



**Comment
And
Opinion**

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THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF RACIAL IDENTIFICATION OF MULTIRACIAL INFANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A RESEARCH NOTE

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ABSTRACT

Building upon previous work, this research note reports results from a replication of Brunσμα (2005) using a nationally-representative sample of six to twenty two-month old infants from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) to explore the structure and processes of racial identification of multiracial infants. The variation in parental racial identifications of mixed-race infants is described and the identifications in the three most common majority-minority interracial couplings – White/Asian, Black/White, and White/Multiracial – are predicted using logistic and multinomial logistic regression models. The results are compared to the original study (Brunσμα, 2005) and briefly discussed.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, scholarship on the multiracial population in the United States has focused on understanding the complex structures of identity formation, negotiation, and maintenance for multiracial people. A great deal has been found. Multiracials' diverse racial identities are: negotiated in social interaction (Brunσμα & Rockquemore, 2001), tied to phenotype, appearance, and skin tone (Herman, 2004; Rockquemore & Arend, 2004), articulated through frames of racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Spencer, 2006), intersectionally coupled with gender (Edwards & Pedrotti, 2004; Gillem, 2000), class (Brunσμα, 2005; Herman, 2004; Roth, 2005), sexuality (Mahtani, 2007), parameterized by systems of classification (Brunσμα, 2006; Roth, 2005), and sown in institutional (Brunσμα, 2005; Harris & Sim, 2002; Renn, 2000) and, importantly, familial (Qian, 2004; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005; Roth, 2005) socialization.

Much of the extant literature focuses on adolescents, young adults, or adults – rarely do studies look at these processes in children. In 2005, Brunσμα reported the results of a study that sought to begin to understand the social structure of parental racial identification of their young children. In that ground-breaking study, Brunσμα concludes:

The seeds of 'honorary whiteness' and multiraciality are sown first in the formations, mediated in the family and other socialization processes and into identities and politics, culture and symbols, meaning and contestation...it may be, as I am suggesting, that they are seeing the structure of resource distribution, the racialized and pigmetized racial hierarchy, and the link between the two, *and beginning to distance their children from the bottom of that hierarchy.* (Brunσμα, 2005, p. 1151, emphasis is ours)

If these conclusions have merit (see also Twine, 1996), we wanted to see whether or not the 'seeds' are sown much earlier than the early elementary school years – in infancy.

There has not been a great deal of work on the racial identification of infants, and even less on multiracial children (see Brunσμα, 2005; Qian, 2004; Roth, 2005). The extant research on the racial identification of infants follows three basic contours: studies on its impact on transracial adoption (see Lythcott-Jones, 1994, Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2008), studies on its implications for epidemiology (Hahn, 1999)

and health research/clinical practice (see Gravlee & Sweet, 2008). A central axis upon which these studies turn, implicitly or explicitly, is racial identification practices of parents. However, research that has empirically assessed the structure of multiracial infants' racial designations is nonexistent and key questions still remain, like: what social variables help us understand how a mother or a father makes decisions about the racial identification of their mixed-race infants? Like Brunσμα (2005), this note focuses on racial identification as a dependent variable. More precisely on the ways that new parents of multiracial babies classify their six to twenty two-month old infants. Focusing on infants, rather than older children or adolescents, has real potential to instruct us on the patterns in parental identifications, for these identifications are less likely to be influenced by the children's preferences.

The Structure of the Racial Identification of Young Multiracial Children

Using a nationally-representative sample of four - six year old children in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), Brunσμα (2005), tested hypotheses that grounded the process of parental designation in several forces. First, via the norm of hypodescent he expected that the parents of White/non-White mixed-race children will identify their children with the non-White designation. Second, he surmised that multiracials might be using a multiracial or White designation to distance themselves from minority groups and/or to occupy a more privileged social location. Given this, the parents of White/non-White mixed-race children will identify their children away from the minority designation – a process of reverse hypodescent. Third, parents of minority-minority multiracial children would choose the racial designation that is the least negatively valued in American society. Finally, drawing upon research on the impact of class on racial identity among young adults, Brunσμα (2005) assumed that class would affect parents' racial identifications of their mixed-race children – the higher the class the more likely 'multiracial' and/or 'White' and with the designation carrying the least negative societal valuation. Additional contextual hypotheses were offered regarding the role of the racial composition of various social networks - the more predominately minority the context, the more likely parents will identify their multiracial children with the minority designation.

