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Understanding the Intergenerational Transmission of Minority Ethnicity: How Mothers in New Zealand Label Their Maori-European Children

Tahu Kukutai

Department of Sociology
450 Serra Mall
Bldg 120, Room 160
Stanford University
Stanford CA 94305-2047
tkukutai@stanford.edu

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies have shown many intermarried parents identify their child as monoracial in surveys, even when given the option to assign multiple races. The identification of biracial children as a minority race is often assumed to reflect the disposition of the minority parent, even though few studies control for which parent identified the child, or the specific racial heritage of the minority parent. This paper uses New Zealand data on the ethnic labels assigned to Maori-European children by their mothers, to examine two potential explanations for the uneven transmission of minority racial identity: 1) mainstream parents actively choose to affiliate their child with the minority parent's race; 2) the diffuse effects of multi-generational intermarriage means minority parents who acknowledge their own mixed heritage are less reliable transmitters of their minority ethnicity. Regression analyses show both factors to be significant, net of other explanatory factors.

INTRODUCTION

The 2000 census marked a major change in the collection of racial data on Americans, allowing identification with multiple races for the first time since its inception (Perlmann and Waters 2002; Rodriguez 2000).[1] For parents of mixed race children, this shift presented an unprecedented opportunity to racially identify their child in a way that reflected both parents' backgrounds**.** Yet recent studies show many parents did not make use of the new option, preferring instead to assign a singular racial identity to their mixed race child (Liebler 2004; Qian 2004). Given the removal of rigid classifications, the question arises: what factors encourage the persistent monoracial labeling of mixed race children by their parents?[2]

This paper attempts to shed light on the transmission of a singular minority identity by focusing on two factors that have received little attention in the literature. The first is the role of mainstream parents in racial identification decisions.[3] Typically, the designation of an exclusive minority racial identity to multiracial children is seen as an indicator of

[1] While historical censuses used various terms such as "mulatto" and "octaroon", they were classifications applied by census enumerators rather than self-reported identities.

[2] This study does not consider the cognitive aspects of racial identity formation. For more on those approaches, see Phinney and Rotheram 1987.

[3] With some exceptions (eg. apartheid South Africa), a mainstream racial or ethnic group is numerically and politically dominant. Usually a society comprises one mainstream group and numerous minorities.

either the "ethnic awareness" of the minority parent or, if the child is identified as a member of the mainstream, as a consequence of the parent's assimilation (See, Saenz *et al*. 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997). Yet, without knowing the decisions of individual parents, one cannot assume that the racial designation of mixed children hinges on the disposition of the minority spouse.[4] This paper departs from other studies by arguing that mainstream parents may actively seek to transmit minority identity in the way they racially identify their children. If correct, this may help explain why minority group identity persists: because it is encouraged by both mainstream and minority parents.

The second factor examined here is the diffuse impact of multi-generational intermarriage on the transmission of minority identity. Parent-child studies are typically limited to intermarried families where both parents are monoracial.[5] Yet, in reality, intermarriage involves a complicated configuration of unions including those where one or both parents are themselves products of intermarriage (Labov and Jacobs 1998; Lieberson and Waters 1988). Taking account of this complexity matters because men and women who have intermarried, and whose parents also intermarried, may be less inclined to transmit their minority heritage to their children. Thus, the transmission of a singular minority identity to mixed race children may be contingent on having at least one parent

[4] Those who use U.S. census data, for example, generally assume that the householder furnished the information (Liebler and Kanaiaupuni 2003; Qian 2004). However the task of completing the questionnaire may conceivably be left to the parent responsible for the daily household management, who is typically the mother.

[5] This is largely a function of data constraints. Until recently, most parent-child studies used survey data that only allowed for single race responses.

who identifies exclusively as a minority. Given the rising trend towards intermarriage in many countries (Birrell 2000; Callister 2003a; Qian 2004; Rosenfeld 2002), this has long-term implications for the size and shape of minority groups.

This study empirically assesses the predictive power of explanations regarding the role of mainstream parents and multigenerational intermarriage using data from New Zealand. These data include information about the ethnic labels that mothers assign to their Maori-European children.[6] New Zealand is an ideal context in which to test these ideas because parents of mixed Maori-European children have long had "ethnic options" (Waters 1990) conferred by historically high rates of intermarriage and a tradition of allowing multiethnic responses in official statistics (Harre 1966; Pool 1991). Yet, in spite of this, a significant proportion of Maori-European persons continue to be identified as solely Maori or solely European in official statistics such as the census (Brown 1983; Callister 2003a, 2003b). Understanding the individual level factors that promote the persistence of singular ethnic identities in New Zealand may provide insights into the future trajectories of minority groups in places where multiracial reporting has not yet come of age.

Besides being of sociological interest, there are pragmatic reasons for considering New Zealand. Specifically, the data employed in this study allow me to determine whether minority and mainstream mothers differ systematically in the ethnic labels they assign to

[6] The concept of ethnic group as used in official statistics in New Zealand is similar to the concept of race used in the United States census. Maori are now defined for statistical and policy purposes as an ethnic group, but for much of the country's history were considered a physically and culturally distinctive racial group (Belich 2001; Walker 1990).

their mixed Maori-European children. If there are no differences, the belief that minority parents drive the continuing transmission of minority identity may need to be revisited. The inclusion of mixed Maori-European mothers also enables an empirical test of the hypothesis that parents who acknowledge their mixed heritage are less likely to pass on minority identity.

