interested in participating. All respondents were reimbursed a small amount for participating.

Early in each interview, respondents were shown and asked to complete portions of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth form concerned with mother's race and Hispanic origin. The Hispanic origin question asked: "OF HISPANIC ORIGIN? (Specify No or Yes - if yes, specify

Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.)." This was followed by an open-ended race question: "RACE - American Indian, Black, White, etc. (Specify below)." In this paper, we refer to this as "Form A." Subsequently, respondents were shown two other versions of the racial identification question that contained varying sets of response options. The second version, labeled "Form B," asked respondents to select from among the following 5 categories: "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian or Pacific Islander," "Black," "White," or "Other (please specify)." The third question version (Form C), was similar to Form B, but also included a "Multiracial" category. The exact wording of each question is presented in Figure 1.

Responses to Form A were coded in accordance with standard NCHS guidelines for the racial and ethnic classification of birth certificate data (National Center for Health Statistics, 1993). For Forms B and C, only minimal recoding of responses was performed. Specifically, "Other-specify" responses were backcoded to specific response categories (i.e., "Black," "White") when they were specified under the "Other" option. Using this information, a series of additional variables was constructed to assess changes in the racial classification of each respondent across each of the three versions of this question. For example, if a respondent was coded as "Black" based upon her responses to Form A, but identified herself as "Other" in response to Form B, she was classified as being of inconsistent status across these question forms. Differences were examined across each pair of question forms (A-B, A-C, B-C).

Respondents were subsequently shown all three versions of the racial/ethnic identification questions and asked: (a) if one version was easier to complete, compared to the others; (b) if one version was more difficult to complete; and (c) which version they thought would produce the most accurate picture of how they classified themselves. In several instances, respondents were unable to distinguish between two or more versions that shared positive or negative features. Consequently, data were coded so that multiple responses to each question could be examined. Tests for differences in responses of persons representing each racial group, compared with all other respondents, were conducted using the chi-square statistic. Because of the number of comparisons being made, a conservative p-value of .001 or less was used in these analyses.

Subsequent to these questions, respondents were asked to participate in a card sorting exercise designed to investigate the dimensionality of their ethnic and racial identifications (Hurtado, Gurin and Peng, 1994). Each respondent was handed a deck of 81 cards containing a variety of terms representing racial (e.g., Biracial, Black, White), ethnic (e.g., Aleut, Hispanic, Korean-American), social role (e.g., daughter, friend, mother), and social class (e.g., middle class, professional, worker) identities. They were asked to sort these cards into two piles, those that did and did not represent terms used by the respondent to think about herself. In the analyses presented here, we focus on a subset of 20 cards that represent primarily racial or Hispanic ethnicity identities.

RESULTS

Response Differences by Question Form

Responses to each form of the racial classification question are presented in Table 2. What is immediately apparent in examining this table are the dramatic differences between respondent

classifications using the open-ended birth certificate coding scheme and each alternative version (Forms B & C) of self-identification. Given the multicultural experience of these respondents, a majority (56.5%) selected an "Other-specify" response option when it was specifically included in Form B. When presented with a "Multiracial" option in Form C, the "Other-specify" choice became less attractive (selected by 7.2%); most elected to specifically identify themselves as multiracial (78.3%).

Changes in respondent racial classification across the three question forms are next summarized in Table 3. Overall, 55.4 percent self-reported their racial identification in response to Form B differently from how they were classified using the birth certificate coding procedures and the information provided in Form A. This disparity is all the more remarkable given the fact that persons "not classified" in Form A and who answered "Other" in Form B were not considered to be changes in classification in these analyses. A large proportion of all respondents (86.2%) also identified themselves differently when asked Form C, which contained the "Multiracial" option, compared to the Form A birth certificate coding algorithm. When answering Forms B and C, most (81.2%) of the sample again identified themselves differently. Much of the change, of course, was a consequence of the introduction of the "multiracial" response option in Form C, which was selected by a majority of all respondents to identify themselves when made available as a response option. Changes across question forms did not vary appreciably by racial and ethnic groups.

