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What is This?
Cape Verdian identity in a land of Black and White

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Abstract
Cape Verde is an island group off the African coast with a history of slavery. Its residents having both European and African ancestors, they consider themselves a mixed-race people. Residents of the United States, however, observe the one-drop rule: anyone with a perceptible trace of African blood is defined as Black. This difference motivates us to ask: how do Cape Verdelian Americans answer questions about their racial identity? Strict assimilationists predict that, as they adapt to their new home, Cape Verdeans will identify less as mixed-race than as White or Black. Others suggest that the quality of race relations at the time immigrants arrive affects their identity. We test these ideas using data from the 2000 US Census and the American Community Survey. Our multivariate analysis shows that some, but not all, forms of assimilation increase the odds of identifying as Black. The odds of identifying as White, on the other hand, have little to do with assimilation. The timing of arrival also has a significant effect on racial identity, with Black gaining popularity among recent immigrants.

Keywords
assimilation, Black immigrants, Cape Verdelian Americans, identity, one-drop rule

Introduction
America’s diversity motivates many to ponder the future of its racial boundaries. Some claim that light-skinned Asians and Hispanics are becoming ‘honorary Whites’; others believe that America is moving toward a racial hierarchy with a large middle rung (Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Yancey, 2003). At the same time, all but a few experts predict that Blacks will remain America’s most stigmatized minority (Gans, 1999; Lee and Bean, 2004; Steinberg, 2007). Similarly, the...
nation is likely to continue observing the ‘one-drop rule’ according to which a few phenotypically African traits are sufficient to label a person ‘Black’.

As a result of this practice, a goodly number of immigrants with some visible African heritage who are not considered Black in their homelands find themselves considered Black in America. In an effort to avoid the disadvantages associated with blackness, some of these individuals emphasize other aspects of their heritage. Best known for this response are Dominicans, a group with both White and African forebears. When asked their race, most say ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’, some say ‘Dominican’; a small minority choose ‘Black’ or ‘White’ (Itzigsohn, 2009; Kasinitz et al., 2008). While Americans consider ‘Dominican’ an ethnicity or national origin, they increasingly view ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’ as a racial category (Golash-Boza and Darity, 2008; Lee and Bean, 2004; Perez and Hirschman, 2009). Thus, the discourse on race offers dark-skinned Spanish-speakers such as Dominicans a normative alternative to ‘Black’ or ‘White’.

Cape Verdeans are another group with White and African forebears, but their colonial heritage is Portuguese. In their homeland, race is continuous rather than categorical, with the European end of the continuum – light skin, straight hair and thin lips – associated with higher social standing than the African. Most Cape Verdeans describe themselves as Mestiço (or mixed) (Meintel, 1984; Sanchez, 1997). Yet, when they move to the USA, most Cape Verdeans are characterized as Black. Their response to this disjuncture is intriguing both because of the difference in racial categories at origin and destination and because, as Portuguese colonials, the Hispanic option is not open to them. In this article, we examine how Cape Verdeans cope with this dilemma.

Our insights come from an analysis of Cape Verdean responses to the question on race posed by the US Census Bureau. The US Census is the only data source that contains enough cases to support generalizations about a small group such as Cape Verdeans. Moreover, as Frank et al. point out, responses to the census race question reveal the ways that immigrants ‘are either accepting, challenging, or expanding federally validated racial boundaries. . . .’ (2010: 385) To be sure, there are shortcomings associated with using the census, shortcomings that we discuss below. Yet, cautiously interpreted, considerable insight into Cape Verdeans’ response to the one-drop rule can be gleaned from a census-based approach.

The remainder of this article is organized in the following way. First, we offer some historical background about Cape Verde and Cape Verdean immigration to America. Second, we discuss those theories about racial and ethnic identity that are likely to illuminate the Cape Verdean response. Third, we summarize previous research on how immigrants with some African heritage have reacted to American racial categories. Fourth, we discuss our empirical approach. This section has three parts: a description of the census questions that underlie our analysis; a discussion of our sample, method and variables; and a list of our hypotheses. Our empirical results appear fifth, followed by a sixth and final
section in which we discuss the implications of our findings for both theory and research.

The Cape Verdean context

Cape Verde is an archipelago off the west coast of Africa. Colonized by Portugal in the 15th century, it was a place where slaves labored and was a seasoning station for Blacks on their way to the New World. In response to racial mixing, three main classifications emerged: Branco (White), Mestiço (Mulatto) and Preto (Black). In addition, there is a large vocabulary for distinguishing types of hair, nose, lips, and especially skin. Because of geographic differences in initial economic pursuits, physical (phenotypical) traits are not randomly distributed; for instance, residents of the island of Brava are more likely to be light skinned than residents of the island of Fogo. Social class is also related to phenotype: the better-off are more likely to be light skinned than the poor. The nation’s few dark-skinned professionals and civil servants are considered evidence that Cape Verde is not a racist society (Batalha, 2004; Lobban, 1995; Meintel, 1984; Sanchez 1997).

In some ways, race functions in Cape Verde as in Brazil (Sansone, 2003; Telles, 2004). However, Cape Verde is less ethnically diverse than Brazil; it has no indigenous peoples and attracted proportionately fewer Europeans. Since the environment in Cape Verde is inhospitable to agriculture, a significant and wealthy landlord class never emerged. Another difference is that Brazil achieved independence in 1822, while Cape Verde remained a Portuguese colony until 1975. Thus, the ‘mother country’ had more time to influence racial perceptions in Cape Verde.

From 1930 to 1961, the Portuguese government introduced regulations that extended to Cape Verdeans many advantages over the natives of Portuguese-controlled Africa. These policies implied that, because of their mixed biological and cultural heritage, Cape Verdeans were morally superior to Black Africans. Still, when Portugal’s African colonies began to agitate for self-determination, Cape Verde responded enthusiastically, becoming independent in 1975 and a democracy in 1991. Though its official language is Portuguese, most residents use Cape Verdean Creole (Kriolu) in everyday conversation. Today there is support for adding Kriolu as an official language. Moreover, blackness enjoys a more positive connotation.

