Race Mixture: Boundary Crossing in Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

In this article, we examine a large, interdisciplinary, and somewhat scattered literature, all of which falls under the umbrella term race mixture. We highlight important analytical distinctions that need to be taken into account when addressing the related, but separate, social phenomena of intermarriage, miscegenation, multiracial identity, multiracial social movements, and race-mixture ideologies. In doing so, we stress a social constructivist approach to race mixture with a focus on boundary crossing. Finally, we also demonstrate how ideologies and practices of race mixture play out quite differently in contexts outside of the United States, particularly in Latin America. Race-mixture ideologies and practices in Latin America have been used to maintain racial inequality in the region, thus challenging recent arguments by U.S. scholars that greater racial mixture leads to a decline in racism, discrimination, and inequality.

INTRODUCTION

We define race mixture as intimate social interaction across racial boundaries, a phenomenon that has generally been analyzed under the rubric of intermarriage or miscegenation. A sociology of race mixture also involves the racial categorization, identity, politics, and social movements surrounding the progeny of race mixture, much of which falls under the subject of multiracialism. A more comprehensive analysis of race mixture also includes an examination of the national ideologies related to the idea of race mixture and the putative consequences that race mixture will destabilize and eventually erase racial boundaries. These topics are often studied as separate processes, but in this article we seek to bring some unity to an area in which these distinct areas of research overlap.

Sociologists often focus on intermarriage, which has been classically seen as indicating a final stage in the assimilation of racial and ethnic groups in that it presumably represents deep erosion of social boundaries (MM Gordon 1964, Lieberson & Waters 1988, Park 1950). Relatedly, multiracialism has become a rapidly growing topic and refers to the children of parents who self-identify in separate racial categories or to individuals who self-identify as multiracial. Some sociological attention has also been paid to miscegenation, which we define as illegitimate or informal sexual unions, although the term has often been used more broadly to include intermarriage as well. Historically, miscegenation involved highly unequal or even forced relationships; thus they were of a nearly opposite character to those involving intermarriage. Anti-miscegenation laws were able to prevent intermarriage in the United States for 300 years, but they generally were unsuccessful in preventing informal black-white sexual unions and the consequent births that followed (Davis 1991, Sollors 2000). Such unions would merely evade the strict racial boundaries of the United States but did little to challenge or erode them and therefore represent a very different social phenomenon than intermarriage.

Informal sexual unions, like intermarriages, produced so-called mixed-race individuals, who themselves have more recently become subjects of much sociological research. Analysts have examined different paths the progeny of these interracial unions have attempted to take or successfully taken; the paths range from willingly or unwillingly accepting placement in their socially assigned category, seeking a particular status without contesting the boundaries themselves, individually skirting the boundaries, or collectively redefining them (Daniel 2002, Nakashima 1992). Scholarly work has also been done on the placement of these mixed-race individuals in the social structure (Davis 1991, Degler 1971, Mörner 1967, Telles 2004).

Before proceeding, we would like to make an important note regarding terminology used in this paper. The term race mixture implies that one is combining two or more substances with distinct and generally fixed properties. In regard to race, this may seem to be especially essentialistic and biological. The very idea of race mixture or multiracialism is premised on the idea that discrete (or even pure) races exist (Goldberg 1997, Nobles 2002). On the other hand, the sociological study of race mixture refers to behaviors that involve crossing racial boundaries (Bost 2003). Our interpretation is socially constructivist and assumes that there is no biological or essentialist basis for race, but rather, race is a concept involving perceptions of reality. Race is of sociological importance because humans are categorized by race, hierarchized according to these categories, and treated accordingly. As a result, humans often create racial boundaries as a form of social closure and erect obstacles to interaction across these boundaries. At other times, they seek to diminish or otherwise change them. We are interested in how race mixture may construct or reconstruct racial boundaries. Although we recognize the conceptual problems implicit in the

term race mixture, for lack of a better term and to be consistent with the literature, we continue to use it, along with related terms such as multiracialism. The concept of ethnicity is related to and sometimes overlaps with the concept of race, but the distinctions are often unclear, context-specific, and highly debatable (Cornell & Hartman 2006, Jenkins 1997, Wimmer 2008). Therefore, the extent to which our discussion is applicable to ethnic as well as race mixture would depend on how one distinguishes race from ethnicity.

