

Abstract: Since the 1997 Office of Management and Budget issued a revision to Directive 15, which allowed individuals to select more than one racial identity, sociological thought on multiracial identity has become an important area of study. In addition to asking what individuals classify as and what influences those decisions, research needs to be done that asks how these decisions are made and how this influences the social reality of mixed race individuals. This qualitative paper uses semi-structured interviews with ten mixed race students for analysis and investigates how existing classifications of race and ethnic identities at Kenyon affect hybrid racial identity and create a social reality for these individuals. I find that the existing classifications of race that Kenyon possesses have a strong influence on how mixed race individuals at Kenyon construct their racial and social identity on campus.

Introduction

The construction and existence of mixed race identity in the US is a multifaceted historical legacy. Early academic studies that examined mixed race individuals in the 1920's feared that it could be "dangerous" and socially "unstable" (Furedi 2001: 24) if the white race was to mix with other races. This problematic belief that arose from, at the time, legitimate academic studies, perpetuated a widespread anxiety and fear amongst the predominant white population that mixing with other races would potentially taint "white prestige" (2001: 24). The extent of disdain for interracial relationships in popular public perception and thought was that those who participated in such relationships were viewed as "immoral" and "weak" (2001: 26). In fact, laws in 29 states prevented interracial marriages until 1967 when the landmark case *Loving v. Virginia* overturned the Supreme Court ban on interracial marriages (Chiong 1998, Farley 2001). The effect of this decision was to increase in interracial families and a growing necessity for groups and organizations for their children, to help reconcile their children's interracial heritages and identities (Farley 2001).

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget issued a revision to Directive 15, the Directive responsible for monoracial categorization, allowing for individuals to select more than one racial identity on national demographic survey intakes and on other governmental forms that asked for racial identification (Renn 2004, Farley 2001). Thus, the formation, thought, and classification of the multiracial individual became a reality. Although the multiracial identity has been created, there is still a complex and problematic social element for individuals who must decipher how they interpret their own multiracial identity.

I am a hybrid race individual, my mother being of Anglo lineage and my father being Chinese. My life possesses a mixture of the cultures, histories, knowledge, and emotions that

both of these racial identities have helped to produce. In coming to Kenyon, I have had the opportunity to explore this sociological issue in an academically grounded manner. While in the midst of enrollment in Knowledge of the Other, I began to consider Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism* on a broader scale. His discussion of Eastern and Western relationships in which the West continually otherizing the East and how this creates tangible social tension was an argument I found perplexing.

I thought about how this relationship and tension might manifest itself when found in a single individual. How does this individual define their racial and cultural identity? Do they relate more with the dominant racial group? Do they maintain a sense of connection with their minority identity? How do outsiders view their racial identity? Finally, what social factors and institutions contribute in the construction and understanding of racial identity for mixed race individuals? I used this as motivation to conduct a final research project for the course that examined these questions within half-Asian and Anglo students at Kenyon.

For my senior thesis, I investigate a similar research topic, but expand my sample to include all mixed race individuals, rather than focusing on Asian-Anglo mixes. My focus is to understand how *existing* classifications of race and ethnic identities that are embedded in Kenyon's social world inevitably affect hybrid racial identity and create and influence the social reality for these individuals. I was guided by sociological history of identity and colleges as a social setting in addition to existing literature on mixed race identity in my exploration of how Kenyon as a social institution aids in the production of a racial identity and how different social facets within Kenyon are a part of this process. In my research, I hope to illuminate how Kenyon and its classifications of race influence the social world that mixed race students are a part of and experience on a day-to-day basis along with the rest of the Kenyon community.

With recent, fundamental shifts in racial identity, such as the US census' recent amendment to demographic census statistics and intakes to include the option to select a mixed race identity, discourse on mixed race identity has also evolved. It has shifted from discussion of the absence of mixed race as a racial category into dialogue on how this new classification fits in correlation to conventional, existing classifications of race. It is now more crucial than ever that we begin to critically research, analyze and discuss mixed race identity in hopes to broaden our understanding of nature of the social world of mixed race individuals. For example, even on a micro level, I remembered that at the time of my application to Kenyon, the option of selecting a mixed race identity on the application was not an option. This is a social change that can be observed here at Kenyon and one that is broadening our understanding of racial classifications. While sociological work has been done on mixed race identity, I hope to expand research on this topic by specifically researching college students. I wanted to sociologically explore how these classifications create a social reality for mixed race individuals on our campus. Education is considered a powerful social institution and by focusing my research on a collegiate setting will elucidate new findings in the social world of mixed race individuals.

Existing Literature

In order to establish a comprehensive framework for analyzing research on hybrid race individuals, there are several theoretical concepts that need to be considered. It is initially crucial to examine social theory on identity and race to understand how individuals construct, interpret and act their social identities. Additionally, sociological literature on colleges and higher level education help to give breadth to Kenyon as the social setting for this study. Finally, contemporary critical theory and research on mixed race identity helps give unique discourse on hybridity in racial studies. While racial classifications are socially constructed, the important

consequence of this social construction is that it distinctively influences the social world and our understanding of why and how race matters.

