"Whitening" and the Changing American Racial Hierarchy

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Abstract

As a result of the increasing number of biracials and multiracials, and White reconstructions of previously non-White skin colors, the Whitening of selected immigrants and especially their children appears to be proceeding. Although there are many studies on the racial identity of biracials, too little research exists on how Whites identify them and light-skinned monoracials, which of these they Whiten, how, and why. Enough is known to suggest that if current trends continue, our picture of the country's racial hierarchy has to be revised. While Whites will likely remain on top and poor African Americans and other Blacks at the bottom, what happens in the middle cannot now even be guessed at with any hope of accuracy. For that reason alone, empirical and policy-oriented research on White identification patterns is badly needed.

Keywords: Racial Hierarchy, Racial Intermarriage, Deracialization, Biracials, Multiracials, Whitening

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, pundits, journalists, demographers, and even some social scientists have been warning the country that by the middle of the twenty-first century Latinos, Asians, and others, defined by most Whites as non-White races, would turn Whites into a demographic minority. Most of the prophets were merely predicting a more diverse future, but some were intentionally scaring Whites, to get backing for one or another measure against immigration or to get rid of immigrants, undocumented and otherwise. Whatever the reason, the prediction is sociologically not credible. The continuing rise in racial intermarriages and more informal couplings are creating with every generation ever larger numbers of people now labelled as biracials and multiracials.[1]

Moreover, even if the Bureau of the Census persists in using old racial categories and names (Prewitt Forthcoming), popular conceptions of Asian, Latino, and other descendants of immigrants should change and might eventually become irrelevant for categorizing and ranking people (Warren and Twine, 1997). Furthermore, unless

current trends are somehow halted, by 2050, two generations hence, many of these hybrids will have been Whitened. However, a rising number of monoracials currently still considered non-White will likewise be Whitened. In fact, East Asians and light-skinned Latinos, particularly middle-class ones, are already heading in that direction. If the processes repeat themselves that turned the 1880–1924 waves of Italian, Jewish, and other Southern and Eastern European immigrants, then called races, into White ethnics after the end of World War II, many Latinos and Asians will be perceived and counted as Whites by Whites before midcentury. Consequently, Whites are likely to remain a demographic majority.

True, such a prediction is risky; we do not know how many immigrants with what phenotypical features and socioeconomic status will arrive here in the coming decades. Predictions can only project some current trends for a decade or so; projecting any trends for forty years hence has to be guesswork. Thus, if the country's economy remains in bad shape and its politics continues to be polarized, White racial and ethnic hysteria could generate new judgments about who is White and who is not and even lead to some un-Whitening (McDermott and Samson, 2005; Richeson and Craig, 2011).

Under other conditions, White racial and class discrimination against Blacks might decline, for example, if anti-immigrant feelings intensify, or if the labor market finds poor Blacks attractive for other reasons. Alternatively, panicked Whites might deliberately hasten the Whitening process to make sure that they remain a majority. This is more easily said than done, because how people judge the skin color of others is not easily controlled by politics or policy. Still, the government has some weapons, beginning with the U.S. Census, which could be persuaded to tweak the racial categories—something it has done in any case from time to time.

Though 2050 is nearly forty years away, racial intermarriage, biracials, multiracials, and the Whitening process are here to stay. Many researchers are already looking at how these factors are beginning to change today's America, but research programs should be established now to track these changes systematically, and most importantly, to reassess frequently what they could mean for the country's future racial hierarchy.[2]

Even more attention must be paid to the position of poor and moderate-income African Americans and Black Latinos who are currently at the bottom of this hierarchy. No one can say if they will be so placed in 2050, but this topic requires the most careful following of trends for both empirical and policy purposes. Although Black intermarriage rates are also rising, and the intermarrieds will be adding further to the biracial and multiracial population, for the foreseeable future Whites are likely to consider a limited proportion of this group as acceptable candidates for Whitening.