THE INTER-GENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

The long-term survival of minority group identity is profoundly dependent on the ongoing affiliation of successive generations. This was recognized by assimilation theorists who believed widespread intermarriage would result in "identificational assimilation" as minorities came to see themselves as part of the mainstream (Gordon 1964). That minority racial and ethnic identities have endured is due to a variety of societal-, familial-, and individual-level influences.

A critical factor in maintaining minority group identity is the willingness and ability of parents to transmit a sense of ethnic loyalty or attachment to their children. As Spickard argues, "The important question regarding the intersection of marriage and ethnicity is whether or not intermarriers and mixed people continue to connect with ethnic communities" (1989:370). The ethnic or racial assignment that parents choose for their child is an indicator of how they socialize the child to think about its ethnicity. By identifying their child as a minority, parents play a role in transmitting minority identity, even if they are not able to pass on the substance of identity in terms of customs, norms, and practices (Waters 1990).

The identification decisions of parents reflect external constraints and incentives, as well as subjective preferences. In the U.S., for example, the identification options of

persons with Black ancestry are constrained by the enduring salience of color in American society, and the legacy of the so-called "one drop" rule (Davis 1991; Waters 1990**)**.[7] External factors do not always constrain identification choices; sometimes they provide new motivations for parents to transmit minority identity. Ethnic "renewal" and public policy initiatives have been invoked to explain the increasing popularity of American Indian and Native Hawaiian racial identity (Eschbach *et al.* 1998; Kanaiaupuni and Liebler 2003; Nagel 1995; Snipp 1997). The critical difference between external constraints and incentives is the availability of the mainstream or dominant identity. While almost half of the children of American Indian-White parentage were reported as solely American Indian in the 2000 census, an additional third were identified as solely White. This contrasts with the mere one tenth of biracial Black-White children assigned a singular White racial identity (Qian 2004).

Recognizing the particularity of group experiences, scholars have tended to focus on identifying the correlates and patterns of identification in specific kinds of intermarriages, rather than advance unifying theories. I discuss key factors reported in the literature before focusing on alternative explanations regarding the role of mainstream parents and the effects of multi-generational intermarriage.

Individual-level factors that may promote the transmission of minority identity

The gender of the minority parent consistently emerges as a significant predictor of minority racial identity. Using single-race data from the 1990 census, Roth (2002) found

[7] In the U.S., the rule of hypodescent meant that anyone with a known black ancestor was legally classified as Black, irrespective of how they self-identified (Rodgriguez 2000).

the racial identity assigned to mixed race children of Black heritage was strongly influenced by the race of the child's father. Xie and Goyette's (1997) study of children with one Asian parent also found significant effects of paternal ethnicity, with 43 percent of biracial children with Asian fathers identified as Asian, as compared to 37 percent of those with Asian mothers. An earlier study of Asian children with intermarried parents found children were less likely to be assigned an "Anglo" ethnicity if the father was Asian (Saenz *et al.* 1995).

There are several competing interpretations for the significant effects of minority paternal ethnicity. One is that ethnic surnames typically reveal heritage, and thus encourage attribution of ethnic or racial identity by others. Perceiving this, parents are more inclined to label the child as part of the minority group if the father is also a minority (Waters 1989; Xie and Goyette 1997). Roth (2002) has questioned the relevance of this interpretation for intermarried Blacks because racial or ethnic heritage can rarely be deduced from Black surnames. She argues the paternal influence of race most likely stems from a larger causal pattern of ***gendered inheritance*** and "patrilineal assumptions about the transmission of identity that affect the racial designation" (2002:10).

A second factor is the ***contextual power*** that arises from being the householder. In their study of the racial identities assigned to multiracial Pacific Islanders, Liebler and Kanaiaupuni (2003) found children were more likely to be reported the same race as the householder, no matter what the householder's gender. Liebler (2004) and Qian (2004) also found significant effects of household status on the racial identification of mixed race children when the householder was the minority parent. While there seems to be a consistent effect of household status, the underlying cause is unclear. One explanation is

that householders have more influence over decision-making generally, including how to identify the child. Another is that the householder fills out the form and, in doing so, tends to favor his or her own group. The tendency to favor one's own group may be stronger for minorities because of ethnic pride bolstered by policies than encourage ethnic pluralism (Nagel 1995; Saenz *et al.* 1995).

A third factor is the ***salience of minority ethnicity***. In a study of Native Hawaiians, Kanaiaupuni and Liebler (2003) found strong ties to Hawaii were vital to the intergenerational transmission of Hawaiian identification in mainland and island families. These ties were measured by birthplace and language spoken in the household. Comparing their findings with studies of American Indians and Asian Americans, they concluded that the identification of children in all three groups depended heavily on parental and geographic ties to "cultural and ancestral lands."

Other studies have found evidence of the influence of parental socio-economic status (Roth 2002; Xie and Goyette 1997), and social structural features such as the racial heterogeneity of the local population. While not discussed here in detail, these factors are controlled for in the analysis that follows.

The role of mainstream parents and the effects of multigenerational intermarriage

In the extant literature, the minority parent is typically seen as the key transmitter of minority racial and ethnic identity (Qian 2004; Saenz *et al.* 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997). However, individuals who have married into a minority group may also encourage the diffusion of minority identity, even if they cannot transmit the cultural content of that identity. There are several reasons why this may be true. Having a child with someone from a minority group indicates a degree of open-mindedness that may well encourage the

retention of minority identity. This is especially likely when there is no strong stigma attached to the group, or when there are anticipated psychological or material benefits. Moreover, when the dominant group is widely perceived to lack a distinctive culture, as is the case in New Zealand (King 1991), the majority parent may wish the child to have a strong sense of identity beyond the nebulous mainstream. Alternatively, mainstream parents might actively militate against the transmission of minority identity. Having garnered the advantages of belonging to the dominant group, the parent might try to minimize the child's identification with the lower-status minority group. This may be easier to do if the minority spouse has only a weak attachment to the minority group.