Charles Cooley (1902: 179-185) helps to define how the social self is created and is then integrated into its social context: "The social self is simply any idea or system of ideas, drawn from the communicative life... [it is] the definite imagination of how one's self...appears in a particular mind." Cooley explains that how one envisions one's role and one's identity is an aggregation of the social world they exist in. This concept is important to help structure this research because it explains how Kenyon's social and intellectual environment directly impacts each interviewee's construction of a racial identity.

Cooley (1902: 179-185) expands on this concept by explaining how the diversity of a social environment relates to this construction of a social identity: "...the ideas that are associated with self-feeling and form the intellectual content of the self cannot be covered by any simple description...but will vary indefinitely with particular temperaments and environments." Cooley increases our ability to analyze the complexity of each individual's own unique construction of a racial identity. Additionally, Cooley recognizes the powerful importance of the variance of the social environment and how that impacts the social self. Finally, Cooley understands that, while each informant has a different respective background, they now share a universal social environment that they will be experiencing—even if in very different narratives.

Ian Hacking's theory on this topic adds depth to how each specific social environment then influences the social self: "Ideas do not exist in a vacuum. They inhabit a social setting...the matrix within which an idea, a concept or kind, is formed" (1999: 10). Here, Hacking argues that these ideas and the setting of the matrix lead to the construction of actual social realities and are not simply isolated away from society. As these ideas influence the matrix or social setting,

Hacking argues that people “can make tacit or even explicit choices, adapt or adopt ways of living so as to fit in or get away from the very classifications that apply to them” (1999: 34).

Both the beliefs and ideologies that come from the ‘matrix’ that originate from this theory are important to my project. Hacking's use of "matrix" is meant as a particular and defined social setting or an institutional context. The setting that is outlined for the individuals in this research project is Kenyon. Thus, it must be recognized that Kenyon as a social setting possesses established ideas and classifications of race. At Kenyon, this set of ideas and classifications are not in an isolated sphere, but rather help to shape the actual understanding of race on campus. This can be observed in a myriad of ways such as student groups and clubs, speakers that are brought to campus or scholarships for minority students. As Hacking suggests, the creation of this social setting still allows for each mixed race student to elect or not elect how they will identify with these classifications.

The synthesis of the work by Erving Goffman and W.E.B. DuBois aids in understanding individuals' reactions to existing classifications of race. Goffman (1963) wrote on the idea of covering parts of a social stigma. The stigma is the part of an individual that they wish not to be fully recognized as a part of them in order to be more wholly integrated into the majority of society. DuBois wrote on the idea of the double-conscience which he describes as the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness” (1973: 3). DuBois alludes to the fact that the self perception of identity is continual, for that individual, it resides in the core of his/her identity. The mixed race individuals are all aware of their own “two-ness” and that affects how they classify their racial identities. It is additionally important to utilize Goffman's idea because often interviewees described their ability and, often times, desire to mute

certain aspects of their multiracial identities. DuBois concentrates on the internal reaction to understanding racial identity whereas Goffman guides our understanding to how external reactions occur to individual's perception of their racial identities.

As many of the theorists speak to how social environment is a factor that influences social identity, existing research that examines institutions of higher level education as a unique social context were added depth in analysis of my research. There is a sufficient amount of existing literature that helps to understand the specific components that have sociological relevance in a college setting. Kenyon possesses many qualities that characterize it as an institution with high intellectual climate. Stern suggests this means that in relation to "intellectual orientation students are concerned with developing their own personal and private system of values," (1968: 213). This is achieved in a variety of ways such as participation in dynamic class discussions or critically thinking about art and music in leisure time (1968: 213). Stern also discusses social relationships in a high intellectual climate as having a strong degree of intellectual and academic autonomy outside the sphere of the classroom as observed in clubs usually being entirely run by students or how students have the ability to decide if they will attend or miss class (1968: 213). Finally, Stern highlights having the opportunity express oneself emotionally as having a high degree of importance for students in a collegiate setting (1968:213).

Other work seems to echo this sentiment on the collegiate social environment. College is a social space that is apt to be used to establish an individualistic social identity that can be expressed in a broader social context (Jackson 1971: 101). Yet, while this is a space that is often used to explore components of a social identity, each individual brings their own social narrative from their home lives. This narrative is directly linked with their social experiences and relationships while in college. "Students do not arrive at college in an unformed state...students

will not be passive," (Smith, Mayer, Fritschler 2008: 140). Thus, students' respective home lives and the social knowledge they accumulate from home will affect their construction of a racial identity while at Kenyon and describes that assessing a racial identity requires taking an active role in its construction.

Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot researched student programs that directly address multiculturalism and came up with two issues that are pertinent to consider in the nature of this research project. First, they cite the difficulty in "maintaining a balance between emphasizing separate social identities and building a transgroup consciousness or community" (2005: 254). This relates to the social impact that is acted out as an individual internally constructs a racial identity and is continually interacting with other individuals, groups, organizations, or classes that also address issues of race. Individuals desire their own understanding of identity, but this is often influenced by peer culture that surrounds them.

The other issues that they raise is "[the] challenge of...negotiating the very life and structure/culture of such programs within the larger academic structure of the university and creating/sustaining collaboration between offices of student affairs and offices of academic affairs," (2005: 255). This touches on the difficulty of finding ways to make discourse and consideration of race accessible in both an academic and social setting in a college. While the college as a social setting is clearly a complex entity, it is still one that thrives with possibility for individuals of mixed race to construct a mixed race identity. Relating to identity theorists, it can be understood that the social reality of the college is definitively affected by ideas and classifications of race and has a social climate that is conducive for individuals to ascertain their racial identity.

Existing literature specifically looking at mixed race individuals explains that as the years have progressed and allowed for the emergence of the multiracial category, multiracialism has moved to the forefront of social and political debate, becoming a contentious topic not only in academic race theory, but also in popular culture and media (Payson 1996, Spickard 2001). It was once feared that mixed race individuals would lose their minority heritage altogether (Aguirre, Anderson, Hwang, Saenz 1995). With the governmental transition into recognizing a mixed race category, the possibility of expression of the minority racial identity and a true multiracial category have become a part of the social realities of race (Renn 2004).

Through different studies of mixed race individuals, researchers have created models that explain the definition of these individuals' racial identity and expression. These models typically break down into the following categories: a "Monoracial Identity," identifying solely with a single racial identity; a "Multiple Monoracial Identity", identifying with both racial identities but in their entirety; a "Multiracial Identity," an identity that fully recognizes both aspects of its racial identity or a "Situational Identity," which allows for the identity to shift and adapt depending on cultural or environmental factors (Chiong 1998, Payson 1996, Renn 2004). Renn continues her categories creating "Extraracial Identity, deconstructing race or opting out by refusing to identify according to U.S. racial categories," (2004: 67). The following factors have been previously identified as important and influential for multiracial children to construct a racial identity: exposure to the culture that the minority racial background comes from, the ability for parents to be an instrument to pass down the racial identity, the ability to speak the language of their non-Anglo background, the community surrounding the mixed race individual, and aesthetic features (Aguirre et al. 1995, Renn 2004).

Literature regarding mixed race individuals and their experience in a college setting and environment is difficult to come by. Renn has used qualitative and statistical research methods and data to create theories on mixed race identity on college campuses. Again, while the social setting for Renn's work is broader, the findings she suggests still show great pragmatic utility in a much more specific field site. Renn focuses on peer culture and opportunity provided by the college as being the most influential factors for mixed race college students in creating their racial identity. She also suggests that individual background plays a role in individual's racial identification. Renn offers many useful insights into the experience of mixed race individuals on college campuses. Her construction of the different categorical models can be applied, and often individuals will be able to place themselves in one of these categories.

Renn's models are similar to what my research also revealed regarding how the mixed race individuals perceive their own racial identification and were helpful in understanding precisely how each individual I interviewed understands their own racial identity. Essentially, there is substantial literature on race, identity, and college environment in sociology. However, there are limited sociological texts regarding mixed race identity and even more severely limited texts regarding mixed race individuals in a collegiate setting. I hope to add to this body of literature by looking at how mixed race identity fits in to the social setting of a college alongside the colleges' already established classifications of race.

Methods

I began my research by contacting several mixed race students that I already knew and had social connections with. From these contacts, I created a snowball sample of interviewees. When I contacted each interviewee via email, I described my research and briefly outlined how the interview would be structured. I created an interview schedule (attached as an appendix) that

began with questions that detailed the individual's family history and life in their home towns to illuminate how past, individual experiences might have influenced their racial identities. The following set of questions looked at how the individual internally interprets the social forces around them to establish their racial identity. Finally, I asked questions regarding how their racial identity is constructed and acted out at Kenyon. The length of the interviews varied with some lasting for only thirty minutes, while others reached over an hour and a half. During each interview, I took detailed notes and recordings to reference in my analysis. Within our conversations and in the realm of this paper, pseudonyms have been used. Using aliases was an additional step to build rapport so that the individuals would know that their responses could be completely honest which helped strengthen and enrich the data.

I selected a sample of any mixed race student on campus. I had students who were half-Black and half-White, half-Asian and half-White, and half-Latino and half-White. I was able to interview seven half-Black students, two half-Asian students and one half-Latino student. This sample stemmed from my prior research project that focused only on racial identity of half-Asian and half-White individuals. By making the sample more inclusive, I wanted to explore whether there was commonality in the experience of mixed race identity as a collective group. It was very challenging to have this sample include a sampling that had enough individuals to constitute substantial analysis in the different categories of multiracial individuals. A definite shortcoming of the sample is that there is only one half-Latino student. Additionally, I was only able to connect with two half-Asian students.