Where Blacks are placed in the racial hierarchy will depend in part on how Whites and the already Whitened will construct the biracial and multiracial descendants of racially intermarried Blacks, particularly those in the more affluent classes. Hypodescent and the one drop rule will probably become less significant even in the South, except among those who still believe in the existence of racially differentiated blood. Researchers therefore have a special responsibility to follow where Whites will position Black and hybrid populations in coming decades. Monitoring whom Whites will treat more equally is particularly important, because public policy could encourage this process in the right political climate.

Although much of the needed research and tracking will have to deal with whether and how Whites Whiten or otherwise allow current non-Whites to move up in the racial hierarchy, researchers must also look for—and at—changes in the class hierarchy of the future. In fact, the racial hierarchy combines race and class; whether

race trumps class in placing people or vice versa may become a question more relevant than it is today. Researchers must ask questions about where societal processes relevant to race and class are headed and make projections. Policy-minded researchers can be drawn in to suggest policies for today that could bring about greater racial and class equality in the future.

A voluminous research literature has already developed on many of the subjects to be discussed below. These are covered in a special issue of *Daedalus* (Bobo 2011a), particularly in articles by Bobo (2011b), Cohen (2011), Hochschild et al. (2011), and Richeson and Craig (2011). Consequently, this article will discuss and speculate on what could begin to happen between now and 2050.

WHITENING

The contemporary study of Whitening began in the 1990s (Brodkin 1998; Ignatiev 1995; Roediger 1991; Twine 1996), in part to demonstrate to Whites that they were as much a race as any other. In fact, the early writers mainly used the concept in the fight against racial discrimination. Whitening is more often used now to describe the social process by which the descendants of the European immigration were accepted by non-immigrant America. As many critics of the term have rightly pointed out, the mostly Southeastern and Eastern Europeans were already White, even though some were considered swarthy.

Whitening is a White activity, although others can act in support or in opposition. As a social process, Whitening works at various speeds, depending on many factors, including among others the size of the non-White population being considered for Whitening. When such populations are large and mainly of low status—such as Latinos in today's California and the Southwest—Whitening is likely to proceed slowly. The speed of Whitening is also determined by how much the candidates for Whitening resemble middle-class Whites socially and culturally. Non-Whites who are able to move into lily-White communities and live like Whites, at least publicly, have similar cultural and other tastes and vote for White politicians to thereby help Whiten themselves. Their ability to achieve the American Dream counts, too. All other things being equal, successful non-Whites Whiten more easily than others.

Nonetheless, the people who are Whitened do not have to accept a White identity. Most Whites probably do not care or even notice what identity these former non-Whites choose for themselves, unless it interferes with their relationship with the Whiteners. So far at least, those already Whitened gravitate toward behavior and attitudes associated with Whiteness, particularly to increase the gap between them and darker-skinned people, notably African Americans (O'Brien 2008). Some Whitened people exercise their racial option instrumentally, biracials choosing to be White when that is helpful, or non-White when that is advantageous: biracial college students at scholarship time, for example.

That some biracials and monoracial East Asian, other Asian, and Latino peoples are on the way to being Whitened does not preclude White discrimination against similar others, for racial or class reasons (Kim 2007). Quotas, glass ceilings, and other obstacles to upward mobility do not necessarily disappear with Whitening; White favoring of East Asians and light-skinned Latinos does not prevent Whites from discriminating against Southeast Asians and dark-skinned Latinos.

Whitening presumably does not exclude subsequent un-Whitening, if and when Whites decide to exclude or otherwise discriminate against those they have

Whitened. If populations which had been Whitened become a threat numerically, economically, or politically, White behavior and attitude can change dramatically. Numbers are particularly important; if the Whitened become a numerical majority, Whites, who are rarely comfortable being a minority, could find ways to un-Whiten them.

It was thus probably no coincidence that White ethnics were fully Whitened when large numbers of African Americans and dark-skinned Puerto Ricans came to the cities dominated by White ethnics. Perhaps today the speed with which Asians are being Whitened is connected to the concurrent large immigration of Mexicans—especially undocumented ones—but then, Whites have Whitened Asians before in order to protect themselves from a dark-skinned majority (Loewen 1971).