The findings, in general, aligned with these hypotheses in several ways. First, while many of the parents of four - six year old majority/minority multiracial children followed norms of hypodescent, there was a great deal of variation in these results. In fact, Brunσμα (2005) found that minority/minority multiracial children's parents as well as Latino multiracial children's parents showed evidence of a general movement away from minority identification, and, in particular, a movement away, from norms of hypodescent. He concluded that, at the end of the twentieth century, parents of multiracial children were involved in a significant process of 'reverse hypodescent.' Second, given the racial hierarchy in the United States and parental recognition of how resources and opportunities are distributed within this hierarchy, Brunσμα (2005) reported these parents are, very early, moving their children away from minority identification to more 'neutral' categories of existence – 'multiracial' and, in some cases, 'White'. This general process was impacted by socioeconomic status, except among Black/White mixed children. Third, there was tentative evidence that minority contexts influenced parents to label their children in the direction of the minority identification as well as the multiracial – but, certainly away from 'White'. Finally, except for Asian/White mixed-race children, no clear parental gender/child gender effects were found.

Data and Methodology

The data used to look at parental racial identification patterns for infants comes from the restricted form of ECLS-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) data. The data was collected, and therefore these children were born, in 2001, importantly, post-Census 2000 - the first Census to allow citizens to 'check all that apply'. Thus, these parents of multiracial infants were surely cognizant of the discourse on multiraciality and racial identification. These data contain information from parents focusing on the characteristics of infants and their families, a wide variety of in-home and out-of-home experiences that influence the

infant's development and early experiences. For the purposes of our study, information on family structure, context, and race data for both parents (biological and residential) and their infants were critical. Retaining all infants whom had complete files and full parent interviews provided a data set of 10,569 infants.

The National Center for Education Statistics appears to have modeled the design of ECLS-B data collection informed by recent debates in the US. Most importantly, the ECLS-B asked racial identification questions with the following options: 1 = 'White, non-Hispanic', 2 = 'Black or African American, non-Hispanic', 3 = 'Hispanic, race specified', 4 = 'Hispanic, no race specified', 5 = 'Asian, non-Hispanic', 6 = 'Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic', 7 = 'American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic', and 8 = 'More than 1 race, non-Hispanic'. Using all available data, we collapsed '3' and '4' into one 'Hispanic' designation and '5' and '6' into one "Asian/Pacific Islander" designation for both infant and parental racial identifications – all others remained the same.

The ECLS-B provides detailed information about the racial identifications of both biological parents in addition to the characteristics of the infant's current/residential parents and current familial structure. This allowed us to analyze the multiraciality of these six to twenty two- month old infants based on biological parentage and their current experiences with their residential parents/guardians. Since earlier research has found that interracial couplings with or without children have higher rates of non-cohabitation and marriage (see Bratter & King, 2008), then the experiences of these children in their residential contexts with the residential parents is vitally important.

Given the hypotheses we wished to replicate from Brunisma (2005), other variables of interest were used in the multivariate models. First, contextual variables ranged from region of country (Northeast, South, and West, with the Midwest as the omitted category) and urbanity (rural and suburb, with urban as the omitted category). Second, other family variables provided additional information: socioeconomic status, age of birth mother, family type (two parents and no siblings, one parent and one sibling, and one parent and no siblings), level of poverty, number of siblings in household, birth certificate usage at birth, religiosity, as well as whether or not a Non-English language was spoken at home (previous research indicates the importance of ethnicity and exposure to secondary languages in the identification process) (Herman, 2004). Finally, we controlled for the infant's age (in months) and gender (1=female, 0=male).

Due to the variation in infant racial designations in terms of biological as well as residential parental racial combinations, much of our analysis is descriptive. In the end, we use binomial and multinomial logistic regression models to look at the processes identified from these detailed and intensive descriptions using three of the most common biologically mixed-race offspring as they exist and are influenced by their present parental and familial structures. These models allow us to predict nominal-level infant racial designations using a variety of focal and control variables.

Results

The Racial Identification of Infants in the United States

Brunisma (2005) found that some 2.6% of children born between 1992 and 1994, upon reaching their fourth, fifth, or sixth birthday, were identified as 'multiracial' by one of their parents. Interestingly, when the biological combination data was assessed, the proportion of those children who were multiracial by parentage was much higher – 10.4%. In the 1990s social, political, and cultural processes helped explain the difference between these two percentages. In this data of 6 to 22-month old infants, born at the turn of the twenty first century, we find that 7.3% are identified as multiracial when roughly 12.5% of them are multiracial by birth. This is significant, in that across these almost ten years, more multiracial children are being born and more of their parents are identifying them as such (over 58%

vs. 25% in the earlier study).

