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Label Use and Mixed Race Asian Americans: Discourses, Performances, and Boundaries

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LABEL USE AND MIXED RACE ASIAN AMERICANS:

DISCOURSES, PERFORMANCES,

AND BOUNDARIES

By

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ABSTRACT

A person's identity is not fixed or stable, rather it changes over time and even from moment to moment (Nagel 1994). Throughout an individual's life he or she constantly cites discourses that relate specific appearances, actions, and behaviors to certain labeled social categories and those discourses make an individual intelligible as an acknowledged type of person (Butler 1990). The self, or identity, that someone presents at any point in time is comprised of the different types of information, both verbal and nonverbal, that the person provides to his audience (Goffman 1959). Labels are one verbal source of information that can both reinforce and subvert the discourses associated with them. Mixed race Asian Americans have a variety of labels to choose from when asserting a racial, ethnic, or national identity to an audience. Through interviews with 21 mixed race Asian Americans (Asian-white, Asian-black, Asian-Hispanic, and Asian-multiple other races), my research examines what factors influence mixed race Asian Americans to choose to assert a particular label at any given moment in time. Since ethnic identity is a result of the interaction of both internal and external opinions (Nagel 1994), my research also investigates how other people select labels to assign to mixed race Asian Americans.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I was at school on a Saturday with a bunch of other kids in October of 2002. We were here to take the PSATs. I was prepared to fill in bubbles and answer challenging questions. I was not expecting to have difficulty with a question before I got to the actual test. Name? Simple. Ellen C. MacDonald. Address? Easy. 8 Paterson Road. Gender? Female. Race? Well, my mom was born in Taiwan and her parents were originally from China. My dad grew up in Florida and his parents in New York. I knew they were white. So the answer for race was Asian and white. But then I realized that I could only fill in one circle to indicate my race and I didn't know what to put. I wasn't 'Asian', but I wasn't 'Caucasian' either. I was both, but there was no way for me to let them know that. When the proctor asked if everyone was finished so that we could move on to the next section I still hadn't filled in a bubble. Finally I hastily marked 'Caucasian'. 'Caucasian' was the only circle I indicated in part because I had been raised primarily by my white father and so, to a certain extent, I knew more about what being white (and American) was like than I did about being Chinese. But I also decided to be 'Caucasian' on paper that day because I knew that Asians sometimes qualified for affirmative action and I wanted to know that I got into college because of my abilities and not because of my race. Additionally, being Asian could be a disadvantage in certain admissions circumstances where many Asians compete for a limited number of spots. I was fifteen.

Years later I was out doing participant observation for this project when somebody in the group of people I was with learned my full name. I had just met this young Filipino man and he asked me, "Are you half? Asian?" I nodded and said, "Mmhmm". I assume he clarified his first question because I look more Asian than my name indicates. But that wasn't the end of his questioning. After I had responded positively to being half Asian he asked, "Chinese?" This time I responded with, "Yeah! You're probably the first person to get all of that right, ever". Even though I never supplied a label to describe my background I was constructed as half Asian, specifically Chinese, in that moment in time because I did not deny the labels that were given to me. This man had gathered information about me, through my name, my appearance, and my actions and used this information to define who I was. Through the conversation my performance of a half Asian/Chinese identity emerged. The fact that I am also half white was implied by my last name but never verbalized. What kind of white I am was not discussed while what type of Asian I am was. Perhaps this is because he was Filipino. The extent to which my background is discussed at any given time often depends on who I'm talking to and the questions they ask me.

These two vignettes show how I use different labels to describe myself in different situations. In the first example I was able to self-select a label from the choices made available to me. When the Filipino man was asking me questions about my background, I had a couple different labels given to me, which I could have chosen to deny, but chose to accept. As a result of both choosing a label and of being assigned labels, I was positioned within discourses of race, or the ways we have of talking about

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how we understand race, in the U.S. One way we understand race is through the labels that correspond with specific social categories like 'Asian American' and 'mixed race' that each have their own discourses on what members should look like and how members should act. Each repetition of labeling cites those larger discourses and that repeated citation is called performativity (Butler 1990). In both of the introductory scenarios, I was exercising agency, or was capable of acting (Ahearn 2001b). Acting, here, is in the simple form of choosing a label for myself, even if that choice is structured in a variety of ways, or of choosing to deny or accept a label that another selects for me. I was also 'presenting a self' (Goffman 1959) to an audience in both of the snapshots from my life given above. On the SAT, I presented a white self to the College Board and to members of college admissions boards that would look at my scores. In the second story, my presentation of a half Chinese (half white) self was co-constructed by both me and my interlocutor, or audience. The self, or identity, presented under a variety of circumstances is not always exactly the same. And in both examples, labels were one aspect of the self that was presented. Mixed race Americans have a variety of labels they can choose from to describe themselves that include labels for race, ethnicity, and nationality. Why do they use the labels they do at any given moment? When others choose to label mixed race Asian Americans, how do they decide what label(s) to use? Are there similarities or differences in the factors that influence why people choose certain labels for themselves and for others? How do the patterns of their label use impact larger racial, ethnic, and national discourses in the U.S.?

In conducting my research it was important to ask about race, ethnicity, and nationality because each of the three terms can hold different meanings for different people. Academic definitions do not necessarily coincide with the government's definitions or with the average American's lived experiences of race and ethnicity. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau considers 'Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin' an ethnicity, not a race. Many who self-identify as Hispanic on forms however, see that identity as a race rather than an ethnicity (Hitlin et al. 2007). As for my participants, some do not distinguish between ethnicity and nationality. They provide the same answer, the same labels, when asked "What is your ethnicity?" and "What is your nationality?" Other participants use different labels to answer each of those questions. The differences may stem in part from participants providing the answer they know that others want to hear, but the concept of nationality can bring with it socialization into being a citizen of that nation and a sense of belonging to that nation (Smith 1991). Many mixed race Asian Americans are born outside of the United States and/or have spent a significant amount of time in the country of origin of one of their parents. These experiences, both within and outside of the U.S., may have socialized them to different feelings of belonging to different nations. Additionally, as members of at least one diaspora, mixed race Asian Americans may have an awareness of 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1991) or 'mythic homeland(s)' (Safran 1991), nations that their ancestors belonged to but which they have only heard about. The recognition that their ancestors came from somewhere else might make mixed race Asian Americans feel as if they belong to those other nations as well. Race, ethnicity, and nationality are not often

differentiated in people's everyday lives; therefore it is important to account for all of these concepts.

One academic distinction between race and ethnicity that is relevant to my research questions is the idea that race can be assigned whereas ethnicity (and nationality) is often asserted (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Race, for the most part, is apparent based on the way someone looks. However, which specific phenotypic variations become associated with a particular race is a matter of history and social construction (Wade 1993). Racial discourses associate certain eye shapes, skin tones, and hair textures with certain racial categories whereas other physical characteristics such as the size of people's heads and ears are not part of racial discourses. Because certain features are racialized, someone else can look at you and assign you to a race; they situate you within and understand you in terms of these discourses. In this sense, racial identity is ascribed and that ascription harkens back to a historical power differential between the ones labeling and the ones being labeled. Ethnicity and nationality, however, are asserted through your cultural practices, which are not always readily apparent and are often more symbolic in nature (Gans 1979). In this distinction, race is something that is given to you whereas you claim ethnicity and nationality.

In terms of my research questions, you might expect others to label mixed race Americans in racial terms whereas they label themselves in terms of ethnicity and nationality. However, it is here that the boundaries between race, ethnicity, and nationality become blurred. Race, ethnicity, and nationality can all be both assigned and asserted; the academic distinction between them does not hold in all cases. You may

assert a race that is different from the one that others assign to you. An ethnicity or nationality may be ascribed to you that does not match up with the one you assert. Individuals of mixed racial background can appear racially ambiguous; it may be difficult for others to assign them a race. They, therefore, may have the opportunity to assert race as well as ethnicity. Others may also challenge those assertions. Assigned (external) and asserted (internal) identities – racial, ethnic, and national – are two sides of the same coin as they are both the product of interactions between groups (Eriksen 2002). Mixed race individuals navigate between assigned and asserted identities and that navigation may, in part, be accomplished through the use of identity labels for race, ethnicity, and nationality.

Race is a difficult term to define; the term 'mixed race' is even more problematic. Several scholars have expressed reservations about the use of the term 'mixed race'. They claim that calling someone mixed race simply reifies the idea of biological race (Renn 2004; Spencer 2004). In order for a mixed race person to exist, you need parents who belong to two different "pure" races to reproduce. This assumes that there is such a thing as a pure race to begin with. Race is a social construct, so if biological race does not exist, then there should be no mixed race individuals. However, we live in a racializing society (Bonilla-Silva 1997), which is reflected in the lived experiences of many people of color, and sometimes especially for mixed race individuals when others try to categorize them. People do not stop categorizing, or stop attempting to categorize, others based on the way they look merely because race has no real biological basis. Describing these individuals as 'mixed race', biracial, multiracial, or 'mixed heritage' is currently the

only way we have of talking about people whose parents are perceived as belonging to two or more different races while race is still relevant in our society. These categories are also relevant to anthropologists because we are interested in how individuals use categories to interact with and make sense of the world. People learn which meanings to attach to categories and how to use them through the experience of interacting with others (Williams 1996). Interacting with others can also give us a better understanding of who we are through learning what it means to belong to certain categories.

Not only are meanings of labels dependent on the people using them, but labels themselves and the categories of people they refer to are dependent on time and history. In fact, Hacking argues that "numerous kinds of human beings come into being hand in hand with our invention of the categories labeling them" (1990:87). In order to have a kind of human being labeled 'mixed race Asian American' humans had to invent categories for 'Asian American' and 'mixed race'.

Kinds of human beings and the labels for them are not invented in a vacuum but exist in relation to other categories. Durham's concept of a social shifter (2000, 2004) exemplifies this idea. Durham (2004) argues that the category of 'youth' is both relational, and that using the term constitutes a political act. 'Youth' is a social shifter because it both refers to a specific group of people and indexes that group's relationship with other social groups such as children, adults, and the elderly. Durham also notes that to label or "to call someone a youth is to position him or her in terms of a variety of social attributes" (2004:593), attributes that are not solely based on age alone. At the end

of her article, Durham (2004) mentions several other types of identities that can also be considered social shifters; race is one such category.

The labels 'Asian American' and 'mixed race' are also social shifters. Both 'Asian American' and 'mixed race' refer to a specific group of people. The term 'Asian American' indexes their relationship to African Americans, European Americans, Hispanics or Latino/as, and Americans in general. Espiritu notes that "the study of pan-Asian ethnicity is primarily a study of social relations, of fusion and fission between Asian and non-Asian Americans as well as among Asian American subgroups" (1992:18). We cannot understand Asian Americans in isolation from other groups. The same holds true for individuals presenting a mixed race self. The category of mixed race only makes sense in relation to the conceptualization of separate, distinct races prevalent in the United States. 'Mixed race' cannot exist without different races to combine. Also, like 'youth', to call someone an Asian American or mixed race positions them in relation to attributes including race, but also advantage-disadvantage, discrimination, privilege, education, wealth, and so on. Presenting your self in either (or both) of these terms, however, is a fairly recent phenomenon.

The use of the label[1] 'Asian American' did not emerge until the late 1960s (Espiritu 1992; Wei 1993). The timing of this is not coincidence. The Civil Rights Movement led by American blacks made Asian Americans "acutely aware that they had

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[1] Although Espiritu emphasizes 'Asian American' as a panethnic label that acts as an umbrella term for ethnic subgroups originating in Asia, she sees panethnicity largely as a "product of categorization" (1992:6) that began with non-Asians who were "unable or unwilling to make correct ethnic distinctions" (162). In this description, the label 'Asian American' is an imposed, or assigned, category; as such, it will be treated as a racial label here.

more in common with African Americans than with European Americans, that racial injustice had been visited on them as well" (Wei 1993:13). Additionally, "Exposure to one another and to the mainstream society led some young Asian Americans to feel that they were fundamentally different from whites" (Espiritu 1992:31). The category 'Asian American' developed out of Asian Americans' understanding their own experiences in relation to the experience of both blacks and whites in America. Again, Asian Americans can only be understood in relation to other social categories that they are similar to or different from.

Like 'youth', to use the label 'Asian American' is a political act because "Asian American activists first had to coin a composite term that would unify and encompass the constituent groups" (Espiritu 1992:33). Political power in the United States can come from numbers; therefore it is necessary to collect as many people as possible behind a single overarching concept. The term "Asian American" was adopted after careful consideration of several alternatives. "Oriental" was rejected because its meaning of "the East" and therefore "Asia" relies on a Eurocentric view of the world (Wei 1993). The label "yellow" would have excluded Filipino Americans, who consider themselves "brown" (Espiritu 1992). "Asian American" was the most acceptable choice to the widest variety of people. While 'Asian American' gives activists a rallying point, it also erases differences between the composite subgroups. Had the Civil Rights Movement and the subsequent Asian American Movement never occurred, 'Asian American' might not exist as an identity to be performed.

A mixed race identity only became possible because of American ideologies of separate, distinct races. If races were not separate and distinct then there would be no way of mixing them. It would also have been impossible to present a multiracial self prior to 1967 when anti-miscegenation laws were declared unconstitutional in the *Loving v. Virginia* case. The kinds of people we understand as 'Asian American' and 'mixed race' came into being when we created the categories that label them as such.

Mixed race Americans is a large category to work with that contains an overwhelming amount of diversity simply in terms of what racial and ethnic combinations these Americans can be, let alone differences in age, gender, region, and class. Mixed race Americans can be black and white, or white and Latino, or black and Asian, the list of possible combinations goes on. In order to limit variables in my sample, I consider Lee and Bean's (2004) assertion that Asian Americans have the highest rate of out-marriage of any of the racial groups recognized by the U.S. Census. The state of Nevada is one of the states with a large percentage of mixed race residents (Lee and Bean 2004); in 2010, 1.8 percent of the population of Nevada indicated 'Asian' in combination with some other race on the Census, exceeded in percentage only by California and Hawai'i, and tied with Washington (Hoeffel et al. 2012). Within the state, Clark County has among the highest percentages of mixed race residents (Jones and Smith 2001). As Las Vegas, NV is located within Clark County, it is an ideal place to locate my study. Additionally, as of the 2000 U.S. Census, in Clark County, NV between 4.2 and 8.3 percent of the population indicated that they were of one or more races including Asian

(Barnes and Bennett 2002), which is among one of the higher rates in the continental

U.S.[2]

My sample of 21 participants includes not only Americans of Asian descent who are mixed with white, but also with black, Hispanic, or some combination of the three. Researchers have shown that the experiences of multiracial blacks often differ from the experiences of other multiracial combinations, especially when black-white multiracials are compared to individuals who are Asian-white or Latino-white (Harris and Sim 2002; Lee and Bean 2010). Lee and Bean (2010) argue that Asian and Latino multiracials have more freedom to choose from among a variety of ethnoracial options than do black multiracials for two different reasons. First, Asians and Latinos have had a larger percentage of their population immigrate much more recently than blacks. As a result many Asian-white and Latino-white multiracials claim white, American, or multiracial identities "as a step in their path toward becoming American" (Lee and Bean 2010:128), whereas for most multiracials of African descent, they are already (considered) American. Additionally, the newer immigrant status of Asians and Latinos makes it more difficult for many Americans to identify those of Asian and Latino descent. Second, the rule of hypodescent, or the 'one drop rule'[3], constrains the identity choices of multiracial blacks in ways that Asian-white and Latino-white multiracials are not (Lee and Bean 2010).

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[2] Unfortunately at this time the U.S. Census has not yet released a brief of the two or more races population for 2010.
[3] The 'one drop rule' in the U.S. means that anyone with as little as one drop of black heritage is considered black, rather than white or multiracial.

Lee and Bean (2010) explore not only why the experience of being multiracial differs, but they also describe how some of those differences play out. They argue that black multiracials feel that those they interact with categorize them as black, while Asian-white and Latino-white multiracials are not immediately assigned a monoracial Asian or Latino identity (Lee and Bean 2010). As we will see in later chapters, this distinction between how labels are assigned to black multiracials (in this case Asian-black) and Asian-white multiracials does not always hold true in my study. By working with twenty-one Asian American[4] college students with a mixed racial background I explore the following question: What factors influence the racial, ethnic and national labels that they, and those they interact with, choose to use to describe their background at a specific moment in time?

In Chapter 2 I will introduce the concept of a fluid, negotiable ethnic[5] identity that is performed in interaction. I will also explore the relationship between performativity, agency, identities, and the labels used to talk about them. Next I will show how I went about answering my research questions and give an overview of my participants (Chapter 3). The organization of the following three chapters reflects in many ways the distinction Rockquemore et al. (2009) make between racial categories, racial identity, and racial identification. Racial categories refer to the "racial identities that are available and chosen in specific contexts" (Rockquemore et al. 2009:27), such as when filling out forms where individuals are requested to check a box for their race. Racial identity, in turn, is how an

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[4] Note how I cannot avoid labeling my participants and that I have the power to label them as such from my position as a researcher.
[5] Here I use ethnic as shorthand for ethnic, racial, and national identities because both race and nationality intersect with ethnicity.

individual understands his or her racial self, whereas racial identifications are how other people categorize an individual (Rockquemore et al. 2009). As labels are one aspect of identity, this framework applies to my research. The factors that influence how participants choose descriptive labels differ depending on the medium by which that information is communicated. Chapter 4 concerns the reasons why mixed race Asian Americans choose the label they do when they are forced to choose only one on an official form (their racial categories). Chapter 5 is about how they choose to use labels in everyday interactions (part of their racial identity). Mixed race Asian Americans do not only assert labels; other people also assign labels to them (racial identification). Reasons why others assign labels to mixed race Asian Americans will be the topic covered in Chapter 6. Finally I will conclude with the significance of this study to other areas of research.

CHAPTER 2

THE ACT OF CHOOSING A LABEL TO PRESENT A SELF

Labels are a fairly common resource that we use to navigate the world around us. Labels are often attached to social categories (such as man, woman, adult, teenager, child, frat boy, emo girl, mother, father, etc.) and people who belong to the same category are often considered to share certain characteristics, or to resemble (not necessarily physically) each other in some way (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003). By distinguishing between categories we learn about the boundaries between them, and also which characteristics and norms are associated with each category. Categories and their boundaries also "give each person a sense of ourselves in the world; they help us know where we fit, what our status is, and who our people are" (Dalmage 2000:35). Creating borders and boundaries can give us either a sense of belonging to a group or category, or a sense of ostracization. Thus, labels come to mark those boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. And in belonging or not belonging to any category at any particular time we both (performatively) constitute the boundaries of those categories and perform an identity. What identity a person performs is dependent on where you are (setting), who you are with (audience), how you look (appearance), and how you act (manner). Additionally, the identities that are historically available at any point in time also impact

the identity a person performs[1]. An individual's agency, or capacity to choose, accept, or reject a label, is structured by those factors.