Whether the Whitening of light-skinned Latinos will be affected by the size of the Mexican immigration needs to be monitored. If the Whitening is slower or faster in cities with a larger Mexican population than in other cities, we need to determine whether and how population size either raises White fears about Mexican immigrants or provides more opportunity for Mexican-White intermarriages, or both.

Impressionistic evidence suggests that the children of East Asians married to Whites are probably the first to be Whitened. However, the same can be said about East Asian monoracials, particularly those who are middle or upper-middle class, or living in almost entirely White suburbs. Conversely, South and Southeast Asians, notably Indians, Filipinos, Malayans, and Indonesians, who are often darker in skin color and not upper-middle class probably are currently not Whitened as quickly or as often, but how far Whitening occurs along the light-to-dark skin color array and down the social-class hierarchy is a major future research question.

The Latino Whitening process is most important, not only because Latinos are by far the largest immigrant group in the country, but also because class, skin color, and other phenotypical characteristics may vary more greatly with this group than among Asians (Alba et al., 2011). As among East Asians, the children of Latino and White parentage as well as some light-skinned Latinos are already being Whitened. However, dark-skinned Latinos and Caribbeans often suffer racial and class discrimination and exclusion, in some cases not very different from those inflicted on African Americans.[3] Even so, immigrants differ not only racially but ethnically, which raises the question of whether adherence to immigrant ethnic culture makes a difference. People who remain inside the enclave and are endogamous are probably not candidates for Whitening, since they may not have much social contact with Whites.

DERACIALIZATION

In retrospect, Whitening was an unfortunate choice of words. Literally, the people in question were being socially bleached, but a more accurate term for the process would be *deracialization*. In fact, when White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) and other Whites turned the Eastern European immigrants into White ethnics, they in effect deracialized them.[4] As I use the term, deracialization is the opposite of racialization (Barot and Bird, 2001). It describes a process which begins when one group ceases to stigmatize the phenotypical distinctiveness of another, continues when that group no longer views the other as a race, progresses as the group, which does not think of itself as a race, ceases to pay attention to the other's phenotypical differences, and culminates when the first group eventually stops noticing these differences

altogether.[5] At some point, the fact that people once distinguished themselves from others by selected phenotypical differences could become a historical curiosity.

Because deracialization is not a common term, the rest of this paper will instead employ the term "Whitening," particularly since empirical and other studies of Whitening are now available (Twine and Gallagher, 2008).

INTERMARRIAGES AND BIRACIALS

All other things being equal, the Whitening process is likely to become publicly visible as more Americans intermarry racially and their children are described and identify themselves as biracial and multiracial. Black and White intermarriage has been studied for decades, but the study of other interracial marriages is now also well under way (Lee and Bean, 2010; Sanjek 1994). So far, the number of racial intermarriages of non-Whites and Whites remains small, though the intermarriage rates continue to rise. According to a recent Pew Research Center study (Wang 2012), almost 10% of all marriages, but 15% of new marriages in 2010 were interracial; 70% of these involved marriages to Whites.

Asian and Latino intermarriages with Whites are most numerous while Black and White intermarriages lag behind, although even they are now increasing.[6] While racial intermarriages still take place largely among middle-class people, researchers also need to study interracial common law and other cohabiting relationships, especially as marriage rates continue to decline.[7] The sociological study of biracials themselves has been limited almost entirely to how biracials identify themselves, and to the possibilities and problems of living with a biracial or multiracial identity (Khanna 2011). The more significant topic—how Whites identify biracials—has not yet received much attention.[8] However, as long as Whites are in charge of the country's racial definitions, their identification decisions are the ones that count.[9]

THE CHANGING RACIAL HIERARCHY

The differential treatment by Whites of the various participants in the post-1965 immigration is also creating changes in the arrangement of the races in the American social, economic, and political hierarchy. No single nationwide racial hierarchy exists that fits all regions of the country; positions in the hierarchy differ somewhat between regions, particularly those with many immigrants of diverse racial, national, and class origins. The hierarchy may, however, be more similar in regions that have experienced little immigration in the last few decades.