The study of boundaries based on race or ethnicity is becoming well established (Barth 1969, Cornell & Hartman 2006, Jenkins 1997, Lamont & Molnár 2002, Lee & Bean 2004). Race mixture represents confrontation with these boundaries. As a result, individuals or groups may seek to maintain, shift, blur, sidestep, subvert, erode, eliminate, or merely accept such boundaries. A social boundaries approach permits analysis of how race mixture is affected by the social context or may change it and how its social implications may vary across societies. This emphasis moves analysts away from the problematic treatment of race and race mixture as biological and fixed across contexts. For example, a social boundary analysis can lend much insight in comparing the situation of the United States, where, for most of the twentieth century, the progeny of black-white unions were considered black, to that of Latin America, where these same progeny occupied intermediate categories. Moreover, activists confronting the issue of multiraciality have acted in surprisingly contrary ways in the two societies. Whereas the multiracial movement in the United States has recently sought to create intermediate census race categories (Daniel 2006; Nobles 2002; Root 1992, 1996), some black movement activists in Brazil have sought to create a *negro* (black) category that would combine the two categories of *preto* (also translates as black) and *pardo* (brown or mixed-race), which have long been separate categories on the Brazilian census (Bailey 2008, Nobles 2002, Telles 2004).

EARLY WORK ON RACE MIXTURE

In the early part of the twentieth century, sociologists and analysts in other fledgling social sciences were very concerned with race mixture, which they tended to perceive as a major societal problem rooted in biology. Their theories were clearly inspired by eugenics and the scientific racism of the time and often supposed a natural human aversion to intermarriage or miscegenation, the degeneracy of mixed-race peoples, and the inherent superiority of whites (see Frazier 1947 for a review of this early literature; Lombardo 1988). In 1911, at the First Universal Races Congress, scholars concluded that miscegenation was undesirable when the "types are too remote" (Weatherly 1911, p. 318). In the context of the United States, E.B. Reuter (1918) saw mulattos as the "key to the race problem" in that they were not content to be "negros" and, instead, tried to measure themselves against whites. He was also concerned that race mixture might push Americans out of the ranks of the "cultured nations" (Frazier 1947, Woodson 1920).

By the late 1920s, American sociologists had gone beyond such interpretations based on biological notions of white supremacy and became particularly interested in how places where various racial or ethnic groups came into contact would provide opportunities for new ways of thinking, new cultural experiences, and hybridization generally (Reuter 1945). Robert Park (1928) emphasized natural or ecological processes of social interaction and was interested in the rate at which groups interacted or amalgamated and produced hybrids. Park's theories about migration, assimilation, race mixture, and the making of a personality type that he called "the marginal man" bore the influence of his mentor, Georg Simmel (Simmel 1921, McLemore 1974). W.E.B. DuBois (1928), by contrast, examined the structural constraints that severely limited race mixture between blacks and whites in the United States, although he also noted how many blacks were products of extensive mixture, which had

generally occurred in illegitimate unions during slavery.[1]

Stonequist (1935), like Park and Simmel, was especially concerned with the psychological and cultural ramifications resulting from race mixture, and he further developed the concept of the marginal man. Like his mentor, Park, he was especially interested in how marginal men, born from the intermingling of two races, would supposedly seek to advance toward the higher-status group but sometimes faced rejection by one or the other group. He specifically noted that persons of racially mixed ancestry are not only influenced by the culture of both races but by their consciousnesses as well. In the mainland U.S. context, Stonequist saw the mulatto as being forced to accept the status of negro because of sharply drawn color lines that differed from societies such as Hawaii and Latin America, where mixed-race persons had greater freedom to achieve the status of the dominant race. However, in societies like India, he noted, the Eurasian was accepted by neither group. In the tradition of DuBois (1903), Stonequist concluded that mixed-race persons would develop a crisis and seemingly troubled double-consciousness but that this fusion would change the social and cultural landscape.

The elimination of the mulatto category after the 1920 U.S. Census, the end of large-scale European immigration by the 1920s, the academic shift from biological to cultural explanations of race, and the virtual nonexistence of black-white marriages until the end of anti-miscegenation laws in 1967 all seem to have led to a diminished interest in the topic of race mixture and multiracialism. Some research on mulatto communities remained, most notably that by Frazier (1947) and Myrdal (1944). Otherwise there was little research conducted on these topics in the United States for decades as the sociological gaze turned to matters related to the civil rights movement. Interest in the topic reemerged with the surge in immigration from Latin America and Asia in recent decades and the consequent intermarriage of many Asians and Latinos with whites[2] (Lee & Bean 2004, Lichter & Qian 2004). This scholarly interest was recently fueled by public policy debates surrounding the attempt to include a multiracial category on the 2000 U.S. Census. The scope of research related to race mixture also multiplied to encompass wider concerns including race relations more generally, multiracial identity, race-based national ideologies, and related social movements.