Despite these political and cultural changes, the Cape Verdean economy is weak, and the nation has one of the highest emigration rates in the world. Its economy relies heavily on remittances (Carling and Akesson, 2009). In 2009, its GDP ranked 160th in the world, with an annual per capita figure of $3600 (purchasing power parity (PPP)). Racially, the Cape Verdean census describes the population as 71 percent Creole (Mulatto), 28 percent African and 1 percent European (US Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).

Cape Verdeans first visited the USA in the early 19th century as seamen on New England whaling ships that replenished provisions and crews off the coast of Brava.
Those who stayed settled in southeastern Massachusetts, where, later on, opportunities for cheap labor opened up in fishing, cranberry picking and textile manufacture. In the late 1890s, packet service – a combination of freight and passenger transport – was introduced between New Bedford, Providence and Cape Verde. By the time the Johnson–Reed Act (1924) passed, halting immigration from all but northern Europe, about 20,000 Cape Verdeans had moved to the USA (Halter, 1993). About a third came from Brava, but other islands, especially Fogo, were also represented. Few Whites left at this early stage, their financial condition being relatively good (Batalha, 2004; Carreira, 1982[1977]). Yet the over-representation of emigrants from Brava, whose inhabitants ‘are characteristically the most Portuguese influenced and of lightest hue’ (Halter, 1993: 43) is noteworthy. Though US immigration restrictions eased with the passage of the Hart–Celler Act in 1965, Cape Verdean visa applicants were classified with Portuguese applicants until 1975, when they became eligible for their own quota. Since then, on average, just under a thousand become legal residents annually (US Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1984, 1999). In 2000, the US census counted about 25,000 Cape Verdean-born persons; in addition, some 20,000 native-born Americans reported Cape Verdean ancestry. Of this combined total, 53 per cent live in the state of Massachusetts, another 24 per cent in Rhode Island.

Ethnic and racial identity

The modern concept of ‘race’ emerged in defense of European imperialism. Defining races on the basis of biological traits, experts declared that one race, variously defined as White, Aryan, Caucasian, etc., was superior to all the others. In the New World, these distinctions were used to justify the extermination of Native Americans and the enslavement of Black Africans. In the American South, miscegenation was common, so laws were passed to categorize the offspring of mixed-race unions. In many southern states, one Black great-grandparent was sufficient to define a person as Black. Later, when masses of people arrived in America from Europe, the term was used to describe people who today would be considered White, such as the Italian race and the Hebrew race.

As these examples illustrate, the traits used to define races vary from place to place and time to time, making race a social construction. To be sure, it is a construction that rests partly on physical traits, but because the relevant traits vary across social contexts, the traits themselves are not as significant as the reasons that motivate their selection (Omi and Winant, 1994).

Ethnicity is also a social construction. Ethnic groups consist of individuals who share a common cultural heritage. Sometimes that heritage is loosely based on historical events; sometimes it is more fiction than fact. Some ethnic boundaries coincide with nation states, but religious or linguistic similarities also circumscribe ethnic groups. Most writers distinguish ethnic groups from racial groups, using the latter term to refer to groups that are defined on the basis of physical rather than
cultural characteristics (Blank et al., 2004; Song, 2003). Others, including the present authors, consider race a form of ethnicity, albeit one that rests partly on phenotypical distinctions (Alba and Nee, 2003; Lopez and Espiritu, 1990).

Immigration, like conquest, is one of the conditions conducive to the development of ethnic and racial groups. The interaction between immigrants and natives heightens awareness of group differences, which creates a boundary between them. On the immigrant side, as newcomers become aware of their distinctiveness they develop a new identity. To be sure, most immigrants arrive with several identities (nation-state, region, religion, etc.). And they may settle in areas where they encounter others with similar pre-migration identities. But, even if their post-migration identity builds upon some aspect of their pre-migration identity, the two cannot be the same. At destination, immigrants are vulnerable to the way they are classified by the individuals and institutions in the host society, a constraint they never experienced at home. Racial and ethnic classifications endorsed by the host society are the most enduring, although there are examples of immigrants successfully contesting the classification accorded them by a dominant group.2

Far more common is a shift to larger, more heterogeneous groupings. Upon arrival, immigrants frequently adopt narrow identities, associating themselves with a region or language. When the resulting groups are too small to support institutions or to wield influence, these narrow identities give way to larger collectivities. In this way Neapolitans became Italians, Litvaks became Jews and Barbadians became West Indians. Larger still are the collectivities that scholars call pan-ethnic groups. These consist of ethnic or racial groups with characteristics and interests in common. Examples include Native Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics (Lopez and Espiritu, 1990). Although the term ‘African American’ usually refers to the descendants of North American slaves, a few writers consider African Americans a pan-ethnic group; that is, they use the term to refer to anyone residing in the USA who has some African ancestry (e.g. Massey et al., 2007). Similarly, US census questionnaires do not differentiate between the response ‘Black’ and the response ‘African American’, a point to which we return in our conclusion. Several factors encourage a pan-ethnic interpretation of African American, including the reluctance of Whites to acknowledge ethnic differences among Blacks, the discrimination all Blacks encounter because of their phenotype and pressure from the descendants of US slaves for Black immigrants to de-emphasize their distinctiveness (Waters, 1991, 1999).3

As the shift from smaller to larger group affiliations indicates, ethnic and racial identities change over time.4 This was also the conclusion of the first sociologists to study the foreign-born in America, the members of the famed Chicago School. Their analysis of European immigrants led them to predict that, in the long run, immigrants and their descendants would exchange many of their old world attitudes and behaviors for the attitudes and behaviors of their host societies. That is, they would ‘assimilate’. Scholars based this prediction on the expectation that, over time, contact between immigrants and natives would increase – in neighborhoods,
workplaces and voluntary organizations – motivating immigrants to abandon their old ways. Though some Chicago scholars expected assimilation to proceed selectively, their followers interpreted their words to mean that assimilation was irreversible and inevitable (Kivisto, 2005). This hard-line view has since been termed ‘straight-line assimilation’ (Gans, 1992).