Labels and Why People Choose Them

Labels are just one component of ethnic identity (Phinney 1992). Mixed race Asian Americans have a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and national identities to choose from. Researchers outside of the discipline of anthropology have attempted to understand why and how different populations choose which label or labels to use at any time. Speight et al. (1996) were interested in the reasons why African Americans would prefer one label over another. Participants were given a checklist that included the labels: African, African American, Afro-American, American, Black, Colored, Negro, and Other. They were then asked to check which label they preferred to use and why. In this study participants were constrained to choose labels that were provided for them on the list and the wording of the question may have dissuaded some from picking more than one preferred label. The research team found that individuals preferred labels for a variety of different reasons and that in many cases people had similar reasons for preferring different labels. Some of the reasons for preferring a label were that the label was self-evident, that the label had been externally imposed, that the choice was out of habit, or that the label reflects their heritage. Others claimed that they preferred their label

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[1] As we saw in the introduction, an identity labeled 'Asian American' was unavailable to be performed prior to the 1960s because that type of person had not yet been invented, or 'made up' (Hacking 1990).

because they disliked all of the other ones. Choices were also made from a sense of political awareness or out of a sense of pride.

A similar study on Asian American label choice correlated the choice of a certain label with the length of time participants or their families had spent in the U.S., the degree to which participants were politically integrated into America, and with the characteristics of their social ties to the U.S. mainstream (Lien et al. 2003). Like Speight et al.'s (1996) study on African Americans, in Lien et al. (2003) Asian American participants from six different ethnic groups were asked to choose a label from a list. They were asked, "In general, do you think of yourself as an American, an Asian American, an Asian, a [R's ethnic group] American or a [R's ethnic group]?" with a follow up question of "Have you ever thought of yourself as an Asian American?" (Lien et al. 2003:465). Studies of Mexican Americans show that their family and peers, especially other Latinos, as well as experiences of racism influence their choice of a label (Malott 2009; Malott et al. 2009). In these studies, however, participants were not asked to choose from a list, but where rather asked about labels they self-selected.

None of these studies focus on the label choice of mixed race individuals or on what influences that choice. Nor do they approach their research questions from an anthropological perspective. My research aims to address this gap. My research also seeks to incorporate these insights into label use with Butler's (1990) idea of performativity and Goffman's (1959) idea of performance. While Butler focuses on discourses about socially constructed categories, and how repeated acts (both verbal and nonverbal) reinforce and subvert those categories, she does not emphasize the

relationship between labels and those categories. Goffman (1959) asserts that whenever an individual is in the presence of others, she provides them with impressions, which constitute information, through both verbal and nonverbal methods of communication. The result of this communication is a performance by that individual. In his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, he focuses his discussion on nonverbal means of conveying information to others, such as the way you dress and your mannerisms. My focus on labels, in combination with Butler's considerations of discourses and performativity, draws the verbal aspect of communication back into the picture and shows how it interrelates with the nonverbal methods that Goffman concentrates on.

Performativity and Race

Although my focus is on labels for race, ethnicity, and nationality, many parallels can be drawn from Judith Butler's work on how gender and sexuality are constituted. Butler does discuss race in her second book *Bodies that Matter*, but only through the lens of gender and sexuality. Several scholars have applied Butler's insights to the study of race and ethnicity, both generally (Mirón and Inda 2000; Rich 2004) and specifically to blacks (Ibrahim 2004; Jackson 2001; Willie 2003), whites (Byrne 2006; Warren 2001), Italians (Fortier 2000), and mixed race women in Canada (Mahtani 2002). However, race, ethnicity, and nationality cannot be studied in isolation from other aspects of identity such as gender, sexuality, and class (Bucholtz 1995; Byrne 2006; Nagel 2000). First I will discuss how Butler considers gender and sexuality and then examine how those ideas inform race and a study of identity labels.

Butler proposes that no subject can be said to exist prior to being called into existence by social categories; she states that (gendered) individuals "only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility" (1999[1990]:22). These 'recognizable standards of intelligibility' can be considered 'discourse', or, the collection of ways we have of talking about how we understand a certain topic[2]. If culturally constructed discourses of what it meant to be masculine or feminine and gay or straight did not exist, it would be impossible to understand yourself in those terms[3]. However, she argues that these categories and the discourses attached to them are inherently unstable and are subject to change.

The same could be said for racial, ethnic, and national categories: they are unstable categories (Mahtani 2002, Mirón and Inda 2000, Nagel 2000, Omi and Winant 1994, Willie 2003) that inform how individuals become comprehensible to themselves and to others. It would be impossible to understand someone as 'Asian American' or 'mixed race' if those terms and discourses about what it means to be that particular term did not already exist. Labels are closely linked to discourses surrounding social categories. The frequency with which participants in my study are asked questions along the lines of "What are you?" points to how they fall outside of normative racial discourses in the U.S. that 1) conceive of individuals as belonging to one race only, and that 2) associate specific phenotypic variations with certain racial groups. In a sense,

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[2] In Butler's work, discourses contain the norms associated with categories such as men and women, or in the case of race and ethnicity, what it means to be normatively (even authentically) black, Asian, Mexican, or Scottish.

[3] In many ways Butler's argument here is similar to that of Hacking's (1990) idea of 'making up people' presented in the introduction of this thesis.

participants' appearances and their use of multiple labels in response to this question could be seen as destabilizing this discourse.

Additional instances in which racial discourses can be seen as unstable are the creation of terms such as 'wigger', and 'oreo' to refer to white people who act black and black people who act white, respectively. Labels such as these disrupt a racial discourse that claims, "People should act in a way that is congruent with their racialized appearance", i.e. black people should act black, white people should act white, etc. The coining of new labels opens a space for new discourses to form and diverging discourses may require the creation of separate labels to distinguish them. Both racial and gender discourses and categories can be seen as unstable.

After establishing the instability of gender discourses, Butler goes on to discuss how a gendered subject comes into being. She claims that gender is an on-going process that begins with the doctor saying, "It's a girl!" The utterance of those words can be considered a speech act: they 'do' something in the world (Austin 1975). The act of labeling (or in Butler's terminology 'interpellating') the baby 'a girl' situates her within a gendered discourse. In order to continue to be understood as a girl, "that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time" (Butler 1993:8). Thus, the gendering of any person is a process that continues throughout his or her life. Indeed it *must* continue in order for people to be understood as boys or girls, men or women; the baby who is labeled as a girl "is compelled to 'cite' the norm[s and discourses of gender] in order to qualify and remain a viable subject. Femininity is thus not a product of choice, but the forcible citation of a norm" (Butler 1993: 232).

Performativity is the term Butler uses to refer to the repeated citation of the norms of discourses.

When my participants label themselves in racial, ethnic, and/or national terms, or when others label them, they are situating and being situated in relation to specific discourses. And just as the mixed race women in Mahtani's study told her "that they felt hypervisible, constantly judged and evaluated, weighed down by the stresses of having to explain why they look the way they do, over and over again" (2002:429), so too do the participants in my study continually need to label themselves and cite racialized norms in order to be intelligible to themselves and to others. Repeated instances of saying, "I am _____", or "I am half _____ and half _____", or being told, "You are (so) _____" can be considered performative.

Butler's notion of performativity does not end with the simple repetition and citation of norms. She goes on to argue that, "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (1999 [1990]:33), or the act of citing a discourse. Therefore, although gender is a process, a volitional individual actor does not 'do' gender. It is through citing gendered discourses that a girl or a boy comes into being; being a boy or a girl does not preexist the citation of that discourse. If Butler's idea is extended to race, then a subject does not do race, but it is rather it is the repeated citation of racial discourses that call a raced subject into existence. Butler further writes, "this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (1993:95). Performativity, citing norms, establishes a person; the person does not perform his or her gender, race,

ethnicity, or nationality. In fact, "performance as a bounded 'act' is distinguished from performativity insofar as the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will or 'choice' […] The reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake" (Butler 1993:234). Thus, performance has an element of agency (to be discussed in more detail below) that performativity does not. In performance, the subject can be seen as preexisting the deed. I agree with Brickell when he argues that "the subject *does* sometimes pre-exist the deed, and is reinforced through the enactment of the deed, but it never pre-exists the social relationships in which it is embedded" (2003:172). For a more nuanced account of a subject who pre-exists the deed, I turn to Goffman's theory of performance.

Agency and Performance: Choosing a Label to Present a Self

In any situation, those involved try to gather information about everyone else. Information, a purposefully broad term, includes characteristics such as class status or dependability, as well as those determined by a person's appearance or actions. The label(s) people use to describe themselves also constitute information. Individuals participating in an interaction are invested in gathering this information, or using information they already possess, because that information helps to define that particular situation (Goffman 1959). Participants could be invested in gathering different sorts of information to find out, for example, whether a certain joke would be appropriate for the people present. Simply observing the way someone dresses or how they interact with

others may influence one to lose interest in interacting with them further. Assembling information may help someone determine whether or not meeting up with a friend for coffee should be considered a date.

The information people (performers) present to those they interact with (the audience) can be both intentional and unintentional. Since individuals do their best to manage the impressions others have of them, they will present a self that they believe is in their best interest to perform in that specific place and time (Goffman 1959). For some participants in my study, it is in their best interest to present an Asian self when applying to college and as a result they intentionally[4] mark the box for 'Asian' on college applications. By marking 'Asian', they provide information to their audience, even though they are not in a face-to-face interaction. However, sometimes people also unintentionally present information about themselves. As mentioned earlier, race is an ascribed characteristic, given to an individual based on his or her physical traits. Individuals cannot avoid presenting their physical appearance in any face-to-face interaction. Race is thus not always an intentional part of people's performances.

In the case of mixed race Asian Americans marking 'Asian' on college applications, by intentionally making a choice from all of the labels listed for them, they are acting. Ahearn (2001b) calls this social mediated capacity to act 'agency', or as Giddens puts it the "person 'could have acted otherwise'" (1976:75). The participants in my study could have chosen and marked the box for 'Caucasian' instead; they could have presented different information to their audience. Giddens (1979) also offers the idea that

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[4] Or, this is may be the intention they rationalize for themselves after the fact.

social structures shape people's actions and that people's actions often have unintended

consequences. The unintended consequences of people's actions may reinforce (or

transform) those social structures. For example, when participants can only select one

label and they intentionally choose 'Asian', by choosing one of the options of labels

presented to them, they also unintentionally reinforce the social structure (or discourse)

that claims that every person must have one and only one race, and that that race must be

one of the ones listed on the page. They have agency in that they were capable of acting,

or choosing a label, but that capacity was mediated by social structures (Ahearn 2001b).

Similarly, when asserting a label for race, ethnicity, or nationality in everyday life, mixed

race Asian Americans are able to make a choice as to what label they will use. In

choosing a label, they are also exercising their capacity to act[5]. If, instead they are

assigned a label, they still have the capacity to act to accept or reject that label. The

choice of a label, or to accept or reject a label, may be influenced by a number of

different factors, but in the end the choice still conforms to the idea that there are specific

sets of labels available to choose from. By choosing a label, they performatively reinforce

a discourse that claims that these labels are the only appropriate ones for discussing race,

ethnicity, and nationality by citing those labels.

    The example of choosing a label based on the perceived benefits of affirmative

action shows not only how people tend to reproduce social structures (often

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[5] The choice of a label can be constrained by discourses that associate certain
appearances with particular social categories: "If one's phenotype differs significantly
from socially constructed notions of what members of a particular race are expected to
look like, they have considerable difficulty asserting that racial identity" (Khanna and
Johnson 2010; see also Rich 2004, Wijeyesinghe 2001).

unintentionally) but also how people are empowered by them. Selecting a label for a minority group when applying to college might lead to scholarship opportunities. Labels are a resource that individuals can bring to bear in a number of situations and people are differentially empowered by them. The resources available to individuals are informed by social structures (Sewell 1992). As we have seen, the labels available for any individual to use are informed by social structures, but mixed race Asian Americans can be empowered by those same labels. They can choose which label(s) they think are in their best interest to use depending on the situation they find themselves in. The use of certain labels may empower them by either distancing themselves from or including themselves within a certain social category. If you are mistaken for being something that you are not, it can be empowering to reject that label. If, however, Asian Americans achieved a political goal, saying that you are Asian American can give you a sense of pride and feeling a sense of belonging. Individuals act to present information, some of it in the form of labels, that it is in their best interests to present.

People can then use the information they have acquired, or information they already possess, to manipulate the situation or the people in it. Their agency to perform a self is structured both by the information they have gathered about a situation and by the range of selves they have available to perform[6]. Presenting a self is not always straightforward; conflicting interests do occasionally arise, especially when an individual is simultaneously performing before two audiences. This can be the case for mixed race

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[6] This is not meant to make the self seem fractured or disjointed, rather it is a recognition that identity is often fluid and situational, and that individuals have a number of different resources to pull from in order to differently perform identities.

individuals when they are asked about their background by a stranger when a friend, or

someone else who already possesses (some of) that knowledge, is also present. For

example, one of my participants was asked, "Are you Filipino?" by someone who had not

met her before and she responded by saying "I am". She was performing a Filipino

identity. However, one of her friends was with her at the time and said to her, "Oh. I

thought you were Chinese". Again she responded with "I am". In this instance she had to

resolve the differential knowledge of her two audiences.

Not only do performers face conflicting interests, but sometimes their audience

can also misinterpret the information they present. One of my participants (Mallory

Blackwood) is half Filipino and half white. She does not speak Tagalog and she told me

about one of her experiences in retail where the information she presented was

misinterpreted by those she was with:

> There were other Filipino co-workers and they could speak Tagalog. And I was told-
> one time this girl Marjorie was talking to this guy Elgin and when they were talking
> to each other in Tagalog I was asking like, "What did they say?" And Marjorie yelled
> at me and said, "Girl, you better learn your culture". And I just was like- I was kinda
> MAD[7]? But I didn't say anything because we were at work. I'm not gonna be
> unprofessional, I was like, "I grew up in AMERica. This IS my culture".

When Mallory asks the question, "What did they say?", she informs her audience that she

does not speak Tagalog. From this information, Mallory's co-worker Marjorie gets the

impression that Mallory is unaware of her culture and is thus not proud of being Filipino[8].

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[7] Transcription conventions adapted from (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; see also
Atkinson and Heritage 1984). Words or syllables in CAPS indicate emphasis. Question
marks (?) indicate rising intonation.
[8] Ethnic discourses often link knowledge of language and food to knowledge of culture
and pride in that culture. Marjorie's comments reinforce this discourse.

However, Marjorie has misinterpreted the information she has gained about Mallory (i.e., that she does not know Tagalog) because as Mallory later says, "I WAS proud of my heritage, but I guess I just never felt like I needed to yell it out to everybody until after that". Mallory's act of asking a question had the unintended consequence of causing others to believe that she was out of touch with and not proud of her Filipino heritage. Marjorie's response to Mallory's question also had the unintended consequence of structuring Mallory's future interactions with other Filipinos. Now she is more aware of the need to provide other Filipinos with the information that she is proud of her Filipino heritage.

So far I have discussed how the gathering of information is important to the performance of identity. According to Goffman, a performance is "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (1959:15). Thus, actions and appearances that individuals can control as well as those that they are unable to control form part of any performance. These actions and appearances constitute information others gather that can then influence them to act or appear in certain ways. The "front" is the part of any individual's performance that helps those involved in an interaction to gather information about and to define the situation (Goffman 1959:22). One aspect of a situation that is likely to remain fairly stable is the setting, or the objects around the interactants (who are simultaneously audiences and performers). If you walk into a building with numerous shelves of books, computer stations set up, and desks or cubicles for people to work at, the setting might help you to define the situation you find yourself in. Knowledge that you are in a library

provides you with a structured set of expectations, or a discourse, for how library patrons should conduct themselves, which further helps to define the situation.

In addition to the setting, an individual's personal front, or how you look (appearance) and how you act (manner), also helps to define the situation. Some aspects of personal front are relatively stable whereas others can change from moment to moment or situation to situation (Goffman 1959). In terms of appearance, race and sex (even if they are ambiguous) tend not to vary from situation to situation (although there are exceptions) but clothing can. These appearances provide information to the audience on the social statuses of the performer, which in turn may influence how members of the audience present themselves. Researchers on mixed race individuals have shown that appearance has an impact on racial identity for both black-white biracials (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001) and Asian-white biracials (AhnAllen et al. 2006; Khanna 2004).

Ethnic and national identities are also part of performance as an aspect of manner. An individual's manner refers to how he or she behaves or acts in a given at any particular moment. Manner may include (socioculturally informed) facial expressions or gestures. For example, it may be advantageous for a Korean American to display through her manner familiarity and competence with metal chopsticks in a Korean restaurant. If she is unaccustomed to, or is unable to use, metal chopsticks (in other words, if she cannot present a certain manner), she could be labeled a Twinkie or a banana[9]. Receiving such a label for this performance may not be in her best interests if she is eating with

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[9] These terms are both used to mean "yellow on the outside and white on the inside" (Pyke and Dang 2003:156).

other Korean Americans for whom that label has a negative connotation. She may be ridiculed or ostracized from the group because of her performance. This particular performance highlights how important a mismatch between appearance and manner can be, and how language can be used to label an identity tied to race and ethnicity. On the other hand, if she were in the same restaurant with a group of white American friends and displayed an ability to use metal chopsticks, she could be seen as asserting a Korean identity. Her cultural knowledge would allow her to present a self that is in touch with her Korean heritage. It is up to her to determine whether or not that would be advantageous for her in this situation. Alternately it may be to her benefit to present a front that is a balance or mixture of both Korean and American. Different audiences may call for the presentation of a different self, or for the performer to draw from different pre-existing discourses for her presentation.

Negotiating Boundaries and Authenticity

In the preceding discussion we see that identity is fluid, situational, and produced through social interaction. Thinking actors make socially constrained decisions on how to present themselves in ways that are both intentional and unintentional and those decisions are based on the information they have about any given situation and the people involved in it. Performance of identities reinforces and sometimes transforms the ideas, or discourses, of what identities are available to be performed. We often label those types of identities and roles. In addition to being fluid and situational, people also construct and

negotiate identities (specifically ethnic[10] ones) over the course of social interactions (Nagel 1994), often with language being the medium through which these negotiations are conducted. Social interaction is important for identity formation because it is in interaction that individuals' internal perception of their identity encounters how others interpret the information being presented. It is easiest to see these negotiations of identity at the borders of ethnic groups because even though membership in ethnic groups is not stable, ethnic groups are invested in maintaining the boundaries between themselves and other ethnic groups with which they are in contact (Barth 1969; Eriksen 2002; Nagel 1994). Ethnic boundaries are a structuring force in that they determine who can claim membership (or who can present a certain identity) as well as designating "which ethnic categories are available for individual identification at a particular time and place" (Nagel 1994:154).