The second explanation considered here is the effect of multigenerational intermarriage: when a family has been subject to at least two generations of intermarriage (Labov and Jacobs 1998). Often self-report data do not give an accurate picture of the number of parents who are products of intermarriage, because persons who are multiracial or multiethnic sometimes simplify their identities (Harris and Sim 2002; Waters 1990). What the data provide is more sociologically interesting - an insight into the identification decisions of parents willing to acknowledge their own mixed heritage.

The literature suggests individuals who locate themselves simultaneously in the mainstream, and in a minority group, tend to have a weaker ethnic attachment than those who identify solely as a minority (Harre 1966; Waters 1990). This is because the salience of minority ethnicity is harder to sustain when one feels a sense of belonging in the dominant group, especially if the social distance between them is great (Spickard 1989). The corollary is that parents with dual racial or ethnic affiliations may be less likely to transmit the minority identity to their child. However, the inclination to pass on the

minority identity is likely to depend on whether the other parent identifies exclusively with the minority group, or the mainstream group, or both. In order to explain the ethnic identities assigned to children from minority-mainstream intermarriages, one needs to control for the specific identities of both parents.[8]

Figure 1 presents the hypothetical relationship between multigenerational intermarriage, the salience of the minority ethnicity in the parental relationship, and the likelihood that the child will be identified solely in terms of the minority ethnicity. As compared to a simple model of intermarriage (eg. a mainstream parent and a minority parent), this paper allows for a more complex view by including parents who are themselves mixed. The underlying idea is that, as the overall parental profile becomes more oriented towards the mainstream, the likelihood that the child will be assigned an exclusive minority identity declines. The explanatory power of these hypotheses will be considered alongside more popular explanations in explaining the ethnic designation of Maori-European children in New Zealand. First, a brief description of that context is required.

[Figure 1 about here]

MAORI-EUROPEAN INTERMARRIAGE AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

In 2001, ethnic Maori constituted 15 percent of the total population of New Zealand, while New Zealand Europeans accounted for 75 percent **(**Statistics New Zealand

8 Intermarriages involving parents from two different minority ethnic or racial groups are beyond the scope of this paper.

2001).[9] The latter group is primarily composed of the descendants of early English, Scottish and Irish migrants, along with later arrivals from other European countries. Until about the 1970s, New Zealand's ethnic statistics reflected its history as a nation of "two peoples": Maori and Europeans. Since then, various peoples from the Pacific Islands and Asia have migrated to the nation.

Maori-European intermarriage occurred from first contact. By 1960, half of the marriages entered into by Maori in the country's largest city were to Europeans (Harre 1966). The high level of intermarriage was reflected in the collection of ethnic data that, until 1986, required persons to report their degree of "ethnic origins" in terms of fractions (Pool 1991). Until 1971, the official definition of a Maori was a person with "half or more Maori blood." Qualitative evidence suggests the decision to identify as Maori was based on a combination of objective and subjective criteria (Metge 1964; Harre 1966; Walker 1990). Certainly the number of persons who reported being "full Maori" far exceeded the number that best estimates deemed biologically possible (Pool 1991). Claiming to be "full Maori" thus reflected a strong affiliation with Maori culture and ethnicity (ie. that one felt fully Maori), rather than an unbroken line of Maori ancestors. In the same way, reporting sole Maori ethnicity in the current census is more a statement about cultural orientation, than exclusive Maori heritage.[10]

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[9] Persons who identified as both Maori and European were counted in both ethnic groups.

[10] The Maori Ethnic Group includes any person who reports Maori ethnicity, either exclusively or in conjunction with some other ethnic group. Separate census help notes direct respondents to answer on the basis of the "ethnic group or groups (cultural groups) you belong to or identify with."

New Zealand Europeans, however, may be more inclined to use the concept of race to understand Maoriness. In a study of how women identified their children and grandchildren, McDonald (1976) found Maori women defined Maori in cultural terms (eg. kinship; customary practices), while European women emphasized visible features such as skin color. For the former, assigning labels such as "half-caste" did not preclude a strong Maori identity, but were claims to being bicultural. Thomas and Nikora's (1996) study of high school students also found differences in cognition. European teenagers tended to interpret Maori in racial terms (eg. skin color), while Maori students more often used cultural criteria. Similarly, Wetherell and Potter (1992) observed a tendency among Europeans to assume a racial classification in their use of the term Maori (eg. "full-blooded Maori").

While groups have their own distinctive histories, the similarities between the experiences of Maori and those of Native Americans and Hawaiians are evident: high rates of intermarriage with the majority, differentiation in legal and policy contexts that include particular rights, pronounced growth in recent decades, the emergence of ethnic renewal movements and initiatives, and over-representation in the lower socio-economic strata.[11] This suggests that the factors that promote identification with the minority group in New Zealand may be broadly similar to those for other indigenous peoples in the "fourth world."

[11] Maori are disproportionately over-represented amongst the incarcerated, the unemployed, the poor, the uneducated, and the sick. In 1999, Maori male newborns could expect to live eight years less than their non-Maori counterparts, and 14 years less than non-Maori baby girls (Te Puni Kokiri 2000).

Explaining the persistence of singular Maori ethnic identity

In the following analysis, there are two focal hypotheses. One is that mainstream parents who have intermarried actively encourage the transmission of minority identity. Even though Maori are generally seen as lower in status than Europeans (Harre 1966; Thomas and Nikora 1996), Maori ethnicity is not strongly stigmatized. Furthermore, ethnic renewal and the perception of benefits (eg. Maori land settlements) may encourage the attribution of Maori ethnicity by European mothers.[12] We can test whether in fact European mothers play a role in the transmission of Maori ethnicity by comparing their ethnic identification decisions with those of Maori mothers.