LATIN AMERICAN NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Throughout the Americas, race mixture has been a particularly salient topic of sociological inquiry given that this region is where American Indians, Europeans, and Africans came into large-scale contact with one another. Early miscegenation occurred largely through sexual liaisons during slavery and was especially prevalent in Latin America because men greatly outnumbered women among the mostly Spanish and Portuguese colonizers who sought out nonwhite women as mates (Esteva-Fabregat 1995, Jordan 1968, Mörner 1967, Pierson 1942, Tannenbaum 1946 [1992]).[3] In stark contrast

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[1]Race mixture did not only occur during slavery but also continued to occur in the Jim Crow era, although at arguably lower rates (Davis 1991). Race mixture between blacks and whites during Jim Crow was especially taboo, and its prohibition was strictly enforced through segregation and antimiscegenation laws. Moreover, consistent with the one-drop rule, persons of partial African ancestry were classified under a single black category, except between 1850 and 1920 when a separate mulatto category existed on the census (Nobles 2000). Some analysts (Davis 1991, Keith & Herring 1991, Williamson 1995) claim that by delimiting a black community, composed of African-origin persons formerly designated in separate racial/color categories, blacks mixed among themselves, which resulted in the gradual diminishing of skin tone differences among them.

[2]Despite the overall increase in intermarriage during this period, black-white intermarriage remained limited even after the end of segregation and anti-miscegenation laws.

[3]The higher rates miscegenation in Latin America have also been explained using cultural arguments that focus on the experience with the Moors and the role of the Catholic Church (Esteva-Fabregat 1995, Freyre 1933 [1956], Pierson 1942, Spickard 1989).

to the United States, in Latin America the idea of race mixture, or *mestizaje/mestizagem*, has been a central pillar of nation building and nationalism. Whereas the United States, like South Africa, tended to rigidly segregate blacks and Indians and where the very word miscegenation invoked fears among whites, Latin American countries have touted their experience of large-scale miscegenation and intermarriage as proof of racial inclusion.

By the early twentieth century, Latin American elites used their region's historical narrative of mestizaje to recruit nonwhites in the process of nation building. They glorified and encouraged racial mixture and showcased their racial democracies as morally superior to that of the United States or other reputedly racist regimes (Appelbaum et al. 2003, Graham 1990, Knight 1990, Sue 2007, Telles 2004, Wade 1997). Because nonwhites were often the majority in Latin American countries, their inclusion was seen as vital. In this vein, the racially mixed person, whether called *mulato*, *mestizo*, or *moreno*, in many cases became the national prototype. Despite this symbolic centering of the mixed-race person in Latin America, a racial or color hierarchy based on white supremacy did effectively persist (Appelbaum et al. 2003, Graham 1990, Knight 1990, Sue 2007, Telles 2004, Wade 1997).

Nevertheless, many scholars in the past glorified Latin American race mixture and concluded there was little racism in the region (Freyre 1933 [1956], Tannenbaum 1946 [1992], Vasconcelos 1925 [1997]). One school of thought advanced the idea that race mixture leads to ambiguity and a consequent decrease in racism and that Latin American countries thus had better or more harmonious race relations than countries like the United States (Freyre 1933 [1956], Pierson 1942, Tannenbaum 1946 [1992], Wagley 1952 [1972]). A related argument claimed that a considerable number of hybrids in Hawaii had led to the absence of racial prejudice, unlike in the rest of the United States (Smith 1939). Somewhat later, Pierre Van Den Berghe (1967) developed a typology of race

relations, arguing that hispanization and miscegenation had so homogenized the population in places such as Mexico that race ceased to be meaningful. Whereas the Latin American (and Hawaiian) exceptionalist thesis dates back to the early to mid-twentieth century, these ideas are being revived in the contemporary U.S. setting.

MISCEGENATION, INTERMARRIAGE, AND MULTIRACIALITY AS A PORTENT OF A DECLINE IN RACISM

Similar to arguments made by scholars of Latin America nearly a century ago, a new group of scholars, this time referencing the U.S. context, are arguing that increased race mixture and multiracial identification will make racism a thing of the past (D'Souza 1995, Patterson 2000; see Hollinger 2003 for a critique). In *The End of Racism*, D'Souza (1995) asserts that "the country is entering a new era in which old racial categories are rapidly becoming obsolete, mostly because of intermarriage" (p. 552). In a similar vein, Patterson (2000) argues that, owing to cultural and biological mixing, "by the middle of the twenty-first century, America will have problems aplenty. But no racial problems whatsoever…the social virus of race will have gone the way of smallpox." Nakashima (1992) posits that the very idea of multiracial people and their families poses a threat to the "American way of life" in that the U.S. system depends on clear racial categories for political, social, economic, and psychological organization. A family-based claim purports that racism and race mixture cannot coexist because families with a diversity of racial or color phenotypes cannot practice racism (Degler 1971, Gay 1987; see also the Association of Multiethnic Americans, **http://www.ameasite.org**). Race mixture is also seen as blurring racial boundaries, which is assumed to lead to less polarization (Degler 1971, Hoetink 1985, Mörner 1967). More specifically, Harris (1964) argued

that the lack of a clear method to distinguish groups by race discourages systematic discrimination.