The relevance of this literature to the present undertaking is that today most sociologists consider identity to be one form of assimilation. For instance, Milton Gordon (1964) distinguished seven forms of assimilation, of which identity was one. In a recent, influential formulation, Alba and Nee assert that assimilation or ‘the attenuation of distinctions based on ethnic origin’ (2003: 38) is ‘the master trend’ (2003: 101), though it rarely proceeds in a straight line. Furthermore, Alba and Nee maintain that even highly assimilated Whites and Asians ‘think of themselves at times in terms of ethnic labels and have some preference for one origin over others when their origin is mixed; they attribute some importance to their ethnic origin; and they have specific conceptions about the characteristics associated with these origins’ (2003: 96). Yet, for Alba and Nee, the identity of later-generation Whites and Asians is a malleable, situational identity rather than a key component of their self-concept. In this expectation, they parallel Gans who hypothesized that highly assimilated Whites may ‘name themselves as members of an ethnic group’ (1992: 175), but that this attachment is more symbolic than real. In her research on later-generation White ethnics, Waters confirmed this expectation. She found that White ethnics could articulate an ethnic identity, but this identity said more about the festivals they celebrate or the food they eat, than about the politicians they support or the persons they marry (Gans, 1979; Waters, 1990).

While concurring that ethnic identity is one of the last ethnic characteristics to recede, some theorists still talk meaningfully about its disappearance (Hollinger, 1995; Morawska, 1994). In the final, assimilated stage of his model, Barkan writes: ‘Although persons may retain a knowledge of their ancestry, they no longer see themselves as ethnic group members’ (1995: 58). An analysis of Americans’ responses to questions about race and ethnicity in the 2000 census shows an increase in such individuals. Perez and Hirschman find that later-generation Whites and Blacks are currently undergoing the ‘Americanization’ of identity, by which they mean ‘the replacement of detailed ethnic origins with simplified panethnic or racial categories which are shaped and often reinforced by political and socioeconomic divisions’ (2009: 4). A survey undertaken in 2003 asked respondents their race and then inquired as to whether or not they also closely identified with an ethnic group. Only 14 percent of Whites responded in the affirmative (Torkelson and Hartmann, 2010). Thus, empirical research suggests that ethnic identity is on the wane in some quarters.

The above-cited literature has conflicting implications for our analysis of the racial identity of Cape Verdeans, a non-Hispanic group. The dominant expectation among scholars is that ethnic and racial identities persist in the face of assimilation, even though their salience may decline. In the Cape Verdian case, these scholars
would predict that the Islanders will contest Americans’ attempts to classify them as Black, irrespective of how Americanized they become. On the other hand, a minority of scholars expect ethnic identities to disappear in the face of assimilation or to devolve into panethnic/racial identities. They would predict that the most Americanized Cape Verdeans identify as Black, with the very light-skinned identifying as White.

**Previous research**

To begin, it is worth noting that English, French and Dutch ex-colonials from the Caribbean are generally comfortable with a Black racial identity. To be sure, they usually also have an ethnic identity that distinguishes them from African Americans, such as Haitian or West Indian. But they do not contest their blackness. An historical reason for this acceptance is that inter-racial mating was less common in the British Caribbean than elsewhere in the region. But there are also cultural reasons. Because the proportion of Europeans was greater in Spanish and Portuguese colonies than elsewhere, they transferred some aspects of Iberian culture to their slave populations. Conversely, in the British, French and Dutch Caribbean, Whites were few and African culture had more opportunity to survive. This is not to say that African culture was preserved in the British, French and Dutch Caribbean and destroyed in Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean, but that the destruction in the latter areas was less complete (Denton and Massey, 1989; Hoetink, 1973; Sutton, 1987).

Part of the legacy of Hispanicity among Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Latin American countries has been the acknowledgement of a racial category, or set of categories, between Black and White. In their homelands, most Hispanics with some African heritage belong to this intermediate category. Yet, since a Hispanicity question was added in 1980, the proportion of Hispanics who identify as Black in the US Census has remained a mere 2–3 percent. Only a few studies have examined the correlates of a Black Hispanic identity. Having analyzed several data sets, Golash-Boza and Darity conclude that Black Hispanics are likely to have ‘darker skin, experiences of discrimination, lower incomes and limited Spanish ability’ (2008: 929). Census-based research by Denton and Massey (1989), Logan (2003) and Denton and Villarrubia (2008) demonstrates that Black Hispanics live in neighborhoods or cities with larger proportions of African Americans than Hispanics who identify with other races. Evidence in favor of identificational assimilation comes from the finding that native-born Hispanics are slightly more likely to identify as Black than are foreign-born (Saenz, 2005).

The Hispanic group with some African heritage that has received the most research attention is Dominicans. In their homeland, Dominicans often describe themselves as ‘indio’, which means Indian but is better translated as Mulatto (Howard, 2001). The proportion identifying on the US Census as Black dropped from 27.3 percent in 1990 to 8.8 percent in 2000, while the category with the greatest increase was ‘Some Other Race’ (Saenz, 2005). We suspect that the
‘other race’ in the minds of most Dominicans is ‘Hispanic’ and that the decennial increase in this response mirrors the growing acceptance of ‘Hispanic’ as a racial category. Consonant with this interpretation, on open-ended questions, Dominicans’ most popular response is ‘Hispanic’ (Itzigsohn, 2009; Kasinitz et al., 2008). With respect to the characteristics of the few who identify as Black, the most consistent finding is that they are slightly more likely to be native than foreign-born (Itzigsohn, 2009; Liberato and Feagin, 2007; Saenz, 2005). Among immigrants, length of residence does not impart a consistent effect (Liberato and Feagin, 2007; Roth, forthcoming). In Roth’s sample of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, those who attended college report a heightened awareness of their racial identity but Feliciano’s analysis of a survey of the children of Latino and Caribbean immigrants comes to the opposite conclusion. Finally, Candelario (2007) notes a greater propensity for Dominicans in Washington, DC than their counterparts in New York to identify as Black. She attributes the difference to the small number of Dominicans in Washington DC and their geographic and social proximity to African Americans.

Brazilians are a growing presence in the USA but remain understudied. According to the authors’ calculations, in the 2000 US Census, 66.8 percent identified as White, 19.5 percent as Some Other Race, 2.1 percent as Black and 0.3 percent as White and Black. One aspect of Brazilian identity that scholars agree on is that few identify as Hispanic. Brazilians eschew this label not only because they speak Portuguese but because they associate Spanish speakers with poverty, drugs and crime (Beserra, 2003; Margolis, 2009; Marrow, 2003; Siqueira and De Lourenço, 2006). Brazilians distance themselves from Hispanics in the same way that Dominicans distance themselves from African Americans. A common racial response among Brazilian immigrants is their national origin. Seventeen-year-old José explains: ‘I am not Spanish, not Hispanic, not Cuban or anything like that. I am Brazilian’ (Marrow, 2003: 440).