Labels are an important aspect of constructing, maintaining, and negotiating boundaries between groups (McConnell-Ginet 2003). One of my participants, Mallory Blackwood, who was introduced above and who is half Filipino and half white, told me about a time when a friend told her she was white. He said to her: "'You're white'. He's like, 'I'm more Filipino than you are'. And he's Taiwanese and I'm like, 'What? What makes you more Filipino than me?' And he's like, 'Because I eat the FOOD. I can understand more words than you'. I'm like, 'Oh, because that makes you- so if I eat Taiwanese food, will I be Taiwanese?'" In this case, her Taiwanese friend is constructing a boundary between himself and her about what it means to be Filipino; the creation of

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[10] Here I use ethnic as shorthand for ethnic, racial, and national identities because both race and nationality intersect with ethnicity.

the boundary could be an unintended consequence of his words. In constructing this boundary, he cites the ethnic discourse that ties knowledge of Filipino food and the Tagalog language to the social category labeled 'Filipino'; since Mallory does not fit the characteristics of the discourse surrounding what it means to be 'Filipino', she must be white, especially because discourses of whiteness often associate whiteness with the lack of any specific ethnic knowledge. By labeling her as white, he positions her outside of, or excludes her from being 'Filipino'. What it means to be 'Filipino' is further negotiated throughout the course of the interaction. Someone can be included within the boundaries of 'Filipino' if they eat Filipino food and if they speak the language, even if they have no Filipino ancestry. Her friend has gathered information about her (she does not eat Filipino food nor does she speak Tagalog, i.e. she does not cite the appropriate (to him) discourses of Filipino identity) that leads him to conclude that she is presenting a white, or not-Filipino, identity. By asking whether or not she would be considered Taiwanese if she ate Taiwanese food, she is challenging his citation of that discourse and his criteria for creating a boundary that includes or excludes her from a category based on the food she eats. This exchange implicitly places her within the bounds of being Filipino because being Filipino (or Taiwanese) means something different to her; she accesses and cites a different discourse on what it means to be Filipino. The example also shows how the meanings attached to labels can vary by person (Ahearn 2001a; Malott 2009).

As we saw in the preceding paragraph, racial and ethnic discourses are unstable and are negotiated in interaction. By saying, "You're white," Mallory's friend locates her within a discourse of whiteness (the boundaries of which are implicitly cited in the

ensuing interaction) and understands her as such. Performativity thus carries implications of authenticity because appearances and "behaviors themselves only have racial value once they are placed within explicit frameworks [discourses] organized to make claims about the connection between behavior and racial authenticity" (Jackson 2001:187; see also Nagel 2000, Rich 2004). When participants provide their audience with information in the form of racial, ethnic, and national labels, they also position themselves within certain discourses and subject themselves to the audience's judgment of their authenticity.

Stereotypes are often part of these explicit frameworks and discourses that relate appearances and behaviors to ideas of authenticity. One stereotype links the size of penis (the possession of which is located specifically within masculine discourses) with race. According to this discourse, black males have the largest penises whereas Asian males have the smallest. Individuals that my male participants interact with attempt to use this stereotype to position my participants in terms of authenticity. Chris Adebayo (half Nigerian, half Japanese) mentioned that some of the women that he's dated have asked him, "Are you sure you're Asian?" When I asked him if that question was in relation to penis size, he admitted that most of the time it was. He was reluctant to mention other questions he had been asked along the same lines because "they're extremely explicit". The women he's dated assign the label 'Asian' to Chris, presumably because his phenotype falls within the discourse of what Asians are supposed to look like rather than blacks. However, by asking "Are you sure you're Asian?", these women call his placement within Asian discourse into question because his penis size does not match

their stereotypic expectations of how large an Asian male's penis should be. Brian Liu (half white, half Chinese) has had a similar experience:

> Well, it was brought up a little while ago when me and my guy friends were talking and most of them are Asian, like one's Thai, one's Taiwanese, one's Filipino and they all have bigger- like, around the same framework as I do. And then we were talking about- We were really uncomfortable cause we were all talking about penis sizes and stuff […] So then, we were talking about it and then we didn't give a specific size, but then we were judging each others'. And then we'd be like, "Ok, that's what you think". And then everybody would be like, "We're all about the same size". And then they started talking about me and they were like, "I don't know, he's white though". Like, "He's not fully Asian, so he might have an advantage on us".

When speculating about penis size, Brian's friends assign him the labels 'white' and 'not fully Asian', locating him within whiteness and outside of Asian-ness. The questioning of his Asian authenticity is tied to a speculation of how he fits into a racialized discourse of penis size.

Participants are often aware of stereotypes/norms of racialized discourses/boundaries of categories and act to either conform to or subvert them. For example, Lynda Sutton (half Japanese, half black) mentioned that sometimes she wants to play up the fact that she is Asian. When I asked her how she does that she replied, "So I would never wear my hair curly at work. It's curly naturally. And then I usually- even just makeup tricks, you know. Like putting eyeliner out more to the side. And it's really just things like that". By straightening her hair and applying makeup, Lynda cites practices that are typically associated with the discourse of femininity. Her gendered practices also conform to racialized discourses of Asian appearances. Asians stereotypically have straight black hair and almond shaped eyes. Lynda cites this discourse through styling her hair and applying makeup in specific ways. The gendered practice of these women

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applying eye makeup shows how they exercise agency to manage their appearance. Altering their appearance makes it easier for them to assert ethnic or racial labels such as 'more Japanese' or 'more Asian', to locate themselves within those discourses, to appear more authentic because the nonverbal information (appearance) conveyed matches more closely with both the verbal information (the label) and the discourses attached to it.

Conclusion

Scholars outside of the discipline of anthropology have looked at the factors that influence a particular demographic's choice of labels. None of them have worked with mixed race Asian Americans, nor have they approached the question through a performative or a dramaturgical lens. Both concepts are useful for understanding race, ethnicity, and nationality (Nagel 2000). By examining mixed race Asian American's label use I show how participants repeatedly place themselves and are placed within racial, ethnic, and national discourses. I also show how verbally conveying information and impressions to present a self intersects with the nonverbal methods (such as setting, appearance, and manner) that are the subject of Goffman's (1959) work. It is also in part through people's actions that a self is presented; people have the capacity to act (agency) to control or change what they say, what they wear, or how they behave. But that agency is constrained (structured) by things that people cannot act on, or act on with difficulty (such as aspects of appearance that have become racialized[11]). People act to present a self

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[11] People do, however, attempt to change phenotypes that have become racialized by dying their hair, or getting it relaxed; using skin-lightening creams; or having eye surgery.

that is in their best interests to present. This may mean that they have the potential to gain resources by presenting a certain self (empowered by structures). Although performers act to present a self that will provide them with some advantage, sometimes the audience misunderstands information that is presented to them. People's actions have unintended consequences. Individuals' use of labels may also have the unintended consequence of creating boundaries between interactants and raising questions of authenticity.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In order to find out why mixed race Asian Americans choose the labels they do to describe themselves, I gathered data from a series of structured and semi-structured interviews and from participant observation with 21 American students of Asian and non-Asian ancestry who are enrolled at UNLV. Data collection took place from February 2011 through November 2011. From among these initial 21 participants, six people, three males and three females, were selected for the participant observation phase of this project through stratified random sampling after I compiled my sampling frame (see below).

In order to recruit participants, I sent out a campus-wide e-mail asking for mixed race Asian Americans willing to participate in an interview. Participants were required to be between the years of 18 and 30, to be students at UNLV, to be American citizens, and to have partial Asian ancestry. The campus-wide e-mail was sent out once a month for a period of three months (from March through May 2011) in the hopes that a different cross-section of the UNLV students would read it each time. I also visited a number of introductory level classes in both the anthropology and foreign language departments to give a brief overview of my project, distribute my contact information, and ask that information be passed along to anyone who fit the description. Additionally, during a campus-wide event that included many student-run organizations on campus, I approached a number of students with the same information. My final recruitment

method was to ask people I already knew at UNLV to pass my contact information and information about the project on to anyone they knew that might fit the description of participants I was looking for.

After receiving IRB approval, I conducted preliminary interviews (see Appendix A) with all individuals who contacted me. With slightly over half of my participants (12) coming from the campus-wide e-mail, it was the most effective method of recruitment[1]. Preliminary interviews were conducted from March through May 2011. All interviews were audio recorded and lasted anywhere from ten to forty minutes. During this interview I asked each participant to provide my contact information to anyone else who might be willing to talk to me. I had hoped to expand my sampling frame through this type of chain referral (Bernard 2006), but unfortunately chain referral did not gain me any additional participants. During the preliminary interview I determined to the best of my ability and my participant's knowledge what countries their ancestors were originally from. If I had enough participants from a similar Asian background (either all part Chinese, or all Filipino and white), I would have narrowed my focus to that group and only selected those to participate in a more in-depth interview at a later date. However, as you can see from Table 3.1, the largest sample I have of any specific grouping is four (Japanese and white) and any larger Asian grouping is six (Japanese and something else). Since neither four nor six participants is a large sample size, I expanded my research focus to include all mixed race Asian Americans.

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[1] As such it may have biased my sample to those who self-identify as 'hapa', 'mixed', or 'multiracial' (rather than those who identify monoracially) as those were the key words used in the subject line of the recruitment e-mail.

Table 3.1 Number of Participants by Asian Ethnicity and Race

Asian Ethnicities	White	Black	Latino	Multiple other races	Total
Taiwanese			1		**1**
Japanese	4	2			**6**
Korean	2				**2**
Chinese	1				**1**
Vietnamese			1		**1**
Filipino	3				**3**
Thai	1	1			**2**
Multiple Asian ethnicities with Hawaiian	2			1	**3**
Multiple Asian ethnicities w/o Hawaiian	1			1	**2**

The in-depth interviews (see Appendix B) contained both a structured and a semi-structured portion, and will be the main focus of this study. The structured portion of the interview is a cultural domain analysis in the form of free lists. Since I am interested in identity labels, I had the interviewees list all of the labels that they use to describe their ethnicity, race, and national origin (see Appendix C for the list of labels provided by each participant). Then, because identities are constructed in interaction, I asked them to list labels that others have used to describe the interviewee's ethnicity, race, and national origin. Through examining the frequency of occurrence of the labels in the different lists, the cultural domain analysis gave me a sense of the labels people have access to and would use as orienting resources in conversation. In addition to examining the frequency with which certain labels occur, I could also rank the order in which my participants list particular labels. If certain labels always appear at the beginning of these lists, then it is likely that they are of greater significance to the participants (Bernard 2006). By

identifying important labels, I could inquire further in potential follow-up interviews and also pay closer attention to them when they come up in interactions.

The semi-structured portion of the interview covered a wide range of topics including: family, college life, affect and identity, language use, and perceptions of physical appearance. Semi-structured interviewing also allowed me to follow up on points that needed clarification or further elaboration. Individuals are likely to use labels to describe themselves when talking about their past experiences. By prompting them to tell stories about their lives, I could see which labels they use to perform an identity, how they use those labels, and inquire as to why they used those particular labels. Some topics were more successful at evoking labels than others; questions about similarities and differences from family members were not effective in terms of having participants use labels to describe themselves whereas questions regarding affect and identity were. These interviews lasted anywhere from one hour to three hours with the majority taking roughly an hour and a half. Again, all interviews were tape recorded. Audio recordings of both interviews were transcribed using Inqscribe to aid in analysis. Although twenty-five individuals contacted me for the preliminary interview, I was only able to schedule the in-depth interview with twenty-one of them. For convenience, occasionally both the preliminary and the in-depth interview were conducted back to back. In-depth interviews took place from April to July 2011 at a location of the participant's choice. I met with participants both on campus and at various coffee shops throughout the Las Vegas area.

While data from the interviews was collected, I also conducted participant observation with six mixed race Asian American students at UNLV, three males and

three females. By participant observation, I mean that I spent time with participants as they went about their daily lives and engaged in any activities or events in which they are involved. While spending time with them, I was able to observe and record what they do. Because I am a linguistic anthropologist, I was interested in the conversations my participants had as they went about their day. I paid special attention to labels as they came up in interactions. In addition to information about the people involved in the interaction (their gender, age, class year, ethnicity), I needed to record as best I could what they were saying. It turned out to be impractical to audio record participant observation sessions; therefore I needed to rely upon the relevant pieces of conversation I was able to write in my field notes. I spent at least ten hours with each of the participants over the course of two or three meetings. Often weeks went by between such meetings.

From July through November 2011, I met with the six randomly selected participants to do participant observation with them. By meeting with my participants more than once I was able to observe a range of different activities. Participant observation allowed me to see how individuals position themselves in relation to labels in daily interactions rather than having to rely on self-reports of how they position themselves. However, of the six participants I observed, only with four participants (two male and two female) did the use of labels for race, ethnicity, and nationality occur during the time I spent with them. Identity labels seem to be more salient in the lives of some participants. As a result, much of the data for my project came from the interviews I conducted. Longer interviews tended to be a richer source of data; therefore, my data may be skewed toward those participants who were more talkative, or toward those for whom

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identity labels have a more significant on their lived experience. Data from both interviews and field notes will were coded using Nvivo software. Coding the data aided me in looking for broader patterns across participants and methods.

Participants

Of the 21 participants I conducted in-depth interviews with, 16 were female and five were male[2] (See Table 3.2). I chose pseudonyms in an attempt to reflect the heritage apparent in participants' given names[3]. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 28, with a median of 22 and a mode of 21. The mothers of 14 participants were of Asian ancestry, whereas only six participants had fathers of Asian ancestry. The parents of the remaining participant both had partial Asian ancestry. Although five participants were born outside of the U.S.[4], they all were born to an American parent and thus had American birth certificates. With one exception, all 21 participants have spent the majority of their lives growing up in the U.S.[5] The majority of the sample (15 participants) has one parent who is an immigrant from an Asian country. The other six participants have at least one Asian parent whose family has been in the U.S. for two to five generations; five of those six were born in Hawai'i.

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[2] None of the males were recruited through the campus-wide e-mail.
[3] This is an important consideration because having a particular surname can cause others to make assumptions about the race and/or ethnicity of that person (Waters 1990; Lee and Bean 2010).
[4] In Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. Three of those five were born on overseas U.S. military bases.
[5] The one exception grew up in South America and came back to the U.S., where she was born, for college.

Working with 21 mixed race Asian Americans provides me with a large, diverse sample size. In this case, the diversity of my participants is a benefit because it more accurately represents the diversity among the larger population of mixed race Asian Americans. I also used a variety of methods to collect my data in order to make my data stronger. For example, some participants used labels in their interviews that they did not put on their free lists. Participant observation allowed me to assess the completeness of the information I had collected from the interviews by verifying that reasons why participants used labels in their everyday life were the same as the reasons that had been reported in the interviews.

Table 3.2 Background Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Asian Parent	Place of Birth	Generation of Asian Parent
Amber Panyarachun	20	Father	Las Vegas, NV	1st
Andrew Rivera	21	Mother	Los Angeles, CA	1st
Anna Zhang	21	Father	Miami, FL	1st
Brian Liu	21	Father	Honolulu, HI	4th
Chris Adebayo	28	Mother	Las Vegas, NV	1st
Emily Bateman	22	Mother	Japan	1st
Heather Guzman	24	Mother	The Philippines	1st
James Brandt	23	Mother	Jacksonville, NC	1st
Jazlyn Morris	21	Mother	Las Vegas, NV	1st
Kaiea Nawahine	23	Father	HI	5th
Kate O'Donnell	21	Mother	Las Vegas, NV	1st
Kathy Anderson	20	Mother	San Francisco, CA	1st
Kimberly Smith	19	Mother	Thailand	1st
Lily Russell	18	Both	Honolulu, HI	2nd/3rd
Lynda Sutton	20	Mother	Pasadena, CA	1st
Mallory Blackwood	23	Mother	Japan	1st
Mandy Akimoto	23	Father	Honolulu, HI	3rd
Mark Vogel	28	Mother	Los Angeles, CA	1st
Samantha Hutchinson	19	Mother	Honolulu, HI	3rd
Stephanie Berg	22	Mother	South Korea	1st
Tiffany Gardner	19	Father	Las Vegas, NV	3rd

CHAPTER 4

LABEL USE ON FORMS

The lives of American citizens are full of forms that require them to fill out information about themselves, from birth and death certificates to applications for schools, jobs, and credit cards. Many forms require respondents to report gender and race. Providing information on these two attributes, however, is not always as simple and straightforward as choosing between one or another of the options listed because as we saw in Chapter 2, identities are often negotiated through interaction (Nagel 1994). Filling out forms is generally not an interactive experience and does not allow such identity negotiations to take place.

In the next two chapters I will discuss how mixed race Asian Americans choose to assert the labels they do in order to describe their race, ethnicity, or nationality both on such forms and in everyday life. Some of the reasons why my participants choose labels on forms are different from the reasons why they choose certain labels when interacting with others in everyday life. This difference is in part because the audience for whom my participants are performing occupies the same space and time in everyday life, whereas the audience for whom respondents are providing information on forms is often not present. Because the audience is absent, it is easier for respondents to imagine a variety of different audiences for the information they are providing. The audience one respondent imagines they are performing for may not correspond to the imagined audience of another respondent. However, respondents often share the impression of an

imagined, institutional, and authoritative audience. Perhaps in part because of the absent audience, performing an identity on a form is structured differently than it is in real life. When presenting an ethnic identity on a form, respondents must choose from the options made available to them on that specific form. In everyday life, people using labels to present an ethnic identity are still constrained by the labels that are historically available at that moment in time. Only a subset of those available labels appears on forms.

A number of different agencies collect information on race, ethnicity, and nationality; places of employment, schools, and the Census Bureau are a few of those agencies. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), part of the U.S. government, oversees how the information collected by those agencies is reported to the government. In 1997, the OMB revised its Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, which details how race and ethnicity is reported, to ensure that all of the collecting of such data operates on the same standards. With the revision to OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, agencies presenting information on race and ethnicity to the government must have the following minimum categories for race: 1) American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2) Asian, 3) Black or African American, 4) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 5) White; and ethnicity: 1) Hispanic or Latino, 2) Not Hispanic or Latino. While these are the minimum categories, more detailed information can be collected with the provision that additional categories can be combined to form the minimum categories (Revisions to the Standards for Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity 1997).