Table 1 shows how these infants are distributed across various interracial and monoracial households. Interestingly, the diagonal is heaviest for monoracial infants – that over 50% of these children live primarily in households with parents that ‘reflect’ their biological parentage; however, this is certainly not the case for multiracial children. Multiracial infants in this dataset live with parents who, by and large, do not reflect their biological parentage. Furthermore, for many of these infants, fathers are not present, residentially, in a staggering number of cases – from a high of 80.3% of Black/Hispanic infants residing in fatherless households, through 49.4% of Hispanic/Native American children residing in fatherless households, to a low of 3.6% for monoracial Asian infants. The rates of absent fathers and/or no father in the residences of these children is higher for multiracial infants, than others. This reality affects our ability to model father characteristics in the multivariate models presented below. The most prominent multiracial combinations in this data set were White/Hispanic (6.9% of all unions), Black/Hispanic (6.7%), White/Native American (3.5%), White/Asian (3.0%), Hispanic/Native American (1.5%), Black/White (1.3%), followed by others. This is interesting to compare to the data reported by Brunnsma (2005) from children born some ten years earlier where the distribution was quite different: White/Hispanic, Black/White, White/Asian, Black/Hispanic, White/Native American, Hispanic/Asian, etc. For the multivariate analyses, below, we focus on Hispanic/White, Asian/White, Multiracial/White, Native American/White, and Black/White patterns in parental racial identification of these infants.

See next page for Table 1

As in Brunnsma’s earlier work (2005), Table 2 shows the detailed distribution of child racial identifications across all possible biological combinations of parental racial identifications. Several patterns of information emerge that are of interest in this replication. First, the degree of persistence is still quite high across these combinations, though none reach 1.00. Interestingly, in 2001, Native American-Native American exhibited much lower levels of persistence than ten years previous. In fact, across all combinations, persistence levels are waning significantly for all groups except for one, African-Americans, where it is increasing. Second, rates of hypodescent processes for these infant designations have changed dramatically over ten years. In fact, it appears only in the case of Black-White multiracial infants, and, here, in very small levels – multiraciality is the prominent designator. Every other White/non-White combination does not follow the pattern of hypodescent: parents of White-Hispanic multiracial infants tend to opt for White or Hispanic depending on the father’s race, Asian-White multiracial infant opt for White or, much more, multiracial and White-Native American parents opt for White and Multiracial. By the turn of the century, processes of hypodescent in the labeling of white/non-white multiracial infants has significantly waned. The multiracial designation rates have skyrocketed in a decade. This is significant indeed as scholars have debated whether this would happen – how and when. The patterns for non-White/non-White multiracials is quite mixed.

See next page for Table 2

Table 3 truncates the information in Table 2 more precisely and concisely. One key comparative finding we want to highlight in this replication is how much multiraciality has increased over ten years. Overall, multiracial rates have increased significantly. The following groups showed amazing increases over the past decade: Black/White (from .588 to .626), White/Asian (from .470 to .673), White/Native American (from .178 to .453), Hispanic/Asian (from .000 to .258), Hispanic/Native American (from .047 to .203), and Black/Native American (from .176 to .393). These represent intense upward shifts in the probability of using multiracial labels for their children. Looking at the first panel, even the multiracial designation rates among endogamous couplings have increased some ten-fold. The acceptability and usage of multiracial labels is significant at the turn of the twenty first century.

Table 1. Mixed-Race Infants as Distributed Across Various Interracial, Current Residential Parental Combinations.

		Child's Current Residential Interracial Structure																					
Infants Bio. Mix	WW	BB	MM	HH	NN	MM	WB	WH	WA	WN	WM	BH	BA	BN	BM	HA	HN	HM	AN	AM	NM	No Mum	No DAd
WW	88.2	0	0.5	0.2	0	0.3	0.1	2.0	0.2	0.1	1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	6.4
BB	0.3	52.4	0.6	0	0	0.5	0.3	0	0	0	0	1.0	0.1	0	1.5	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0.1	42.7
HH	2.6	0.5	74.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0	1.0	0	0.2	0.2	0.3	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0.1	19.6
AA	0.9	0	0.3	92.1	0	0.4	0	0	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0	0.2	0.1	1.3	0	0	3.6
NN	2.1	0.7	0	7.8	54.6	5.0	0	0	0	1.4	1.4	0.7	0	0	0	0	2.8	0	0	0	5.0	0	17.7
WB	1.4	2.2	0.7	0	0	1.4	55.4	3.6	0	0	6.5	2.2	0.7	0.7	0.7	0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0	23.0
WH	20.3	0.1	4.1	0.1	0	0.3	1.1	31.6	0.4	1.1	0.8	0.3	0	0	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.7	0	0	0	0.9	35.5
WA	4.9	0	0.7	2.6	0	1.3	0	0.7	69.3	0	10.1	0	0.3	0	0	1.0	0	0.3	0	2.0	0	0	6.5
WN	17.1	0	0	0	3.0	1.1	0.3	2.2	1.1	35.0	21.5	0	0	0	0	0	1.7	0.6	0	0.6	1.1	0.3	14.0
WM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3	28.6	0	42.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3	0	0	0	0
BH	0.3	12.1	0.9	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	4.4	0.4	0.1	0.3	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	80.3
BA	2.2	2.2	2.2	0	0	4.3	0	0	2.2	0	0	0	39.1	0	4.3	0	0	2.2	0	13.0	0	0	28.3
BN	0	5.7	0	2.9	0	5.7	0	0	0	0	0	5.7	0	34.3	11.4	0	0	0	0	0	2.9	0	31.4
HA	0	0	5.3	6.9	0	0	0	0.8	2.1	3.1	0	0	2.3	0	0.8	32.8	0	9.2	0	1.5	0	0	38.6
HN	1.9	0	3.1	0	11.3	1.3	0	2.5	0	3.8	2.5	0.6	0	0.6	0	0.6	11.9	4.4	0	0	0.6	0.6	49.4
AN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.2-9	14.3	0	0	0
AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Numbers are percentages. Table should be read across rows (i.e., 1.4% of Black-White Biracial infants (BW) currently live with two white parents (WW).