The hierarchy was probably also more similar across the country during most of the last half of the twentieth century. Then, the hierarchy constructed by Whites as the dominant race put themselves at the top, followed by Asians, Latinos, Afro Caribbean, and Black Latinos, with native Americans and African Americans at the bottom.

Because racial discrimination toward all non-Whites (and in the first half of the twentieth century, White ethnics) was still rampant, it was once possible to construct a simpler hierarchy: White and non-White. Then, in the 1990s, some of us, realizing that many of the new immigrants were being incorporated and assimilated at a faster rate than the Europeans who had arrived between 1880 and 1924, suggested that the hierarchy was being rearranged.

If the class differences between Whites and light-skinned non-Whites were going to be reduced—skin color differences to be de-emphasized—and if Whites were to begin Whitening the latter, the American racial hierarchy might move toward becoming non-Black and Black someday (Gans 1999; Lee and Bean, 2004; Yancey 2003).[10] Whites were of course still free to distinguish themselves from other non-Blacks, but before the intense demonization of undocumented Mexican immigrants began, African Americans—and some others whose skin color Whites constructed as Black—were clearly the lowest stratum.

The fact that African Americans were losing jobs to Latino newcomers made it even clearer. Even though Whites treated middle- and upper-middle-class African Americans with more respect, they nonetheless continued to discriminate against and harass them in a variety of ways (Feagin and Sikes, 1994).

While the non-Black–Black duality was being proposed, other observers added a third category—Brown—in the middle (O'Brien 2008). However, Bonilla-Silva (2002), feeling that the Whitening process had not yet sufficiently advanced, saw the middle category in his tripartite hierarchy as honorary Whites and the bottom one as "collective Blacks" (p. 4), which included very dark-skinned Asian and Latino immigrants as well as African Americans (Bonilla-Silva 2002).

When I wrote about a non-Black-Black hierarchy (Gans 1999), I qualified it as "an exercise in speculative analysis," (p. 371) which I justified by the need to think about where the country might be headed in the future. The experiences of the last decade suggest that the analysis has to be reconsidered, especially because of the acceleration of intermarriage, the rising number of White-appearing biracials, and the Whitening of non-Black newcomers. In retrospect, the notion of a non-Black–Black hierarchy may also have been naive. Although it is phenotypically accurate enough to serve as an analytic concept, we should have realized that most Whites would strenuously reject being described as non-Blacks. For this reason, and because of the likelihood of continued White domination of the hierarchy, its description should have placed Whites at the top.

Some researchers are still reporting a non-Black and Black hierarchy; since they are doing empirical work in particular regions of the country, they have good reason to do so (Marrow 2011). Still, I believe the currently evolving hierarchy is better described, at least for now and for the country as a whole, as a tripartite one, with Whites as well as Whitened Asians, Latinos, and some others at the top and African Americans at the bottom, together with others perceived by Whites as Black, including Latinos and Caribbeans.

Between these two strata, I would hypothesize a heterogenous stratum of dark but not Black Americans, some of whom, such as Southeast Asians, are closer to the immigrants once perceived as Yellow and others more like Latino Browns.[11] This stratum could also be constructed as a broader non-White but non-Black stratum.[12] This stratum could also become an interstitial one, perhaps in continuing flux, in which White America will locate all those, including new non-White immigrants, it is not yet able or willing to assign a place in the hierarchy. The stratum could be further subdivided by a variety of other phenotypical and class criteria as White America tries to figure out how to identify the increasing variety of biracials and multiracials.

Much of the flux will stem from widespread White confusion about how and where to place the growing number of biracials and multiracials. How Whites will classify the rising phenotypical varieties is impossible to predict, although they will probably use class and other criteria to reduce their confusion. There is some empirical indication that the confusion is already beginning (Harman 2010; Harris

2002), and it should be a major research topic someday. If White confusion becomes too disturbing, phenotypical classification might be de-emphasized, with Whites and other Americans exploring alternate ways of ranking each other. Researchers studying the racial hierarchy must look carefully to see if an interstitial stratum develops as well as who is placed in it and by what criteria.