The second hypothesis is that parents who acknowledge their own mixed heritage are less likely to desire a singular minority identity for their child. However this is likely to depend on the specific ethnicity of the other parent. If this is correct, mothers who identify as both Maori and European, should be the least likely to transmit Maori ethnicity to their children. But this should depend, in large part, on whether the father is Maori, European, or Maori-European.

The significance of contextual power and gendered inheritance are also considered as alternative explanations. The first perspective predicts children should be more likely to be assigned the ethnicity of the identifying parent who, in this study, is the mother. If true, both Maori and European mothers should be inclined to impute their own ethnicity over

[12] Purely opportunist behavior should be more likely, however, when there is a real prospect of gain (eg. application for a Maori scholarship), than in a neutral context such as completing a questionnaire.

that of the father. Given Maori ethnic renewal, the effect of in-group bias should be greater for Maori than for European mothers. If mothers do not tend to favor their own group, then the significance of householder status in other studies would seem to derive from a more generalized influence of household authority. Finally, if the attribution of a singular Maori identity is due to gendered inheritance, we should see significant effects of paternal ethnicity. Because Maori surnames often reveal Maori heritage, we would expect the effect to be amplified when the father is the minority parent.

DATA AND METHODS

Data employed here are drawn from the nationally representative survey New Zealand Women: Family, Employment and Education (NZW:FEE) undertaken in 1995 (For a technical description see, Marsault *et al*. 1997). The sampling strategy used was random multi-level stratified clustering with an over-sample of Maori to ensure sufficient numbers for regional analysis. A sample weight is used throughout this analysis to control for the greater probability of Maori selection.

There are several unique features of the NZW:FEE. Unlike most parent-child studies, it includes parents whose relationship was intact at the time of survey, and those who had parted ways. We can also distinguish natural from adopted children. While this might seem fundamental to the study of intergenerational transfers of identity, often it cannot be definitively determined using census data.

Because the survey was administered exclusively to women, the ethnicity of the child's father was reported by the mother rather than self-reported. Fortunately, it is unlikely a woman would not know the main ethnic group of the father of her child. The most likely source of error is due to simplification – that is assigning men who would

normally see themselves as both European and Maori, as either European or Maori. Comparisons of the distribution of parental ethnicities in the NZW:FEE and the 1996 census suggests simplification did in fact occur, but only in the direction of Maori (Appendix A1). Because of the under-reporting of Maori-European fathers, and the potential unreliability of the responses, they are excluded here from the analysis.[13]

Out of the possible kinds of intermarriage shown in Figure 1, this study includes four specific combinations: Maori mothers and European fathers; European mothers and Maori fathers; Maori-European mothers and European fathers; Maori-European mothers and Maori fathers. This latter type is typically not considered to be intermarriage because of the convention of defining biracial persons as minorities. However this study treats Maori-European mothers as a separate category, rather than as Maori who are "part European." There is a strong justification for this: when dual ethnic (Maori-European) women were asked to report a main ethnicity in the NZW:FEE, responses were fairly evenly split between the two groups. Where there is more than one child per intermarried couple, the youngest biological child is selected, giving a final unweighted sample size of 297.

The model used for the multivariate analysis is multinomial logistic regression that simultaneously controls for child, parental, and community characteristics. The interpretation of the results is based on the change in the natural log odds of the outcome

13 To ensure that excluding Maori-European fathers did not bias the results, the multivariate analysis shown in Tables 1-3 were re-run with Maori-European fathers included. The results were strikingly similar.

(in this case, the child's reported ethnic identity). For ease of interpretation, log odds have been transformed into odds ratios.

Outcome and explanatory variables

There are two dependent variables. The first is a dummy variable indicating whether the reported child's ethnicity is exactly the same as the mother's. It is coded 0=no, 1=yes. The second is the assigned ethnic identity of the child coded 1=Maori, 2=Maori and European, 3=European.[14] The latter is the base category since the substantive interest is in the factors promoting the assignment of a singular minority versus identity versus a mainstream one.

The explanatory variables capture different aspects of parental ethnicity. Maternal ethnicity is a polytomous variable coded 1=Maori, 2=Maori and European, 3=European (base). A second maternal variable captures the main ethnicity of mothers, coded 0=European, 1=Maori. This enables comparisons of dual ethnic mothers who are Maori oriented, with those who identify more strongly as European. This is important because mothers who acknowledge mixed heritage, but nevertheless identify more strongly as Maori, may be more committed to transmitting Maori ethnicity to their child.

[14] The European category mainly comprises New Zealand Europeans, but includes a small number of "Other Europeans" (one tenth of intermarried European mothers were "Other European"). New Zealand Europeans tend to be at least second generation New Zealanders, while "Other Europeans" are usually recent migrants who still identify with specific European nationalities (eg. Irish; Dutch; English).

Paternal ethnicity is a binary variable coded 0=European, 1=Maori. The specific effect of gendered inheritance is captured in a dummy variable that indicates which parent is Maori. For couples where the mother is Maori-European and the father is Maori, the father is defined as the Maori parent.

Control variables

Several variables capture the characteristics of the child. The first is a polytomous variable for birth cohort divided into three time periods: 1=1986-1995, 2=1976-1985, 3=1962-1975 (base). Controlling for age is necessary because the literature suggests that multiethnic persons develop a stronger orientation towards one group as they mature (Harris and Sim 2002; Phinney and Rotheram 1987). This may affect how others, including their parents, perceive them. Thus I expect a negative relationship between the child's age and being designated a Maori-European identity.