Only 10 of 69 respondents (14.5%) did not select either the multiracial or the other-specify category when they were both available in Form C, selecting instead a single category identifying their minority racial background. In all but one of these cases, the parent of majority race (typically the father) was not present for most of the woman's upbringing or the woman had been raised exclusively in the minority community. Thus, except in some of the cases where the person felt multiracial only in a biological sense, the respondents preferred a multiracial identification.

Preferences for Question Forms

Respondent perceptions of and preferences for each question version were next examined. Tables 4 and 5, respectively, present responses to probes concerning which question forms were easiest and most difficult to complete. Table 6 presents information regarding which form respondents thought provided the most accurate picture of how they classified themselves. Because some individuals identified more than one question form in response to one or more of these questions, the percentages presented in these tables sum to more than 100 percent.

Overall, these tables indicate that Form C, which included the "multiracial" option, was considered the easiest to complete version for reporting racial identification (by 52.9%) and was preferred by a majority of respondents as most likely to give an accurate picture of how respondents would classify themselves (by 68.9%). Moreover, of the three versions examined, only a relatively small number of respondents (9.0%) considered Form C to be the most difficult to complete. As might be expected, the key to the overall popularity of this version was inclusion of the "multiracial" response option. Among the reasons given for preference of Form C were the following: "It had all categories and 'other' in addition to 'multiracial'"; "has more choices;" "selected because of 'multiracial' option;" "easier because did not have to pick one race;" "seemed more complete;" and "there was an option that was inclusive." When examined by racial/ethnic groups, persons with one

Native American parent less likely to consider Form C the easiest to complete (Table 4). Rather, members of this group were approximately twice as likely to indicate that they had no preference or to report some other preference.

The least preferred of the versions examined was Form B, which included an "Other-specify" but not a "multiracial" option. Approximately one third (34.3%) thought this version was the most difficult to complete, a third as many as thought this version was easiest to complete (8.8%). About a third (34.4%) also selected Form B as the version that would provide the most accurate picture of how they viewed themselves. A major concern with this option was being limited to the "other-specify" response option for describing one's background. Comments made by respondents echo this concern: "very limited, not accurate of who I am;" "angry, amazed when I see this...feel marginalized;" "limited categories;" "no one wants to be classified 'other'...sounds like an alien, they don't let you say who you are;" "does not have 'multiracial;" "no category applies...'other' is a lazy thing;" and "'other' implies you don't belong to a group." There were no differences across racial groups regarding opinions of Form B.

Form A, the open-ended version used in completing birth certificate forms, was considered easiest to complete by 17.6 percent and most difficult to complete by 25.4 percent; 40.0 percent selected this as their preferred version. Among the comments given by those favoring Form A were the following: "the birth certificate was easier because I can label myself any way I choose to;" "it gives examples, allows you to be more specific;" "I can pick what I want, not restricted to certain choices;" and "because open, not limited to one response." Among the negative comments made about this version were: "doesn't give you choices (rather than open questions);" "did not give options;" "there wasn't an option, and the 'specify' wasn't clear, didn't seem clear that the 'specify' option was for any category;" and "more time consuming but not really more difficult." Multiracial persons with one Black parent were less likely to consider Form A the most accurate question form for self assessment, compared to other respondents (Table 6).

Several respondents (14.5% of the total sample) volunteered an alternative that was not tested as part of this study: permitting multiracial respondents to designate their multiple backgrounds by circling "all that apply." Among the comments suggesting this format were the following: "Card C ...would design to choose all that apply, subheadings under 'multiracial,' specify self or parents;" "design one that you could circle more than one option. It would include every possible racial category;" and "a card like Card B with 'other-specify' but could circle more than one." This potential response format, unfortunately, was not formally examined as part of this study.