Needless to say, all possible scenarios can evolve quickly with new immigrations or with other macro changes in America—for example, the possible replacement of aging Whites by Latinos and other now non-Whites in the professional and managerial upper-middle class (Alba 2009). If enough now poor African Americans and other Blacks were allowed to enter the middle class, Blacks might no longer be consigned to the bottom of the hierarchy. Conversely, if Whites are sufficiently fear driven, if future conservatives continue to think as do today's, and if they obtain enough power, the government could turn overtly racist, or race blind.

RACE AND CLASS

The racial hierarchy is actually part of a larger race-class hierarchy, for the two categories are generally treated as conjoined, as in the race-class nexus (Franklin 1991). Which one is more important is itself an empirical issue that has become more visible because of the class diversity of the post-1965 immigration. In fact, what may once have been a race-class hierarchy could be turning into a class-race one, for the early moves to Whiten East Asian newcomers were in large part an effect of their higher-than-average class status, as immigrants but even more so as second-generation Asian Americans.[13]

To put it another way, class appears to be trumping race in the ranking process, but only up to a point, for as already noted, Blacks, and particularly African Americans, including Black-White biracials are now almost never Whitened. If or when class trumps race, then successful dark-skinned people may become honorary Whites, or perhaps the hierarchy will consist of high-status lights at the top and low-status darks at the bottom. If race trumps class, very dark-skinned people will continue to be ranked lower and possibly discriminated against more severely regardless of their class status.[14] High-status African Americans whom White taxi drivers will not pick up have been experiencing this brand of race-class inconsistency for a long time.[15]

Whatever the future shape of the race-class nexus, the likelihood of America soon becoming postracial seems small, at least for African Americans. Despite the enthusiasm for postracialism evoked by the 2008 Obama campaign, the Obama presidency quickly discovered that the president could not appear to favor African Americans in any way. In fact, if today's austere economy continues, race and class conflicts may harden, and young people in the future may not be as racially tolerant and postracial as are some of today's youth. In the near future, researchers can begin to determine whether and how today's tolerant and postracial young feel and act in later adulthood (Bobo 2011b; Cohen 2011; Hochschild et al., 2011).

The race-class (or class-race) hierarchy is a metaphorical concept, but how people rank and are ranked is an existential reality that affects their lives in innumerable ways. A higher rank means having and exercising more economic, social, and political power. As a result, voting and other political activities may affect the racial hierarchy. Until now, most people at the higher levels of this and other hierarchies, with some exceptions, are likely to vote Republican.

However, Asian, Latino, and other immigrants and their children have so far voted Democratic more often than Republican. Upward mobility is likely to per-

suade some to switch parties, but what they will do if they are Whitened remains to be seen. The political choices of Whitened Latinos will be most significant; their numbers alone could swing elections in several states if not the country some day. Even so, how Whitened populations will vote in the future also depends on whether and how global and other economic and political forces remake the political parties and national political demographics. No one can guess now whether the two major parties will survive to midcentury.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Keeping track of trends in intermarriage, biracialism, and multiracialism, changes in the race-class hierarchy, and in the realities and politics of migration are not just topics for research, but issues relevant to public policy. The following four points are of paramount importance.

Reducing White Fears and Deconstructing Race

White fears about becoming a racial minority must be stilled, if only to prevent additional fear-driven politics by government or social movements. Perhaps ways can be found to persuade the fearful that race is a social construction—and that they are therefore likely to remain a majority. Indeed, learning that they would remain demographically dominant might get Whites to understand the constructionist nature of race and therefore perhaps reduce racism.

Preventing Downward Mobility

Downward mobility has many destructive effects on the downwardly mobile. One of these effects would probably be racial, driving darker races further down the racial and class hierarchies. Economic policies which minimize downward mobility are therefore essential on racial grounds as well.