A dummy variable captures whether the parents were still together at the time of survey. This distinction is particularly germane in New Zealand, because Maori women are much more likely than their European counterparts to be raising a child without a spouse (Callister 2003b). If parents tend to favor their own group when identifying their child, one would expect this to be more pronounced when the parents have parted ways and the child is residing with the mother. A dummy variable indicates whether the child resided with the mother at the time of survey.

There are several controls for maternal attributes. The first is a dummy indicator of whether the mother has a formal educational qualification (0=no, 1=yes). A dummy variable is also included to denote whether the mother is in the paid labor force. The effect of maternal age is controlled for by an indicator of whether the mother is 40 years or older.

Older mothers may see race in singular terms, either as a function of ageing (Nagel 1994), or because they were raised when narrow ideas about race and racial identity prevailed (Harris and Sim 2002). Indicators of the father's socio-economic characteristics are not included because they were only available when the parental union was intact, and our focus here is on the identifying parent.

Finally, I include two measures of community characteristics. The first is the proportion of the population that is Maori in the territorial authority (TA) where the mother resides. A territorial authority approximates a county in the U.S. census, and is the conventional measure used in New Zealand to measure regional effects. This is a binary variable coded 0 for "less than 15% Maori" and 1 for "15% or more Maori." Because Maori constitute 15 percent of the total population, this variable captures their over-representation. I expect that raising a child in a community with increased exposure to other Maori will be positively related to the attribution of a singular Maori identity. The second community-level variable measures the relative group position of Maori and non-Maori. It is the difference in the median personal income of the Maori and Total (Maori and non-Maori) population in the TA where the mother resides, expressed in 1,000s.

RESULTS

Descriptive results

Descriptive statistics for child, parent, and community characteristics are shown in Table 1. Of the 297 Maori-European children included in the sample, 28 percent were assigned a singular Maori identity, and 21 percent a singular European identity. While the majority was identified as Maori and European, this is much less than if the identification

process faithfully reflected both parental backgrounds (in which case 100 percent would be identified as Maori-European).

Table 1 provides some preliminary evidence for assessing the involvement of European mothers in the transmission of Maori identity. Of the 89 European women who had a child with a Maori man, a much higher proportion assigned their child an singular Maori identity (36 percent) than a singular European one (13.5 percent; $\chi^2(4)=11.4$, $p<.05$). Far from expressing bias towards their own group, European mothers tended to favor Maori ethnicity.

[Table 1 about here]

Among Maori mothers, a quarter identified their child as exclusively Maori. Unexpectedly, this is less than the proportion of children identified as solely Maori by European mothers. Nevertheless, more Maori mothers assigned their child a singular Maori identity, than a singular European one. This supports the prediction of a stronger in-group bias among minorities, but challenges the gendered inheritance perspective that the transmission of minority ethnicity depends on the father. When compared to European mothers, a much higher proportion of Maori-European mothers assigned a singular European identity, while a slightly smaller proportion designated their child as Maori-European. This latter point is noteworthy because I expected more of these mothers to identify their child as mixed, given their readiness to identify as mixed themselves.

While Maori-European mothers, on the whole, are the least willing to assign an exclusive Maori identity to their child, the difference compared to Maori mothers is less than we would expect given the multigenerational argument. A clearer distinction can be seen if maternal ethnicity is reconfigured to reflect primary ethnic orientation. Among

mothers who identified solely or primarily as Maori, a third identified their child as exclusively Maori, compared to a quarter of women who identified solely or primarily as European ($p<.01$). The difference is even more striking when the focus is narrowed to dual ethnic mothers (figures in parentheses). Nearly half of the Maori-European mothers who considered Maori to be their main ethnicity identified their child as exclusively Maori, compared to a handful of mothers who identified more strongly as European. It should be noted here that their choices not only express cultural orientation, but also the broader parental ethnic profile. This is because the majority of "mainly European" mothers had children to European men, while the majority of "mainly Maori" mothers had children to Maori men (see Table 4). Although the absolute number considered here is small, it confirms we ought to take account of the specific parental profile when trying to explain the ethnic designations of minority-mainstream children. When paternal ethnicity is considered, 43 percent of children with Maori fathers were identified as solely Maori, compared to just 14 percent with European fathers ($p<.001$).

With regard to the control variables, there is little significant effect. It may be that accounting for different kinds of intermarriage dampens the effects of secondary factors that would be apparent in simpler models.[15] The exception is the status of the parental union – the identification of children was significantly associated with whether the parents were still together or not ($p<.05$). Of those women still living with their child's father,

[15] Using the following categorizations did not yield significant test statistics: distinguishing between working mothers in blue or white collar jobs; disaggregating secondary school and tertiary qualifications; employing the % of Maori TA as a continuous variable.

about equal numbers assigned a singular Maori or singular European ethnic identity to their child.

Multivariate results

While bivariate associations are useful for developing hypotheses about the relationships between variables, multivariate analysis pinpoints the effect of specific variables on the outcome, holding constant other possible influences. Two kinds of multivariate analysis are performed here. The first, shown in Table 2, attempts to measure the potential effects of in-group bias. The outcome variable in Model 1 is whether the child is identified the same as the mother. In the interest of parsimony, only controls of theoretical significance are included.[16]

[Table 2 about here]

If the effect of householder status in other parent-child studies is derived from the biases of the identifying parent, we would expect this to emerge in the NZW:FEE survey. Model 1 shows that, net of other factors, Maori mothers were 2.3 times more likely to label their child in a way that mirrored their own identity, than were European mothers ($p<.01$). Maori-European mothers were almost 7 times more likely to identify their child as mixed, than European women were to identify their child as solely European ($p<.001$). However, because these children are mixed by definition, it is impossible to determine whether dual

[16] I also ran models that included combinations of the control variables in Table 1. None yielded significant coefficients, or changed the sign and significance of the results shown in Tables 2 & 3.

ethnic mothers were imputing their own identity onto the child, or simply reporting both parental ethnicities.