This debate has carried over to the progeny of miscegenation and intermarriage. In the U.S. context, some argue that the embracing of multiracial identities will be a step toward the elimination of race as we know it. Drawing on historical formations of group identity, Zack (1993) purports that, by choosing a black identity over a multiracial one, the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance "threw away an effective intellectual weapon against American racial designations, which is to say, against the core of American racism" (p. 97).

This presumed connection between multiracial identities and a decline in racism is embedded in the rhetoric of the U.S. multiracial movement. Multiracial individuals are thought to have the unique ability to transcend racial boundaries and bridge racial groups; they have been described as "intermediaries," "interpreters," "cultural brokers," "children of the future," and "edgewalkers" (Krebs 1999, Nakashima 1992, Smith 1939, Wilson 1992). Spencer (2004) describes this phenomenon as the "cheerleading trope" in which multiracials are romanticized as representing the best of both worlds. Multiracial activist Carlos Fernández asserts that the failure of the United States to accommodate interracial relations and people is at the "heart of an unresolved American identity crisis, a dilemma that perpetuates ethnic and racial disunion and makes the resolution of the general race problem virtually impossible" (Fernández 1996, p. 28). In a thoughtful critique, Dunning (2004) argues that many of the key multiracial scholars problematically treat race mixture as "an 'acid' that can dissolve race and then destroy all traces of itself" (p. 132).

Empirical Evidence

Problematizing the assumed relationship between miscegenation/intermarriage/multiracial identification and a lack of racism, an emerging group of scholars of race in Latin America have urged contemporary thinkers to look at empirical evidence from the Latin American case that demonstrates that race mixture and the embracing of multiracial identities in the region has not led to an absence of racism (Nobles 2002, Sawyer 2006, Telles 2004, Wade 2004, Warren & Sue 2007). In fact, in Latin America, race mixture comfortably coexists with a racial hierarchy and ideologies of whitening (Fernandes 1969, Hanchard 1994, Sawyer 2006, Sawyer et al. 2004, Sue 2007, Telles 2004, Twine 1998, Wade 1993, Wright 1990). The idea that low levels of racism on the horizontal dimension (sociability, including intermarriage) can coexist with high levels on the vertical dimension (inequality and discrimination) seems counterintuitive, but in fact, it is this situation that exists in countries such as Brazil and has been deemed the "enigma of Brazilian race relations" (Telles 2004).

A national ideology promoting race mixture and multiracial identification has actually created a situation in which racism can thrive (Hasenbalg 1996, Hasenbalg & Huntington 1982, Sagrera 1974, Sue 2007, Twine 1998) and in which rights for black and indigenous peoples are inhibited (Hale 1999, Mollett 2006, Telles 2004, Tilley 2005). The ideology of miscegenation has been used to silence black movement claims as elites in Brazil and other Latin American countries have argued that "state actions on behalf of racial groups are not possible because race mixture has blurred racial distinctions[,] and race-specific interventions would only harden or polarize boundaries that were smoothed over by centuries of race mixture" (Telles 2004, p. 233; see also Dulitzky 2005). These arguments have become especially salient today in the Brazilian debate over affirmative action in that country (Bailey 2008, Telles 2004).

Regarding the blurring of boundaries, Marx (1998) reminds us that there is no absolute logic to the drawing of racial-group boundaries and that one could imagine a very rigid racial

classification system in an area with high rates of miscegenation and intermarriage. To support his case, one need only look at the cases of Mexico and Colombia, where elaborate caste systems were designed to create a hierarchy of the various categories of mixed-race persons (Katzew 2004, Wade 1993). As Sawyer (2003) aptly puts it, mixed-race categories only become another rung on the ladder of a relatively stable racial hierarchy. Race mixture, while appearing to break down racial boundaries, can actually reconstruct and reify them (Wade 2004). Goldberg (1997) adds:

> "Mixed race" may seem to offer exciting proof positive [sic] that a deep social taboo has been transgressed, that racial discipline and order have been violated, that liberty's lure once again has undermined the condition of homogeneity by delimiting the constraints of the hegemonic. Yet it at once, and necessarily, reimposes the racial duality between blackness and whiteness as the standard, the measure, of mixed-ness (p. 63).

Similar cautions have been forwarded based on other case studies. For example, drawing on the South African case, Hickman (1997) argues that a three-tiered system, which included a separate "coloured" category, was one of the "bedrock elements of apartheid" (p. 1198). Also referencing South Africa, Spencer (1997) discusses how the recognition of a separate mixed-race group creates and perpetuates divisions between coloureds and blacks. For example, he argues that the coloured group was targeted by de Klerk's National Party, which used the rhetoric of "you are not black" as propaganda; the National Party simultaneously portrayed Nelson Mandela's ANC party as a party of blacks. Spencer issues the cautionary warning that a very similar dynamic could take place if a multiracial group is formed in the United States.