A few scholars have explored the self-classifications of Cape Verdean Americans. Rather than ‘identities’, Greenfield calls these classifications ‘strategies of ethnic identity projection’ because they are ‘strategies being projected by members or segments of a community seeking to have itself defined in a way that the individuals see as being most favorable to them’ (1976: 10). He distinguishes four such strategies. The first and oldest is the ‘Capeverdean-Portuguese strategy’. This response reflects the reality that, until 1975, Cape Verdeans carried Portuguese passports. Moreover, because they lived and worked primarily among their co-ethnics, earlier-arrived Cape Verdeans were relatively insulated from Americans’ view of them as Black. However, already in the 1960s, this strategy lost some adherents because the Civil Rights Movement and its aftermath enhanced the psychological and economic benefits of identifying as ‘Capeverdean-Black’. A third approach reflected the wars for independence in Africa, particularly the alliance between Cape Verde and Guinea against Portugal. Persons pursuing the ‘Capeverdean-African’ strategy expected that close ties to a free and developing Africa were in the interests of Cape Verde and Cape Verdeans. Greenfield’s fourth and final strategy is ‘Capeverdean-American’. This position evolved in the
mid-1970s in response to the many ethnic and pan-ethnic movements that emerged in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement. Here the goal is to discourage Cape Verdeans from merging into the African American community by emphasizing the distinctiveness of a Cape Verdan cultural heritage.

Yet, Sanchez (1997) feels that, by the 1990s, Cape Verdeans did not adopt a Cape Verdan identity in order to distance themselves from African Americans. Especially among students, she finds that ‘identification as Cape Verdeans is not a denial but an affirmation of their African ancestry’ (1997: 64). In addition, her research raises the possibility that the nature of the discourse on race and ethnicity at the time an immigrant arrives may continue to affect the way he or she identifies for many years. Cape Verdeans who began their lives in America identifying as Portuguese may still do so; those who arrived when Black was a proud label may still invoke it, and so on.

To sum up, persons with some African heritage who originate in societies that do not observe the one-drop rule display a preference for a pan-ethnic identity or an ethnic identity (e.g. Hispanic, Latino, Brazilian, etc.) Quantitative studies show that the few who identify as Black are likely to have dark skin, to have been born in the US and to reside in a Black neighborhood. Other traits that might be associated with identity – age, English ability, education, citizenship, years in the USA – show no consistent pattern. Additionally, qualitative research suggests that the social standing of ethnic and racial groups when immigrants arrive at destination may have long-term effects on their identity. Taken together, these findings imply that identificational assimilation is not a late stage in an essentially linear process but a phenomenon associated with a bumpy process (Gans, 1992).

**Data and methods**

**The census questionnaire**

In an attempt to maximize sample size, we combine the 1 percent and 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 US Census with eight waves of the American Community Survey (ACS) (2000–2007) (Ruggles et al., 2008). The US Census Bureau developed the annual ACS as a substitute for the long form of the decennial census, which has been eliminated. The question wording in the ACS and the long form of the 2000 census is nearly the same (see below). These data sets inquire about three aspects of identity: Hispanicity, race and ancestry.

The first of these questions is ‘Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?’. Respondents may answer ‘No’, but, if they choose ‘Yes’, they must select an additional label. These include options such as ‘Yes, Puerto Rican’, ‘Yes, Cuban’ and also an open-ended choice: ‘Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino – Print group’. Perhaps some Cape Verdeans answered this question in the affirmative, particularly since they were given the option of selecting ‘Yes, other’ and writing in the response of their choice. Unfortunately, before releasing these data to the public, the US Census Bureau recoded all non-Spanish speakers as non-Hispanic (Marrow, 2003).
The next question asks: ‘What is this person’s race? Mark one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.’ There are several choices, some closed, such as ‘White’ and ‘Black, African Am or Negro’, ‘Japanese’; some open, like ‘Other Pacific Islander – Print race’ and ‘Some other race – Print race’. The major divergence from previous years is the option ‘or more’. The primary motive for this innovation was to allow the offspring of multi-racial unions, a growing population in America, the chance to acknowledge their multiple identities.

Somewhat later, the census questionnaire inquires: ‘What is this person’s ancestry or ethnic origin?’ The response is wholly open-ended but several examples are offered to show the respondent the form of the desired answer. Quite by chance, one of the prompts is Cape Verdean. Because this question comes after the race question, it is less likely to affect the race response; still, at least some Cape Verdians who initially answered ‘Some other race’ probably changed or amended that answer after encountering the ancestry question.

The 2000 US Census and the ACS do not use identically worded questionnaires. In the 2000 and 2001 ACS, the ‘Black, African Am, or Negro’ option appeared in row 6 rather than in row 2. In addition, the prompts offered for the ancestry question did not include ‘Cape Verdean’. In 2003, the ACS questionnaire reverted to a format quite similar to the census format. The most relevant difference on the race question was that, in 2003, the space for writing in ‘Some other race’ was also the write-in space for ‘Other Asian’ or ‘Other Pacific Islander’. ‘Cape Verdean’ was re-introduced as a prompt for ancestry. This situation still obtained in 2007.

Sample, method and variables

Limiting our sample to persons 18–64, we define as Cape Verdian anyone whose first or second response to the ancestry question was Cape Verdean. This approach yields 4510 individuals, 58 percent of whom were born in the USA. Among the foreign-born of Cape Verdean ancestry, 89 percent list their birthplace as Cape Verde; conversely, 3.6 percent of persons born in Cape Verde fail to choose ‘Cape Verdean’ as either a first or second ancestry.

In order to assure an adequate number of cases, we limit our analysis to the five most popular responses to the race question: White (Wh), Black (Bl), some other race (SOR), White plus some other race (WhiteSOR), and Black plus some other race (BlackSOR). Although the Census Bureau does not reveal the write-in responses that it codes as SOR, in the Cape Verdean case, we suspect that the most frequent write-in response is ‘Cape Verdean’. Other possibilities include ‘Portuguese’ or one of the terms for mixed-race that are popular in Cape Verde. Similarly, we suspect that the most common write-in response for WhiteSOR is White Cape Verdean and for BlackSOR, Black Cape Verdean.