An alternative way of approaching this problem is to consider to what extent mothers are prepared to assign only the father's ethnicity. Model 2 shows that, compared to European mothers, Maori women were 62 percent less likely to identify the child solely in terms of the father ($p<.01$). While Maori-European mothers were more likely than European mothers to assign the father's identity over their own, this is only at the $p<.10$ level of significance, and thus should be treated with caution. Overall, the results suggest that minority mothers may be more inclined to favor their own ethnic or racial group in identification decisions. This is a tentative explanation, however, because we do not know how fathers in these families would identify their child. In the absence of being able to test the counterfactual, or to access individual attitudes, little more can be said about in-group bias here.

In Table 3, we separately consider the effects of multigenerational intermarriage, and gendered inheritance on identification decisions. Whereas Table 2 focuses on the likelihood that the child's identity is reported the same as the mother's, Table 3 considers the likelihood that the child is identified as solely Maori, or as both Maori and European (vs. European). This highlights the central concern of this paper, which is identification of the factors that promote the transmission of a singular Maori ethnic identity. These models are not nested. Rather, they are intended to test the relative explanatory power of the aforementioned factors.

[Table 3 about here]

Model 1 shows that Maori mothers who intermarried were *no more likely* than European mothers to assign their child a singular Maori ethnic identity (vs. a singular European identity). Mothers who identified as both Maori and European were significantly *less likely* than European mothers to identify their child as solely Maori ($p<.05$), or as Maori-European ($p<.10$). Because European mothers label their children as solely Maori, even if they are not equipped to transmit to them the substance of Maori identity, they play a role in transmitting Maori ethnicity across generations. Dual ethnic mothers, on the other hand, might be seen as less reliable transmitters of Maori ethnicity, despite the fact that they identify as Maori on some level. However, their readiness to impute Maori ethnicity may be contingent on whether the father is Maori or European, a point to which I will return.

Model 2 expands on Model 1 by reframing maternal ethnicity in terms of *main ethnicity*. Mothers who identified as Maori, or as both European and Maori but more strongly as Maori, were 2.3 times more likely to assign their child a singular Maori identity than mothers who identified solely or mainly as European ($p <.05$). Although the model itself has relatively limited predictive power, when viewed alongside Model 1 the findings underline the importance of ethnic salience.

Finally, Model 3 tests for the partial effects of gendered inheritance – that is, whether the transmission of Maori ethnicity is predicted better by having a Maori father, than a Maori mother. The effect of gendered inheritance appears to be very strong, with children 9 times more likely to be identified as solely Maori (vs. solely European) if their father was the Maori parent. The effect of minority paternal ethnicity is more muted for

Maori-European designation ($p<.10$). Being under age 10 also decreased a child's odds of being assigned a singular Maori identity, but only at $p<.10$ level of significance.

Compared to the first two models, Model 3 fits the data better by both X^2 and BIC.[17] However, a caveat is required. Given that Model 1 showed no difference in the readiness of Maori and European mothers to label their children as exclusively Maori, the effect of gendered inheritance in Model 3 must be due to dual ethnic mothers. This is confirmed by looking at Table 4, which details the specific distributions of parent and child ethnicities in the NZW:FEE. It shows that the identification decisions of dual ethnic mothers vary greatly, depending on the father's ethnicity. Of the 37 Maori-European mothers who had a child with a Maori man, almost two thirds identified their child solely as Maori. By comparison, very few Maori-European women who had a child with a European man assigned a singular Maori identity to the child. Given the small sample size, it is useful to compare these findings with census data.

Indeed, Table 4 confirms the same broad patterns evident in the NZW:FEE were reflected in the census undertaken a year later. Specifically:

1) The likelihood of a child being designated as solely Maori was much greater if one parent identified exclusively as Maori;

2) Only a very small proportion of children with a Maori-European parent and a European parent were identified exclusively as Maori

3) The likelihood of being assigned Maori ethnicity depended, to a large extent, on the specific configuration of the parental ethnic profile.

[17] Both the X^2 and BIC statistics are measures of the relative goodness of fit. A more negative BIC provides evidence of a better fitting model (Raftery 1995).

4) Similar proportions of children from Maori and European unions were identified as solely Maori, irrespective of whether the mother or father was Maori.

[Table 4 about here]

Taken together, the results from the NZW:FEE and the census yield some interesting insights into the effects of multigenerational intermarriage. Contrary to the predictions in Figure 1, the ethnic designations of children with two mixed parents in the census were quite different from those with one minority and one mainstream parent. When both parents were Maori-European, a much smaller proportion of children were identified as solely Maori (7 percent) than in families where one parent was Maori and the other was European (29.4 + 33.8/2=31.6 percent). This suggests that the effect of having one parent with a highly salient Maori identity is far greater than having two parents who have some affiliation as Maori, but who also locate themselves in the mainstream. Moreover, when unions involved a European mother and a Maori-European father, very few children were identified as solely Maori. This suggests that the role of European mothers in the transmission of Maori identity is confined to those cases where the father also strongly identifies as Maori.

