

- Lecture comments
 - pick up from the folder (sorted by first initial of last/family name)
 - Write on it today
 - Give it back at the end of class into the SAME folder you took it out of
- Please reserve back row for Tas
- Sections: No room in 8:50, 1:20, 3:30 unless someone drops. Multiple seats in 9:55 open

Race is Socially Constructed



Discuss: What ideas do we start with?

- What have you learned before about race? What does "race" mean?
- How many races are there? What are the races?
- How do you know what race somebody is?
- Are there differences between races? What are they?
- TO PBS site

- Go to PBS site: guessing races, distributions of traits
- http://www.pbs.org/race/002_SortingPeople/002_00-home.htm

Race & Ethnicity definitions

- “Race” refers to groupings among people that are understood as [note my stress on social construction] having a physical basis
 - Genetic: Breeding populations, lineages, ancestry groups, geographic groups
 - People who have common ancestors tend to be genetically more similar, have common physical traits
 - Broad continental origins
- “Ethnicity” refers to groupings among people based in cultural differences
 - Language, religion, customs

Race & Ethnicity Overlaps

- People COULD adopt any culture (ethnicity) regardless of ancestry (race), but they don’t
 - People of common ancestry (race) tend to have similar culture (ethnicity)
 - People of common culture (ethnicity) tend to marry each other and thus produce physically different ancestry lines (race)
- Thus, “race” and “ethnicity” tend to get blurred in practice, even though they are logically different
 - Historical discussions of “race” always included cultural differences
 - People commonly attribute physical differences to different cultural groups

“Race”: the physical underpinnings

- 99.9% of human genetic characteristics are common to all
- There is a small proportion that varies, and much of this variability is heritable (i.e. people with more recent common ancestors will be more similar than those whose common ancestors are more distant)
- Groups are more physically distinct when geographic or social barriers prevent their intermarriage across generations: this is the physical basis of “race”

Physically, common-ancestor groups nest & overlap: do not form distinct groups

- Single common origin in Africa.
 - More variation WITHIN one region of Africa than between “races”
- Sub-groups within larger groups
- Migration & intermarriage throughout human history
- People from different parts of the world differ in appearance, but with ill-defined boundaries and relatively minor differences between them
 - Outward markers such as skin color, eye shape are found in all “races”

“Race” as a social construction - physical

- Statistical patterns seen as group boundaries
 - Belief that there are 3 (or 4 or 5 or even 10) distinct non-overlapping “races” with well-defined differences
 - Belief that people “really are” one race or the other
 - Reality of mixed ancestry and within-race diversity is downplayed
 - Categories are seen as distinct: you “are” one or the other

“Race” as social construction - cultural

- Physical differences are seen as the CAUSE of cultural differences
- The racial” groups are seen as ranked: some are superior to others. Europeans rank them as: European > Asian > African & American
- Tied to popular ideas of biological evolution developed in “scientific racism” of 19th century: higher “races” are more evolved or more fit

Racial construction is ongoing and changing

- Racial categories & boundaries are not natural but created in response to political boundaries and pressures
- Constructions of race and politicized nature of language go together
- There is always political contestation over categories
 - who is in a group, who is out, what their boundaries are, how many groups there are, what their names are
- Group names & definitions & boundaries in the US today are fluid, shifting

“Race” was created as a social construct to justify domination

- Race as the concept we use today created in the wake of European colonial conquests as justification for domination. In US, specifically as justification for African slavery and displacement of American Indians
- Old contrast was Christian vs. infidel. Debate was whether baptized “Indians” had the rights of personhood. Old ideologies accepted hierarchy, you could enslave or dominate others without needing to justify it.
- “Race” drew on Darwin, used the new biology to create an ideological justification for hierarchy despite Enlightenment ideals of equality: some people are “naturally” superior to others
- The idea that race is biological IS the social construct

Racial boundaries are socially defined

- In US, there is a strong boundary around "Black" and "White" versus others
 - "Black" = any known Black ancestor
 - Many "Black" people have lighter skin than many "White" people
 - Despite mixed descent, "correct" classification as "Black" or "White" is socially important
 - "White" people with dark skins upset if classified as "Black", often ditto "Blacks" with light skin
 - "Passing" = a light-skinned "Black" person "pretends" to be "White"
- "Mixes" between other groups are more recognized in the US.
- Other countries have other "rules" & systems

Race is Social But it is Still "Real"

- Things that are believed to be real are real in their consequences
- In some societies, religion or language or culture is the barrier. The barriers are still real.
- What "race" you are in the US has enormous social, economic, and political consequences that will affect you whether you "believe" in race or not.
- Example: religion is entirely social but it is still "real" & in some place/times determines your life

Naming Is Not Trivial But There Is No Way to "Get It Right"

- Races in US originate in European ideology justifying domination.
- Other groups became race conscious in response.
- Subordinate groups contest names & rename themselves as part of political struggle.
- Always disputes within a group about how to name themselves, tied to political struggle.