Therefore, we (along with others) question whether new trends in multiracial identification in the United States will truly mean the destabilization of the racial hierarchy. We urge scholars to look beyond the U.S. case to inform their assertions on the relationship between race mixture and racism. Race mixture surely complicates racial dynamics, but does not necessarily erase them.

INTERMARRIAGE

As the population of Latinos and Asians in the United States has soared following an increase in immigration, the nature of race mixture has taken on new meanings. In recent years, intermarriage rates between whites and these groups have been moderate, whereas black-white intermarriage has remained low (Lee & Bean 2004, Lichter & Qian 2004, Stevens & Tyler 2002). Thus, racial boundaries in intermarriage are clearly weaker for other groups compared with blacks. American Indians have the highest outmarriage rates among the major race/ethnic groups as designated by the U.S. Census, followed by Asians and then Hispanics,[4] and such boundaries among various European-ancestry groups are especially low or nonexistent (Lee & Bean 2004, Lichter & Qian 2004). Analysis of 1980 Census data shows that the highest level of in-group marriage occurred among black women (99%) (Lieberson & Waters 1988). In Brazil, by contrast, more than 20% of married blacks and mixed race persons were married to whites in 1991, making contemporary intermarriage relatively as high as it had been in the past through miscegenation (Telles 1994, 2004; there is little or no data on such intermarriage for other Latin American countries).

Lieberson & Waters (1988) point to four factors as being the major determinants of rates of intermarriage: (*a*) the existence of legal proscriptions or societal taboos against marriage; (*b*) the availability of partners of their own and outside their own group; (*c*) attitudes and

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[4]Hispanics or Latinos are themselves products of extensive so-called race mixture but are redefined in the United States with a separate racial or ethnic category (Telles & Ortiz 2008).

opinions about intermarriage; and (*d*) the overlap between ethnic membership and nonethnic characteristics. As noted, intermarriage is not based solely on group attitudes and preference, but also on opportunity or propinquity (Blau et al. 1982, Kalmijn 1998, Stevens & Tyler 2002, Telles 1993). Variables such as residential segregation, composition of the local marriage market, and group size need to be taken into consideration when interpreting intermarriage patterns. These variables can have varying effects depending on which group is being discussed. For example, Stevens & Tyler (2002) note that demographic factors seem to have less explanatory power for blacks' marriage patterns compared with preferences for in-group marriage or barriers against intermarriage. However, demographic and structural factors largely influence intermarriage patterns among Hispanics and Asians.

On a broader level, sociologists have sought to understand the significance of intermarriage patterns on racial boundaries. Lieberson & Waters (1988) assert that intermarriage functions to create more ethnic heterogeneity in terms of social networks that could lead to the weakening of ethnic identities and boundaries. Similarly, Kalmijn (1998) sees intermarriage as decreasing the salience of cultural distinctions in future generations because the offspring are less likely to identify themselves with a single group and that by intermarrying, individuals may lose negative attitudes toward the other group. Other scholars are less optimistic and expect that with increasing Asian and Latino intermarriage, antiblack racism will persist. Recently, Lee & Bean (2004) argued that increased intermarriage and multiracial identification may not indicate the fading of color lines, but instead indicate the loosening of boundaries for new immigrant groups, mainly Asians and Latinos. This may lead to a new black/nonblack divide that "could be a disastrous outcome for African Americans" (p. 237). Several scholars have proposed that the United States is experiencing a "racial redistricting" (Gallagher 2004) partially based on intermar-

riage trends, which is leading to a divide that is primarily black/nonblack (Gans 1999, Warren & Twine 1997). However, despite moderate intermarriage rates between Mexican Americans and others, a large educational gap with non-Hispanic whites persists for three and four generations since immigration (Telles & Ortiz 2008). Furthermore, in the case of Brazil, Telles (2004) finds that despite relatively high rates of intermarriage between whites and nonwhites, racial discrimination and inequality persist.

Finally, the theory of status exchange posits that intermarriage is not a random phenomenon, but instead that individuals exchange such traits as economic status, power, beauty, and race (Davis 1941, Merton 1941). Evidence has been found to support this theory both in the United States (mainly among black/white intermarriages) (Fu 2001, Kalmijn 1993, Lichter & Qian 2004, Qian 1997) and Latin America (Burdick 1998, Telles 2004), although counterevidence has been found in relation to Asian Americans (Spickard 1989). On a methodological note, Rosenfield (2005) argues that the findings used to support status exchange theory are not based on robust models, but Rosenfield's assertions have recently been challenged by Gullickson & Fu (2009).