DISCUSSION

This study has identified several factors that can account for the uneven attribution of Maori ethnicity. One is multigenerational intermarriage or, more precisely, the acknowledgement of mixed heritage. Mothers who identify solely as Maori are more reliable transmitters of Maori identity than those who identify as both Maori and European. One possible reason for this is that they value Maori identity and desire the same for their

children. This is especially likely in the case of mothers who have mixed parentage but who identify only as Maori. For these women, Maori ethnicity is extremely salient because they consciously choose it as their only affiliation in spite of having "ethnic options."

It does not necessarily follow that mothers who acknowledge mixed heritage do not value Maori ethnicity. Indeed, the majority of mothers who identified as both Maori and European, but more strongly as Maori, assigned a singular Maori identity to their child. This was not unexpected, however, given that most of these women had children to Maori men. Similarly, most of the dual ethnic mothers who were European oriented had children to European men. Unfortunately this asymmetry and the small sample size preclude a more refined analysis of how primary ethnic affiliation affects the identification decisions of dual ethnic or biracial parents.

One of the notable findings of this study was the readiness of European mothers to designate their child as solely Maori. That European mothers desire their child to have a Maori identity, even if it means denying their own heritage, challenges the assumption that minority parents are the sole transmitters of minority identity. While we do not have access to the cognitive processes underlying these identification decisions, McDonald's (1976) study suggests that European and Maori women have different understandings about what being Maori means. More specifically, Maori mothers who identify their child as both Maori and European may still see the child as culturally Maori, and socialize him/her to have a strong sense of Maori identity. European mothers may be more likely to take account of the child's physical appearance when assigning an identity. If that is correct,

then they may be more inclined to identify the child as solely Maori if he or she displays stereotypically Maori features.[18]

I have argued that assigning ethnic or racial identity in contexts such as the census is an expression of a deeper process of intergenerational transmission. Most European mothers are unlikely to possess the cultural expertize to transmit the content of Maori ethnicity to their child. Nevertheless, in so far as they are willing to identify their child as solely Maori, European mothers help to provide the conditions conducive to the fostering of Maori identity. This insight offers an additional explanation for how minority identity persists across generations when high levels of intermarriage have occurred: because of promotion by both minority and mainstream parents.

A clear conclusion of this study is that racial and ethnic identity is not "passed" across generations in a predictable, linear fashion. In many instances, children of intermarriages are not identified in terms of both parents. Nevertheless, general patterns are evident. The most important point is that the likelihood of being assigned a singular Maori ethnic identity diminishes as the Maori ethnicity of the parental union decreases. Couples involving a European and a Maori-European parent – which constitutes the majority of intermarriages - are very unlikely to identify their child as solely Maori. Given the recursive nature of intermarriage (Labov and Jacobs 1998), this pattern has long-term implications for the transmission of Maori ethnicity. As long as intermarriage between

[18] Features associated with being Maori are those attributed to other Polynesian peoples: brown skin, dark curly hair, a flat nose, and full lips. While a good number of Maori fit this stereotype, a long history of intermarriage means that there are also many Maori who "look" European (eg. fair skin and/or green/blue eyes).

Maori and Europeans continues, the proportion of children being designated as solely Maori will decline. However, it is important to note that the majority of children nevertheless continue to be assigned Maori ethnicity, even if it is only one of several affiliations.

The patterns uncovered in this study have implications for other minorities that have experienced, or are about to experience, high rates of intermarriage. Contrary to the predictions of assimilation theories, marriage across racial and ethnic boundaries does not inevitably lead to the absorption of minorities into the dominant group. This is because intermarriage not only facilitates integration into the mainstream, but also aids the diffusion and retention of minority identity.

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Figure 1: The hypothetical relationship between specific types of intermarriage and the transmission of a singular minority identity

Model of intermarriage	Combined parental ethnic profile		Salience of minority ethnicity in parental profile	Likelihood that child designated as solely minority
	Parent 1	Parent 2		
Simple	Minority	Mainstream	Variable	Medium
Refined	Minority	Mainstream		
	Mixed	Mainstream	Weak	Low
Complex	Minority	Mainstream		
	Mixed	Mainstream		
	Mixed	Minority	Strong	High
	Mixed	Mixed	Variable	Medium

Note: Shaded areas are types of marriages included in this study
Mixed = minority and mainstream

Table 1. Percentages and Means of Explanatory and Control Variables by Assigned Ethnicity of Maori-European children, 1995.

	Child's assigned ethnicity			
	Maori	European	Maori European	N
Total	28.1	20.8	51.1	297
Explanatory Variables				
Mother ethnicity *				
Maori	25.5	18.1	56.4	82
European	36.0	13.5	50.5	89
Maori & European	22.0	30.0	48.0	126
Father ethnicity ***				
Maori	42.6	10.4	46.9	126
European	14.2	30.8	55.0	171
Mother's main ethnicity [a] **				
Maori	32.5	14.5	53.0	123
	(48.8)	(-)[†]	(43.9)	(41)
European	25.8	25.8	48.4	146
	(-)[†]	(50.9)	(45.6)	(57)
Control Variables				
Child Characteristics				
Cohort				
1962 – 1975	34.1	22.0	43.9	52
1976 – 1985	37.5	17.9	44.6	72
1986 – 1995	22.5	21.7	55.8	173
Resides with mother	27.4	19.8	52.8	249
Parents are still together *	22.9	22.9	54.2	182
Mother Characteristics				
Has a formal qualification	29.1	21.6	49.3	183
In paid labor force	28.6	19.4	52.0	159
40 years or older	30.2	19.8	50.0	109
Community Characteristics				
At least 15% Maori in TA where mother lives	28.6	19.8	51.6	157
Difference in Maori & Total income in TA where mother lives (in 1000's)	4.7 (0.07)	4.3 (0.07)	4.4 (0.08)	297

Source: New Zealand Women: Family, Employment, and Education, 1995.