Table 2. Infant Racial Identification in all Biological Combinations of Parentage.

Racial Designation of Biological Father						
Racial Designation of Biological Mother	White	Black/ African American	Hispanic (all races)	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Native American	Total
White	<u>W 3788(.961)</u> B 4 (.001) H 86 (.022) A 10 (.003) N 1 (.000) M 52 (.013) Total = 3941	<u>W 10 (.098)</u> B 18 (.176) H 5 (.049) A 0 N 0 M 69 (.676) Total = 102	<u>W 331 (.562)</u> B 12 (.020) H 206 (.350) A 3 (.005) N 1 (.002) M 36 (.061) Total = 589	<u>W 17 (.143)</u> B 0 H 8 (.067) A 13 (.109) N 0 M 81 (.681) Total = 119	<u>W 57 (.294)</u> B 0 H 4 (.021) A 2 (.010) N 39 (.201) M 92 (.474) Total = 194	4945
Black/African American	<u>W 4 (.108)</u> B 7 (.189) H 4 (.108) A 0 N 0 M 22 (.595) Total = 37	W 7 (.007) B 1000 (.943) H 27 (.025) A 2 (.002) N 0 (.000) M 24 (.023) Total = 1060	<u>W 3 (.005)</u> B 604 (.912) H 33 (.050) A 2 (.003) N 0 M 20 (.030) Total = 662	<u>W 1 (.067)</u> B 3 (.200) H 0 A 2 (.133) N 0 M 9 (.600) Total = 15	<u>W 0</u> B 9 (.643) H 0 A 0 N 2 (.143) M 3 (.214) Total = 14	1788
Hispanic (all races)	<u>W 33 (.202)</u> B 0 H 120 (.736) A 2 (.012) N 1 (.006) M 7 (.043) Total = 163	W 0 B 6 (.150) H 34 (.850) A 0 N 0 M 0 Total = 40	<u>W 50 (.032)</u> B 11 (.007) H 1471 (.950) A 6 (.004) N 7 (.005) M 4 (.003) Total = 1549	<u>W 1 (.023)</u> B 0 H 33 (.750) A 9 (.205) N 0 M 1 (.023) Total = 44	<u>W 0</u> B 1 (.045) H 18 (.818) A 0 N 0 M 3 (.136) Total = 22	1818
Asian/Pacific Islander	<u>W 37 (.191)</u> B 0 H 7 (.036) A 21 (.108) N 0 M 129 (.665) Total = 194	<u>W 1 (.032)</u> B 4 (.129) H 3 (.097) A 3 (.097) N 0 M 20 (.645) Total = 31	<u>W 3 (.034)</u> B 3 (.034) H 39 (.448) A 27 (.310) N 0 M 15 (.172) Total = 87	<u>W 11 (.009)</u> B 0 H 9 (.008) A 1120 (.957) N 1 (.001) M 29 (.025) Total = 1170	<u>W 0</u> B 0 H 0 A 1 (.100) N 0 M 0 Total = 1	1483
Native American	<u>W 49 (.290)</u> B 0 H 11 (.065) A 0 N 36 (.213) M 73 (.432) Total = 169	<u>W 1 (.048)</u> B 3 (.143) H 1 (.048) A 0 N 4 (.100) M 12 (.571) Total = 21	<u>W 7 (.051)</u> B 2 (.014) H 48 (.348) A 0 N 56 (.406) M 25 (.181) Total = 138	W 0 B 0 H 0 A 0 N 0 M 6 (.100) Total = 6	<u>W 3 (.021)</u> B 1 (.007) H 9 (.064) A 11 (.078) N 99 (.702) M 18 (.128) Total = 141	475
Total	4504	1254	3025	1354	372	10509

Note: Shaded Data refers to Persistence processes; Bold Data refers to Hypodescent processes; Underlined Data refers to Whiteness processes; Italicized Data refers to Multiracial processes.