Preferences for Alternative Racial and Ethnic Labels

Because the measurement of racial and ethnic identity is largely dependent on the shared use of terminology, it is also important to investigate the degree to which various labels are accepted and used by multiracial persons. As part of this study, preferences for racial and ethnic self identification were assessed using the card sort exercise described earlier. As indicated in Table 7, approximately three-quarters thought of themselves as "multiracial" (73.9%) and "biracial" (71.0%). More than half of respondents with each background except Asian/Pacific Islander also identified as a "Person of Color." Analyses of the card sort exercise also revealed considerable variability in the racial and ethnic labels selected by individuals within each subgroup. Among persons of Asian origin, for

example, 78.9 percent selected the term "Asian American," while 42.1 percent thought of themselves as "Yellow." Among Blacks, the proportion selecting various cards reflective of group membership ranged from 81.6 percent endorsing the label "African American," to 23.7 percent endorsing "Colored." Among persons of Hispanic origin, the proportion selecting relevant identifiers ranged between 83.3 percent (for "Hispanic") and 62.5 percent (for "Latina"). Persons with one parent who was American Indian strongly preferred the term "Native American" (93.8%); less than a third (31.3%) thought of themselves as "Red." Among persons who were part White, however, less than half (43.4%) selected the "White" card as a term they would use for self identification.

Alternative Label Usage

Given the evolving nature of racial and ethnic identification in recent decades, and the growing acceptance of multicultural individuals by society at large, questions were also asked about possible changes in their self identification. Respondents were asked if they had ever reported their racial/ethnic background differently than they usually do now for any reason. Approximately half (49.3%) of the sample reported having done so. Among the reasons for reporting racial and ethnic background differently were growing self awareness and evolving self identification, as well as for perceived advantages in applying for scholarships, loans, school admissions, housing and employment. Others indicated they self identified differently, depending on the context or social situation, or in response to the range of options available on precoded application forms. One respondent indicated that, when confronted with a forced-choice race question, she randomly selected which of her multiple racial backgrounds to report. When asked if they could foresee a future time when they might identify themselves differently, over one-quarter (30.8%) indicated that it was possible they might self-identify in a different manner under some circumstances. There were no racial or ethnic group differences in responses to these questions.

DISCUSSION

This study of a small sample of multiracial women suggests several implications for the collection of survey data and social statistics. Perhaps most importantly, these findings contribute to the growing body of evidence indicating that ethnic and racial identities are far more sensitive to method of data collection than a simple biological model would suggest. Reinterview studies, for example, have demonstrated that respondent-reported race and interviewer-reported race are not always consistent (Hahn, 1994; Massey, 1980; McKenney, Bennett, Harrison, and del Pinal, 1993). Similarly, other research has also demonstrated that self reports are not always consistent with either self or with proxy reports at reinterview (Hahn, 1994), and that responses to self-administered and interviewer-administered questionnaires are inconsistent as well (McKenney, Fernandez, and Masamura, 1985). In a split census experiment conducted in Brazil, the substitution of a more commonly-used term for mixed race persons produced a dramatic increase in the proportion of respondents self identifying as being of mixed race (Harris et al., 1993). Here, we have learned that relatively simple changes in question wording can also have profound effects on the self-reported identities provided by multiracial persons in the United States.

Among the alternatives examined in this study, we have also learned that multiracial respondents largely prefer a question format that permits them to self-identify themselves as "multiracial." Many, in fact, expressed negative emotional reactions to their common experience

of forced categorization into a single racial group or relegation to a residual "Other-specify" category. Simple courtesy alone therefore suggests that researchers make the minor modifications that would be necessary to enable the increasing numbers of multiracial persons in this country to identify themselves in social surveys and other data collection systems. Such a simple change, however, is not free of political ramifications which will also need to be addressed (Schodolski, 1996; Wright, 1994).

A number of respondents also volunteered a preference for a choice not formally offered in this study--that they be allowed to identify each of their multiple racial backgrounds. Others have also recommended a "check all that apply" approach (Anderson and Fienberg, 1995). Given the interest expressed in this approach, it clearly warrants more systematic evaluation. We understand that at least one federal agency is currently sponsoring a formal assessment of a "check all that apply" version of a racial identification question and look forward to their findings. However, there are some serious implications in regard to the statistical use of a non-mutually exclusive coding system.

Future research should also consider that ethnic and racial identification may be particularly fluid among multiracial persons. In the past, sociologists have discussed the likelihood that self identification is situation dependent and that many individuals may "layer" their ethnicities, moving between identities to gain advantage (Nagel, 1994). In support of this hypothesis, Stephan (1989) has reported that 73 percent of a sample of part-Japanese and 44% of a sample of part-Hispanic college students listed their racial and/or ethnic identities differently in various situations. In the present study, half reported having previously reported their racial/ethnic identity differently in the past, and about one-third thought there would be a time in the future when they would identify themselves differently. It will be important for future studies to investigate whether and how various question forms and formats may discourage multiracial persons from consistently reporting their racial and ethnic identification.