Our data analysis involves first tabulating these five responses and the characteristics of the individuals choosing them, then using multivariate regression to distinguish net from gross covariates. In using regression to analyze five responses,
a very large number of contrasts are possible. In order simultaneously to limit the results to a manageable number and to address our theoretical concerns, we estimate a multinomial logistic regression with SOR as the contrast category. Our rationale for this approach is as follows. First, we choose SOR as our primary dependent variable because it is the response that represents the clearest dissent from American custom. Our central question is whether or not there are any characteristics that distinguish persons who choose SOR from those choosing more Americanized racial identities. In addressing this issue, we are conscious that persons who choose White may differ in some fashion from persons who choose Black. To avoid conflating these differences, we need to distinguish the contrast White versus SOR from the contrast Black versus SOR. Similarly, we would not want to combine persons choosing WhiteSOR with persons choosing White or combine persons choosing BlackSOR with persons choosing Black. The most efficient way to conserve the uniqueness of each identity is to estimate a model in which persons choosing SOR are compared to persons choosing White, Black, WhiteSOR and BlackSOR, respectively. This type of model is called a multinomial logistic regression.

As it turns out, the results of the multinomial regression suggest one additional contrast would yield valuable information: Black versus BlackSOR. The numbers associated with this contrast can be calculated directly from the results obtained from the multinomial regression.

We follow other students of racial identity in selecting covariates that have traditionally been associated with assimilation (Feliciano, 2009; Frank et al., 2010; Golash-Boza and Darity, 2008; Itzigsohn and Dore-Cabral, 2000). Census data provide age, education, US citizenship and nativity; for immigrants, years spent in the US is available. Because preliminary tabulations show that English ability is not linearly related to identity, we incorporate it as a series of dummy variables: speaks only English, speaks good English, speaks fair English and speaks poor (or no) English. As for geography, as most Cape Verdeans live in the Northeast, we created a dummy to represent this location.10 We also incorporate the percentage of African American neighbors. Regrettably, our data do not provide information at the level of neighborhoods. Thus, as an indicator of this variable, we calculated the proportion of African Americans in each metropolitan area and appended the appropriate percentage to the corresponding case.11 Conspicuously absent as a covariate is any measure of income. The reason is that we cannot assign a causal direction to the relationship between income and racial identity. Most likely, income affects identity and identity affects income. Because our data do not allow us to distinguish the two possibilities, we relegate this issue to a future article.

Following Greenfield (1976) we also include time (or cohort) of arrival. Methodologically, it is critical to distinguish the effect of time (or cohort) of arrival from the effect of years in the USA. Cohort effects are the result of a temporally specific experience common to a group of individuals. In the case of immigrants who enter a country at roughly the same time, they are subject to similar
immigration laws, similar economic conditions, similar political circumstances, and so on. These cohort effects are not the same as the effect of years in the USA, which we also include as a covariate and which reflects the passage of time. When all the data at hand are collected at a single point in time, the correlation between cohort of arrival and years in the USA is 1.0, making it impossible to separate the linear effects of these variables. However, when the data are collected over a period of years, as is the case here, the two effects can be distinguished. To capture the cohort effect, we construct a series of dummy variables. With some modifications to assure adequate case size, they correspond to the periods that Greenfield (1976), Sanchez (1997) and Halter (2009) associate with trends in Cape Verlean identity. The periods are as follows: before 1966, between 1966 and 1975, five-year intervals from 1976 through 1999, and a single category for those arriving post-1999. We divided the post-1975 era into several smaller periods in order to test the idea that immigrants entering an increasingly diverse America will be increasingly likely to identify as Cape Verlean or Cape Verlean-American (e.g. SOR). To capture the passage of time, we simply include a linear measure of years since arrival.

Finally, even though the US Census Bureau concludes that ‘In general, ACS estimates were found to be quite similar to those produced from decennial census data’ (US Census Bureau, 2008: A-8), our multivariate analyses include a dummy variable identifying each wave of the ACS. As it turned out, these dummies were never significant.

**Hypotheses**

We formulate three sets of hypotheses; the first two draw on straight-line assimilation theory, the third on the observations of Greenfield (1976). (1) Compared to the four alternatives, Cape Verdeans who identify as SOR will more often be foreign than native-born, their English will be poorer, they will be more likely to live in New England, to be young and to be poorly educated. The foreign-born identifying as SOR will have arrived relatively recently and will less often be citizens. By similar logic, persons choosing a combined identity (BlackSOR or WhiteSOR) will be more assimilated than those choosing SOR but less assimilated than those choosing White or Black. (2) Cape Verdeans who have a high proportion of Black neighbors will be more likely to choose Black or BlackSOR than SOR. (3) A disproportionate number of persons choosing White or WhiteSOR will have arrived before the implementation of the Hart–Celler Act in 1966, while those choosing Black or BlackSOR will tend to have arrived between 1966 and 1975. Those choosing SOR will be more likely to have arrived after 1975.

**Results**

The first two columns in Table 1 present the relative size of each response category; the remainder of the table shows how nativity and cohort of arrival are related to racial identity. The most popular Cape Verlean response is SOR (39.6%), followed
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>5.84%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td>5.21%</td>
<td>3.63%</td>
<td>3.28%</td>
<td>5.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White SOR</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.95%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOR</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black SOR</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.39%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>9.75%</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1419</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>9.12%</td>
<td>2.74%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
<td>3.93%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>4510</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rather closely by Black (31.4%). By comparison, the most popular Dominican response in 2000 was SOR (57.3%), with Black a distant third (9.2%). This suggests that Cape Verdeans’ inability to identify as Hispanic lowers their propensity to identify as SOR. Yet, if we exclude individuals identifying as SOR, Cape Verdeans are still more willing than Dominicans to identify as Black.12 Perhaps Cape Verdeans’ closer proximity to Africa is a factor. Another possibility is that variations in the skin color of the two groups contribute to variations in their racial responses. Census data do not support testing these possibilities.