Table 3. Persistence, Hypodescent, Whiteness, and Multiracial Rates by Type of Parentage (Biological).

Type of Union	Persistence Rates	Hypodescent/Whiteness Rates	Multiracial Rates
<i>Monoracial (7861):</i>			
W + W (3941)	.961	---	.013
B + B (1060)	.943	---	.023
H + H (1549)	.950	---	.003
A + A (1170)	.957	---	.025
N + N (141)	.702	---	.013
Interracial (2628):			
W + H (732)	---	Avg: W=.497 H=.445 Dad _H : W=.562 H=.350 Mom _H : W=.202 H=.736	Avg: .010 Dad _H : .061 Mom _H : .052
B + H (702)	---	Avg: B=.869 H=.095 Dad _B : B=.150 H=.850 Mom _B : B=.912 H=.050	Avg: .015 Dad _B : .0 Mom _B : .030
W + N (363)	---	Avg: W=.292 N=.207 Dad _N : W=.294 N=.201 Mom _N : W=.290 N=.213	Avg: .453 Dad _N : .474 Mom _N : .432
W + A (313)	---	Avg: W=.173 A=.109 Dad _A : W=.143 A=.109 Mom _A : W=.191 A=.108	Avg: .673 Dad _A : .681 Mom _A : .665
H + N (160)	---	Avg: H=.413 N=.350 Dad _N : H=.818 N=.000 Mom _N : H=.348 N=.406	Avg: .203 Dad _N : .000 Mom _N : .406
W + B (139)	---	Avg: W=.101 B=.180 Dad _B : W=.098 B=.176 Mom _B : W=.108 B=.189	Avg: .626 Dad _B : .657 Mom _B : .595
H + A (131)	---	Avg: H=.550 A=.275 Dad _A : H=.750 A=.205 Mom _A : H=.448 A=.310	Avg: .258 Dad _A : .205 Mom _A : .310
B + A (46)	---	Avg: B=.152 A=.109 Dad _B : B=.129 A=.097 Mom _B : B=.200 A=.133	Avg: .333 Dad _B : .645 Mom _B : .020
B + N (35)	---	Avg: B=.343 M=.429 ~	Avg: .393 Dad _B : .143 Mom _B : .643
A + N (7)	---	Avg: A=.143 M=.857 ~	Avg: .050 Dad _A : .000 Mom _A : 1.00

Note: 'Avg.' refers to the average rates of column process for that combination; Subscripts refer to racial designations (e.g., W=White, B=Black, H=Hispanic, etc).

Table 4. Results of Multivariate Analyses.

	Hispanic / White	Asian / White		Multi / White	AmerInd / White		Black / White	
	White	White	Multiracial	White	White	Multiracial	White	Multiracial
Resident Mom, nonWhite								
Female								-
Mom's Age (years)								
Biological Parents	+++							
Northeast Region								
South Region						---		-
West Region					-			
Rural				+++		--	++++	+
Suburb				+				
Family SES		+	+					
Non-English Lang.		+			+		-	
Number of Siblings					--	-		
Religiosity								
Birth Cert Used								
Res. Mom X Female				--				
Res. Mom X Bio Family								
Intercept	n/a	16.20	16.85	n/a	-3.43	2.03	-17.80	-0.84
Constant	-4.03**	n/a	n/a	-6.60**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Classification %	86.40%	n/a	n/a	82.60%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nagelkerke Pseudo R2	n/a	0.22	0.22	n/a	0.27	0.27	0.47	0.47
+/- = .05 < p < .15, +/- = p < .05, +++/- = p < .01, ++++/- = p < .001								

Multivariate Patterns in Parental Racial Identification of Multiracial Infants

For the most prominent parental racial combinations, we looked at a variety of independent indicators of the structure of parental racial identification of their children – in this case, their six to twenty two month-old multiracial sons and daughters. Using the lead of Brunnsma's (2005) earlier analysis, we looked at the impact of the resident mother's racial identity, the child's gender, the mother's age, whether the biological parents were both in the residential household, region of the country, urbanity, socioeconomic status, home language, number of siblings, religiosity, whether the birth certificate was used to assess child race, and two interaction effects: mother's race x child gender and mother's race x presence of the biological parents. Table 4 summarizes the magnitude and direction of effects across these multinomial and logistic regression models.