Encouraging Upward Mobility at the Bottom

The people assigned to the bottom of any hierarchy are always the most vulnerable; consequently any policies that enable them to move up economically will also have other positive effects. If class and intermarriage remain correlated, economic upward mobility will raise Black-White intermarriage rates, which will subsequently add to the number of biracials and multiracials.

The people at the bottom are also politically the weakest; politicians are rarely eager to support policies that help them move up. Full employment has traditionally been the most effective policy, but it is probably unachievable, even by maximal bribing of private enterprise. Political conditions in which government is forced to become the employer of last resort for job seekers at the bottom, especially those now considered unemployable, must therefore be exploited (Gans 2012). Meanwhile, economic and other public policies are needed to reduce the size of the economic and social gap between those at the bottom and in the rest of the hierarchy. Someone must always be at the bottom but the people assigned to it are better off with an income 10% below the country's median income than one that is 50% below it. People at all levels in the hierarchy generally oppose reducing all gaps, especially the one between them and the people just below them; what policy and which politics can alter the gaps still needs to be understood.

Preventing Undercaste Growth

Although rarely noticed by its higher strata, American society includes an under-caste, a racially distinctive population at the bottom of the class structure.[16] Today it consists largely of the poorest segments of the African American, dark-skinned Latino, and Native American populations. Once institutionalized by slavery and its aftermath, today's undercaste is much less visible. Nonetheless it is currently grow-ing, partly because it has been the major victim of the Great Recession.

Other societies include undercastes: gypsies in Europe, untouchables in India and elsewhere, "indios" in Latin America. Whether the dominant racial groups "need" an undercaste to construct as inferior, dangerous, or undeserving in order to justify their own positions and powers should be investigated.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Although this paper already suggests needed research, if only indirectly, four of the most urgent projects deserve individual mention.

Whitening Demographics

Basic information on which Whites Whiten (and deracialize) which perceived non-Whites is needed, whether these are East and other Asians, light-skinned Latinos, or their biracial or multiracial descendants. Research about whom Whites refuse to Whiten is also needed: who is not Whitened helps us understand who is. Since Whitening takes place both privately and publicly, each process need to be studied separately.

The Whitening Process

Whitening (and deracialization) are social processes; who starts them and makes them persist is important to know. For example, what roles do public officials, politicians, the courts, celebrities, other prominent figures, and the media play? The possibility that the process occurs in stages, from the reduction of discrimination and limited inclusion in White society to honorary Whiteness to Whiteness—and equiv-alent stages of deracialization—should be studied over time. Unwhitening and re-racialization should also be on the research agenda.

Phenotype and Class

We need to know what phenotypical characteristics and qualities, real and imagined, Whites invoke in approving or rejecting Whitening for the now phenotypically non-White. If color continues to be significant, what colors and shades do different people see and evaluate, and what other phenotypical characteristics play significant roles?

In each case, boundary judgments are needed as well. What makes Whites construct others as White or non-White? When does light Brown become White, when is dark Brown treated as Black, and when are "Asian" eyes no longer distin-guished from others? Phenotype has no meaning until people add social associations; the associations Whites make with Whiteness and other phenotypical characteristics are at least as relevant as phenotype itself.

How do people see phenotype in conjunction with class, and what class-related attributes become relevant in Whitening? Higher status is correlated with White-ness, but when do class judgments lead to racial ones, and vice versa? The pheno-typical and class cues that lead Whites to reject Whitening are as important to know as those which help.

Blackness

Given the possibly permanent lower status of Blackness, the questions about pheno-type and class must be explored in greater detail concerning Blacks of all class levels. The particular phenotypical characteristics that Whites use to distinguish African Americans from other Blacks, especially African immigrants, and from dark Brown peoples require determination. Social and other associations are particularly impor-tant, including whether, when, and why Whites still describe African Americans with stereotypes and blaming terms used against their enslaved ancestors.

Research attention needs to be given to successful Blacks, especially those living in White communities (Lacy 2007), working in White-dominated workplaces, and married to Whites. Instances of the Whitening of African Americans and other Blacks deserve particular attention. Ideally, the policy analyses and research projects described above should be pursued under special institutional auspices, not only to underline their importance, but also to make sure that they are framed as long-term projects and can be continued over time.