The U.S. Census is one agency that collects more information than the minimum categories for race and ethnicity. The option to mark one or more boxes for race on the

U.S. Census did not appear until 2000 (Williams 2006). Prior to this change respondents had been instructed to "Fill ONE circle for the race that the person considers himself/herself to be" (see Appendix D for the 1990, 2000, and 2010 U.S. Census questions on race and ethnicity). The change to the form acknowledges the existence of an alternate discourse of race in the U.S. where individuals are understood as the combined product of two or more distinct races rather than solely as black because they have one drop or more of black ancestry[1]. Regardless of how many boxes an individual is allowed to mark, the act of checking a box (or boxes) reinforces the structure provided by the form because respondents can only choose from the labels provided by the forms' makers[2]. Additionally, comparison of the three most recent variants of the U.S. Census provided in Appendix D shows that the structure of the form does not remain static; racial and ethnic categories and discourses are unstable and change over time (Butler 1990; Omi and Winant 1994). The 2000 Census introduces the labels 'Latino', 'African American' and 'Chamorro' and condenses 'Eskimo' and 'Aleut' into 'Alaska Native'. With the 1997 revision of OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, the racial category of 'Asian or Pacific Islander' was split into the categories 'Asian' and 'Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander'. The ability to choose one or more labels on forms is contingent

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[1] This discourse refers specifically to blacks because of their lengthier presence in the U.S. and history of racial intermixture compared to many Asian and Latino groups. Although American Indians also have a long history of miscegenation in the U.S., their population is much smaller than that of blacks and they were positioned higher in the discourses of racial hierarchy prevalent in those times.
[2] While there is a space on the U.S. Census to write in labels other than those provided, for the purposes of providing reports the write-in responses are often collapsed into "Other Asian" or "Other Pacific Islander", or on a broader level as "Asian or Pacific Islander".

upon the choices made available to respondents by the makers of the forms and racial discourses of the historical moment.

By being constrained to pick from the options provided to them on the form, people reinforce the racial discourses presented by it. Choosing a label from the list cites the racial discourse used by the form and reinforces the idea that the labels listed are the only ones that are acceptable and appropriate. Additionally, the act of selecting a label positions the person with respect to other racial discourses more specific to that particular label. For example, if someone chose 'Asian' when filling out the SATs, those looking at the scores might judge those scores in relation to the stereotype that Asians do well on standardized tests.

In picking a label from a limited number of options, people also perform an identity. As noted earlier, the performance of identity relies on all parties gathering information about the setting, the audience, and the appearance and manner (or actions and behaviors) of everyone involved (Goffman 1959). However, when gathering demographic information via forms, the respondent and the party for whom the information is intended are generally not in each other's presence; the audience is absent. Since those who will be using the data collected are absent, it is difficult for them to obtain detailed information on appearance and manner from demographic information. Thus, in the presenting of a self through marking boxes or filling in circles, the audience has to trust the respondents to accurately choose a label that identifies themselves from the alternatives presented to them. By choosing any label on a form, respondents present themselves as such, be it 'male' or 'female', or 'Asian' and/or 'Hispanic'. All of my

participants would mark all of the labels that apply if they were given that option because

they feel like that is the most accurate representation of how they consider themselves. Or

rather, that marking all that apply is the most accurate representation possible within the

constraints of the labels provided on the form. However, the decision to allow individuals

to mark one or more boxes to indicate the race they consider themselves to be is a recent

one, and all of the participants in my study recall a time when they were only allowed to

choose one. When my participants could only check one box, a number of factors

influenced which label they would choose (Table 4.1). These factors include: desire to

opt out of the constraints of the question, personal benefit in the form of affirmative

action or scholarships, their appearance, what others would expect them to put, how they

identify, and knowledge that one heritage is of greater percentage than any of the others.

Table 4.1 Factors influencing label choice on forms[a]

Factors	Number of Participants
Opting out	10
Personal benefit/Affirmative action	8
Physical appearance	4
Others' expectations	2
Personal identification	2
Majority percentage of heritage	2

[a] The total is larger than the total number of participants because participants' answers do
not always remain consistent over time, nor do all participants consistently choose the
same label for the same reasons every time they fill out a form that instructs them to
chose only one label to describe their race.

Opting Out

       One of the more compelling reasons for participants to choose the label they did

was the desire to opt out of the constraint of choosing only one label. Opting out took the

form of choosing the label 'Other' for all ten participants[3]. Emily Bateman (half Japanese, half white[4]) described this choice for me. She said, "I always pick 'Other' because I reFUSE to pick. I think those are awful questions". Emily's choice of 'Other' does not mean that she sees herself as something different and completely outside of the realm of options presented on the form; she chooses 'Other' because that is preferable to picking only one label to describe herself. She understands her choice as presenting an identity that is not 'white' or 'Asian' because neither label on its own is sufficient and because she cannot choose between them. The labeled category 'Other' can thus come to mean whatever the respondent wants it to. By choosing 'Other', Emily avoids choosing a label that she feels does not adequately describe her self. While choosing 'Other' is a way to opt out of the constraint imposed by the question, it does not serve to opt out of the question entirely. Emily simultaneously subverts a racial discourse that claims she can only choose one race and reinforces the racial discourse provided by the form by citing one of its options. Her choice is a response to the structure of the form that requires her to pick one label only.

Personal Benefit

As my participants came from varied racial/ethnic backgrounds, not all of them chose to mark the same label when they were required to choose one. But about one-third of them chose to mark the label they did because of some perceived advantage they

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[3] Other forms of opting out could include refusing to mark any box at all, filling in every box despite instructions to pick only one, or writing in 'human' on the form.
[4] Descriptors are based on both their free lists and how participants answer the question "What are you?"

would gain from it. Other researchers have reported similar findings (Johnson et al. 1997; Khanna 2004; Khanna and Johnson 2010; Lee and Bean 2010). For example, when asked why he picked the label 'Hispanic', Andrew Rivera (half Vietnamese, half Spanish) said:

> The main reason why I do that is because I feel that, although they don't like to admit it, for med school? There's like, I forgot what it's called. Like affirmative action or something? I feel like if I put 'Hispanic', there's not a lot of Hispanics that apply for med school, and that would kind of give me whatever edge that is over if I said I was Asian. Cause I think there's a lot of Asian people applying for med schools. So that's kind of my main reason why I do that.

Andrew recognizes that many Asians apply for medical school. If he chooses the label 'Asian', then he is just one among a crowd of other Asians. By claiming the label 'Hispanic' in this case, he is hoping that it will benefit him by making him a more unique and attractive applicant to medical school. Andrew's decision to present a Hispanic identity is based on the potential resources he can gain from doing so and the belief that gaining such resources is in his best interest. Identifying as Hispanic has the potential to empower him by providing him with resources through a structure designed to address the discrimination faced by certain groups in the U.S. Structures can empower people through the resources those structures provide (Sewell 1992). Choosing the label for this reason serves to reinforce the structure where certain groups have advantages over others in certain situations. Andrew's purposeful exercising of agency in choosing the label 'Hispanic' also has the unintended consequence of reinforcing a social structure that makes belonging to a certain group more advantageous than belonging to another group.

Of the eight participants in my study who chose a label at one point in time out of the belief that it would provide them some advantage in terms of affirmative action, seven were half white and half Asian. All seven of those participants chose 'Asian'

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because of affirmative action. Washington (2011), in interviewing students at Harvard and Yale, found that some half white half Asian students would check only 'white' on forms. One half Taiwanese and half Norwegian young woman who was interviewed at Harvard said, "'I didn't want to put "Asian" down because my mom told me there's discrimination against Asians in the application process'" (Washington 2011:1). Instead of choosing 'Asian' because of the perceived benefits of the choice, some mixed race Asian Americans avoid choosing 'Asian' because of the perceived disadvantages of the label. It might be disadvantageous to present an Asian identity when applying to a school that already has a high percentage of Asians in the student body. If applicants believe that admissions officers are attempting to fill quotas, presenting an Asian self would make competition stiffer. Many already believe that Asians are held to higher standards because of the perception that so many of them do well on standardized tests. With those considerations in mind, it is potentially more beneficial for them, in terms of empowerment through resource availability, to choose the label 'white' instead of the label 'Asian'. Although the labels chosen (and identities presented) are not always the same, the reason behind the choice of labels for these individuals is that they believe that it is in their best interest to choose that label.

Physical Appearance

Participants' appearances, especially how they think others will perceive them, also have an impact on the label they select. The label they choose is partially contingent on their belief of what their audience would accept based on discourses of racial

appearance. Although appearance is an integral part of any performance in which interactants are co-present (Goffman 1959), appearance also influences the presentation of self when the audience is absent. Heather Guzman (Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Mexican, white) recalls that before forms began included a category for 'Other', "I'd have to be like, well I look Asian so I'll just choose that. I'm like, no one's gonna believe me if I'm like, I'm white". Heather used to present herself as 'Asian' before forms began to include the label 'Other' because of what she thought she looked like. Not only does she think that her appearances position her within an Asian discourse but she also acknowledges that others would not believe her if she claimed 'white' as her label. One assumes that their disbelief of her claim to whiteness is based on her appearance. In addition to her own beliefs about her appearance, an absent audience's beliefs also shape her decision. If the absent audience could gain information about her based on the way she looks, they would find it hard to believe that she was white if that were the only label she claimed. She takes this information into account when choosing the label 'Asian'. For those who make their choice of a label based on their appearances, that choice is also made with the knowledge of how an absent audience would react to a mismatch between appearance and the discourses surrounding a particular label.

Others' Expectations

An absent audience also plays a role when participants base their choice of label on what others would expect them to choose. Others' expectations of why mixed race Asian Americans should choose a particular label vary. Brian Liu's (half Chinese, half

white) choice of 'Asian' is based on his experience of growing up in Hawai'i and his internalization of how Hawaiians think of hapa haoles (a Hawaiian term for people who are mixed white and Asian). He says, "If you put 'Caucasian', and you're from Hawai'i and you're half and half, people would be like, 'What?' Like, 'You're not Caucasian, you're Asian. You identify more with Asian because you're from Hawai'i'". According to Brian's citation of hapa discourse in Hawai'i, people who live in Hawai'i (locals) would question anyone from Hawai'i who was half Asian and half Caucasian that chose 'Caucasian' on a form because locals believe that hapa haoles from Hawai'i should identify more with being Asian. When Brian selects 'Asian' on a form, he does so because he is citing a Hawaiian discourse and performing for a Hawaiian audience.

Conforming to others' expectations may be a strategy for avoiding the questions or challenges of others regarding label choice when an audience is present. That strategy might carry over to when the audience is absent. Since the audience is absent, the conception of the audience participants are performing for is not always constant. Mandy Akimoto (half Japanese, half white) is conscious of how her surname influences an absent audience when filling out a form. Mandy explains, "But I'd always figure like, well, they're gonna look at Akimoto and if I check 'Caucasian' they're gonna think it's an error. So I just do 'Asian'". Mandy is aware that her surname is a source of information regarding her ethnicity to many people (Waters 1990; Lee and Bean 2010). She recognizes that most people would not expect someone with a Japanese surname to be white. As in Heather Guzman's case with appearance, there would be a mismatch between information the audience has gained from different sources. Brian and Mandy

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both present themselves as 'Asian' when filling out forms based on how they think an absent audience would react to their choice of label.

Personal Identification

One of the other reasons why participants chose the label they did was to reflect how they identified at that moment in time. Jazlyn Morris (half black, half Thai) told me that she usually picked 'Asian' more often than 'black' on forms. When I asked her why, she told me that it was because "I started becoming into this thing where I was just like, you know, I don't- I didn't LIKE most of the black girls in my class? So I decided I didn't identify with them? So I didn't WANT to be them so I think I just started saying, 'Well you know, I'm gonna stick up for my other side'". Jazlyn did not like the black girls she knew at the time; she was not similar to them in terms of personality and so she decided not to identify with them on that level; she came to the conclusion that she did not fit within the localized discourse of what it meant to be a black girl in her class. As a result, she began to identify more with being Asian, or Thai. This sense of identification led her to present herself as 'Asian' more often in filling out forms than 'black'. Life experiences also led Samantha Hutchinson (half Japanese, half white) to identify in a particular way. When she was very young her mother and father divorced. As a result, she grew up with her Japanese mother in Hawai'i and had very little contact with her white father. Until she came to Las Vegas for college she thought, "Well I'm not mixed race. I'm Asian. So I would just check 'Asian'. You know, cause that's what I FELT like I was". At that point in her life, she identified more with being Asian than she did with being mixed race (or

white). For Jazlyn and Samantha, part of the reason for identifying as 'Asian' at that time was *not* identifying as 'black' or 'mixed race'.

Majority Percentage of Heritage

The final factor that influenced participants' choice of one label over another when filling out forms was the knowledge that one portion of their ancestry was a higher percentage than the others. Kate O'Donnell's mother was Korean and her father was Irish, Scottish, English, French, and German. With this combination she believes, "I'm exACTly half Korean so I think it's the most DOminant ethnicity? So since it's exactly 50 percent I'd like to identify myself with that more". Although Kate is half Korean and half white, she sees her white heritage as composed of several different European ethnicities. Therefore, the percentage of her background that is Irish, Scottish, English, French, or German is less than the percentage of Korean. Because she is more Korean than any single European ethnicity, she chooses to identify with that more and so she marks 'Asian' when she is required to choose one label. She presents an Asian identity on forms because she believes that having a larger percentage of Korean heritage than any specific European heritage makes being Korean more dominant.

Conclusion

A number of different factors influence what label mixed race Asian Americans choose for themselves on forms where they can only select one. They might pick 'Other' because they do not wish to choose one label that only describes part of their heritage, or

they might pick whatever label they think might give them an advantage in terms of gaining resources. By doing so they provide support for Goffman's (1959) assertion that performers present a self that it is in their best interests to present. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) idea of performers presenting information to an audience in face-to-face interaction, we see that participants also made their label selection (information) with an absent audience in mind by choosing a label that matched with either the audience's expectations of appearance, identification, or name. Other factors that impacted mixed race Asian American's choice of a label were personal identification, and the knowledge of one heritage having a greater percentage than others. Regardless of which label(s) participants choose, by choosing a label they cite the racial discourse of the form, position themselves within a specific set of racial discourses, provide information to an absent audience, and perform an identity. Although participants are able to implement their agency by choosing labels to describe what they consider themselves to be, their choices are constrained larger discourses that understand race in terms of six categories or some combination of them.

CHAPTER 5

LABEL USE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

We use labels to categorize both others and ourselves so consistently in our daily interactions that the use of labels becomes unremarkable. The minutiae of our experiences that become familiar and ordinary are what constitute our everyday lives (Scott 2009). Everyday life becomes repetitive; participants in my study use racial, ethnic, and national labels in ways that have become routine and unquestioned. Some experiences that have become mundane for my participants (answering questions such as "What are you?" on a fairly regular basis) might seem extra-ordinary for those who do not have a racially ambiguous appearance. My study draws attention to how the use of labels plays out in commonplace interactions for mixed race Asian Americans.

Displaying information through filling out forms is a fairly ordinary experience for everyone. The subject received its own chapter because many of the reasons why individuals chose the label they did when filling out forms were different from when they were not constrained by a specific question and a restricted range of answers to it. When choosing labels to describe themselves in everyday life, mixed race Asian Americans are instead constrained by the labels that are available to them at that historical moment in time. However, this still leaves mixed race Asian Americans with many labels to pick from. How do they decide what label(s) they will use to describe their background at any given moment in time? Are their reasons for deciding on a label in their everyday lives the same as when they choosing a label from a list on a form?

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Some overlap does exist between the reasons why mixed race Asian Americans choose labels both on forms and in everyday life, mainly when there is a benefit to claiming a certain label and when appearance makes the claiming of a label less likely to be challenged. However, the major reason for choosing a label on a form (opting out) is not applicable in everyday life. Opting out is not a reason why individuals choose a label in everyday life because participants are not restricted to a small subset of labels when answering a question about their ancestry. Other factors, like setting and manner, impact everyday decisions on label use as they do not on forms.

All aspects of Goffman's 'front' (setting, appearance, and manner) influence the labels mixed race Asian Americans choose to assert. Setting refers to the location an individual finds himself in during the course of the interaction and all of the objects found at that location. Physical characteristics, both those a person can control and those they cannot, constitute a person's appearance. An individual's manner encompasses all of her behaviors and actions (Goffman 1959). It stands to reason that these three facets of the front impact label use because the front is how the audience gains nonverbal information about the performer and situation. People use labels to aid them in the performance of self. The audience itself can also impact the label(s) the performer chooses to present his self. We have already seen the impact an absent audience can have when mixed race Asian Americans choose a label on a form; the influence the audience has on label choice is much more varied in everyday life. Participants also choose the labels they do in everyday life because some labels are more expedient than others, because they have come to evaluate a label in a certain way, and because they feel that a

label can be used to explain something about them. Often when mixed race Asian

Americans choose a label for any of the reasons discussed above, my research shows that

the use of that label cites pre-existing discourses, and positions interactants through

constructing boundaries.

Creating Boundaries

Mixed race Asian Americans use labels in order to create boundaries. Everyone

tells stories about events that happen to them or the circumstances they find themselves

in. Sometimes race, ethnicity, and/or nationality are relevant to those situations and

warrant mentioning. And the discussion of race, ethnicity, or nationality can create

boundaries that are used to either include or exclude those being discussed from a

particular group. Kimberly Smith (Thai, Chinese, German, Irish) uses the label 'Asian' to

create a boundary between herself and her audience. She describes a time when "I was

hanging out with a Filipino guy, Chinese girl, me, and then a half white half Mexican

guy. And so it was the four of us at Tea Station in Chinatown. And he [the half white half

Mexican guy] was like, 'Let's go eat tacos'. And I was like, 'You're with three Asians.

Well no, actually two and a half Asians, so you're not gonna win this argument'". By

labeling herself 'Asian', or even 'half Asian', she is aligning herself with the majority of

the four-person group. When Kimberly includes herself with the Asians in the group, she

also excludes the half white half Mexican boy; she uses the label 'Asian' to create a

boundary between them. This boundary, with majority Asian on one side, is used to

explain why no one will support his suggestion. Her use of the label 'Asian' in this

situation also cites a discourse where tacos are considered ethnic food, an ethnic food that is associated with Mexicans rather than any Asian ethnicity.