These results have implications for how birth certificate and other vital statistic racial/ethnic classifications are coded. More than half of the respondents using Form B and more than four-fifths using Form C identified themselves differently from how they were classified using the existing birth certificate coding procedures. A few states (e.g., Georgia, Michigan, Indiana) now accept "Multiracial" as an answer and code the data accordingly. Similar legislation is pending in several more states. When "Multiracial" is reported, NCHS currently imputes the race using the race reported on previously processed records. As long as the numbers of respondents classified as "Multiracial" remain small, the implications will not be severe for national natality statistics. However, as the number of multiracial persons increase, pressure to consider alternative coding algorithms for the reporting of birth statistics are likely to increase.

Finally, the findings of this study also have implications for any consideration to change the current racial/ethnic categories currently recommended by OMB. First, consider some of the terms currently used on OMB questions on race and ethnicity: "American Indian," "Asian or Pacific Islander," and "Black." Among multiracial respondents in these groups interviewed for this study, none of the above terms is the preferred terms for these groups of respondents as evidenced by the card sorting task. Second, as already discussed, respondents clearly preferred the term "multiracial" to forced categorization in any of the above categories, or to the "Other-Specify" category. Third, as also mentioned earlier, some respondents volunteered a preference for a choice not even presented

in this study--that they be allowed to check all that apply. These data, although representing a relatively small sample of multiracial respondents, nonetheless provide evidence that the current categories employed by federal statistical systems are in all likelihood outdated, as they fail to accommodate this small but rapidly growing component of our population.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Charles Bright, Jane Burris, Ana Chapa and Bernita Rusk for their assistance in conducting this research. This research was supported in part by contract # HHS 0009430486 from the National Center for Health Statistics.

REFERENCES

- ANDERSON, M. and Fienberg, S.E. (1995). Black, white, and shades of gray (and brown and yellow), *Chance*, 8, 15-18.
- BATES, N., de la Puente, M., DeMaio, T. J., and Martin, E. A. (1994). "Research on Race and Ethnicity: Results from Questionnaire Design Tests," *Proceedings of the U.S. Bureau of the Census Annual Research Conference*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, pp. 107-136.
- BOWMAN, K. H. (1994). "What We Call Ourselves," *The Public Perspective*, May/June, pp. 29-31. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (1995). *A CPS Supplement for Testing Methods for Collecting Racial and Ethnic Information: May 1995*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Labor.
- ELKIN, F. (1983). "Family, Socialization, and Ethnic Identity," in K. Ishwaran (ed.), *The Canadian Family*, Beverley Hills, CA: Sage, pp. 145-158.
- EVINGER, S. (1995). "How Shall We Measure Our Nation's Diversity," *Chance*, 8, 7-14.
- HAHN, R.A. (1994). "Identifying Ancestry: Consistency of Racial and Ethnic Identification by Self, Proxy, and Interviewer," *Proceedings of the U.S. Bureau of the Census Annual Research Conference*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, pp. 491-504.
- HARRIS, M., Consorte, J. G., Lang, J., and Byrne, B. (1993). "Who are the Whites?: Imposed Census Categories and the Racial Demography of Brazil," *Social Forces*, 72, 451-462.
- HURTADO, A., Gurin, P., and Peng, T. (1994). "Social Identities-A Framework for Studying the Adaptations of Immigrants and Ethnics: The Adaptations of Mexicans in the United States," *Social Problems*, 41, 129-151.
- JACOBS, J. H. (1992). "Identity Development in Biracial Children," in M. P. P. Root (ed.), *Racially Mixed People in America*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 190-206.
- JOBÉ, J.B., and Mingay, D. J. (1990). "Cognitive Laboratory Approach to Designing Questionnaires

for Surveys of the Elderly," *Public Health Reports*, 105, 518-524.