The patterns summarized in Table 4 are not singular – the variation in the structure of these parents' racial designations of their multiracial young children is dizzying. Across these models we see a few interesting effects arise. First, Black/White girls are less likely to be identified as Multiracial by their parents. Second, having both biological parents in the household increases the odds of Hispanic/White infants being classified as White. Third, there is some evidence that multiraciality is less available in the Southern regions of the United States and some (albeit less) evidence that White is less available in the Western regions. Fourth, White is a much more available infant racial identification in rural areas than is Multiracial. Fifth, for Asian/White infants, family socioeconomic status is associated with a move away from identifying these children as Asian. Sixth, there is quite mixed and difficult patterns in language effects on identification patterns. Seventh, the more siblings present in a household increases the chances of an American Indian identification for multiracial American Indian/White infants. Finally, Multiracial mothers are more likely to identify their daughters as such than their sons.

Discussion

In this replication of Brunnsma (2005), we find that the processes for infants are both similar and different from those found in the earlier study on four - six year olds. In the descriptive data, we see that in the ten years since the last study, more multiracial children are being born and more of their parents are identifying them as multiracial – over half. The multiracial combinations in this data set that were the most prevalent - White/Hispanic, Black/Hispanic, White/Native American, White/Asian, Hispanic/Native American, and Black/White – are quite different than those from a decade earlier. Things have changed in the United States. Processes of hypodescent in the labeling of White/non-White multiracial infants has decreased quite significantly, whereas, multiracial designation rates have risen unprecedentedly – in some cases, over ten-fold. While the multivariate models present no clear patterns across the multiracial combinations, one thing is clear, multiracial and White identification of these infants is rooted in family structure, region, and gender. The bottom line: multiracial identification of multiracial infants at the turn of the century is on the rise – the distancing from minority status that Brunnsma (2005) found in his earlier study continues unabated to this day and is increasing.

These are empirical patterns in a large set of quantitative data. What is missing are the processural reasons why such decisions and such patterns might be occurring. Many factors are certainly at play, the age of these children, the relationship status of the parents, family structure, etc.; however, this replication also, importantly, shows these processes of parental racial identification of their children in two points of time – both before and after the 2000 census and the associated discourse surrounding it about multiraciality in the US. Hypodescent is waning for most multiracial groups, but not for Black Multiracial groups. Reverse hypodescent processes are on the rise as is the use of Multiracial and White. Perhaps these parents see multiraciality as a 'good thing' – distancing their children from perceived disadvantage – seeing Multiracial as a ticket, in a particular market? Unlike the analysis in Brunnsma (2005), these parents have not had four - six years of socially, culturally, and interactionally seeing what works and what doesn't – in an identity sense for their children. As in

the previous study, exploring and beginning to understand the complex ways in which their adult guardians racially categorize their offspring on an institutional survey (e.g., related to their education – in school) illuminates the nature of race relations, processes of racialization, the structure of racial stratification, and the enigmatic relationship between racial identity and racial identification.

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The Characteristics of the Congressional District and Tea Party Victories in 2010

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Abstract

This study examines the webpages of 137 tea party backed candidates in the 2010 elections to determine the commonalities and differences in their campaign materials on their websites. We next proceed to analyze who among the Tea Party candidates won their elections, and who lost, linking electoral outcome to the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the Congressional Districts in question.

One hundred and thirty-seven Tea Party backed candidates stood for election to the US House of Representatives in the 2010 elections. Fifty of these candidates were victorious, while eighty-seven lost. In order to see if there was any difference in the candidate's positions on the issues, we conducted a content analysis of the websites of the victors and losers. Following the content analysis, we next analyzed the effects of demographic and selected socioeconomic characteristics of the Congressional Districts to see if these variables shed light on the electoral outcomes.

Looking at the webpages we found a high degree of commonality - first in terms of the issues identified as important in the election and, second, in terms of the actual position on the identified issues. One of the strongest areas of commonality amongst the Tea Party candidates was that they were all overwhelmingly Pro-Life; and they took great pains to present their overall opposition to abortion. Variation on this issue was only generated by the existence of some candidates who were against abortion on all grounds, and others who would tolerate it in the case of rape and/or incest and to protect the health of the mother. The vast majority of the Tea Party candidates also mentioned their support for the traditional family and for traditional marriage: one man and one woman - a clear rejection of the Gay rights movement's attempts to