While Kimberly uses the label 'Asian' to include herself in a larger group, Andrew Rivera (half Vietnamese, half Hispanic) uses a different label to exclude himself from a larger group. When he was describing one of the groups on campus that he belongs to, he said, "I think we all just happen to be Asian. I'm the only one that's half NOT Asian". In his description of the members of the organization, Andrew highlights race. He makes race a salient factor in his description by drawing a boundary between himself and everyone else in the club. Everyone in the club is Asian, but Andrew distinguishes himself by labeling himself additionally as 'half not Asian'. His position as different and on one side of a boundary is emphasized because he is the only one labeled as such. Andrew's desire to present himself as different from the rest of the group led him to choose the label 'half not Asian'. As we proceed with the discussion of factors that influence mixed race Asian Americans' choice of what label(s) to assert, we will continue to see how the creation of boundaries is (a perhaps unintended) consequence of label use.

Setting

One factor that influences the labels that mixed race Asian Americans use to describe themselves is location, or setting. Setting is not as relevant when filling out forms because the same form may be filled out in a number of different locations with no change to the wording of the question or the audience to whom the answer is addressed. Location is, in many ways, tied to the audience a person is performing an identity for.

Certain audiences may be found more readily in certain settings. A location may tell the performer about what knowledge an audience is likely to possess, or what discourses they have access to. For example, Samantha Hutchinson (half Japanese, half (white) Australian), who was born in Hawai'i and came to Las Vegas for college, explains that the labels 'hapa', 'hapa haole', and 'haole' are ones "that I would use at home? Because I think if I were to use it here [in Las Vegas] I would just have to start explaining stuff? And I'm kind of over explaining it". 'Hapa', 'hapa haole', and 'haole' are Hawaiian terms. When Samantha is in Hawai'i (a setting located outside of the continental U.S.), she can assume that her audience is aware of what those terms mean and the discourses surrounding them, and can therefore present herself as hapa through the use of the label. Nonverbal information the participants receive from where they are has an impact on what kind of information is given off verbally (i.e., non-English identity labels). Explaining what Hawaiian terms such as 'hapa haole' mean to people who are not from Hawai'i would require Samantha to cite other labels like 'Asian' and 'white' to locate 'hapa' within mainland U.S. racial discourses. Since other labels need to be used in order to explain the Hawaiian ones, outside of Hawai'i it seems easier and more efficient to use labels that the audience in that setting will be more familiar with.

The same holds true for Mark Vogel's use of 'hafu' (a Japanese word for half Japanese that stems from the English word 'half') in Japan and Stephanie Berg's (half Korean, half white) use of 'miguk' (the Korean word for America) in Korea. Again, these terms and the social categories and discourses they refer to are located outside of U.S. discourses and the English language. For my participants, labels in a different language

are used primarily in the locations (typically outside of the continental U.S.) where that language is natively spoken. The knowledge of a different language can also be tied to an audience in another location. By choosing to use labels in other languages only in locations where that language is understood, participants reinforce the discourse of racial and ethnic categories in the U.S. by not challenging it. They are not "making up" (Hacking 1990) a new group of people in the U.S. and labeling it. When using a label from a language other than English to describe their background, mixed race Asian Americans often take location, and the audience found there, into account.

Appearance

Appearance also influences the label choice of mixed race Asian Americans both on forms and in everyday life. Some aspects of appearance can change from moment to moment; a participant might wear glasses instead of contacts, straighten or curl their hair, dye it, or have it cut in a different style. Other aspects of appearance are more permanent, such as eye shape, facial structure, and body type (Goffman 1959). The combination of all of these aspects of appearance, as well as dominant discourses of racialized appearances, can influence participants' label use.

I was out doing participant observation with Brian Liu (half Chinese, half white) and three of his friends in downtown Las Vegas. We had settled into a booth in a dimly-lit piano bar. One of Brian's friends decided to take a picture of the group so we all squeezed into the corner of the booth. After the first flash went off Brian removed his glasses to reduce the glare in subsequent pictures. As we eased back into our original

seats Brian remarked, "I look more Chinese without my glasses on". He then proceeded to alternate between pushing his glasses up on his head and pulling them back onto his face. Each time his glasses were on top of his head he would say "Chinese". When Brian lowered his glasses to his face again, he would say "American". From moment to moment the label he used to describe himself changed and that change was based on his manipulation of his appearance. The act of changing his label mirrored both the act of changing his appearance and his system of beliefs about what Americans and Chinese people look like. By choosing to switch between the labels 'American' and 'Chinese', he cites and unintentionally reinforces a discourse where American and Chinese people look different. Brian was able to act to alter his appearance and that alteration gave him access to multiple labels to describe his appearance.

Instead of providing multiple options, in some cases appearance can constrain the labels that are available to participants because participants' appearances deviate from the discourses of racialized phenotypes associated with a group that they may want to claim membership in (Khanna and Johnson 2010; Rich 2004; Wijeyesinghe 2001). Heather Guzman (Japanese, Korean, white, Spanish, Mexican) told me of a time when she was out at a Korean restaurant with some of her siblings. One of her brothers was saying: "There're some times when I'll act- I'll be like, 'I'm Asian, I'm Asian'". And then he goes, "And then sometimes I'll act like, 'I'm white, I'm white'". They were saying that right? And then I go, "I can't DO that because, you know, I look Asian". Heather's siblings are able to use both 'Asian' and 'white', independently, to describe themselves. Heather, on the other hand, feels as if she cannot claim to be just white because of the

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way she looks. If she chooses to use the label 'white' to describe herself, it is usually in conjunction with the use of other labels that also present an Asian self. By refraining from using the label 'white' on its own to describe herself, Heather avoids having her audience challenge her on the self she is presenting. She is attempting to make nonverbal information that she cannot avoid presenting through her appearance match the verbal information she conveys through her use of labels. She is also attempting to situate herself as intelligible within a discourse of Asian-ness by citing the label Asian, whereas she would be unintelligible within a discourse of whiteness because of her appearance. Based on her phenotype and existing discourses of racial appearance, many people would assign her the racial label 'Asian'. Heather acknowledges that she cannot present a fully white self because of the relationship between her appearance and discourses of what whites look like. Her appearance thus creates a boundary that excludes her from asserting a solely white self and using the label 'white' in isolation; she cannot be understood as 'authentically' white alone because of these discourses. That boundary also separates her from her brothers, who can use labels differently because of their more ambiguous appearance.

Manner

Manner is a consideration for mixed race Asian Americans in the choice of a label and identity to perform. As an aspect of Goffman's (1959) front, manner refers to a person's actions and behaviors. The way in which a person acts can have implications both for how they see themselves and for how other people identify them because manner

is part of the information that a person provides for the audience when presenting a self, and that information on behavior is then placed within larger discourses that make actors intelligible as certain types of persons. However, manner is only relevant in everyday life, not when filling out forms, because when filling out forms, it is difficult for the absent audience to gain information from actions and behaviors that they cannot see. For Stephanie Berg (half Korean, half white), it is the comparison between her manner and that of her older sister and how those manners are interpreted within discourses of ethnicity that enforces her presentation of a more Korean self[1]:

> [My sister] doesn't retain Korean language as much as I do. It was easier for me to learn how to read and write it […] I knew a lot more vocabulary and I would understand a lot more than her. But I think I'm more Korean than HER in a lot of ways. Like she eats Korean food, but she doesn't eat all of it and she still gets weirded out by certain seafoods or she'd always be like, "What is that?" Like, question a lot before she would try it? And she can't really handle spicy food as much as I can now? Because she doesn't eat as much Korean food?

In this case, Stephanie conceives of being Korean as a continuum, not as a dichotomy between being Korean and not being Korean. Her use of the modifier 'more' in conjunction with the label 'Korean' places her more firmly within the boundaries of the Korean ethnic group than her sister; she positions herself as more authentically Korean. She justifies her placement by referring to her manner in relation to a discourse that connects knowledge of language and food to knowledge of culture and an ethnic identity. She performs an identity that is more Korean than that of her sister because she knows more of the Korean language, and that knowledge allows her to be better at speaking it;

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[1] Stephanie and her sister are full siblings, not half or step-siblings, so her perception of her self as 'more Korean' has nothing to do with being more Korean in the sense that she has a greater percentage of Korean in her background.

and because she chooses to eat Korean food more often, and as a result is more accustomed to it. Knowing more of the language and eating more of the food are pieces of information that Stephanie presents nonverbally that reinforce the ethnic discourse described above, and she modifies her use of the label 'Korean' so that the information she presents both nonverbally and verbally is in alignment. Language and food, however, are not the only boundaries to Korean-ness. Stephanie does not exclude her sister from being Korean; recognition of Korean heritage and background is part of what it means to be Korean (part of its discourse and one of the boundaries), but is not the only part. Stephanie's manner (the acts of speaking Korean and eating Korean food) influences how she chooses to use the label 'Korean'.

Bringing Together 'The Front'

As we saw in Chapter 2, all aspects of Goffman's (1959) front provide information to the audience and that information helps the audience to locate performers in racial and ethnic discourses. Setting, appearance, and manner do not operate in isolation, nor do they work independently of verbal means of communicating. Sometimes, however, the information we receive from one aspect of the front does not match the information we obtain from another; the performer does not always fit all of the norms of a discourse. James Brandt (half Filipino, half white), for example, thinks that he appears Filipino (or brown) to other people, but tends to see himself as acting more American/white than Filipino, especially when he was younger. His perception of his manner as such is perhaps a result of him growing up primarily with his white

American father after his parents divorced. James recognizes that the Filipino appearance he presents to his audience may not match his (white) manner. His appearance fits into a discourse of what it means to look Filipino, but his behaviors do not. He occasionally uses the label 'coconut' (brown on the outside, white on the inside) to acknowledge this discrepancy. He notes, however, that he usually uses it only in a joking context. The incongruity between the information conveyed by appearance and manner for Americans who are not considered white is important enough (especially in conversations of authenticity) that an entire family of labels has come into existence around the concept of being '_____ on the outside, white on the inside': Oreo/Ding Dong (black/African American), banana/Twinkie (yellow/Asian), coconut/potato (brown/Mexican/Latino/East Indian/Filipino), apple/radish (red/Native American)[2].

The Audience

The audience influences the label(s) a person uses to present a self in a number of different ways. We have already seen how location can have an effect on the audience and what labels mixed race Asian Americans use. The audience also plays a part when a participant stands to gain something from them. The role of the audience as a stranger or a friend, as well as what questions they ask, change individuals' label use.

Audiences are capable of providing different resources (e.g. business connections, money) to individuals, and those resources can empower those individuals (Sewell 1992). Gaining resources from an audience can come in a number of different forms. The two

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[2] These labels are used not only by multiracial individuals who may look more like one side of their heritage, but also by those who would be considered monoracial.

types of resources my participants focused on were political and monetary. When politicians campaign, many of them will try to gain support from various minority groups. In these situations, Brian Liu (half Chinese, half white) says, "I can leverage myself as Asian American" because if he does so, he can stand with other Asian Americans and claim, "We're Asian. And if you want the Asian vote, this is what you need to do". Presenting and labeling himself as an Asian (American) to politicians empowers Brian because it includes him within the boundaries of a larger group that is capable of influencing public policy through its numbers. Membership and inclusion in a larger group is a political resource because policy decisions may result in additional resources being allotted to that group. Having a politician as an audience makes it beneficial for Brian to present an Asian American self in order to gain resources as such.

Participants find it advantageous to use labels to present themselves in a certain way when they stand to gain monetary resources from such a presentation as well. It is economically beneficial for Lynda Sutton (half Japanese, half black) to present herself as Japanese when she is working. She works at a strip club and "when people ask [about my ethnicity], I make sure to TELL them that I'm Japanese. And make sure they know. And then I'll tell 'em I'm Japanese and black, of course. But Japanese is really more of a selling point, just because there ARE a lot of black girls. So it's just more unique". Lynda can gain more economic resources by using and emphasizing the label 'Japanese' to present herself to patrons at a strip club. Her use of the label 'Japanese' sets her apart from the other black girls who work at the strip club. In the localized discourse at the strip club, being (part) Japanese (or perhaps Asian in general) positions one as more

distinctive. The boundary she creates through the use of 'Japanese' in addition to 'black' establishes her as a more desirable commodity to her audience by accentuating her difference. She uses labels and creates boundaries to present a self that will gain more money from her audience. Earning more money can enable Lynda to accomplish her other goals with greater ease. The prospect of gaining resources from an audience can make mixed race Asian Americans choose certain labels over others to present their identity.

The audience an individual presents a self to is not always the same audience. Sometimes the audience might be a friend; other times it might be a stranger, or a group of strangers. An individual also gains information from the audience's presentation of self (Goffman 1959) and the information they gain can affect label choice. For instance, Anna Zhang (half Latina, half Taiwanese) uses one label with her friends and a different label with strangers. She says, "When I use 'Latina' I say it how I say it in Spanish[3]? And I use it with my friends because other people? As soon as I say 'Latina' they're like, 'You're just trying to brag that you speak Spanish,' you know what I mean? So that's why when I'm with people that don't know me, I just say 'Hispanic'". Anna has learned to use different labels with different audiences because of how audiences locate her when she pronounces the label 'Latina' the way she does. It is easier to present a Hispanic self to those she does not know than to have them comment on her knowledge of the Spanish language if she were to use 'Latina'. With her friends, her knowledge and use of Spanish is not an issue.

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[3] Spanish is her first language.

Tailoring label use to the audience includes using labels the presenter thinks the audience will understand. When Mandy Akimoto went to get her nails done, the manicurist asked her, "What are you?" His question was perhaps based on the assumption that she was not like him, otherwise he would not have to ask. By asking the question, the manicurist drew a boundary between himself and Mandy. From the self that the manicurist presented to her, Mandy assumed that he was Vietnamese and did not have a very good command of English so her response was "I'm half Japanese and half white". When I asked her if she always chose 'white' as the second label she explained, "I had a feeling if I said, 'Caucasian' to him he'd just look at me. Or 'Scandinavian'. I thought that might go over his head". Mandy chose the label 'white' to present herself over 'Caucasian' or 'Scandinavian' out of consideration for her audience. From the information she had gathered from him, she came to the conclusion that 'white' would be the best label to use because it was the easiest to understand; the manicurist would have a better chance of locating and comprehending Mandy within a discourse of whiteness rather than Caucasian-ness or Scandinavian-ness. Anna and Mandy's choice of label is made based on characteristics of the audience they are performing for.

Not only does information about the audience have an effect on label choice, but the questions the audience asks can also influence participants' use of labels. People who interact with mixed race Asian Americans often ask questions that try to get at their ethnic background[4]. These questions include, but are not limited to: 'What are you?', 'What's your ethnicity?', 'What's your race?', 'What nationality are you?', 'Where are

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[4] Often people asking these questions are complete strangers who are most likely asking because of the ambiguous racial appearance of many mixed race Asian Americans.

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you from?', and 'Are you _____?' (fill in some race, ethnicity, or nationality). That the audience feels a need to ask these questions marks a boundary between the questioner and the person being questioned. If the questioner did not perceive these differences important enough to construct a boundary over, they would not ask the question. The question "What are you?" when asked, "assumes the foreignness and nonbelonging of phenotypically ambiguous individuals" (Williams 1996:203). The implication of asking, "Where are you from?" is that the person being asked must not be from here (Kibria 2000; Rastas 2005). Repeated encounters with these types of questions continually position many mixed race individuals as foreign and different.

The implication of "Where are you from?" became especially clear to me one night when I was in my sophomore year of college. The college I attended had co-ed bathrooms. One night, as I was brushing my teeth in front of the mirror, a young white man walked into the bathroom and asked me, "Where are you from?" I answered his question with, "I'm from New Jersey". My answer did not set up the boundary the white boy questioning me wished to construct based on my racially ambiguous appearance. If I am from New Jersey, then I must not be that different; I must not be from somewhere else, somewhere outside of the U.S. Because he still wished to define the boundary he sensed from the differences in our appearances, he then asked, "No. I mean, where are your PArents from?" I answered, "Well, my dad is from Florida, and my mom is from Taiwan". He responded with, "That's why you look so exotic," and walked away. With the boundary between us established, and my appearance positioned within appropriate

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discourses and explained to his satisfaction, there was nothing left to talk about. My perceived difference and his need to pinpoint it were the only bases of the interaction.

For some participants, some questions require the use of different labels to answer. Jazlyn Morris, for example, says, "Whenever anybody asks me what I am I DO tell them that I am mixed. I don't really say, 'I'm black,' or 'I'm Thai,' I just say, 'I'm mixed'. And then if they say, 'With what?' I say, 'Black and Thai'". The questions 'What are you?' and 'What are you mixed with?' have answers that employ different labels to present a self. Kaiea Nawahine (when she is not lying[5]) will answer the question 'What are you?' with "Hawaiian, Chinese, German". However, if "somebody would ask like, 'Oh are you Hawaiian?' then I would be like, 'Yeah'. Then I wouldn't explain anything else. I'd just leave it at that". The question 'Are you Hawaiian?' does not require Kaiea to provide any additional information about her background unless her audience prompts her further. She is giving the easier answer to that question, which influences her to choose one label instead of three.

Providing the answer that the audience wants to hear is another reason why participants choose the labels they do. By offering the audience the information they want the first time around, participants can sometimes avoid a lengthy round of questioning. This is why when Stephanie Berg is asked about her nationality, "I just tell 'em half white and half Korean. Even though I should say 'American'. But I feel like when they're asking me 'What's your nationality?' they're not asking me if I'm American, they're asking me where I'm from, or what race I am or whatever". Stephanie uses the labels she

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[5] More on this in a bit.

does because she knows what information her audience is looking for. She recognizes that her audience is attempting to make her (racially) intelligible by placing her within a racial discourse, one that to her is different from a discourse on nationality. While other participants also know the answer the audience seeks when they ask about nationality, they prefer to subtly educate, or 'discomfort' (Mahtani 2002), their audience. Chris Adebayo will answer the question 'What are you?' with "I'm Asian and black". When I asked him how he responded to the question 'What nationality are you?' he said, "And that's the thing, people don't realize- Yeah, when they ask me what nationality, I say, 'American'. And I'm like, 'You mean ethnicity, right?'" Chris's choice of a label for the question 'What nationality are you?' is an attempt to educate his audience that nationality and ethnicity are not the same. Since nationality and ethnicity are different concepts, describing them requires different labels. His response to the question "What nationality are you?" destabilizes the discourse his audience is citing that claims, "If you do not look white, then you must not be American". Chris's use of the label 'American' positions him as such and that position is contrary to the expectations of the norms of the discourse his audience has referred to by asking him about his nationality. Although in both Stephanie and Chris's cases their choice of labels was influenced by the question they were asked by their audience, label choice was secondarily influenced by either a desire to avoid further questioning or a desire to correct, instruct, or perhaps discomfort the audience.