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

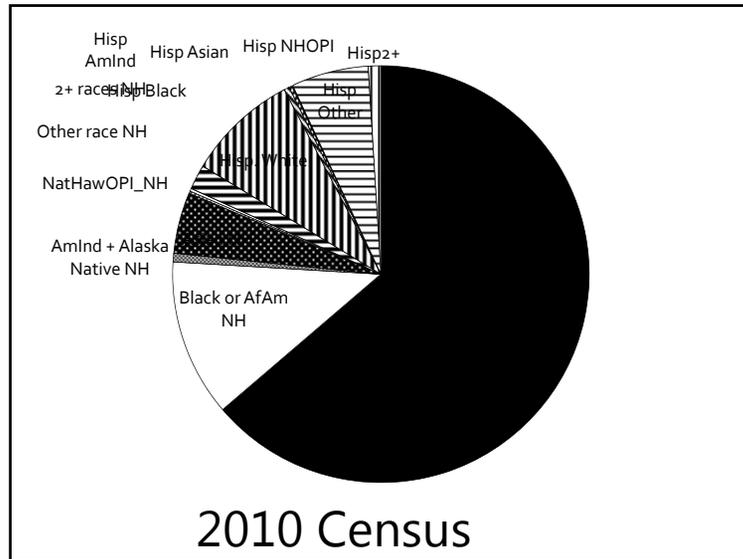
- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* ↗

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.* ↗

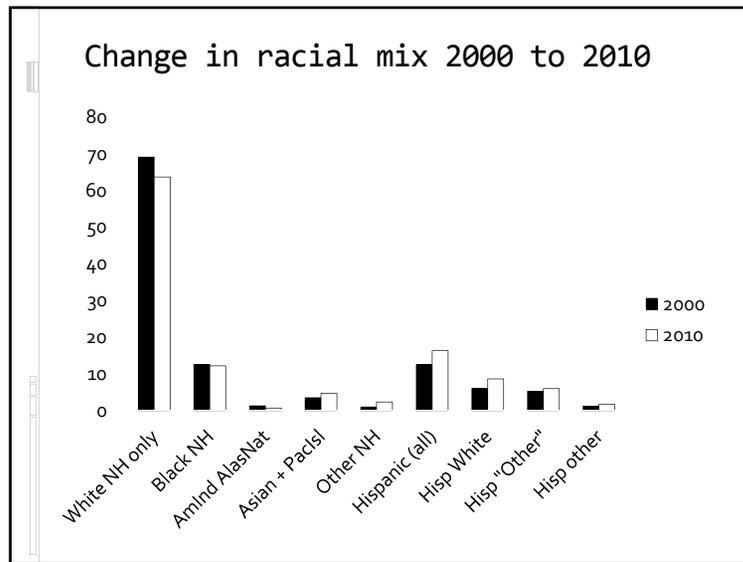
- Asian Indian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* ↗
- Japanese
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Native Hawaiian
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.* ↗

- Some other race — *Print race.* ↗



Change between 2000 and 2010

	2000	2010
White NH only	69.1	63.7
Black NH	12.5	12.2
Amlnd + AlaskaNat	1.3	0.7
Asian + PacIsl	3.5	4.7
Other NH	1.0	2.3
Hispanic (all)	12.5	16.3
Hisp White	6.0	8.6
Hisp "Other"	5.3	6.0
Hisp other races	1.2	1.7



- ### African American / Black
- Reality of mixed ancestry & common identity
 - "Negro" was both the "official" term of slavery AND a term of pride in the early 20th century
 - "Colored": used by genteel racists under segregation; Sometimes used by older Black people as a "folksy" self-description.
 - "Black" is a term of pride & power in 1960s; preferred or not offensive for older people; some younger people reject it
 - African American increasingly preferred, especially among college-educated
 - African or Caribbean immigrants have national/ethnic identities (Jamaican, Nigerian, Kenyan etc.)
 - Both African immigrants and Black Americans see social differences & boundaries between them: "African American" a problematic label
 - Politicized cycles & ongoing themes in naming
 - Negro to Black in 1960s
 - Black to Afro-American to African American in the 1980s
 - Continuing contests about names
 - "Nigger" always an insult, always hurtful. Other insults: spook, shade

American Indian (Native American)