MIXED-RACE CLASSIFICATION AND CATEGORIZATION

Sociologists are not only concerned with race mixture in and of itself, but also with how mixed-race persons are categorized in a particular society and how this, in turn, affects race relations and the social structure more broadly. As a sign of the growing importance of multiracialism, Root (1996) purports phenomenal growth rates of multiracial babies in the United States since the early 1970s. The fact that these multiracial individuals were born of two parents that identified in different racial categories does not mean that they are necessarily multiracial. Classification as multiracial depends on self-identity, outside classification, and societal categories that are used.

The United States—the One-Drop Rule

By the end of the nineteenth century, scientific racism had fully legitimized the belief that the racial hierarchy is rooted in biology (Davis 1991, Sollors 2000, Stoler 1992). One component of scientific racism was the idea that racial hybridity would lead to degeneration (Stepan 1991). In the United States, the idea and practice of race mixture created especially strong anxieties among whites. Despite the persistence of anti-miscegenation laws from the 1660s to 1967 (Davis 1991, Sollors 2000), some have estimated that anywhere between 30% and 80% of the African American population has some European ancestry[5] (Davis 1991, Degler 1971). This has generally been the result of miscegenation outside of marriage, most notably that between a white slave master and a black female slave. The presence of the one-drop rule since the late nineteenth century has generally resulted in a racial classification system devoid of mixed-race categories (Davis 1991, Malcomson 2000, Smedley & Smedley 2005). The progeny of black-white unions, whether formal or informal, have almost always been classified as black in the United States (Hickman 1997).

This classification system of hypodescent has clearly defined whiteness and blackness in the United States, and it has been considered the "lifeblood of the American binary racial project" (Daniel 2002, p. 122). The creation and enforcement of the one-drop rule is a demonstration of how mixed-race individuals have posed a threat to the American racial order (Davis 1991). Although the one-drop rule was written in the law, Sollors (2000) notes that such laws were contradictory and were never applied widely. Therefore, the true power of the one-drop rule lies in its ability to penetrate popular

thought, where it has been internalized (Daniel 2002, Davis 1991).

However, there is evidence that suggests that the one-drop rule may be losing its power to define and patrol racial-group borders (Brunsma 2005, Korgen 1998, Rockquemore & Arend 2002, Waters 2000). Since the 1960s, the number of children with parents who self-identify in different racial categories has grown dramatically and is expected to continue to increase (Lee & Bean 2004, Ramirez 1996, Waters 2000). Many of these children will identify as multiracial, though many others likely will not. On the 2000 Census, 6.8 million or 2.4% of the U.S. population claimed more than one racial category, with the vast majority marking only two boxes (Lee & Bean 2003). Lee & Bean (2003) note that by 2050, 20% of the U.S. population may identify as multiracial, and Goldstein & Morning (2000) expect the relative size of the single-race population to decline considerably. Like trends in intermarriage, multiracial identification among African Americans is much less than among Asians or Latinos. Single-race identification is declining in significance at quite different rates across groups (Lee & Bean 2003).

Latin America—the Intermediate Category

In Latin America, mixed-race individuals fall into intermediate racial/color categories such as *mestizo*, *moreno*, and *mulato*, and their placement and treatment largely depend on phenotypic appearance. Latin Americans embrace mixed-race identities (de la Fuente 2001, Spickard 2005, Telles 2004, Wright 1990), and mixed-race persons are often seen as the quintessential national citizens of places like Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico (Knight 1990, Telles 2004, Wright 1990). Consequently, mixed-race individuals tend to have strong national identities and a weak black consciousness in Latin America compared with the United States. Whereas in Latin America it is commonplace for individuals to identify in the middle categories, in the United States any attempt to opt out of

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[5] In 1918, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that at least 75% of all blacks were racially mixed, but after the 1920 Census, there were no more attempts to determine the mulatto population (Davis 1991).

the black category, or "pass," has commonly been stigmatized. This difference is an important factor in explaining the lack of strong race-based social movements in Latin America (Burdick 1998, Hanchard 1994, Sheriff 2001, Twine 1998, Vaughn 2001).

Degler (1971) argued that mixed-race individuals have an advantaged place in Latin America, especially Brazil. He used the concept of a "mulatto escape hatch" to describe the differences in race relations in Brazil and the United States. Brazilian survey and census data tend to show that mulattos have life chances that are more similar to blacks than to whites (do Valle Silva 1985, Lovell 1989, Telles 2004, Telles & Lim 1998). Data for other Latin American countries are rarely found, though Wade (1993) sees the primary racial cleavage to be between blacks and nonblacks (including mulattos), based on ethnographic data for Colombia.