Researchers need to study Whites' identification of major monoracial, biracial, and multiracial non-Whites, especially in a variety of actual social situations, but also in interviews using photographic cues (Harman 2010; Harris 2002; Roth 2012). These populations can be asked whether and why they believe they have been Whitened, are being Whitened, or might be Whitened in the future.

CONCLUSION

If Du Bois were writing today, he might identify the existence and future of what I have called an undercaste as a principal racial problem of the current century. He would also recognize that African Americans could be pushed further and further below the next higher social and economic strata. Consequently, he would likely call for special attention to the class components of the American race and class hierarchy that makes an undercaste possible.

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NOTES

1. Perhaps even concepts such as biracial and multiracial will eventually disappear, since they are based on an essentialist conception of race—as well as on a quantifiable notion of racial "blood." In that case, race may be described phenotypically, mainly or solely in terms of appearance or simply skin color.
2. Although it is often called a racial order, this term fails to convey the characteristics and attributes of its hierarchical structure.
3. Whether and how Whites distinguish between "indios" and "mestizos" is not yet clear, but the former look more unlike Whites and are poorer than the latter. Researchers interested in phenotypical subtleties need to study how Whites deal with the children of Latino Asian intermarriages and other less numerous mixtures.

4. Actually, many of the Jewish immigrants who came earlier in the nineteenth century seem to have been WASPed, if I may coin that term. A significant number later converted to high-status Protestant denominations. The arrival of the poor Eastern European Jews put an end to WASPing, and led to the racialization of even the richest and most assimilated German Jews, as well as to a drastic increase in antisemitism.

5. So far, deracialization has been used mainly by political scientists to describe race-blind election campaigning for local offices

6. In 2010, about a quarter of Asian and Latino marriages, and 17% of Black ones were racial intermarriages. Asian intermarriages are currently declining somewhat, probably because of the rapid increase in second-generation Asian Americans of marriageable age (Wang 2012).

7. According to Batson et al. (2006), interracial cohabitation takes place at a higher rate among Blacks than interracial marriage.

8. Recall that the Chicago School began its study of the immigrant second generation by focussing on its identity and its problems, notably marginality (Park 1928). Researchers find it easier to study how a small number of biracials identify themselves than to analyze how a huge and diverse aggregate such as Whites categorizes the variety of biracials.

9. Needless to say, the targets of such identification may reject or be troubled by it, particularly because of its effects on how they identify themselves (Davila 2008).

10. Sanjek (1994) has a prominent place on this list as well. He constructed several scenarios, one of which divided the racial hierarchy into light and dark, thereby anticipating the non-Black–Black binary by several years.

11. Perhaps there will be two middle strata, but a stratum is a sociological construction with fluid and fuzzy boundaries. In fact, strata should perhaps be placed in quotes for this reason.

12. The populations Bonilla-Silva (2002) describes as collective Blacks may ultimately describe themselves as Browns, since such immigrants and their descendants will probably want to place themselves above African Americans in the pecking order.

13. Working-class Asians and Asian Americans are very different from their middle- and upper- middle-class coracials. They fit the model minority stereotype even less, but despite their large numbers in some parts of the country, they are also less visible to Whites (Lee 2005).

14. One can also argue that race is itself a proxy for class, and that Blacks are at the bottom of the American hierarchy because they were enslaved and not because they were Black (Fields 1990; Gans 2005). Had the Chinese slaves who first worked the plantations not been replaced by Africans, today's poor Asian Americans might be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.

15. In this connection, it would be important to study how Whites perceive and treat high-status Africans and very dark South Asians who are Black but not African American. If the Whites see Whites, class trumps race; if not, race trumps class.

16. My notion of the undercaste derives from Myrdal's (1963) underclass concept. Myrdal viewed the underclass as an economic stratum occupying "the basement of the stately American mansion" (p. 49), but said nothing about its racial characteristics.

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