Additionally, my sample deliberately aimed to have approximately half of the interviewees be first year students and half of the interviewees be students who have been at the college for at least one year. This decision would allow first year student's impressions to more

directly reflect the transition to Kenyon's effects on racial identity. Similarly, by interviewing upper class students, one could observe individuals who are more socially established at the college and how they might view race differently. Comparing these two categories would theoretically allow for the data to be interpreted on how the college has addressed mixed race identities on campus.

While the actual interviews themselves were to be semi-structured, often the interviews turned into conversations that deviated from the original research questions. This method allowed for the interview to become much richer in data collection. Methodologically, it established a much stronger link between me and each interviewee because of the absence of formality. Indeed, it was a curious approach; while the interviews did have this comfort within them, they were still formulaically guided by the interview schedule. Michèle Lamont wrote in regards to her use of inductive methods and interviews that "...it lets us see into the theories that people use to make sense of their lives, into the taken-for-granted categories they mobilize when interpreting and organizing the differences that surround them...to reconstruct the internal coherence of their worldviews," (2000: 4-5). I concur with Lamont's reasoning and found that interviews were the optimal method to allow each individual an opportunity to reflect and create their own social narrative in response to the interview questions. Using interviews allowed me to directly connect with the data that is not readily accessible by means of other methods.

One variable I had to take into account as a researcher was anxiety regarding the possibility of "me-studies." This term, taken from a New York Times Op-Ed piece by Kenji Yoshino, is the idea of focusing too much on a component of your own identity. Being mixed race myself, I have my own experiences and narrative to draw on for analysis. However, in approaching my research, I was able to see that many of the hypotheses I had constructed, were

incorrect. This became an exciting revelation in the objectivity of my research. I worked fervently to ground my research in an academic manner so as to truly understand the nature of multiraciality. And while I initially had hesitations being mixed race, I discovered it to be a positive factor as a researcher because it added depth to my rapport with my interviewees.

Furthermore, being a multiracial individual myself allowed me a unique entrée into conversations with my interviewees that would not have existed if I classified as a monoracial individual. They were able to explain situations in a manner that hinted to the notion that I must also have similar feelings or experiences. There was a comfort in knowing that their observer and questioner had a similar social actor position in this social setting, my role as a fellow mixed race individual superseded my role as a researcher.

Results

It is important to divide the informants based on their respective racial backgrounds to give a descriptive framing to their responses. This makes it possible to find the observable similarities within racial categories as well as similarities across respective minority racial backgrounds. Differences will also be pronounced between and within racial backgrounds. For the different thematic elements found in this study, I will synthesize the data to give my analysis.

African-American

Seven of my interviewees are half African-American, six who are mixed with Anglo-descent, and one who is mixed with Puerto Rican and Italian descent. Three of these respondents described their familial backgrounds as being more traditional white racial upbringings. “Like in education and cultururation you could generically say that there are more white attributes to my upbringing,” said Stewart, a senior. Sally, a senior described her youth experience as follows:

I wasn't as comfortable with my black side because there was some weird baggage...I felt apart from them culturally so it wasn't just the color of my skin. It was because of

other attributes—because I'm half white and I feel like it showed, and I didn't like that they knew that about me.

Sarah, a first year student, described her background growing up in a rural area as being fairly isolating as an African-American minority, which led her to connect more with her white identity. “But then I'd get told something like ‘You're the whitest white girl we know,’” Sarah said. She felt that this made her connect with being white, but created conflict and a desire to connect with her African-American heritage.

The other four interviewees identified themselves as being mixed which contrasts with the other half-Black interviewees who felt their more connection to their white racial identities. The individuals who see their racial identity as mixed detailed their efforts to recognize both components of their racial backgrounds. “As a family, we try and recognize both. My sister checks other, I check black, but we have conversation and try to talk and recognize both. I mean, my sister growing up had dolls and she'd have a black one and a white one,” said Charlie, a senior. Tommy, a first year student, grew up outside the US, yet his experiences still led him to try and be aware of his mixed racial backgrounds.

Where I'm from, there were a number of racial groups and my skin color automatically meant I fell into one. There was white, colored, black, and Indian. I fell into the colored category. But I didn't have the same language or mannerisms, so I knew I was mixed.

Sam, a first year student was adopted by a black family and so he is the only mixed individual within an all African-American family. He discussed that this allows him to think about it more because sometimes he does not identify wholly with the African-American components of his family. “...Sometimes I feel at odds with it all. Like, okay. I don't feel like being super-black today. I think it's because I'm not one hundred percent black.” Similarly, Jeremy, a junior, also worked to recognize both components of his mixed race identity. His dad is black, his mother is white, and his two sisters are from a different father who is also white. “I'm the only one who is

mixed race in my family. If there's something that specifically deals with being black, I'm going to talk to my dad about it. But at the same time, everyone's aware of it."