The next largest Cape Verdean identity is White (10.1%). This is a very high figure considering that, in 1950 only 2.06 percent of Cape Verdeans identified this way (Lobban, 1995). Next in popularity is BlackSOR (9.2%), followed by WhiteSOR (3.1%). Within the residual category (6.43%), the largest response is ‘White and Black’ (1.88%). Since ‘White and Black’ is a biologically accurate description of most Cape Verdeans’ heritage, the small number identifying in this way reaffirms that race is a social construction. It would be interesting to know whether the outdated term ‘Mulatto’ would have generated more responses.

Looking at covariates, we expect the native-born to be more assimilated, hence to identify as White or Black more readily than the foreign-born. The numbers weakly uphold this expectation. For example, 13.1 percent of the native-born identify as White, compared to 5.84 percent of the foreign-born. Conversely, we expect the foreign-born to more readily select SOR or its variants. This generalization holds strongly for SOR (51.4 % of the foreign-born versus 31.1% of the native-born), but not for its combinations. In fact, nativity has almost no consequence in the choice of WhiteSOR or BlackSOR.

The middle portion of Table 1 shows the distribution of identity by cohort of arrival. The expectation that the earliest to arrive are prone to identify as White is supported. Those arriving before 1966 are more likely (21.9%) than members of any other cohort to make this choice. However, this effect lingers, with those arriving between 1966 and 1975 second most likely (9.38%) to do so. On the other hand, contrary to expectation, members of the 1966–75 cohort are not unusually likely to identify as Black (16.1%) or as BlackSOR (11.6%). Rather, this cohort strongly prefers the SOR response (58%). The SOR response, of course, was expected to pick up adherents beginning in 1975. Instead, the proportion of post-1975 arrivals identifying as SOR remains stable at about half, while the proportion of post-1975 arrivals identifying as Black increases. Indeed, the percentage of Cape Verdean immigrants identifying as Black is highest (41.2%) among those arriving after 1999.

Table 2 presents additional information about the association between covariates and racial identity. As will be seen shortly, some of these variables affect identity irrespective of nativity; others affect only native-born or foreign-born identity. Table 2 is organized to convey these distinctions. Beginning with the first variable, the tabulation suggests that age has little relation to identity, except that those choosing White are slightly older (38.8 years). Conversely, those choosing White or Black are slightly more educated (12.7 and 12.6 years,
respectively) than those choosing SOR (11.5 years). In addition, Cape Verdeans choosing SOR are most likely to live in the northeast (94.1%), a finding consonant with the expectation that living among compatriots retards assimilation. Likewise, a relatively high percentage of African Americans in Cape Verdeans’ metropolitan areas is associated with identifying as Black (9.25%), but this effect is less pronounced among those selecting BlackSOR (7.29%). The lowest African American percentage is found in the metropolitan areas of Cape Verdeans identifying as SOR (6.50%).

One of our English ability dummies, ‘Speaks only English’, significantly affects the identities of native-born (but not foreign-born) Cape Verdeans. Not surprisingly, the great majority of native-born Cape Verdeans speak only English. Yet those identifying as SOR are about 10 percent less likely to do so than those choosing other identities. This finding is consonant with the expectation that persons choosing SOR are less assimilated. Finally, two variables are meaningful only for the foreign-born. Years in the USA are greatest for those identifying as White (21.6 years) but, unexpectedly, those choosing SOR have lived in America longer (16.9) years than those choosing Black (15.6 years). The last indicator of assimilation is citizenship status. Unexpectedly, more persons selecting WhiteSOR (73.7%) are citizens than persons selecting White (65.8%), while the differences among those choosing SOR (49.3%), BlackSOR (44.0%) and Black (48.8%) are small. In short, on both years in the USA and citizenship status, foreign-born Cape Verdeans identifying as White are relatively assimilated, but the analogous relationship does not hold for identifying as Black.

To sum up the tabular results, the correlates of identifying as White and as Black are quite different. Persons choosing White meet many of the expectations of straight-line assimilation theory, but persons choosing Black do not. Furthermore, while Cape Verdeans choosing a White identity are earlier arrived, persons choosing Black are recently arrived. More consistent with expectations are the correlates of SOR; for instance, they are relatively less educated and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Native born</th>
<th>Foreign born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean education</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% North east</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% African Americans in metro area</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks only English</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in US</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Citizen</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of Cape Verdeans by racial identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>All Native born</th>
<th>Foreign born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhiteSOR</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOR</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlackSOR</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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concentrated in the northeast. Finally, it is worth noting that the demographic characteristics of persons choosing SOR and BlackSOR are very similar.

Because several covariates are correlated with each other, a multivariate analysis is necessary before drawing any conclusions. Table 3 contains the results of a multinomial logistic regression in which SOR (Columns 1–4) and BlackSOR (Column 5) are the respective omitted categories. The coefficients associated with each model appear under three headings: those that apply equally to both nativity groups, those that apply only to the native-born, and those that apply only to the foreign-born. We incorporate these distinctions because statistical tests (not shown) reveal that some variables interact with nativity; that is they affect the foreign-born and native-born differently. Another notable feature of the table is that the native-born serve as the omitted category for the dummy coefficients of cohort of arrival, rather than the customary practice of excluding one of the foreign-born cohorts. This feature facilitates interpretation of cohort trends but obscures the overall difference between the native-born and the foreign-born. As a result, we compute the average effect on the dependent variable of being native versus foreign-born. This figure appears in the last row of the table.

The first column of numbers in Table 3 contains the coefficients for the contrast between White and SOR. Looking first at the indicators of assimilation, observe that some of them increase the odds of identifying as White, while others do not. As anticipated, residents of the northeast are less likely to identify as White, while others do not. As anticipated, the percentage of African Americans in the metro area has no effect. The last entry in the column (1.1763*) shows that, on average, the native-born are significantly more likely than the foreign-born to identify as White. Thus, in terms of their region and their birthplace, those preferring White over SOR are more assimilated. Yet, some variables expected to impart a significantly positive relationship fail to do so: age, education, English ability, years in the USA and citizenship. These discontinuities indicate that assuming a White identity is associated with only a moderate degree of assimilation. In terms of cohort of arrival, we predicted that, relative to the later arrived, immigrants who arrived before 1966 would be more likely to identify as White than SOR. In broad terms, the coefficients indeed display this pattern and the linear trend across cohorts is significantly negative (results not shown).