LAVRAKAS, P. J., Schejbal, J. A., and Smith, T. W. (1994). "The Use of Perception of Ethno-Racial Labels: "African-American" and/or "Black,"" *Proceedings of the U.S. Bureau of the Census Annual Research Conference*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, pp. 505-515.

MASSEY, J. (1980). "Using Interviewer Observed Race and Respondent Reported Race in the Health Interview Survey," *Proceedings of the Section on Social Statistics of the American Statistical Association*, Alexandria, VA: American Statistical Association, pp. 425-428.

MCKENNEY, N., Bennett, C., Harrison, R. and del Pinal, J. (1993). "Evaluating Racial and Ethnic Reporting in the 1990 Census," *Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods of the American Statistical Association*, pp. 66-74.

MCKENNEY, N.R., Fernandez, E.W. and Masamura, W.T. (1985). "The Quality of the Race and Ethnic Origin Information Reporting in the 1990 Census," *Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods of the American Statistical Association*, Alexandria, VA: American Statistical Association, pp. 46-50.

NAGEL, J. (1994). "Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture," *Social Problems*, 41, 152-176.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS. (1993). *Vital Statistics Classification and Coding Instructions for Live Birth Records, 1993*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. (1977). "Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting," *Statistical Policy Directive 15*, May 12. Washington DC: Office of Management and Budget.

PHINNEY, J. S. (1993). "A Three-Stage Model of Ethnic Identity Development in Adolescence," in M. E. Bernal and G. P. Knight (eds.), *Ethnic Identity: Formation and Transmission among Hispanics and Other Minorities*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 61-79.

PINDERHUGHES, E. (1995). "Biracial Identity--Asset or Handicap?" in H. W. Harris, H. C. Blue, and E. E. H. Griffith (eds.), *Racial and Ethnic Identity: Psychological Development and Creative Expression*. New York: Routledge, pp. 73-93.

RODRIGUEZ, C.E., and Cordero-Guzman, H. (1992). "Placing Race in Context," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15, 523-542.

ROEDIGER, H.L., and Neely, J. H. (1982). "Retrieval Blocks in Episodic and Semantic Memory," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 36, 213-242.

ROOT, M.P.P. (1992). "Back to the Drawing Board: Methodological Issues in Research on Multiracial People," in M. P. P. Root (ed.), *Racially Mixed People in America*, Newbury Park, CA:

Sage, pp. 181-189.

SCHODOLSKI, V.J. (1996). "Mixed-Race Americans Feel Boxed in by Forms," *Chicago Tribune*, February 14, p. 8.

STEPHAN, C.W. (1992). "Mixed-Heritage Individuals: Ethnic Identity and Trait Characteristics," in M.P.P. Root (ed.), *Racially Mixed People in America*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 50-63.

WILLIS, G.B., Royston, P.N., and Bercini, D. (1991). "The Use of Verbal Report Methods in the Applied Cognitive Laboratory," *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 5, 251-267.

WRIGHT, L. (1994). "One Drop of Blood," *The New Yorker*, July 25, pp. 46-55.

TABLE 1
RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

	N	Percent
One Hispanic parent	24	34.8
One Asian parent	19	27.5
One Black parent	38	55.1
One Native American parent	16	23.2
One White parent	53	76.8
Total sample	(69)	(100.0)

NOTE: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds of respondents.

TABLE 2
 CLASSIFICATION OF MULTIRACIAL RESPONDENTS USING
 ALTERNATIVE QUESTION FORMS

	Form A ¹	Form B ²	Form C ²
American Indian/Alaskan Native	9.2	7.2	4.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	10.8	8.7	2.9
Black	35.4	21.7	5.8
White	32.3	5.8	1.4
Not classifiable	12.3	na	na
Other specify	na	56.5	7.2
Multiracial	na	na	78.3
Total N	(65)	(69)	(69)

¹Responses are classified according to NCHS Birth Certificate coding algorithms.

²Responses are classified according to self report.

na=Response options not applicable for question form.

Form A is an open-ended question.

Form B is a closed question that includes an "Other-specify" option.

Form C is a closed question that includes "Multiracial" and "Other-specify" options.