When using the classifications of race on something more formal or structured such as college applications, the interviewees were also divided in their responses. Three wished to select other or multiracial while four definitively selected African-American. This coincided directly with their responses to their racial backgrounds growing up. The individuals who felt that they grew up more in defined white background family environment and felt more distant from their African-American identities were the individuals who then selected multiracial or other. Conversely, the individuals who saw their racial identity as mixed selected African-American.

The individuals who selected black often based this on social interactions and relationships. The sentiment is best summarized by Jeremy when he said "If I put down African-American and I show up it makes sense. But if I put down white and show up it wouldn't. I can say anything I want about it, but people use what I look like." Conversely, the individuals who selected multiracial or other tended to make the decision internally. This is best stated by Sally when she says

Outwardly, I'm black, but a lot of ethnic identity comes from your family and what they instill in you as your identity. I'm able to get along really well with my white family and the white side of me. My father is really a dark colored man, but he's my father and I'm proud of both. I'm not just one even if I look it.

Asian-American

Two of my interviewees were of Asian and white descent, with their Asian heritages both being Chinese. The individuals represent two very different narratives on Asian and white descent. Pamela, a senior, comes from a home environment that is located in an area with a

thriving Asian population. Pamela confidently stated that she is Chinese. Pamela discussed race at home by saying:

We are definitely an Asian family...we practice so many Chinese heritage things from like the Chinese Day of the Dead to the Chinese New Year. My mom's whole family is here so it's easy for us to do the Chinese stuff. I mean at home, it's predominantly Japanese and Chinese racial groups. Where I'm from is more like Asia than the states.

Jillian, a junior, identified as being mixed. "I don't think we have a definite racial identity as a family, I don't think we've put a label on ourselves," Jillian said. Jillian seemed acutely aware of both her backgrounds, recognizing that while she has both racial identities within her, neither racial identity is predominant her understanding of race.

In deciding how to categorize themselves in their preparation for college, Pamela checked Asian-American whereas Jillian marked other or multiracial. However, there were cases where Pamela chose something else. "Honestly, for my application at Columbia, I marked Caucasian because Asian females have less of a chance to get in." Jillian talked about her struggle with her decision:

I had a lot of problems with the check-one-box. I do like the check-all-that-apply. I know that I am not a defined box. I try to establish myself as well as I can in the system that they give me...but it's really debatable as to whether institutions would think I'm minority or not. I had conversations with my parents about whether or not it would be beneficial if I checked Chinese or if I checked white.

In both these cases, this exemplifies a unique characteristic of the Asian-American informants. They are able to manipulate and shift their racial identities within the existing classifications of race.

Latina-American

In my sample, I was only able to get in contact with one Latina-American student, a first-year student named Andrea, yet she provided me with rich data for analysis. However, I would have liked to interview more than just Andrea. Andrea's mother is Bolivian-German and her

father is Ecuadorian. Andrea's family would describe themselves as being Latinos and Hispanic. They speak Spanish at home, practice traditional Latino holidays, and cook Latino food. Yet, while this is true, Andrea still feels very able to mute her Latina racial background. "I grew up in an affluent, white neighborhood, all my friends were white, and I was the only Hispanic student until the fourth grade when there was one more. My friends don't necessarily see me as Latino."

When Andrea decided on what to classify herself as when checking a racial category box, she always marks Hispanic or Latina. "I mean, I look more Hispanic, and I tend to leave out the German side when having to categorize myself." This decision seems to be based strongly on her physical appearance, similar to African-American individuals who marked African-American. While she often defined herself as being culturally white, she still selected Latina when faced with making the decision of a racial classification in a more formal setting such as college applications or the SATs.

Analysis of Data

Social distance from clubs that focus on discussion of race

An important component that shows the existing classifications of race found at Kenyon, are the various clubs at Kenyon that directly address issues with race. Within the subset of my informants, there are various clubs for minority students that each of the respective mixed race individuals could potentially be members of. For African-Americans there is the Black Student's Union, for Asian-Americans there is the Asian Student's Union, and for Latino-American's there is ADELANTE. While these groups' missions are to support cultural awareness and provide unity and pride in these cultures, membership is open to the entire campus. Clubs at Kenyon help to exemplify Hacking's point that ideas do not exist in a vacuum. Classifications of race and the ideas and thoughts behind those classifications do not simply reside at a BSU, ASU or

ADELANTE meeting. Thus, the interviewee's description of their relationship with clubs that address race on campus shows how these classifications of race affect their social reality, help each mixed race individual to construct a racial identity, and how they then relate to that racial identity.

The African-American mixed race students had varying relationships with the BSU. Some informants simply stated they were not affiliated with the BSU. Yet in many aspects there seemed to be a tangible disconnect and social distance between mixed race students and the BSU. "At Kenyon, I don't really feel too much pressure racially. If anything, I feel pressure to act more black. I go to the BSU meetings and I feel outcasted there. I feel like I'm not black enough," said Sarah. Jeremy agreed that beyond that "...the state of the BSU, it's not really as active as it could be. There's no real outlet for it. I don't know what we're accomplishing. It does provide support." Sally echoed this as she remembered her first year at Kenyon.