As we have seen, the role of the audience as well as the question the audience is asking can influence the labels people use to present themselves. Some participants will choose different labels and position themselves differently depending on who is asking

the question. Return to Kaiea Nawahine from above. Her response to the question 'What

are you?' changes with her audience: "So if it's somebody like a friend of a friend, or

someone at work, or somebody that I'm gonna see again? I'll tell them 'Hawaiian,

Chinese, and German'. If it's somebody at the club, or trying to holler at me at Jack in the

Box, I'll just make something up. I'll be like, "Oh yeah. I'm Japanese, Irish and

something". Lying to someone you do not know and will not likely ever meet again has

far fewer potential consequences than lying to audiences with whom you will have future

interactions. Nor is she the only participant to lie. A specific person in the role of stranger

or acquaintance asking a particular question can influence the labels mixed race Asian

Americans choose to use.

Expediency

Sometimes participants choose to use the labels they do out of a sense of

expediency. When label use is a matter of expediency, it highlights the idea that mixed

race Asian Americans have a number of different alternatives to choose from when

presenting their identity. When people ask Andrew Rivera the question 'What are you?',

he tends to first tell them that he is Hispanic or half Spanish. Most of them express

disbelief at the presentation of this identity because he looks more Asian than Hispanic,

which then leads him to clarify, "Oh yeah. Well I'm part Vietnamese too". While this is

his usual response, he explains, "Sometimes I'm lazy to explain my ethnic background?

So I'm just like, 'Ok. I'm Asian'. Like if it's a quick thing? And I don't explain what I

really am". Here he uses the label 'Asian' instead of 'Hispanic' or 'Spanish' and

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'Vietnamese' because it is quicker and does not require any additional explanation on his part. His audience is less likely to question or challenge the presentation of his identity when he uses the label 'Asian' instead of 'Hispanic' because the use of that label locates him in a discourse where his appearance is more intelligible because it conforms to the norms of the discourse, which is why answering with 'Asian' is both lazy and expedient. Likewise, Kimberly Smith explains that the labels "'Asian' and 'white' I don't use as much. But I'll use them when I'm really in a hurry". She prefers to use the labels 'Thai, Chinese, German, Irish' to present herself, but recognizes that the labels 'Asian' and 'white' are easier for her audience to accept and digest if she does not have time to explain her background. Other participants will shorten the list of their ethnicities to two or three when responding to strangers. Haste and expediency tend to influence participants to choose broader, less specific labels.

Stance

Another reason why the participants in my study chose the labels they did was because they had evaluated that label in some way. The evaluation or assessment someone makes of either another interlocutor or some object of discourse (in this case labels) is called stance (Irvine 2009; Johnstone 2009). Participants may take a number of different stances regarding labels and different participants may have varying stances regarding the same label. Take, for example, the label 'hapa'. Kimberly Smith (Thai, Chinese, German, Irish) discovered the term on her own. She believes that "it's ['hapa' is] the perfect way to describe me and I LOVE using that […] It's kind of a nice way to

put it. Easy". In her assessment, 'hapa' is the perfect term and its perfection makes her

eager to use it to present herself as hapa. Mark Vogel (half Japanese, half white),

however, holds a different stance on the personal use of the label. He sees the label 'hapa'

as "more of a political thing too now. It's like, 'We're this unified group'. But then, who

are hapas? What if you're a quarter Chinese, or what if you're half Indian? So I don't like

that term as much anymore". Mark chooses to not use this term anymore; he has a more

negative evaluation of 'hapa' than Kimberly does because its boundaries are not well

defined and because he sees it as more of a political tool for activists to rally around than

anything else. Kimberly and Mark cite different discourses, both of which are associated

with the label 'hapa'.

Evaluating a label as perfect or political are not the only stances participants take

that affect how they choose to use labels. Three of my participants (Emily Bateman,

James Brandt, Brian Liu) avoid asserting the term 'mutt' because of they evaluate the

label as derogatory. Emily Bateman (half Japanese, half white) remarks, "Sometimes

somebody'll say I'm a mutt. And I think that's really offensive […] It just has a bad

stereotype. I just- I don't like it. It's just dirty". Emily's assessment of the label 'mutt' is

that it is offensive and dirty. She does not appreciate it when others assign her that label

and she eschews its use to describe her self. Coming to the conclusion that a label is

formal, politically correct, or technical also results in participants refraining from using

the term regularly. For example, Kathy Anderson (half Filipino, half white) says, "I

consider that ['Caucasian'] the same as 'white'? It's just a formal saying. So, I don't use

that term a lot, in case you haven't noticed, but it just sounds so long and so formal that I

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just say 'white' a lot". Mallory Blackwood (also half Filipino, half white) and Stephanie Berg (half Korean, half white) express similar sentiments regarding the evaluation of 'Caucasian' and a preference for the use of 'white'. Lily Russell (Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Spanish, white) and Amber Panyarachun (half Thai, half white) also do not use 'multiracial' and 'biracial', respectively, because of the labels' association with formality. The stance an individual holds toward a label, or where an individual locates a label within a particular discourse, can impact his or her decision to use that label.

Explanatory Value of Labels

Mixed race Asian Americans also choose specific labels when they feel like that label will explain something about them. Often the explanatory power of the label lies in some stereotype or assumption that attaches it to a larger discourse. As mentioned previously, Asian males are often stereotyped as having small penises, which is part of a broader discourse that associates race with penis size. When I asked Brian Liu (half Chinese, half white) if anyone ever jokes about that with him, he said, "They DO. But then I say, 'Oh, I'm only Asian up here. White down there'". With this statement, Brian refutes any insinuations about having a small penis. However, he does not come straight out and claim that. Instead, he relies upon the stereotype of whites having bigger penises than Asians. His use of the label 'Asian' acknowledges that while his appearance might match more closely with a discourse on what Asians look like, he is not Asian, but rather 'white', elsewhere. Tiffany Gardner (Japanese, Hawaiian, Scandinavian, Puerto Rican) also uses a label in an explanatory fashion. She says, "People ask, 'Oh, do you like

sushi?' And I'll be like, 'Yeah. I'm Japanese. What do you think?'" Her answer to the question affirms that she does indeed like sushi; the reason why she likes sushi is implied by her label use. Since sushi originated in Japan and since she is Japanese, that must mean she enjoys eating it. Again, she is citing a discourse that links the knowledge and enjoyment of Japanese food to a Japanese identity. Participants often choose labels that explain some aspect of the self they are presenting because labels are tied to discourses, stereotypes, and assumptions about certain groups of people.

Conclusion

Mixed race Asian Americans have many different labels they can choose from to describe their race, ethnicity, and nationality. When they choose a label, it is part of the self they present to their audience and that choice locates them within discourses associated with that label. In choosing a label they exercise agency and in many cases also create boundaries. How they choose to present themselves depends on a number of different factors. They may choose one label over another based on where they are, what they look like, or how they act, which are all aspects of Goffman's (1959) 'front' as setting, appearance, and manner. The people mixed race Asian Americans interact with, or Goffman's (1959) audience, impact the labels my participants assert in a variety of ways. If my participants are in a position to gain resources from an audience they might choose the label that gives them a better chance of obtaining those resources. The identity of the audience, what they know, and the questions that they ask can also determine which labels mixed race Asian Americans use. Additionally, the desire to avoid

prolonging a series of questions or to educate or discomfort the audience also influences

label choice. Sometimes the need for a quick response leads participants to use broad,

non-specific labels. The stance, or evaluation (Irvine 2009; Johnstone 2009), participants

have toward a label, as well as the label's explanatory power, also affected the choice of a

label.

CHAPTER 6

ASSIGNING LABELS

As we have seen in the previous two chapters, mixed race Asian Americans

choose labels when filling out forms (Chapter 4) and assert labels in their daily lives

(Chapter 5) for a number of different reasons. The labels that participants choose in

Chapter 4 correspond closely to Rockquemore et al.'s (2009) term 'racial category' in

their formulation of an analytically useful schema for studying the mixed race

experience. As we saw in the introduction, a racial category is a racial identity that is

available and chosen in specific contexts, which include the filling out of various forms.

Chapter 4 examined what factors influenced mixed race Asian Americans in their choice

of a racial category. Chapter 5 contained information concerning the aspect of 'racial

identity' (Rockquemore et al. 2009), or how an individual understands his or her racial

self, that is labels for race, ethnicity, and nationality. My participants understand their

racial selves, in part, through the labels they choose to assert, and a number of elements

impact the choice to assert a label including the front, the audience, and the stance

participants hold toward a particular label. The final component of Rockquemore et al.'s

schema is 'racial categorization', or how others categorize or label an individual, and it

will be the subject of this chapter.

The self asserted by mixed race Asian Americans at any moment in time is

influenced by a number of different factors. But since the self is in constant negotiation

between the presenter and the audience the self is being presented to, sometimes the

audience assigns a label to the presenter's self, or locates them within a particular discourse. Just as mixed race Asian Americans are capable of choosing any label that is available at that moment in time to claim their race, ethnicity, or nationality, those they interact with (their audience) are also capable of choosing racial, ethnic or national labels to give to them. Mixed race Asian Americans are capable of acting to accept or deny the labels others ascribe to them. Mahtani argues that the mixed race women in her study "often actively respond—as opposed to accept passively—to the ways their racialized selves are perceived by others" (2002:429). Other people label mixed race Asian Americans the way they do for some of the same reasons why mixed race Asian Americans choose certain labels to assert their selves. As we saw in Chapter 5, participants' assertion of a label often has the unintended consequence of creating a border between themselves and others, no matter what factor is influencing their label use at that particular time. When those people that my participants interact with assign labels to mixed race Asian Americans, that label use also frequently constructs boundaries.

Creating Boundaries

The audience sometimes selects certain labels out of a need to create boundaries that both include and exclude. The label(s) others choose is influenced by which boundary they are trying to create. For example, Heather Guzman (Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Mexican, white) has a friend who "knows that I have a little bit of Mexican? So she'll just- cause she's Mexican, right? So we'll always joke with each other? And I'll be like, 'Oh. You gonna go eat that burrito hunh?' And she's like, 'Shut up, you're Mexican

too'. And I'll be like, 'Ok. Fair enough'". Heather accepts the label her friend assigns her because it is true, but her friend uses the label to include her within the group of people who are labeled 'Mexican' (in part through citing the discourse that links ethnic food to ethnic identity). By labeling Heather 'Mexican' and including her in the group that the friend herself also belongs to, the friend points out that Heather is also making fun of herself. In creating the boundary to include both her and Heather, Heather's friend labels one of the characteristics they have in common.

However, boundaries not only unite; they also divide. Kathy Anderson (half Filipino, half white) was told, "Oh, you're being a wannabe Asian," and, "You're not even full Asian, so why are you hanging out with a bunch of Asian people?" The people who were saying these things to Kathy were trying to create a boundary between her and her friends through the use of labels. They were emphasizing her whiteness and her difference from the rest of her friends by telling her what she was not; she was not full Asian, she was a wannabe. These labels located her outside of a discourse what it means to be authentically Asian. This boundary between Kathy and her friends is different from the one that surrounded Heather and her friend. These different boundaries called for people to choose different labels to describe mixed race Asian Americans.

Setting

In addition to location being a factor that influences how mixed race Asian Americans describe themselves, it also influences how others label them. Emily Bateman (half Japanese, half white) told me, "When I go to Hawaii and they would call me 'hapa',

that would always make me smile". She also told me that the only time she was ever

called 'hapa' was when she was in Hawai'i. Since the label 'hapa' is Hawaiian, more

people in Hawai'i would be familiar with the term, and the type of people the use of the

term 'made up' (Hacking 1990), than the population of Las Vegas, where Emily grew up.

Since the term 'hapa' is part of the discourse on race in Hawai'i, by labeling Emily as

such and situating her within that discourse, her audience was rendering her intelligible.

The location Emily found herself in (i.e. Hawai'i) and the people, racial discourses, and

history there had an impact on the label others decided to call her.

Appearance

The appearance of participants is also related to the label(s) that others select to

describe them. Some aspects of appearance can be changed more readily than others and

a small change can alter the way others see you. Kimberly Smith (Thai, Chinese,

German, Irish), for instance, normally has very curly medium brown hair. But she says,

"I straightened my hair once. My friend was like, 'You look so Asian and so pretty'". Her

appearance, with straight hair, led him to use the label 'Asian' to describe her. His words

imply that 'Asian' might not normally be a term that he uses to describe her appearance,

but with her hair straight, the label suddenly becomes more applicable because straight

hair matches the norms of discourses on Asian appearance. Kimberly is not the only

participant to have the way she wears her hair affect what label others use for her. Lynda

Sutton (half Japanese, half black) says that the labels people assign her when they guess

her ethnicity

Depends on how I wear my hair […] When it was long and it was curly, people would assume that I was half black or Hawaiian. Like Hawaiian or half black and something. And then when I wear it straight, then people get confused. I've gotten Indian sometimes? And sometimes Hispanic. But most of the time it's Filipino or Hawaiian.

When Lynda wears her hair differently, those she interacts with ascribe different labels to her. If her hair is in its natural curly state, that feature fits closely with the norms of appearance for particular groups, and as a result others will label her 'Hawaiian' or 'half black' and locate her within those discourses. When she straightens her hair, others might call her 'Indian' or 'Hispanic'. As Lynda's appearance changes with her hair, so too do the labels that others assign to her. Additionally for both Kimberly and Lynda, the practice of straightening their hair places them within a normatively feminine discourse. Their recounting of these experiences places them within both a racialized and a gendered discourse.

Manner

A participant's manner presents the opportunity both for her to assert a self using a label and for others to assign a label to her. A person's actions and behaviors (manner) provide information to the audience. The audience can then fit those actions and behaviors to the norms of discourse associated with a label. For example, Mandy Akimoto (half Japanese, half white) told me, "My dad would make fun of us. He'd call me and my brother, 'Haole boy' or 'Haole girl' if we were doing something that's too white. I used to like to put ketchup on my rice? With my meatloaf? I still do, but. He would make fun of me. Like, 'Haole girl. You don't want *shoyu* [soy sauce] on your

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rice?'" Mandy's third-generation Japanese father grew up in Hawai'i, where 'haole' has come to mean 'white'. He uses 'haole' in part because of where he is from, which contributes to his knowledge of, and familiarity with, the label and its discourses. However, what prompts his use of the label in this case is his daughter's manner. By calling Mandy 'haole', her father cites a discourse where ethnic food is related to ethnic identity. He associates putting soy sauce on rice with being Japanese[1]. Additionally, he uses the Japanese word for soy sauce (*shoyu*) to bolster his own authenticity and to give him the authority to tie using soy sauce on rice to being Japanese. Through Mandy's action of using ketchup, her father gains the information that she likes ketchup better than soy sauce on her rice. Since he has cited the discourse where ethnic food equals ethnic identity, and because Mandy does not make appropriate use (to him) of the ethnic food discourse, Mandy's father sees her as lacking a Japanese identity. At this point a second discourse comes into play where the lack of an ethnic identity is associated with whiteness. Thus since Mandy's act displays a lack of ethnic identity, she must be white, or haole. By labeling Mandy as 'haole', her father also creates a boundary between the two of them. Because her father prefers soy sauce on his rice instead of ketchup, he is not 'haole'. Their differing manners and his use of the label 'haole' positions Mandy within the bounds of being 'haole' and her father outside of them. He uses a label to describe the self she has presented to him through her actions and how he locates that self within various discourses.

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[1] I am not Japanese, but in my experience, putting soy sauce on rice is linked to being American. In the discourse that I am famiiar with, Asians in general never put soy sauce on their rice.

The manner that James Brandt (half Filipino, half German) presents also influences the label that others assign him. He mentions that when he is out with his friends, who are mainly Filipino, "Usually if we're getting Filipino food or something and I can't speak Tagalog? They'll be like, 'Oh. You're half. I forgot'". In James' case, it is his inaction, or inability to speak Tagalog, that leads his friends to call him 'half'. His friends are citing the discourse that associates knowledge of the language Tagalog with (authentic) Filipino identity. If he had known how to speak Tagalog, he would not have been labeled 'half'. 'Half' is an ambiguous label; in this case it could mean either '(only) half Filipino' or 'half white'. Either way, his friends are commenting on how he is not full Filipino and simultaneously drawing a boundary that excludes him from being fully and authentically Filipino. His inability to speak Tagalog is the root of why they chose 'half' at that particular moment in time as the appropriate label to ascribe to him.

Bringing Together 'The Front'

Chapter 5 showed how more than one aspect of Goffman's (1959) front interacted with each other and with verbal information in the form of the assertion of labels that convey that an individual is '_____ on the outside and white on the inside'. Components of the front also interrelate when others assign labels to participants. In the case of Stephanie Berg (half Korean, half white), both the setting she and her mother find themselves in and Stephanie's appearance influence the label Stephanie's mother gives to her. Stephanie and her mother attempt to return to South Korea every summer for about a

month[2]. When Stephanie got a tattoo on her side, she said that her mother told her, "Well you can't come to Korea cause you have a tattoo and people are gonna think you're a gangster". However, Stephanie did return to Korea, and some Koreans did see her tattoo. Stephanie stated, "People would ask her [my mom] like, 'Oh she got a tattoo?' And my mom'd be like, 'Yeah. She's American'. And that's it. She'd just brush it off". Part of Stephanie's appearance (her tattoo) caused the Koreans she and her mother were with to question why she looked the way she did. Stephanie's mother labeled her 'American' in an attempt to explain her appearance; locating Stephanie and her tattoo in the discourse of American-ness makes her more intelligible to her Korean audience. However, this label only has explanatory power because of the setting (South Korea) Stephanie and her mother find themselves in and the discourses those Koreans have about both tattoos and Americans. Information transferred verbally (labels) can be impacted by more than one form of nonverbal information (in this case, setting and appearance) simultaneously.

The Audience

As we saw with Mandy's father using the term 'haole', the audience, or the person who is labeling the mixed race Asian American individual, can have an impact on what label that person chooses to use. Both Mandy and her father were familiar with the label 'haole' and discourses associated with it since they had both grown up in Hawai'i. It might have been more comfortable for him to use that word with her than 'white'. Similarly, women from the Philippines often use the label 'mestiza' to refer to Mallory

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[2] The repetition of this activity also places her within a classed discourse.