These were but two of the religiosity related themes that appeared on Tea Party candidate websites. Many of the Tea Party candidates highlighted their religious background, the idea that the United States is a Christian nation, and, in several cases, the notion that the founding fathers were 'divinely inspired'. Perhaps none was as emphatic on this last point as Joe Walsh (R, IL-08). According to Walsh's website, 'The United States has a manifest destiny to eventually become a glorious example of God's law under a restored Constitution that will inspire the entire human race.' (<http://walshforcongress.com>, accessed November 15, 2010). As a 'divinely inspired' document, the Constitution is regarded as fixed and immutable in its meaning. Overlooked in such views of the document are its treatment of race and slavery, women's rights, and limitations on democracy that are built into the document. Such positions show the close ties between the radical religious right and the Tea Party movements. Indeed, it may not be too much of a stretch to see each as an extension of the other. The Tea Party being but one facet of the religious right and the religious right being another facet of the Tea Party movement.

All of the Tea Party candidates of 2010 supported the concept of unfettered free-markets as a fundamental bedrock of the American economy and of basic American freedoms. Tea Party candidates' ideas about the free market and its relation to the ideas of freedom and liberty are heavily grounded in the works of Friederich von Hayek, one of the founders of the so-called Austrian School of Economics. The work of Hayek, along with Ludvig von Mises and Milton Friedman, has proven very influential in guiding the economic policies of the Tea Party movement. In his influential *Road to Serfdom* (1944), von Hayek argued that there was little difference between communists and National

Socialists in the effects of their governmental control upon the economy. He suggested that both sought to control the means of production and undermine the rights of private property. In building a relationship between communism and Naziism, Tea Party activists make it acceptable to portray President Obama both as a socialist/communist and a Nazi, simultaneously.

Not satisfied with expanding the market in the economic sector, the 2010 Tea Party candidates expressed a desire to expand the market principle to new arenas of American life, for example, education. It was frequently mentioned by both winning and losing Tea Party candidates that education ought to be governed by the principle of competitive choice. They argued that funding for education should be given to the parents of students rather than to the school, and that the parents should be free to spend the money on whatever type of school they wish. Tea Party candidates also endorsed turning over control of schools and their curricula to states and local communities, because parents and the local community know best what their children need to learn/should learn.

Controlling spending - by cutting it - was another prominent theme in the Tea Party movement universe. Very few of them were specific about just what it was they would cut and even seemed ignorant of the federal budgetary process and how little discretionary spending there was in this budget. In order to get spending under control, several Tea Party candidates announced that upon election they would fight for a balanced budget amendment. In cutting spending, they believed it likely that taxes would be cut - especially business taxes. According to some of the Tea Party candidates, Tax cuts are necessary because taxes discourage self-reliance and personal accountability, which should be/are primary values in American society. The Tea Party candidates were unanimous in supporting the extension of the 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts to all of the tax brackets, including the wealthiest Americans. They did not seem to care about the effect this would have on the US budget deficit.

Arguing that it was undemocratic to force workers to surrender the right to a secret ballot, the Tea Party candidates opposed card check for union recognition. But this was but one aspect of Tea Party opposition to unions. Many of the Tea Party candidates opposed public employee unions, especially the teachers' unions. Furthermore, they also opposed the bailout of the auto industry in the US - in part, because they blamed the financial problems of the big car companies on the fact that they were unionized and thus were compelled to pay their workers more in wages and other forms of compensation than the foreign producers running non-union shops in the US. The Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) also was targeted for critique by the Tea Party candidates. It was claimed that TARP, like the auto bailouts, catered to politically favored entities, which was seen as unfair to the rest of the citizenry and their enterprises.

Like TARP and the bailouts, the stimulus package came under attack by Tea Party candidates. It was argued that if the government wanted economic growth the best thing it could do would be 'to get out of the way and let private sector activities create more jobs'. It was the contention of many of the Tea Party candidates that only the private sector could create jobs- the only thing the government did was redistribute wealth, which had little to do with job creation. Whilst citing Government spending as an obstacle to job growth, the Tea Party candidates also argued that excessive government regulation was an additional obstruction. They argued that regulation was a stimulus for companies to move capital and jobs to foreign countries where taxes were lower, unions were not strong, and regulations were minimal or absent altogether. In other words, the Tea Party wanted to create a positive business climate for corporate America: low taxes, no unions and no regulations.

Quite a few Tea Party candidates acknowledged having signed the Americans for Tax Reform Protection Pledge, which committed them to stand in opposition to tax increases. Americans for Tax Reform is one of the main groups funding the Tea Party movement and also provides them

with logistical support (Keil 2010). In turn, American for Tax reform is supported by the Walton Family Foundation, the Gilder Foundation, the Simon Foundation, the Armstrong Foundation, the Carthage Foundation (a Scaife foundation), the Sarah Scaife Foundation, the Lambe Foundation, the Randolph Foundation, the Davis Foundation, the JM Foundation, the Roe Foundation, the Olin Foundation, and the Bradley Foundation (Keil 2010).