There were two girls here who were really active in BSU. They were so rude to me for not self-segregating and for not being active with BSU. It was like why are you rude to me if I'm one of your own race? I didn't feel that need because...maybe because I'm half white. Or maybe because of my background in high school.

The African-American mixed race students relationship with the BSU leads them to feel that their racial identity does not have enough characteristics that qualify them as being "black enough." For African-American mixed race students, their social relationship with the BSU draw attention to qualities that show that they are something other than Black.

Neither of the Asian-American students that were a part of my study are active with clubs that focus on the discussion of race. Jillian simply stated that she is not a part of any Asian related clubs on campus because she feels comfortable enough with herself to not need that venue. Pamela described that being approached by individuals who asked her to be a Discrimination Advisor, to join the Chinese Club, or to be a part of Asian Awareness Week

seemed to be marking and drawing overt attention to the fact that she was somehow different than the rest of the students at Kenyon because her racial identity was different from the majority of the student population. "I had never thought about race until I came to Kenyon and suddenly I didn't really like that other people were assuming that I would want that, to be a part of something different," she said. Similar to the African-American mixed race students, Asian-American mixed race students are also wary of the attention that is raised to their racial identity by joining clubs that focus on Asian culture. Again, this points to the Asian students being different than their peers. However, this converses with African-American mixed race students as the Asian-American mixed race students are more concerned with feeling something other than fitting in with a white racial identity.

Andrea stated that she is not a part of ADELANTE. While coming to Kenyon has increased her desire to understand her Latina background more fully, she couldn't generate enough interest to make the decision to join the organization. Andrea reasons that "I don't want it to be a Hispanic-White thing...I'm still in the phase of not knowing how to really say I'm different." For Andrea, ADELANTE is too bold of a statement regarding her racial identity and draws immediate attention to her racial difference; thus she did not join the organization.

In all these cases, membership within these established clubs that directly address race and ethnicity on our campus influences construction of a racial identity by means of reacting to the existing classifications of race found in each organization. For many of the African-American students, membership in the BSU translated into a social meaning of not feeling black enough. It raised awareness of the fact that they were also part white. Conversely, in both the Asian and Latina-American examples, membership in the respective clubs indicates an otherness within the individual from the majority racial group amongst the student population. It makes too audacious

of a statement that separates them from the predominant, white racial background. Essentially, joining any club that deals with race draws attention to what makes an individual different than the predominant racial background of the group they are joining. The interviewees suggest that membership in any of the clubs demands that they commit all the way to being Black, Asian, or Latino, rather than allowing for a multiracial identity. The desire to avoid drawing out differences and blend in with or avoid the existing classifications results in multiracial individuals tending to avoid association with these clubs.

Race and identity in the classroom at Kenyon

Within this study, the interviewees' thoughts on discussion in the classroom regarding existing classifications of race and multiraciality were quite perplexing. It is clear that there is a vivid amount of both internal and external social tension that arise from these classifications for mixed race students. The role of the mixed race individual becomes is complex because of their seeming inability to wholly relate with one side of the argument or discussion; they continually find themselves caught in-between because they are not fully classified in to one racial group or another. Additionally, there is a lack of discourse that relates directly to the social narrative of hybrid race individuals. This sociological theme was evident throughout the racial categories. The tension and anxiety of being trapped in the middle, between two predominant existing racial classifications, became the source of contention for the majority of interviewees.

Sarah describes a common thought she has in the classroom:

In class, I want to be seen as someone who deserves to be here just as much as anyone else did. I should be looked at as equal to them. Sometimes, white kids think that I just got here on Affirmative Action. Instead, they should get to know me and see that I really deserve to be here at Kenyon.

Sam echoed that response: “There were people in my class hating on Affirmative Action, and they’re just rich white boys who will just never get it.”

This anxiety can lead to an individual not wanting to respond in class or not wanting to fight what seems to be a strong social current. Andrea shared her observations on this issue: “When we talk about classism or racism, I find it really hard to express my opinion. I feel like people will say ‘Oh she’s just saying that because she’s a Mexican who got in because of Affirmative Action.’ It makes me feel like a coward.” While the overall sentiment is that Kenyon is still a safe setting to have discussions on race, it comes innately linked with a culture of slight ignorance as perceived by the mixed race students. Sally said “People say stupid shit. Even with a good education, people still don’t know about how to discuss and interact with people of other races.” This issue is not necessarily a unique one as many minority students often describe similar reactions. What makes the mixed race identity unique is that they feel a need to strongly dignify their role as a minority because they are stuck in-between. They are defending their minority status and feelings of being a minority to full minority students in addition to full white students.