Blackwood (half Filipino, half white): "Filipinos are the only ones who use that term [mestiza]? I always get asked by Filipino women […] whenever I talk to them, they get SO surprised. And then they go, 'Oh:, you're mesTIza'". 'Mestiza' is a word of Spanish origin[3] that, in the context of the Philippines, indicates people who have mixed European and Filipino ancestry. For Mallory's audience, women from the Philippines, it is perhaps easier to assign Mallory a label in their language that they have a background for understanding than to accept Mallory's asserted labels of 'half Filipino, half white'; they can locate Mallory as more intelligible within a discourse of 'mestiza' and mixing in the Philippines than within American discourses of being half one thing and half something else. Mallory has also picked up from the way the Filipino women say 'mestiza' and the follow-up comments on how she should go to the Philippines to model that in the racial discourse of the Philippines, being 'mestiza' is "a good thing, like it's BETter than being Filipino". The audience's self and their knowledge of (non-English) labels and discourses also play into what labels they assign to others.

Explanatory Value of Labels

Like mixed race Asian Americans themselves, those they interact with also choose labels because the stereotypes associated with them can be used to explain something about the person being labeled. This is exactly what happened one day to James Brandt (half Filipino, half German). I was sitting in McDonald's with him and four of his friends. James was sitting next to Calvin, who is Chinese. Both of them were eating

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[3] Many Tagalog words are loanwords from Spanish.

when Calvin glanced over at James' hands and exclaimed, "You have really thick finger hair!" James held up his hand next to Calvin's so they can compare better. As they did so, one of the girls sitting at the opposite end of the table said, "Cause he's white". She assigned him a label in this case because of his appearance, but her use of the label 'white' paired with the word 'cause' implies that his whiteness is supposed to explain something. James' whiteness only explains why he has more hair on his fingers if it is in fact linked to the stereotype that Asians do not have a lot of body hair. Since James is part Filipino, his fingers should be relatively hair free; since they are not, the other part of his heritage must be the reason why. By labeling James 'white', the girl is citing the normative discourse on Asians and body hair. Additionally, using the label 'white' to explain his hairy fingers marks James as different from Calvin. It is his inclusion within the boundaries of whiteness that explains why he is different, and hairier, than Calvin.

Different stereotypes inform other audiences' label use. Jazlyn Morris (half black, half Thai) says, "I used to get in this fight with this one girl cause she's always like, 'It's because she's half ASIAN that she's so smart'". This girl labeled Jazlyn as 'half Asian' because, as a result of her actions, Jazlyn did well in school. The label 'half Asian' was used as an explanation for why she was smart by citing the discourse that connects being Asian with being smart. Labeling Jazlyn 'half Asian' also included her within the boundaries of what it meant to be Asian. It did not matter to this girl what type of Asian Jazlyn is, because the stereotype is that Asians are smart, not that Thais are smart because 'Thai' is subsumed by the larger category of 'Asian'. The emphasis on 'Asian' and its modification with 'half' could also be an acknowledgement of the stereotype that blacks

are not intelligent. In this broader racialized discourse on intelligence, it would not make sense for the girl to explain Jazlyn's academic success by referring to her black heritage. The audience relies on stereotypes of both appearance and manner when they choose a label to assign to the performance given by mixed race Asian Americans.

Negating Assigned Labels

The audience may choose labels to assign to mixed race Asian Americans, but this does not mean that they always passively accept the labels that are selected for them. Mixed race Asian Americans can choose to accept or reject the labels that others assign to them. As we saw above, Heather Guzman accepts the label 'Mexican' that her friend assigned to her. But it is through the interaction of the assigning and the rejecting of a label that selves and identities are negotiated (Nagel 1994). For example, Kate O'Donnell (half Korean, half European) says that sometimes people come up to her and "they might go right off the bat and say, 'Oh you're Hispanic'. And then I'll say, 'No I'm not' and clarify". Her clarification would take the form of: "I'm half Korean and then I'm Irish, Scottish, English, French, and German". Again, audience matters to participants' label choice because "if it's a stranger I won't go into all the details, but I'll just say I'm Asian. NOT Hispanic". People who have never met Kate before might assign her the label 'Hispanic' and place her within the boundary of that category based simply on the way she looks and how that fits in with discourses on how 'Hispanics' normally look. Kate, however, contests the appointment of the label 'Hispanic' to her self; 'Hispanic' is not the identity she wants to present, so she rejects the label and asserts that she should be

included in the boundaries of Asian, or Korean, Irish, Scottish, English, French, and German. By rejecting the label 'Hispanic', Kate gives herself the opportunity to present a self and situation that self in a discourse of her own choosing. She asserts her agency both in the act of rejecting an assigned label and in the act of choosing different labels to present her self to a particular audience.

Stephanie Berg (half Korean, half white) acts similarly. Occasionally she has found herself in a situation where somebody will "call me a 'chink' and I'll be like, 'No. Chinese people are chinks' […] My dad always told me that Koreans are 'gooks' and so are Vietnamese people? So I would always be like, 'I'm a gook, not a chink'". Not only does Stephanie reject the label 'chink' and choose to assert the label 'gook' in its stead, she also attempts to educate her audience on the correct usage of slurs directed toward different Asian ethnic groups. Chapter 5 shows that educating the audience is one of the motivations for mixed race Asian Americans to choose one label over another. When mixed race Asian Americans reject a label that is assigned to them, they are engaged in the process of negotiating their identity and their placement within or without certain boundaries and discourses with their audience. The performer's rejection of a label also leads them to assert a different label or self. Factors that influence the choice of a different label were presented in the previous chapter.

Conclusion

Other people assign labels to mixed race Asian Americans for many of the same reasons mixed race Asian Americans assert labels for themselves. The choices people

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make in both assigning and asserting labels are influenced by setting, appearance, manner, who the people involved in an interaction are, the explanatory power of stereotypes, and the desire to create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Since most of my data on how others assign labels to mixed race Asian Americans comes from the participants themselves, it is difficult to determine the extent to which it would benefit others to assign a particular label to an American with partial Asian ancestry. It is also challenging to figure out how much impact the question being asked has on the labels that others use to describe mixed race Asian Americans from my data because it seems as if the audience more often directly questions mixed race Asian Americans about their background than the audience asks other audience members about their background. Therefore, the impact of the question on label choice is more significant for participants asserting an identity than for others assigning them one. Stance, or the way in which an individual evaluates a label, may have some influence on the way in which the audience assigns labels; however, given the limitations of the research design, this information is unavailable. Both the labels that mixed race Asian Americans assert and the labels that others assign to them are important to the performance of identity. And in both asserting and being assigned labels, my participants are positioned in relation to larger socially constructed discourses. Although the choice of one particular label over another is influenced by a number of different factors described above, all actors exercise their agency by choosing that label from among all of the labels made available to them at that point in time.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Growing up in America, I've always thought that I look more Asian than white. I think this in part because in comparison to my brother, I do. My face is rounder and my hair is straighter than his. He is far taller than the average height of a white American male, while I'm in between the average heights for Asian and white American females. But maybe the real reason why I think I look more Asian is because for most of my life I've encountered questions like "What are you?" and "Where are you from?" and "What nationality are you?" People must ask me those questions for a reason, because the answer isn't obvious to them. Since strangers are usually the only ones to ask me these kinds of questions, they must be based on how I look. And since I've never noticed them asking any of the white people around me, they must be asking because I look different. So it always surprises me a little bit when Asian American friends of mine tell me that I look more white than Asian. Or when I travel to Taiwan and the housekeeper tells my aunt that I look too *wai guo ren*[1] to take a taxi by myself. My appearance was important to the choice of labels in each situation. I think of my appearance as 'more Asian'; I think some see me as 'Asian'; others think of my appearance as 'Asian', 'white', and '*wai guo ren*', to name a few. And even though each label, and the discourse(s) cited by their use, was different, my appearance stayed the same throughout. The labels individuals choose

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[1] *Wai guo ren* (外國人／外国人) translates to 'foreigner', but when used colloquially it means something more along the lines of 'white person' or 'Caucasian'.

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to describe themselves do not always match with the labels that others ascribe to them. Interactions are the medium through which labels and the identities attached to them are negotiated. Appearance is not the only factor that influences the selection of a label.

Mixed race Asian Americans choose to assert racial, ethnic, and national labels for a number of different reasons. When my participants chose one label from among a finite list, they based the decision of what information to present to an absent audience on a desire to opt out of the constraints of the question, on the (potential to) benefit from affirmative action, on their appearance, on other's expectations, on how they identify, and on which percentage of their heritage constituted a majority. However, participants' assertion of labels is not confined to presenting information on race, ethnicity, and nationality on forms; they also present this information as part of the self they perform for others in the course of daily interactions. Setting, appearance, and manner all have an impact on what label(s) participants choose to use to provide information to their audiences. The audience itself also influences participants' label use: participants may select certain labels if they perceive that the use of that label will allow them to gain resources from the audience; the role of the audience in relation to the performer (as friend, stranger, or foreigner) has consequences for label choice, as does the question the audience chooses to ask each participant. Some participants respond to questions with the answer they think their audience wants to hear; others reply in a way that attempts to make the asker question their citation of a discourse that relates American nationality with white appearance (only). In other cases participants choose a label because it is expedient, or avoid a label because of the evaluation they have made of it. Finally,

participants choose to use a label when they believe that the label will explain something about them through an explicit connection with a discourse in the form of a stereotype. The assertion of a label also has the unintended consequence of creating a boundary between different groups and of reinforcing or subverting discourses in many instances.

Other people involved in an interaction assign labels to mixed race Asian Americans for many of the same reasons why my participants choose to assert such labels. Again, the setting interactants find themselves in, as well as the appearance and manner of the mixed race Asian American, play a part in the decision to assign a particular label to that person. The audience, and who they are in relation to the participant, also guides interlocutors in the act of choosing a label to describe the participant. All of these aspects of Goffman's (1959) theory of the presentation of self apply not only to how participants display their racial, ethnic, and national selves to an audience, but also to how the audience exhibits their knowledge or understanding of the presentation of that information. Sometimes, however, the audience's placement of a participant within a racial/ethnic/national discourse and their use of a label to convey that information are inaccurate. In cases such as these, participants are capable not only of accepting the label they are assigned, but are also capable of rejecting it. When mixed race Asian Americans reject an assigned label and assert another in its place, they are negotiating their placement within or outside of the discourses and boundaries of the categories represented by those labels. The explanatory value of labels in their attachment to discourses and stereotypes is the final similarity in how labels are both asserted and assigned.

There is a large degree of overlap between the reasons participants choose labels to describe themselves in everyday life and the reasons why others assign them the labels they do. However, considerably less overlap occurs between those reasons and why participants choose a single label on a form when they are not offered the choice of marking one or more boxes for race. Participants choose a label because it benefits them in some way both on forms and in everyday life. Choosing a particular label on an application benefits participants because they have the potential to gain resources through affirmative action (see Andrew Rivera, Chapter 4). They also have the possibility of gaining resources from their audience if they choose a particular label as Brian Liu and Lynda Sutton demonstrated in Chapter 5. While I have no direct data to support it, it is also conceivable that the audience would assign a label to a participant because it is in the audiences' best interest for the participant to have that label. For example, the audience may want a participant to sign a petition concerning Asian American rights. They might say, "Hey. You're Asian. You should take a minute to look at this". In this case, it is in the audience's best interest to label the participant 'Asian' in order to place them inside of the boundaries of Asian-ness so that they can then appeal to the participant's sense of community. The prominent theme of choosing a label for personal benefit reinforces Goffman's (1959) idea that we display a self that is in our best interest to present.

In my data, appearance was the only factor to influence participants' choice of a label on forms, when asserting a label in everyday life, and when they are being assigned a label. Heather's appearance impacts her decision to pick 'Asian' both when filling out forms (Chapter 4) and when interacting with her family (Chapter 5). Brian Liu shows us

how he changes labels as he changes his appearance, second by second in everyday

interactions (Chapter 5). Finally, the way that Kimberly Smith and Lynda Sutton alter

their appearances in Chapter 6 affects what labels their audiences assign to them. This

common thread of appearance shows how important appearances are to how we gather

information about the world and to how we understand it. Appearances matter to such an

extent that my participants even take them into consideration when providing information

to absent audiences who have never seen them and probably never will. Appearances are

also highly subjective and the ways in which physical features are understood are

dependent on which discourses people have access to and which ones they are citing.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the use of labels (whether asserted or

assigned) positions interactants within wider discourses. Labels performatively locate

individuals by citing the norms of the discourses associated with those labels. Discourses

may associate particular appearances or behaviors with a labeled identity as a way of

understanding that identity (Butler 1990). The two broader discourses most frequently

cited by my participants and those they interacted with were ones that related ethnic

identity to a knowledge of the corresponding food and/or language, and its corollary that

connected whiteness with the lack of such knowledge; and discourses that associated

certain phenotypic characteristics with particular racial, ethnic, or national groups.

In this study, label use both reinforced and subverted larger discourses on race,

ethnicity, and nationality in the U.S. Participants and their audiences cited the discourse

linking ethnic food to ethnic identity in seven instances in this thesis, and the only

example in which that discourse came close to being challenged was when Mallory

Blackwood asked her friend, "So if I eat Taiwanese food, will I be Taiwanese?" Mallory questions the assumed naturalness of the association between ethnic food and ethnic identity, but does not subvert the discourse. The association between ethnic identity and knowledge of the food and language becomes naturalized as the norm of this ethnic discourse through the constant citations that reinforce this belief. The food/language-identity discourse seems fairly well entrenched among my participants. However, discourses linking physical characteristics to racial/ethnic/national identity are less uniformly reinforced. Fourteen citations of the appearance-identity discourse occur in the examples of label use included in this thesis; eleven of those citations support the discourse whereas three subvert it. The three occasions in which the appearance-identity discourse is disrupted occur when participants assert labels in everyday life that do not match their audiences' expectations of a label based on participants' phenotypes. Thus, the appearance-identity discourse seems easier to disrupt than the food/language-identity discourse, and as a result the appearance-identity discourse has a greater potential to change. As stated in the introduction, academic distinctions between race and ethnicity see appearance as more closely associated with race, which is assigned, whereas food and language are more closely tied to ethnicity, which is asserted (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). Again, this academic distinction does not capture the nuances of race and ethnicity because my research has shown that although race is supposed to be assigned via appearances, it is easier to disrupt this discourse than the food/language-ethnic identity discourse.

Label use not only subverts and reinforces discourses, but it also creates boundaries both between and within races and ethnicities (see Kang and Lo 2004; Pyke and Dang 2003). The use of language to create and maintain boundaries has long been a focus within linguistic anthropology. Linguistic anthropologists who work with Asian Americans have looked at how code-switching (Lo 1999; Shin and Milroy 2000), and style (Bucholtz 2009) impact identity and boundaries. Noro (2009) and Shin (2010) examine the connection between heritage language experience and identity in hapa Japanese Canadians and mixed race Asian Americans, respectively. Bucholtz (1995) has shown that Americans of ambiguous racial appearance use (or conceal) knowledge of another language as a resource when navigating ethnic boundaries. This current study showed how mixed race Asian Americans, who often have ambiguous racial appearances, choose to use specific labels in certain situations and how the use of those labels positions them within and outside of discourses of racial, ethnic, and national categories and their boundaries.

Goffman's (1959) study of performance can be used to relate the repeated citations of discourses to a self. Goffman (1959) writes about how in every interaction all of the people involved present information to each other both nonverbally and verbally. This information that people present can be and is interpreted by referring to discourses of certain types of identities. The information interactants receive helps them to understand the situation they find themselves in and to perform a self to their audience that they think is in their best interests to present. In performing a self they have the capacity to act in ways that alter to a certain extent where they are (setting), how they

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look (appearance), how they behave (manner), and what they say. Goffman (1959) only focuses on the first three nonverbal methods of conveying information about a situation. My research concentrated on the use of labels as a specific way of communicating verbal information, and showed how the reasons why mixed race Asian Americans choose to assert labels overlap in many ways with both the nonverbal information they give off and the audience they are performing for.

Although mixed race Asian Americans often find themselves in situations where they assert racial, ethnic, and national labels, the labels they assert do not always reflect how they see themselves. For example, when answering questions like "What are you?" Andrew Rivera uses the labels 'Hispanic' and 'Vietnamese'. However, he went on to tell me, "But I really don't- I feel like I don't really identify with either of the two [Hispanic or Vietnamese]". He uses those labels to provide information to his audience about his heritage, but the information does not extend to how he identifies. Identity is a difficult concept to pin down. Chris Adebayo, who is half Japanese and half Nigerian, shows nothing of his African heritage in his appearance. He says, "In terms of how I identify myself, yes, I do identify myself [as black], but at the same time, it's kinda really hard for me to identify myself [as black] because in order to identify yourself, you have to really fully experience what it's like to be that particular ethnicity or race"[2]. Chris's Asian appearance prevents him from experiencing much of the discrimination that blacks face

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[2] A competing discourse to the one Chris cites here is that if you have black (or any other racial heritage) you identify with it because it is part of your genetic makeup, regardless of your life experiences. As stated in the introduction, this biological basis for race has been refuted in academic discourses on the topic.

by virtue of their darker skin color. Chris's awareness of the lack of discrimination he faces is heightened by interactions with his brother, who shows nothing of his Asian heritage in his appearance. Chris is aware that he and his brother were treated differently because of their appearances: "Certain jobs even when we were younger, I would get where he wouldn't. Or where we'd both get hired. He's more watched over, you know? And I would get more praise. But he worked just as hard, if not harder. But I've noticed he experiences more scrutiny over anything else. And more suspicion. Compared to me". Chris is aware that he is black and identifies as such, but also acknowledges that he does not have the same set of experiences as his brother. Chris's recognition that it is difficult for him to identify as black may also stem from his experiences with the African American community. Sometimes when Chris went to school functions that were predominantly African American, "I would have my brother tag along. Just to prove that he is. And they STILL wouldn't believe me [that I was (half) black]". Participants use labels that they do not identify with, or that they do identify with but have little direct experience of what it means to belong within the boundaries of that label. Although mixed race Asian Americans provide information to their audience through the labels they choose to use, there are often limits to how widely that information can be applied.

Chris's vignette reaffirms that appearance is an unavoidable part of many interactions. Because of the way he looks his audience may exclude him from the boundaries of being black and assign the label 'Asian' to him. Although Chris does assert the label 'Asian', he also asserts the labels 'black' and 'American'. Chris asserts racial labels, as well as national ones, even when the information presented by those labels does

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not match with his appearance and its location within racial discourses[3]. His stories demonstrate yet again how race and nationality are often difficult to disentangle from ethnicity, and academic distinctions between the three concepts often obscure how they play out in people's lived experiences.