TABLE 3

PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WITH CHANGED RACIAL/ETHNIC
CLASSIFICATION ACROSS ALTERNATIVE QUESTION FORMS

	Change from			
	(N)	Form A-Form B	Form A-Form C	Form B-Form C
Total sample	(65)	55.4%	86.2%	81.2%
One Hispanic parent	(22)	63.6	86.4	79.2
One Asian parent	(19)	47.1	94.1	89.5
One Native American parent	(16)	43.8	75.0	75.0
One Black parent	(36)	58.3	88.9	86.8
One White parent	(50)	60.0	86.0	79.2

TABLE 4

RESPONDENT OPINIONS OF EASIEST QUESTION FORM TO COMPLETE

	(N)	Form A	Form B	Form C	Other/No preference
Total sample	(68)	17.6%	8.8%	52.9%	30.9%
One Hispanic parent	(24)	20.8	8.3	45.8	33.3
One Asian parent	(18)	11.1	0.0	72.2	27.8
One Black parent	(38)	13.2	13.2	60.5	26.3
One Native American parent	(16)	6.3	12.5	18.8***	62.5***
One White parent	(52)	21.2	7.7	50.0	30.8

***p <.001.

NOTE: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to multiple responses.

TABLE 5

RESPONDENT OPINIONS OF MOST DIFFICULT QUESTION FORM TO COMPLETE

	(N)	Form A	Form B	Form C	Other/No preference
Total sample	(67)	25.4%	34.3%	9.0%	37.3%
One Hispanic parent	(24)	37.5	12.5	4.2	45.8
One Asian parent	(18)	33.3	38.9	5.6	33.3
One Black parent	(37)	24.3	40.5	10.8	29.7
One Native American parent	(16)	12.5	25.0	18.8	50.0
One White parent	(51)	21.6	41.2	9.8	35.3

NOTE: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to multiple responses.

TABLE 6

RESPONDENT OPINIONS REGARDING QUESTION FORM THAT PROVIDES
MOST ACCURATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

	(N)	Form A	Form B	Form C	Other/No preference
Total sample	(61)	41.0%	34.4%	68.9%	21.3%
One Hispanic parent	(19)	47.4	31.6	52.6	31.6
One Asian parent	(16)	50.0	37.5	75.0	12.5
One Black parent	(34)	23.5***	32.4	73.5	26.5
One Native American parent	(16)	42.9	42.9	78.6	21.4
One White parent	(49)	42.9	34.7	69.4	22.4

***p <.001.

NOTE: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to multiple responses.

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WITH SPECIFIED RACIAL
BACKGROUND* SELECTING VARIOUS CARDS

	Total sample	One Asian parent	One Black parent	One Hispanic parent	One Native American parent	One White parent
Biracial	71.0	89.5	71.1	58.3	50.0	69.8
Multiracial	73.9	73.7	84.2	62.5	68.8	71.7
Person of color	56.5	26.3	76.3	54.2	62.5	56.6
Asian		68.4				
Asian American		78.9				
Pacific Islander		21.1				
Yellow		42.1				
African American			81.6			
Afro-American			34.2			
Black			76.3			
Brown			60.5			
Colored			23.7			
Negro			39.5			
Hispanic				83.3		
Latina				62.5		
Spanish origin				70.8		
American Indian					56.3	
Native American					93.8	
Red					31.3	
White						43.4
(N)	(69)	(19)	(38)	(24)	(16)	(53)

*Not mutually exclusive.

FIGURE 1

WORDING OF ALTERNATIVE QUESTION FORMS

FORM A

"Of Hispanic origin? (SPECIFY NO OR YES--IF YES, SPECIFY CUBAN, MEXICAN, PUERTO RICAN, ETC.)"

"Race-American Indian, Black, White, etc. (SPECIFY BELOW)."

FORM B

"If you were asked to respond to a question about your race and given these categories, how would you respond?"

- American Indian or Alaskan native 1
- Asian or Pacific Islander 2
- Black 3
- White 4
- Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) 5

FORM C

"If you were asked to respond to a question about your race and given these categories, how would you respond?"

- American Indian or Alaskan native 1
- Asian or Pacific Islander 2
- Black 3
- White 4
- Multi-racial 5
- Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) 6