In addition to this tension in the classroom, it seems that for mixed race individuals there is a fundamental absence of curriculums that allow for class discussion, texts, or assignments that focus on mixed race identity. Jeremy talked about dialogue regarding mixed race identity:

I feel like it’s something we don’t get to talk about...you talk about white, you talk about black, but you don’t really get to talk wholly about what it feels like to be mixed in a classroom. After those conversations [on being mixed], I felt good...I realized I had never had that conversation. There’s just not an outlet for it.

Charlie felt similarly: “There’s no dialogue on mixed race. Some classes talk about race but they more generally talk about Black or White. I’d like to be able to discuss mixed race because it’s its own category...there’s a need for that kind of discussion to figure out who you are.” Because there is little recognition of a mixed race category, there is little room for full discussion inside the classroom. Like student organizations, the classroom uses existing classifications of race to

structure curriculum, text selections and class discussions. Since mixed race students do not necessarily fit in to the existing classifications, it becomes difficult to feel that their specific identities ever receive attention.

Stigma, Covering and Double-Consciousness as a Mixed Race Individual

The social technique of covering and muting racial identity became a very pertinent topic of discussion with my interviewees. Both at Kenyon and outside of Kenyon, the individuals discussed the malleability of their racial identities. They recognized their ability to manipulate their racial identities if they are in a situation called for it. For example, Andrea who usually chooses to cover her Latina heritage, is still able to check Latina on something like the SATs or college applications. This relates back to a fusion between Goffman's theory of covering and DuBois' theory of double-consciousness. Each mixed race individual has an awareness of the two strikingly different racial identities within themselves. They are also able to observe when one of those identities may become problematic. Thus, they are able to mute their 'stigma,' working to hide traits of whatever the problematic racial identity is based on their cultural surroundings.

Andrea describes her experience with this concept:

In my experience with being mixed, I'm able to go back and forth between two sides. But I'm trying to blend in and be normal. I get more benefits that way. Teachers favor that group, the white group. You get more things that way. I think that if I hadn't been identified as white, I would have been viewed very differently. I didn't want to be associated with being a 'dirty Mexican,' so I sought out ways to not be that.

Sally also exemplifies this combination of theories:

At Kenyon more so than ever, it has change what I acknowledge about race. There is the stigma of the 'angry black woman' and that makes me constantly second guess myself as a person. So I think about it and I act about it differently than I might somewhere else, like at home in Chicago.

Both of these examples are microcosms for what many of informants shared. They do have a heightened awareness of their double-consciousness, but they are also, at times, willing to cover whatever parts of their racial identity may be considered a stigma. Many of the informants felt that their aesthetic features were a large part of their ability to shift racial identities. The mixed race students feel that they are able to parse out traits of their racial identity that aid them in avoiding a connection with stigmatized aspects of their racial identities. Andrea noted that her lighter skin allowed her to mute her minority background because she was not dark enough to necessarily be considered a "dirty Mexican" which is a stigma she actively avoids. Pamela found her almond shaped eyes gave her the ability to relate more to being Asian.

The strongest contributing factor to the mixed race individual's desire to cover a "stigma," is directly related to an extreme, active avoidance of negative stereotypes that are associated with certain parts of a particular racial background. It is interesting that while it often seemed problematic for mixed race individuals to feel that their racial identity results in an in-between condition, this is an area where it actually leads to them feeling they benefit from their transient state. Additionally, the mixed race individuals are also able to gain a sense of control of existing classifications of race by using their awareness of "double-consciousness" and "covering." Mixed race students described their ability to accentuate physical features that are associated with certain racial classifications as a means of either muting their connection to stereotypes or to show their relationship with a racial group.

Perception of the social world as a mixed race individual on campus

A common theme amongst the informants was the acknowledgment of there being a particular social disposition towards discussion of race amongst students. Stewart said:

There can be uncomfortable interactions with people who make clumsy statements. One friend here made a mildly offensive joke, looked at me and said 'Sorry—I forgot you

were black!' I don't think it's because people are ignorant, I just think they haven't had interaction with other races.

This sentiment was echoed by many informants. While they find the campus to be open-minded and accepting, this does not prevent people from forgetting that that mixed race individuals are a minority. In their open-mindedness, the interviewees believe that this will often lead people to engage in silencing conversations about race. "The Kenyon bubble can be more harmful than helpful...it shadows real conversation, when people really do need to talk to come to realizations about race," said Sarah.

Additionally, the social reality for mixed race individuals is often assigned by outside decisions that do not come from the individual. "I'm not able to express my white identity here. Only my Chinese because I look more that than white. But that's how it is; you describe mixes here by using their minority. There's the Japanese girl—not there's the mixed girl," said Pamela. Charlie, an athlete, described how he is often assigned rooms with fellow black teammates or hosts the black prospective students. Within the existing social reality at Kenyon and the ideas on race that permeate in this social context gives structure to the social reality of race on our campus.

From the observations of mixed race individuals, the existing classifications of race are certainly a part of their social reality. As highlighted in the aforementioned quote, these classifications dictate what is acceptable and what taboo in humor or jokes and in actual conversations about race. Additionally, mixed race students detect that the social role of mixed race individuals, is described by their peers in accordance with existing classifications and identities of race.