As we have just seen, using labels is not a perfect system: people use labels that they do not identify with to describe themselves; and the information presented by labels, appearances, manner, discourses, and a number of other factors do not always match. At the same time, avoiding the use of labels would be exceedingly difficult, especially when we are routinely asked to provide labels for race, ethnicity, and nationality when filling out forms. Labels are also inescapable because people are invested in maintaining the boundaries that label use creates. Boundaries, labels, and the discourses attached to them are part of how humans categorize and make sense of their world. One small piece of establishing and maintaining those boundaries is asking ambiguous individuals questions to better place them within a schema of discourses surrounding race, ethnicity, and nationality. Although this schema is often ambiguous, it is still all we have to work with right now and labels for these concepts form an integral part of that schema. As such, it is incredibly important to understand how racial, ethnic, and national labels work and how people use them if we ever hope to change the discourses that they are embedded in. We cannot discard the labels we have, or persuade people to stop using them, when they can

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[3] 'Black' does not match his appearances because he has none of the physical features that have become racialized as indexing blackness. 'American' does not match his appearances because of the myth prevalent in America that people of Asian descent are 'perpetual foreigners' (Tuan 1998; Wu 2002) and cannot really be 'from' America.

see and feel the benefits of using a label like 'Asian' on a job application or for college admissions, when they can see how much easier it is avoid being questioned by telling people what they want to hear, or while discourses of racialized appearances tell them that they belong to a particular category. Perhaps the continued subversion of these discourses will lead to the emergence of new ones that take into account the ambiguous appearances of mixed race Americans.

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

Thanks for coming out to talk to me today. This interview will be fairly short. I'm just trying to get some background information and I'll contact you for a longer interview later. If you are unsure about a question, or if a question makes you feel uncomfortable, just stop and let me know.

1. How old are you?

2. Where were you born?

3. Have you moved around since then? If so, where?

4. Do you go back to visit or to stay with your parents, or the people who raised you?

5. If you go back to visit, how often do you go and how long do you generally stay for?

6. Were there other people like you, in terms of racial background, where you grew up?

7. How long have you lived in Las Vegas, if you were not born here?

8. How long have you taken classes at UNLV?
    a. Have you taken classes at any other colleges or universities?
    b. When do you expect to graduate?

11. Do you have a job? If so, what do you do?

12. Do you know what generation your parents are?

13. Do either of your parents speak languages other than English? If so, what language(s)?

14. Do you speak any language other than English? If so, which languages?

15. Do you have any siblings? Are they older or younger, male or female?

16. Have you ever been asked questions like "What are you?" or "Where are you from?"?
    a. If yes, why do you think people ask you those types of questions?
    b. Do you think that people who ask you "What are you?" are really trying to ask you a different question? If so, what is it?

c. Would you prefer that people ask you those questions in a different way?
    i. If yes, what is a better way of asking?
    ii. Why do you think that particular question is better?

17. Do you know anyone else who is part Asian that would be willing to talk to me? If yes, could you give me their contact information? If you don't feel comfortable giving that information to me, please give them this card, or pass along my contact information to them.

APPENDIX B

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

Thanks for agreeing to do this interview with me today. I'll be asking you questions that deal with your racial, ethnic, and national identity. If at any time you have questions or are unsure of something, interrupt me and ask. Let's start with an activity.

Section 1: Labels and Stereotyping Activity

1. Please list all of the labels that you use to describe your ethnicity, race and national origin. Leave space between them. GIVE LINED SHEET OF PAPER AND PEN.

2. HAND ANOTHER SHEET OF PAPER OUT. Now list all of the labels that others such as friends, acquaintances, relatives, or the media have used to describe your ethnicity, race and national origin that do not appear above. Again, leave space between the items in your list. If there are no other terms, let me know and we'll continue.

3. Okay. Now write in any stereotypes you associate with those labels. You may think some of the stereotypes you just wrote down are inaccurate. If this is the case, please circle those you think are inaccurate with this red pen. GIVE RED PEN.

We'll set these aside for now. If you come up with anything during the course of our interview that didn't make it onto those sheets, stop me and jot it down.

I want to start out with asking you questions about your family and the experiences you had growing up.

Section 2: Family

4. Tell me about yourself and your family.
      a. When and where were you born and raised?
      b. Where were your parents from?
      c. How did they meet?
      d. Do you have siblings? Are they older or younger?
      e. What's your family like?
            i. Do you feel closer to one family member over another? If so, who and why?
            ii. How would you characterize the relationship between your parents and your grandparents? Why?
            iii. Do you have any relatives who are also of mixed heritage?
      f. Does your family do things together, like celebrate certain holidays, keep certain traditions, make certain foods?

    i. If so, what are those things? Were there others that you did when you were younger, but don't do now? Or, are there things you do as a family now that you did not do when you were younger?

5. Do you think you're a lot, a little, or not at all like your mother?
  a. IF YES, how? IF NO, why not?
    i. Look alike?
    ii. Act alike?
    iii. Alike in other ways?
  b. Have you had people tell you how alike or different you are from her? If yes, tell me about one of those experiences.

6. Do you think you're a lot, a little, or not at all like your father?
  a. IF YES, how? IF NO, why not?
    i. Look alike?
    ii. Act alike?
    iii. Alike in other ways?
  b. Have you had people tell you how alike or different you are from him? If yes, tell me about one of those experiences.

7. Growing up, did your parent/s talk about their own ethnic, racial heritage, or identity? IF YES PROCEED TO QUESTION 7a, IF NO PROCEED TO QUESTION 7b.
  a. If yes, can you tell me about a time they talked about their own ethnic identity?
    i. If they still talk about their own ethnic identity now, has the way they talk about it changed since you were younger? How?
  b. If no, why do you think it wasn't talked about?

8. Growing up, did anyone in your immediate family talk to you about *your* ethnic, racial heritage, or identity? IF YES PROCEED TO QUESTION 8a, IF NO PROCEED TO QUESTION 8b.
  a. If yes, can you think of a time recently?
  b. If no, why do you think it wasn't talked about?

In this next section, I'll ask you about your experiences with going to college.

Section 2: College

9. Tell me about coming to college.
  a. Was it different from high school? Why or why not?
  b. What were classes like?
  c. How did you make new friends?
  d. Did you get involved with any activities, or are you involved in any now? IF YES PROCEED TO 9di. IF NO PROCEED TO 9e.

i. Why these?
e. What do you do with your free time?
f. Are there any extracurriculars that you wish you had been a part of? IF YES PROCEED TO 9fi. IF NO PROCEED TO NEXT SECTION.
 i. What were they?
 ii. Why didn't you join?

Now I'd like to ask you about experiences you've had with the need to identify yourself racially or ethnically.

Section 3: Affect and Identity

10. Have you ever gone through times in your life when you've been told you had to choose between one or another race? IF YES PROCEED TO QUESTION 10a. IF NO PROCEED TO QUESTION 11.
 a. Tell me about those times. What led up to this? What happened?
 b. How did it make you feel? Why?
 c. Why do you think it mattered that you could pick only one?

11. Have you ever been asked the question: "What are you?" IF YES PROCEED TO 11a. IF NO PROCEED TO 12.
 a. How do you respond?
 b. How do you feel when you are asked this? Why?
 c. Has the way in which you answer this changed over time? If yes, how?
 d. Why do you think they ask?

12. Have you been asked other questions that try to get at this same thing? IF YES PROCEED TO 12a. IF NO PROCEED TO 13.
 a. If so, what are they?
 b. Do you respond differently to them than you do to "What are you?" IF YES PROCEED TO 12bi. IF NO PROCEED TO 13.
 i. How do you respond?

13. Has anyone ever given you a hard time about the way you respond to any of these questions? IF YES PROCEED TO 13a. IF NO PROCEED TO 14.
 a. Can you give me an example?
 b. Why do you think it mattered to them?

14. Has anyone ever given you a hard time because of your mixed heritage in general? IF YES PROCEED TO 14a. IF NO PROCEED TO 15.
 a. What is the most memorable experience you have of that happening?

15. Have racial slurs ever been directed at you?
 a. Which ones?

b. How does it make you feel when you're called something like that?
c. How do you respond?
d. Has your response changed over time? If so, how?

Let's talk a little bit about the different ways we talk with other people.

Section 4: Language Use

16. Have you noticed that there are times when you change the way you talk depending on the context you're in? If so, please describe.

17. Do you think language important in the Chinese community? IF YES PROCEED TO 17a, IF NO PROCEED TO 18.
    a. How?
    b. Why do you think it's so important?

18. Do you think language important in the X (African American, white, Latino, German, Cuban, etc.) community? IF YES PROCEED TO 18a, IF NO PROCEED TO NEXT SECTION.
    a. How?
    b. Why do you think it's so important?

Another thing that impacts identity is how other people see you. This will be the next topic we talk about.

Section 4: Others' perceptions and physical appearance

19. How do you think strangers see you?
    a. Why do you think they see you in this way? (physical appearance, language/dialect, name, clothing, mannerisms, etc.)
    b. Do you have any examples that particularly illustrate this?

20. Have you ever had strangers or people you don't know well make comments about how you look, positive or negative? IF YES PROCEED TO 20a. IF NO PROCEED TO 21.
    a. Tell me what happened.
    b. Why do you think it mattered to them?

21. Have your parents or friends ever encouraged you to try to change your physical appearance? IF YES PROCEED TO 21a. IF NO PROCEED TO 22.
    a. Tell me what happened.
    b. Why do you think it mattered to them?

Alright. Just a few more questions to go.

Section 4: Coda

23. Do you ever feel more, or see yourself as more X sometimes?
	a. Can you give me an example?

24. Do you ever feel more, or see yourself as more Y at other times?
	a. Can you give me an example of this?

25. Would there ever been a time where you would choose to identify as solely one or the other? IF YES PROCEED TO 25a, IF NO PROCEED TO 25b.
	a. In what circumstances and why?
	b. Is there any particular reason why you wouldn't?

26. Are there other events in your life that have influenced your perception of your identity?

27. Do you think your ideas about your racial or ethnic identity have changed?
	a. How and why?

Let's look again at the lists you made at the beginning of the interview. Is there anything you would like to add to them? Look at the labels you picked that describe yourself.

28. How do you pick which one or ones to use?

29. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that we haven't covered?

Thanks for taking the time to do this interview with me. Feel free to contact me in the future if you have any questions or concerns regarding the material we've covered today.

FREE LISTS OF LABELS

Pseudonym	Labels Listed to Describe Self	Labels Used in Interview but Not Listed
Amber Panyarachun	American, half Thai/half white	Norwegian, French, Asian
Andrew Rivera	Asian, Hispanic, Vietnamese, El Salvadorian, Central American	Spanish
Anna Zhang	Asian, Latina, Hispanic, Taiwanese	Chilean
Brian Liu	Chinese, Caucasian, hapa, American, Asian	white
Chris Adebayo	Asian-African, blasian, hapa, Asian	Black, American, Asian American, Nigerian, African
Emily Bateman	White, Asian, Caucasian, Japanese, half Japanese, American	
Heather Guzman	Asian, white, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, American	Italian, French, Dutch, English, Mexican, Jewish
James Brandt	Hybrid, mix, halfie, mutt, white, Filipino, Asian, German, Pacific Islander, other, Caucasian, CaucAsian, brown, coconut	American
Jazlyn Morris	Blasian, mixed, half breed	Black, Thai
Kaiea Nawahine	Asian, Hawaiian, mixed, Pacific Islander	Chinese, German
Kate O'Donnell	Asian, half Asian, Korean/half Korean, European, mutt	Irish, English, Scottish, French, German
Kathy Anderson	White, Filipino, Asian, Caucasian, Islander, pinay, mixed, half and half	American, halfie

Pseudonym	Labels Listed to Describe Self	Labels Used in Interview but Not Listed
Kimberly Smith	Hapa, Asian, American, Thai/Chinese German/Irish, half-breed, mutt, halfie, white	
Lily Russell	Asian, Flip, hapa, mixed	Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Spanish, Irish, English
Lynda Sutton	Half black half Japanese, "black and Asian", American	mixed
Mallory Blackwood	Half white/half Filipino, half Caucasian/half Filipino, half white/half Asian	Asian, American
Mandy Akimoto	Hapa, half Japanese half white, Eurasian, mixed	Hapa haole, Scandinavian, American, Asian, Okinawan
Mark Vogel	Hapa, half Japanese, half Asian, hafu, Eurasian, white, Asian, Jewish and Japanese, Jewish, Jewpanese, Japajew, American, Japanese	Whitewashed, mixed race
Samantha Hutchinson	Japanese, Asian, hapa, hapa haole, mixed, multi-racial, haole	Australian, white, Caucasian
Stephanie Berg	Half white half Korean, wasian, Korean Nazi, American, Caucasian, Asian	Mixed, German
Tiffany Gardner	Japanese, Swedish, French, Canadian, Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, Scandinavian, Native American, mutt, Heinz 57	

QUESTIONS ON RACE AND ETHNICITY: 1990-2010 CENSUSES

1990 Census

4. Race

Fill ONE circle for the race that the person considers himself/herself to be.

    If Indian (Amer.), print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe. _____→

    If Other Asian or Pacific Islander (API), print one group, for example: Hmong, Fijian, Laotian, Thai, Tongan, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. _____→

    If **Other race**, print race. _____→

○ White
○ Black or Negro
○ Indian (Amer.) (Print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe.)⌐
    [_____]

○ Eskimo
○ Aleut

Asian or Pacific Islander (API)

○ Chinese   ○ Japanese
○ Filipino   ■   ○ Asian Indian
○ Hawaiian   ○ Samoan
○ Korean   ○ Guamanian
○ Vietnamese   ○ Other API⌐
    [_____]

○ Other race (Print race)⌐

7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin?

Fill ONE circle for each person.

    If **Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic**, print one group. _____→

○ No (not Spanish/Hispanic)
○ Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Am., Chicano
○ Yes, Puerto Rican
○ Yes, Cuban   ■
○ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic
    (Print one group, for example: Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.)⌐
    [_____]

7. Is Person 1 Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? *Mark* ☒ *the* ***"No"*** *box if* **not** *Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.*

☐ **No,** not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino   ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican

☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano   ☐ Yes, Cuban

☐ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino — *Print group.* ↙

8. What is Person 1's race? *Mark* ☒ *one or more races* to *indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.*

☐ White

☐ Black, African Am., or Negro

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↙

☐ Asian Indian   ☐ Japanese   ☐ Native Hawaiian

☐ Chinese   ☐ Korean   ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro

☐ Filipino   ☐ Vietnamese   ☐ Samoan

☐ Other Asian — *Print race.* ↙   ☐ Other Pacific Islander — *Print race.* ↙

☐ Some other race — *Print race.* ↙

➜ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.**

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

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

[| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |]

9. What is Person 1's race? *Mark* X *one or more boxes.*

☐ White
☐ Black, African Am., or Negro
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ⬐

[| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |]

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

[| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |]

☐ Some other race — *Print race.* ⬐

[| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |]

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Academic Background:

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Las Vegas, NV
Master of Arts in Anthropology, May 2012
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Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY
Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Chinese, May 2009
GPA 3.74/4.0

Qingdao University, Qingdao, China
Study Abroad Program in Chinese language, Summer 2007

Awards:

May 2011   Won 2nd place ($100) for SWAA's Annual Student Paper Competition
March 2012   Received Honorable Mention for a talk presented at the UNLV Graduate
             & Professional Student Research Forum

Grants and Scholarships:

Spring 2012 Received $1,000 from a UNLV Access Grant
Fall 2011   Received $1,000 from Patricia A. Rocchio Memorial Scholarship for
             thesis research
Fall 2011   Received $500 from UNLV GPSA to present at AAA in Montreal, QC

Publications:

2011   Constructing Difference Through Indirect Speech Acts in "Harold and
             Kumar go to White Castle. *Proceedings of the Southwestern
             Anthropological Association* 5:9-14.

Scholarly Activities:

March 2012   *Chinks and the Chinese Exclusion Act: Ethnic Slurs and Social Processes*
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Paper presented at the UNLV Graduate & Professional Student
Research Forum
Nov. 2011   *Chinks and the Chinese Exclusion Act: Ethnic Slurs and Social Processes*
Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association
meeting "Traces, Tidemarks and Legacies" in Montreal, QC as
part of panel entitled "Gossip, Confession, and Innuendo: Family
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May 2011   *Practices and Perspectives on Public Performance*
Panel organizer, presented at the Southwest Anthropological
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May 2011   *Constructing Difference through Indirect Speech Acts in 'Harold and
Kumar go to White Castle'.*
Paper presented at the Southwest Anthropological Association
meetings at the University of Nevada, Reno as part of panel
entitled "Practices and Perspectives on Public Performance".

Professional Experience:

Spring 2012   *Student Advisor*, Raising Our Asian Rights, UNLV
Assisted students in planning and running a variety of activities to
promote a sense of community among Asian/Pacific Islanders
(API) both among various student organizations on campus and
between students and the larger API community in Las Vegas

2011-2012   *Clinician*, Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes
Work one-on-one with students of all ages to assist them in
learning how to decode words and how to comprehend the material
they read.

2010-2011   *Assistant Editor*, Department of Anthropology, UNLV
Edited and formatted manuscripts, and corresponded with authors
and reviewers for *Ethnoarchaeology: Journal of Arachaeological,
Ethnographic and Experimental Studies*, a peer-reviewed journal.

Spring 2010   *Bibliographer*, Department of Anthropology, UNLV
Complied and sourced bibliography for book manuscript entitled
*Rewriting Shangri-la: Tibetan Exile Youth, Literacy, and Social
Change* by Dr. Heidi Swank.

Fall 2009   *Teaching Assistant*, Department of Anthropology, UNLV
             Graded homework and exams, taught several classes, assisted in
             the development of exams, counseled students one-on-one during
             weekly office hours.

2008-2009   *Vice President*, Multiracial/Biracial Students' Association, Vassar College
             Led meetings when president was unavailable, acted as liaison
             between the Association and administrators, coordinated and
             booked rooms in which events were held.

2007-2008   *Publicity Chair*, Multiracial/Biracial Students' Association, Vassar
             College
             Created flyers and posters, kept campus informed of upcoming
             events.

2007-2008   *Committee Chair*, Asian Students' Alliance, Vassar College
             Oversaw weekly meetings of three subcommittees tasked with
             programming to bring awareness of Asian and Asian American
             issues to campus, planned the annual Lunar New Year Dinner.

Spring 2007 *Secretary*, Asian Students' Alliance, Vassar College
             Sent weekly e-mails to general body members, kept an up-to-date
             mailing list of members, kept minutes at weekly executive board
             meetings.