A preponderance of Tea Party candidates identified themselves as small business owners, even if they were professionals, such as lawyers, dentists, physicians, etc. Apparently, it was not a good year to run as an intellectual or as someone with professional expertise on the Right. Many of these small business owners proudly touted their membership of their local Chambers of Commerce, as if this highlighted anything significant about them. Candidates mentioned Chamber membership almost as often as church membership or a military background as means to enhance their credentials with their target voters. Given the class location of many of the candidates it is not surprising that the websites to a large degree advocated policies that would advance the cause of the petite bourgeoisie vis-à-vis that of other classes.

Many Tea Party candidates called for 'reform' of Social Security and Medicare, if not immediately then in the future. There was some degree of variety on the positions candidates took on these issues. Some called for privatization, some for 'common sense' reform, without specifying what this entailed, some for raising retirement age in the future, and some for future privatization while retaining fixed benefits for current retirees or near-retirement workers.

The Tea Party candidates were unanimous in rejecting what they derisively referred to as 'Obamacare'- President Obama's health care reform legislation. They denounced it on several grounds: that it was unnecessary; that it was too expensive; that it would set up a rationing of health care; that it would interfere with doctor-patient relations; that it represented government over-reach; that it was a step toward nationalization of health care; and other similar arguments. Instead, almost every Tea Party candidate offered the same set of alternatives: changing relevant laws to permit the sale of health insurance policies across State Lines; personal ownership of health care policies that would insure their transferability; and tort reform to reduce legal claims for malpractice against medical facilities and their staffs.

All of the 2010 Tea Party candidates endorsed closing US borders as a way of ending illegal immigration. They also rejected any amnesty for those immigrants already living in the US without proper documentation.

A large number of the Tea Party candidates labelled themselves as constitutional conservatives, pledging to not vote for any law that could not be justified by a specification in the US Constitution. They were mainly advocates of a small, weak federal government, and who saw power residing in the people and in the States rather than in the federal government.

There was an amazing consistency with respect to the principal points that were raised on Tea Party websites - far more than one would expect by chance or that one would expect from a leaderless, spontaneous grass-roots organization.

A Model for Predicting Support for Tea Party Candidates

We now turn to the question of what variables might predict which Tea Party candidates were victorious in the 2010 elections and which were not. We collected data from each of the 135 congressional districts. The dependent (endogenous) variable in our analysis is election of a Tea Party candidate. If a Tea Party candidate won the district our dependent variable was scored one, if they lost the election the score was zero. Given that the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable, we evaluated the data by running a binomial logistic regression. We used the following status indicators: median household income in

2009; change in household median income from 2008 to 2009; percentage of high school graduates; unemployment in 2009; change in unemployment from 2008 to 2009. We also included per cent White. The results were consistent with our structural model. The only variable that had a significant effect was percentage White. None of the status indicators entered the equation after White had entered it. Moreover, none of the indicators were significant when we excluded White from the model.

Conclusions

These results are surprising, not so much the positive effect of percentage White on the electoral success of the Tea Party candidate, but, rather, the absence of an effect of status, especially the change income variable, the unemployment level, and the change of unemployment in the logistic regression model, the formal results of which are available from the authors at tjkeilsoc@aol.com.

Leading up to the election it was common beltway wisdom that the continuing high unemployment rate was going to be the downfall of the Democrats, and was going to lead to a repudiation of the Obama administration in particular. Such, however, does not seem to be the case, given the lack of effects of the status predictors in our analysis.

Rather, it seems that the undoing of the Democrats was based on racial anxieties of White voters who were reluctant to support a political agenda framed by and a political party led by a Black man. In some sense, then, the 2010 election was a racial referendum – a reaction by Whites who wanted ‘to take back’ ‘their country’ from the usurpers who had won the 2008 election. This drive to ‘take back’ the country had little to do with class issues or with economic distress. Because of their racist sentiments, White voters were willing to support radical right-wing - some of whom frequently used words long associated with negative evaluations and treatment of Blacks – words such as ‘school choice’, ‘States’ rights’, ‘personal responsibility’, amongst others. There is a sense among White voters that Whiteness has been devalued as a form of social capital by Mr. Obama’s election and that Blacks, especially, as well as other minorities are receiving disproportionate benefits from his administration (Zernike 2010).

Race figured into the elections in a myriad of ways. President Obama was described by Newt Gingrich, and others of his ilk, as a President who was raised with values far outside of the American mainstream, thereby rendering him as radically ‘Other’ - as a man out of touch with how the average American thinks and feels.

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