The second column in Table 3 conveys the contrast between Black and SOR. Relative to the previous contrast, more indicators of assimilation are significant in this estimate. They include being native-born, living outside the northeast, completing more years of schooling, having spent more years in the US if foreign-born, and speaking English only if native-born. Two variables that do not attain significance are citizenship and age. However, residence in a metropolitan area with a large African American population is associated with higher odds of choosing Black. On the other hand, the intra-cohort differences do not operate as expected. Each cohort is slightly more likely to identify as Black than the cohort that preceded it, a linear trend that is statistically significant (results not shown). These findings say that arriving during the immediate post-Civil Rights Era does not...
Table 3. Regression coefficients of models predicting Cape Verdeans’ racial identitya,b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>White vs. SOR</th>
<th>Black vs. SOR</th>
<th>White vs. SOR vs. SOR</th>
<th>Black vs. SOR vs. SOR</th>
<th>Black vs. Black vs. BlackSORc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.0020 (0.0046)</td>
<td>0.0033 (0.0033)</td>
<td>-0.0157* (0.0076)</td>
<td>0.0043 (0.0049)</td>
<td>-0.0011 (0.0050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.0236 (0.0194)</td>
<td>0.0550*** (0.0125)</td>
<td>0.0038 (0.0316)</td>
<td>0.0142 (0.0176)</td>
<td>0.0410* (0.1888)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>-1.1239*** (0.1797)</td>
<td>-0.4313** (0.1495)</td>
<td>-1.6759*** (0.2561)</td>
<td>-0.2301 (0.2335)</td>
<td>-0.2010 (0.2234)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%AfAm in Metro</td>
<td>0.0267 (0.0147)</td>
<td>0.0800*** (0.0115)</td>
<td>-0.0237 (0.0259)</td>
<td>0.0412* (0.0165)</td>
<td>0.0388** (0.0148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Englishd</td>
<td>0.5297* (0.2668)</td>
<td>0.2987 (0.1602)</td>
<td>0.6490 (0.4368)</td>
<td>0.0314 (0.2367)</td>
<td>0.2699 (0.2523)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Englishd</td>
<td>0.0608 (0.2435)</td>
<td>0.1484 (0.1330)</td>
<td>0.5327 (0.3651)</td>
<td>0.3761* (0.1814)</td>
<td>-0.2265 (0.1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native born</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Englishd</td>
<td>0.6530*** (0.1705)</td>
<td>0.8675*** (0.1290)</td>
<td>0.5299* (0.2696)</td>
<td>0.5633** (0.1941)</td>
<td>0.3047 (0.2034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign born</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Englishd</td>
<td>0.4488 (0.3489)</td>
<td>0.2054 (0.2397)</td>
<td>-0.1796 (0.6792)</td>
<td>-0.3965 (0.4248)</td>
<td>0.6039 (0.4430)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in USA</td>
<td>0.0043 (0.0318)</td>
<td>0.0480* (0.0200)</td>
<td>-0.0447 (0.0533)</td>
<td>-0.0413 (0.0307)</td>
<td>0.0877** (0.0327)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>0.3648 (0.2501)</td>
<td>0.0164 (0.1286)</td>
<td>1.1347*** (0.4421)</td>
<td>-0.2906 (0.1790)</td>
<td>0.3071 (0.1947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived in USAe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1966</td>
<td>0.0118 (1.3724)</td>
<td>-2.3932*** (0.9283)</td>
<td>1.7166 (2.2291)</td>
<td>0.3579 (1.6104)</td>
<td>-2.6814 (1.7002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 1966 and 1975</td>
<td>-0.9352 (1.0249)</td>
<td>-2.2994*** (0.6657)</td>
<td>0.0637 (1.6949)</td>
<td>1.4945 (0.9631)</td>
<td>-3.7325*** (1.0415)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 1976 and 1981</td>
<td>-1.0527 (0.7756)</td>
<td>-1.2102* (0.4919)</td>
<td>-0.8706 (1.3208)</td>
<td>1.3322 (0.7223)</td>
<td>-2.5045*** (0.7752)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 1982 and 1987</td>
<td>-1.0912 (0.6040)</td>
<td>-0.6367 (0.3790)</td>
<td>-0.4803 (0.9872)</td>
<td>1.1167* (0.5504)</td>
<td>-1.7257** (0.5907)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 1988 and 1993</td>
<td>-1.4367*** (0.5068)</td>
<td>-0.4197 (0.3025)</td>
<td>-1.7663* (0.8992)</td>
<td>0.4889 (0.4401)</td>
<td>-0.8884 (0.4719)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 1994 and 1999</td>
<td>-1.5367*** (0.4220)</td>
<td>-0.0504 (0.2227)</td>
<td>-1.3138* (0.5776)</td>
<td>0.0733 (0.3347)</td>
<td>-0.0927 (0.3559)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after 1999</td>
<td>-0.9772 (0.5322)</td>
<td>0.2888 (0.2737)</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>-0.3500 (0.5736)</td>
<td>0.5824 (0.5858)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.9574* (0.4076)</td>
<td>-1.4746*** (0.2934)</td>
<td>-0.6318 (0.6356)</td>
<td>-1.8060*** (0.4335)</td>
<td>0.3254 (0.4437)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. NB – FB difference</td>
<td>1.1763* (0.5754)</td>
<td>0.8138* (0.3683)</td>
<td>0.9045 (0.9667)</td>
<td>-0.7928 (0.5379)</td>
<td>1.6066** (0.5779)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001
aAnalysis limited to persons 18–64. Coefficients for year of observation omitted. Standard errors in parenthesis.
bTechnique is multinomial logistic regression. SOR is the reference category. N = 4220. Likelihood ratio chi-square (91 d.f.) = 713.57, p = 0.0000.
cCoefficients and standard errors obtained by re-estimating the logistic regression with BlackSOR as the reference category.
dOmitted category is Good English (speaks English very well)
eOmitted category is Native-born.
enhance the odds that a Cape Verdean immigrant identifies as Black. Rather, as the results in Table 2 already revealed, the more recently arrived are significantly more likely to identify as Black. In short, taking into account the effect of cohort of arrival, years in the USA and birthplace, the results say that two sets of Cape Verdeans tend to identify as Black: one consists of the native-born and the long resident foreign-born; the other consists of those who arrived in the last few years.