- The indigenous people of the Americas
- Indian is the European name, but a self-name in much casual use. (People from India object.)
- Native American once preferred: politics & confusion, still often used.
- Shift to "American Indian" as officially preferred.
- Also: indigenous, first nations (Canadian & some US), native peoples, "real Americans" or "first Americans"
- Tribal/national Identities: Lakota, Navajo, Cherokee, Chickasaw. (Variation in balance between tribal identity and US/American identity)
- Much mixing, intermarriage -> blurred identities
- Legal status: being on a tribal roll
- Insults: squaw, brave, redskin

Asian

- Asian & Pacific Islander created as a political category in US political context: includes South Asians [Indians, Pakistanis] & Polynesians
- Asian vs. Asian American
 - Asians are people from Asia
 - Asian Americans are Americans of Asian descent
- Most in category do not use it, have ethnic identity instead: Chinese, Chinese-American, Korean, Korean-American, Hmong etc.
- "Asian American" is a self-identity of 3rd + generation persons with no real ties to Asia (like Europeans)
 - ALSO used as the identity of political coalition
- US racialized experiences turn ethnic identities into racial identities. Vincent Chin case.
- "Oriental" not meant as an insult, but often be taken as such by young activists.
- "Jap" "Chink" "Gook" etc. are all insults.
- [JAP=Jewish American Princess an insult of a different kind]

Hispanic/ Latino/a

- Two different names for the same basic group
- Refers roughly to those descended from Spanish-speaking people of the Americas
- The different names cut differently in their emphasis
 - Hispanic emphasizes Spanish language, Spanish surname: people from Spain could be called Hispanic, people from Brazil are not
 - Latino emphasizes origins in the Americas
 - People in the group vary on which they prefer
- Many people prefer an ethnic identity: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Guatemalan, Colombian, etc.
- Insults: Spic, greaser, beaner etc.

Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Chicanos

- Mexicans identify as Mexican. A proud identity, not an insult.
- Mestizo (mixed Indian/white), racialized: "La Raza."
- Important distinctions
 - Mexican = a person from Mexico
 - Mexican American = an American of Mexican descent
 - Chicano = an alternate positive identity for Mexican Americans, originally radical & political; now emphasizes US birth [but considered an insult by Mexicans or non-Mexican Latinos]
- Non-Mexicans resent being called Mexican because they are not Mexican

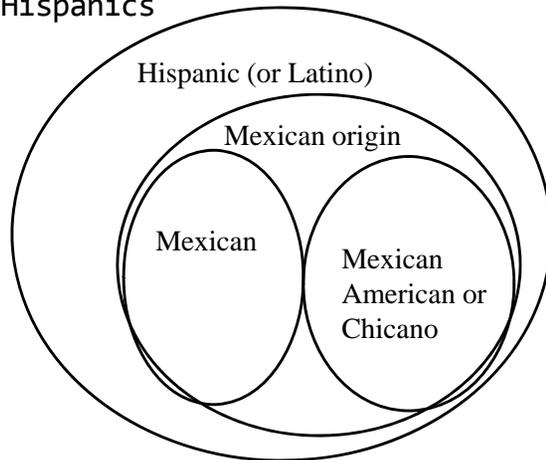
Slide 22

PO5

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Pamela Oliver, 1/24/2013

Hispanics



“Minority” or “Person of Color”

- Lumps together everyone who is “not White”
- Often used by Whites to refer to “others”
- Used by “minorities” or “people of color” as the term for coalition and common political action
 - a “secondary” identity
 - Refers more to groups or collections of people than to an individual
- Political signification isn’t the same as dictionary definition
 - “Colored Person” was the term of genteel racism
 - “Person of color” is a political term seeking to link everyone with a common enemy, links US minorities to 3rd world “southern hemisphere” struggles
- “Minority” is sometimes resented as a label, while others use it comfortably in contrast to “majority group”

White/Caucasian/European American

- White as opposed to Black or colored (or Indian)
- Jews, southern Europeans, Irish seen as different “races” in 19th century through 1940 popularly and by “scientific racists”
- Lawsuits over who was “White” 1900-1940 (Japanese, Arabs, Indians) because naturalized citizenship was restricted to “White persons”
- Those who remember immigrant generation may have ethnic identity: German, Italian, etc.
- “Caucasian” originates in scientific racism (Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid) but today used widely
- European American: reaction to African American, de-centers white sense of entitlement
- American vs. North American vs. United Statesian in response to Latin American claims to name “American”
- “American” or “Just plain American” implies assumption that “plain” Americans are White. This assumption is an implicit political claim.
- Insults: honkey, cracker, whitey. (Why don’t these hurt so much?)

END OF CONSTRUCTION LECTURE

Go to immigrant identities lecture