Mixed-Race Individuals in Other Parts of the World

Davis (1991) creates a typology based on cross-national cases of the status of racial hybrids. They are as follows: (*a*) a lower status than either parent group [e.g., Korean Americans in Korea, and Vietnamese Americans in Vietnam (for a discussion of Amerasians in Vietnam, see Valverde 1992)]; (*b*) a higher status than either parent group (mulattoes in Haiti pre-1960); (*c*) an in-between marginal status (coloureds in South Africa); (*d*) a highly variable status, depending more on social class than color (mulattoes in Brazil, Colombia); (*e*) a variable status independent of racial traits (racially mixed persons in Hawaii); (*f*) the same position as the lower-status group (mulattoes in the United States), and (*g*) the status of an assimilating minority [persons of mixed (except black) ancestry in the United States]. Stoler (1992) offers an elaborate discussion of race mixture and its effects on national projects and identities in colonial Southeast Asia. For other examples of works on race mixture from a comparative perspective, see Gist & Dworkin (1972), Reuter (1918), Telles (2004), Van Den Berghe (1967).

THE BOOM IN MULTIRACIAL IDENTITY RESEARCH IN THE UNITED STATES

In recent years, coinciding with an increase in interracial marriage, multiracial identification has grown in the United States, and it has captured the interest of scholars. It was only in 1980 that the term multiracial first appeared in the U.S. context (Daniel 2002). Part of the reason for the surge in scholarly interest is due to the status of multiracialism as a hot topic in public policy debates, which manifested in the 2000 Census allowing people to mark one or more racial categories. Recent studies address the topic of multiraciality from different theoretical and disciplinary angles (for a categorical review of the literature, see Brunsma 2005). We briefly review this now large multidisciplinary literature in the following paragraphs.

The early work on multiracials came from a biological perspective (Dyer 1974, Provine 1973), but this approach was later criticized, and the focus turned to the social and psychological impacts of multiraciality. Scholars conducted research on mixed-race children in psychiatric hospitals or clinics, under the presumption that these individuals suffered from problems of maladjustment and conflicts with self-identity (AI Gordon 1964, Hall 1992; for a discussion, see Johnson & Nagoshi 1986). In one of the early, in-depth classic treatments of "the mixed blood," Reuter (1931) refers to the mulatto as an "unadjusted person." More recent work has been done on mental health issues, adjustment, and counseling strategies for multiracial individuals and their families (e.g., Comas-Díaz 1996, Gibbs & Moskowitz-Sweet 1991, Hershel 1995, Jacobs 1992, Murstein 1973, Piskacek & Golub 1973, Root 1992, Sue & Sue 2003, Winn & Priest 1993).

Analysts coming from sociological and psychological perspectives have examined broad questions of identity of multiracials (Adler 1987, Brunsma 2005, Daniel 2000, Field 1996, Korgen 1998, Root 2000, Tatum 1997, Thornton 1996, Tizard & Phoenix 1993, Twine 1996, Wilson 1987, Zack 1996; for

a bibliography on multiracial identity development, see Webster 2005). One perspective challenges earlier notions of maladjustment by framing multiracial identity in a positive light (e.g., Hall 1992, Johnson 1992, Krebs 1999, Wilson 1987). Others have developed multidimensional ecological models that emphasize simultaneous group membership and the interaction between society, family, and the individual (Hall 1992, Johnson 1992, Miller 1992, Root 1992, Stephan 1992, Williams 1992).

Scholars have recently sought to understand the structural or cultural forces that influence multiracial identities (Anderson & Saenz 1994, Davis 1991, Harris & Sim 2002, Khanna 2004, Korgen 1998, Lieberson & Waters 1988, Saenz et al. 1995, Tizard & Phoenix 1993, Waters 2000, Xie & Goyette 1997). For example, Saenz et al. (1995) found that among children of white-Asian couples, those who have the highest degree of cultural maintenance were most likely to hold an Asian identity. Similar to Waters (2000), they found that people with parents from higher education and class status are more likely to report multiple ancestries or use an "other" ethnic identity. In contrast, Tizard & Phoenix (1993) found that for black/white biracial adolescents, social class was unrelated to racial self-identification. For a discussion of additional factors that influence multiracial identification, see Lee & Bean (2004).