Conclusion

The overall social reality for mixed race individuals as created by existing classifications of race at Kenyon is a complicated and often contentious entity. As existing research has

indicated, mixed race identity as an overarching idea does not exist within a vacuum. It is a constant thought for multiracial individuals here at Kenyon and a striking feature of the social reality on campus. This makes Kenyon a social setting where these existing classifications of race and the ideas, thoughts, and behaviors permeate throughout the actual lived social reality for mixed race individuals. Individuals can make decisions on how they choose or refuse to relate to these existing classifications. In response to my research question, it seems that one of the main effecting factors is there is lack of solidarity and meaning in the classification of a mixed race identity. However, this seems difficult to overcome based on the variance found by each interviewee in their perception of their mixed race identity.

Renn's categories of racial identity in mixed race individuals were not as observable in my research of mixed race students at Kenyon as she found in her study. The students in my sample seemed to mostly be "multiple monoracial," "situational" and "multiracial" identity categories of the spectrum of her classifications. The "multiple monoracial" identity, in which individuals shift racial identities according to a situation, was very common and relates to the ideas of double-consciousness and covering. The "situational" identity alludes to the idea that mixed race individuals often find themselves able to shift their racial identities. Finally, the "multiracial identity" in which individuals decisively recognize both heritages reflects an internal desire to recognize both facets of their racial identity in a harmonious method.

The "multiple monoracial" identity specifically seemed to have more resonance with my interviewees. Because of this desire to express and explore both racial heritages in their fullest, mixed race students make strong efforts to manifest this in the social reality at Kenyon. For example, in Sarah's work in the theatre department, she detailed that she wants to be considered

for roles that are white and black. She discusses that these are both within her and she needs to be able to share that on the stage.

Yet even when this was possible, it did not come without conflict. For the most part it seems that the mixed race individuals in my study, feel that they are somewhat trapped in a stuck-in-between identity. In relation to Kenyon, it seems that the existing classifications of race limit dialogue, institutions, and courses that allow for a deeper understanding of multiracial identities. Kenyon's lack of institutions that recognize multiracial identities, many interviewees discussed successful programs at other academic institutions, such as Macalester and Bard that address multiraciality and make it a more inclusive conversation for the whole campus. Many of the interviewees observed these programs as they went through the college application process. They directly addressed the issue of multiraciality in forums that encouraged the whole school to consider the issue. Tommy described that with a means to discuss the middle ground between the dualities of races leads to “Clubs becom[ing] polarized in race. There needs to be something in the middle that could explore that middle.”

For mixed race students, the problem with the campus then, is that it seems a difficult place for a mixed race student to have forum to discuss the individual and unique aspect of being mixed with mixed race students. This conflict could even be seen in methodology in my struggle to find enough interviewees to really diversify and enrich the sample for the project. The lack of multiracial students and diversity on a larger scale allows for the ideas and intimate conversations to be left, if had at all, in an unstructured and often frustrating conversation.

There are several ways that I would have liked to improve the design of the project, specifically in methodology. It would have been advantageous to have a wider sampling to see if the theoretical concepts that I used for my framework could be applied in a larger sample.

Furthermore, it would be even more beneficial to interview the families of the individuals as well. This could allow for the researcher to see whether there seems to be a deliberate racial identity being established. Understanding the relationship between the parents would give more depth to the study. I also would have liked to have incorporated participant observations with the informants. However, this would have had to take place over a long period of time to really collect data that would be relevant to this project. Additionally, I feel my research design was unable to specifically give a precise comparative analysis between first years and students who have been at Kenyon for more than one year.

The amount of time and breadth of researchers is another area of this study I would have liked to increase. As I covered the data, I made a list of all the sociological relevant issues I found pertinent for analysis. The list became longer and longer, and I realized that this is a study that, to gain a strong sociological understanding in, needs a longer period of time. More time would also allow for follow up interviews, another component I think would have added depth to my study. With more time, I would have liked to have had additional researchers conducting analysis. Examining even a small sample of interview transcripts as data takes an incredible amount of time and critical concentration. There were several factors, such as adoption, deaths in the family, transferring to Kenyon, and being international students that were all factors that should be explored with more depth. Increasing the amount of eyes covering the data would have been extremely advantageous.

The social indications from my small study seem clear: the mixed race identity is becoming a discursive, wholly unique identity and classification. Because of the increasing growth in population of mixed race identity, there is also an increase in popular imagination as well as academic research and thought on mixed race individuals. Popular thought is often

considered by individuals who are from either a full white or full minority racial background.

Thus, it is necessary to begin including mixed race individuals more so into the collegiate setting.

Creation of student organizations that feel less contentious and more open to less racially

polarized conversations would benefit the continued development of the classification of mixed

race. Integrating that identity discussion in the classroom would help mixed students feel at ease

in representing both heritages that are intricately woven into their identities.

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