Notes: a. Excludes women who did not report a main ethnicity, N=28. Figures in parentheses are for Maori-European mothers only. [†] N too small.

N are unweighted; % based on weighted N

Numbers in parentheses are standard errors using unweighted data.

Income is median personal income.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 2: Model testing gendered inheritance: (1) child is identified same as mother; (2) child is identified same as father

Explanatory Variables	**Model 1**		**Model 2**	
Maternal ethnicity	Odds ratio	Robust SE	Odds ratio	Robust SE
Maori	2.25 *	(.94)	.38 **	(.14)
Maori - European	6.69 ***	(2.69)	1.77 +	(.53)
Child cohort				
1976 – 1985	.71	(.33)	1.27	(.65)
1986 – 1995	.81	(.36)	.82	(.40)
Resides with mother	.74	(.33)	1.29	(.63)
Parents are still together	.66	(.20)	.93	(.26)
Intercept	-.68		-.72	
Model X^2, df	28.04***	6	20.04**	6
BIC (compared to control only model)	-24.99	2	-7.97	2

Notes: + p<.10 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001(two-tailed)
Weighted N=235
Base categories are: European; 1962-1975

Table 3: Parsimonious regression of factors affecting identification of child as Maori or Maori-European (vs. European).

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3			
Explanatory Variables	Maori		Maori-Euro.		Maori		Maori-Euro.		Maori		Maori-Euro.	
Maternal ethnicity												
Maori	.53	(.26)	.84	(.38)	-		-		-		-	
Maori - European	.33*	(.15)	.44*	(.18)	-		-		-		-	
Mother's main ethnicity			-									
Maori	-		-		2.29*	(.88)	1.87+	(.64)	-		-	
Father is Maori	-		-		-		-		8.9***	(3.73)	2.4*	(.92)
Child cohort												
1976 -1985	.89	(.54)	.84	(.45)	1.04	(.69)	.96	(.54)	.82	(.50)	.82	(.44)
1986 -1995	.46	(.27)	.86	(.44)	.42	(.26)	.76	(.39)	.35+	(.20)	.74	(.38)
Resides with mother	.55	(.31)	.55	(.27)	.43	(.26)	.51	(.26)	.52	(.29)	.52	(.25)
Parents are still together	.57	(.22)	.98	(.35)	.48+	(.19)	.82	(.30)	.59	(.23)	.91	(.31)
Intercept	2.97*	(1.29)	2.18+	(1.19)	2.62+	(1.37)	1.95	(1.19)	1.48	(1.30)	1.75	(1.12)
Model X^2, df	21.66*	12			15.78	10			48.96***	10		
BIC (compared to control only model)	13.25	4			6.02	2			-25.91	2		

Notes: + p<.10 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001(two-tailed)
Models 1 & 3 weighted N=235; Model 2 weighted N=215, excludes mothers who did not report a main ethnic group.
Figures in parentheses are Robust Standard Errors.
Omitted categories are: European; 1962-1975.

Table 4**:** Assigned child ethnicity by maternal and paternal ethnicity, 1996 census and NZW:FEE, 1995.

1996 census

		Child			
Father	**Mother**	Maori	European	Maori & Euro.	N
Maori	Maori	-	-	-	-
	European	29.4	16.4	54.2	7,389
	Maori & Euro.	32.3	1.7	66.0	3.078
European	Maori	33.8	12.5	53.7	6,144
	European	-	-	-	-
	Maori & Euro.	2.8	19.7	77.5	10,698
Maori & Euro.	Maori	52.4	1.7	45.9	2,157
	European	3.2	30.8	66.0	10,389
	Maori & Euro.	6.9	3.2	89.9	4,251

1995 NZW:FEE

		Child			
Father	**Mother**	Maori	European	Maori & Euro.	N
Maori	Maori	-	-	-	-
	European	36.0	13.4	50.6	89
	Maori & Euro.	65.4	-	34.6	37
European	Maori	25.2	18.4	56.4	82
	European	-	-	-	-
	Maori & Euro.	4.7	41.5	53.8	89

Source: NZ Census, 1996, custom table. Mothers aged 20-59 years.
Notes: Census N= 44,106; NZW:FEE N=297 (unweighted)
NZW:FEE % based on weighted N.

APPENDIX

Table A1: Percent of mothers and fathers identified as Maori; Maori-European; and European in the NZW:FEE and 1996 census.

Ethnic Group	Maori only	Maori & European	European	Total [N]
NZW:FEE				
Mothers	5.7	5.0	89.3	2,156
Fathers	10.7	**2.3**	87.0	2,121
1996 census				
Mothers	7.3	6.1	86.6	347,949
Fathers	7.8	**5.4**	86.8	342,210

Note: Census data pertains to women aged 20-59 years who were part of a two-parent family with at least one residing child. The number of mothers and fathers differ because the data includes intermarriages where one parent is non-Maori, non-European (eg. Samoan).
NZW:FEE weighted N.

A2: Ethnicity questions used in the NZW:FEE and 1996 census

(1) NZW:FEE

Mother:
Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?

A list of 10 possible ethnic groups including "Other" was read out, and a showcard listing the options was also presented. Specific details were sought for an "Other" response. If more than one ethnic group was reported, the following question was asked:

Please tell me which one of these is the main ethnic group you identify with

On child:
Which ethnic group does the child belong to?

On child's father:
What is the ethnic group of the father

(2) 1996 census

Tick as many circles as you need to show which ethnic group(s) you belong to.