THE MULTIRACIAL MOVEMENT

The U.S. multiracial movement largely developed in the 1980s and was mostly concerned with convincing the U.S. Census Bureau to allow people to identify as mixed-race. By the 2000 Census, the movement's efforts largely paid off as the Census Bureau allowed respondents to check more than one racial category. Farley (2002) describes this shift as "the greatest change in the measurement of race in the history of the United States" (p. 33). Regarding the multiracial movement itself, Williams (2006) identifies the main actors as being the activists (adult-based multiracial organizations), civil rights groups who perceive

the multiracial movement as a threat, the Office of Management and Budget responsible for coordinating the activities of the census, and finally, elected officials. By the 1990s, 30 to 40 grassroots and educational organizations began pressuring the federal government to change procedures for collecting data on race to include multiracial-identified individuals (Daniel 2002). The Association of Multiethnic Americans (AMEA), a national umbrella organization, was formed in 1986 and was highly influential in the debate on how to classify mixed-race persons on the census. AMEA and similar groups advocated for the inclusion of a multiracial category, something that has not existed on the census for more than 80 years (Lee 1993).[6]

Opponents of the multiracial movement argue that the one-drop rule had the unintended consequence of creating a strong black community that has provided the basis for antiracist struggle and race-based social movements (Hickman 1997). The fear is that multiracial identities will erode the solidarity of the black community and weaken its political strength (Hickman 1997). A related concern is how this new multiracial identification will affect the enforcement of civil rights legislation. Demonstrating opposition from another angle, Hickman (1997) argues that the creation of a multiracial category will "rebiologize" race. Waters (2002) describes the fundamental tension underlying this debate as the right for self-identification and the purpose of census categories to address issues of public policy that are often based on single-race categories. She argues that this tension has not been a problem when race is thought to be mutually exclusive but that multiracial identification has confronted this issue head on.

CONCLUSION

In this review, we have attempted to bring together a large, interdisciplinary, and somewhat

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[6]For a detailed discussion on the history of U.S. racial classification in the census, see Lee (1993), and for how census-taking has directly contributed to the formation of racial ideas, see Nobles (2002).

scattered literature, all of which falls under the umbrella term race mixture. We have noted important analytical distinctions that need to be taken into account when addressing the related but separate social phenomena of intermarriage, miscegenation, multiracial identity, multiracial social movements, and race-mixture ideologies. Whereas all these topics deal, on some level, with racial-boundary crossing, the implications for the boundaries themselves and the racialized social structure are not consistent. For example, intermarriage may be an indicator of healthy race relations, but this is certainly not the case with miscegenation, especially in a context of high racial inequality. Whereas intermarriage has the potential to directly challenge, shift, or loosen racial boundaries, the informal practices of miscegenation are less likely to do so.

We have stressed a social constructivist approach to race mixture with a focus on boundary crossing. We feel that many scholars of race mixture become trapped in an essentialistic language framework when trying to discuss the issue of race mixture. No doubt, we too have fallen into this same trap, despite our efforts to the contrary. Nevertheless, we believe that race mixture, despite its socially constructed nature, has very important real-life consequences that make it an area worthy of sociological inquiry.

The U.S. model of black-white relations has been the traditional base for theorizing about race and race relations in the social science literature, but the analysis of other contexts has led to a more complete and nuanced sociology of race. This is especially relevant for the topic of race mixture. We have demonstrated how race mixture and race-mixture ideologies have played out very differently in the United States and regions such as Latin America, where race mixture has been central to the meaning of the nation. Not only has there been a different ideology regarding race mixture in Latin America, there are also different behavioral patterns of miscegenation, intermarriage, and multiracial identification compared with the United

States. For example, within the United States, intermarriage rates across racial boundaries are especially low among blacks and whites when compared with Asian and Latino intermarriages with whites. Rates of black-white unions in the United States are also low compared with black-white unions in Brazil. Thus, some racial boundaries are more permeable than others, which highlights the particularly segregated nature of black-white social relations in the United States.

We have also presented empirical evidence based on the Latin American experience that challenges the recent arguments of U.S. scholars regarding the relationship between miscegenation, intermarriage, multiracial identification, and the weakening of racial boundaries and a consequent decline in racism. Instances of collective boundary crossing are complex and possibly foreshadow societal change, but we feel there is not clear evidence that merits an automatic assumption that race mixture will lead to the complete erosion of racial boundaries. In terms of future research, we urge scholars to use a comparative lens to enlighten sociological understandings of the various facets of race mixture.

On a methodological note, we encourage scholars of intermarriage to look beyond intermarriage rates and also rely on qualitative and ethnographic data to better understand the racial dynamics between couples in these relationships. Whereas statistical analyses showing high rates of intermarriage in some countries may lead us to the conclusion that intermarriage is accepted, other data caution us from assuming racial intermarriage is a sphere where race is less salient (Burdick 1998, Hale 1999, Sue 2007, Twine 1998). In addition, in future research we hope scholars will broaden their view of intermarriage to encompass cohabitation, which is on the rise (Lichter & Qian 2004); although these are informal unions, they are closer on a spectrum to the dynamics of intermarriage then they are to miscegenation or informal sexual unions. There are also important issues of measurement that arise when

looking at intermarriage rates and the multiracial population. For complex and thoughtful discussions of these issues, we encourage readers to consult the work of Lieberson & Waters (1988), Perlmann & Waters (2002), and Harris (2002).

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors are not aware of any biases that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

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