The next column depicts the differences between persons picking a WhiteSOR identity versus a SOR identity. The characteristics associated with this choice include being younger, living outside the northeast, speaking English only if native born and being a US citizen if foreign born. While there is no significant difference between the native born and the average foreign born, members of the two most recently arrived cohorts are less likely to choose WhiteSOR than are the native born. Note that there is no coefficient for persons arriving after 1999; the reason is that no cases fit this description (see Table 1). Turning to the effect of cohort of arrival, observe that earlier arrived Cape Verdean immigrants are more likely to identify as WhiteSOR than those who follow. A test for a linear trend in the coefficients is significant (results not shown). In sum, Cape Verdeans choosing WhiteSOR are quite similar to those choosing White: they are moderately assimilated and are long resident in the USA. Recall that we hypothesized that those choosing White would be more assimilated than those choosing WhiteSOR. This is not the case.

The penultimate column of Table 3 presents the differences between choosing BlackSOR and SOR. Of the indicators of assimilation, only the language variables attain significance, and they display a strange pattern: relative to those speaking English very well, those speaking well and those native born speaking only English are significantly more likely to identify as BlackSOR. Living in a metro area with a high proportion of African Americans increases the odds of identifying as BlackSOR. As for nativity, it has no effect on this contrast; indeed, only one cohort coefficient is significant. The pattern across cohorts, on the other hand, operates as expected, which it did not do in the case of Blacks. Cape Verdeans are most likely to identify as BlackSOR between 1966 and 1975; after that, the odds significantly decline (results not shown). In short, those identifying as BlackSOR differ from those identifying as SOR in terms of language, proportion of African American neighbors and a propensity to have arrived in the immediate post-Civil Rights era.

Given the paucity of significant relationships in the BlackSOR versus SOR comparison, in order better to understand the correlates of BlackSOR, we estimate the additional contrast Black versus BlackSOR. These results appear in the last column of Table 3. Relative to BlackSOR, those identifying as Black are moderately more assimilated: they are more educated, have lived in the USA longer if foreign born, and are more likely to be native born. Residing in a metropolitan area with a high percentage of African Americans motivates Cape Verdeans to identify as Black rather than as BlackSOR. The intra-cohort differences are quite interesting. The temporal pattern is curvilinear, with Cape Verdeans who arrived in the
post-Civil Rights Era of 1966–75 least likely to identify as Black, or, put differently, most likely to identify as BlackSOR. Thereafter, the attraction of Black increases as cohort of arrival becomes more recent, an increase that is statistically significant (results not shown). Taken together, the results of the two Black-based contrasts show that arrival during the post-Civil Rights Era increases the odds that Cape Verdeans characterize themselves as BlackSOR, while arrival during or after the late 1980s increases the odds that they identify as Black.

**Discussion**

Research has shown that Hispanics of mixed African heritage who come from regions that honor a mixed-race category have difficulty accepting America’s one-drop rule. When asked their race, many respond ‘Hispanic’, a label that Americans increasingly consider a racial label. In this article, we explored how Cape Verdeans, a non-Hispanic population of mixed European and African heritage, respond to this situation.

The theoretical perspective most often used to predict the racial identity of immigrants is assimilation theory. These days it comes in a soft and a hard version. In the soft version, sometimes called ‘bumpy’, no form of assimilation necessarily precedes another, the dominant society may adopt some of the immigrants’ norms and practices, and assimilation, especially in terms of identity, may remain incomplete. In the hard version, sometimes called ‘straight-line’, identificational assimilation is a relatively late phase. Relatively assimilated individuals are expected to replace their detailed ethnic affiliations with larger racial or pan-ethnic identities. To date, both these perspectives have received some empirical support.

We formulated our hypotheses in terms of straight-line assimilation theory because its expectations are easy to test. In responding to questions asked by the US Census Bureau, we hypothesized that Cape Verdeans identifying as SOR (which we suspect most often means ‘Cape Verdean’) would be least assimilated, followed by those identifying as BlackSOR or WhiteSOR. Cape Verdeans identifying as Black or White would be most assimilated. But our analysis of the way Cape Verdeans answered the questions about race does not support these predictions. While the 39.6 percent identifying as SOR are least assimilated, the only meaningful difference between them and the 9.2 percent identifying as BlackSOR is that the neighborhoods of the latter contained more African Americans. Those choosing White (10.1%) and WhiteSOR (3.1%) are only moderately more assimilated than those choosing SOR. The 31.4 percent choosing Black are most assimilated, but on some covariates even they remain indistinguishable from those choosing SOR. In short, our findings are more compatible with bumpy than with straight-line assimilation theory.

Still, Cape Verdeans identifying as Black are more assimilated than those identifying as White. We hypothesized that assimilation would be strongly associated with both racial labels. Perhaps this is not the case because White is a high-status identity in both Cape Verde and America. Thus, Cape Verdeans do not have to
assimilate to choose it. Another unexpected finding is that education is significantly associated only with a Black identity. While education can be an indicator of assimilation, it can also reflect exposure to the history of Blacks in America, Blacks in Africa and other topics likely to enhance racial pride. Because previous findings about the effect of education on racial identity have been inconsistent, we pose this interpretation as possible but not proven. Also noteworthy is the non-linear effect of English ability. Among the native born, speaking only English depressed the odds of identifying as SOR; not so among the foreign born. Other levels of English ability exhibited an uneven relationship to identity. These findings, coupled with the weak performance of our citizenship indicator, reinforce the conclusion that assimilation has a bumpy relationship to Cape Verdeans' racial identity.

We offered some additional hypotheses regarding the net effect of cohort of arrival on identity. To our knowledge, previous scholarship has neglected this possibility. Extrapolating from the literature, we hypothesized that the early arrived would be more inclined to identify as White or Cape Verdean-White (WhiteSOR), that those arriving around the time of the Civil Rights Movement and the African independence movements would be more likely to identify as Black or Cape Verdean-Black (BlackSOR), and that the most recently arrived would be more likely to identify as SOR.

Our analysis offers support for some but not all of these hypotheses. Arrival before 1966 increases the odds of identifying as White or WhiteSOR rather than SOR. This trend is consistent with the propensity of the early arrived to perceive themselves as Portuguese and with the possibility that many of the early arrived were light skinned because they were disproportionately from Brava. At the same time, the historical record makes us reluctant to conclude that 10.2 percent of Cape Verdean Americans are phenotypically White. We suspect rather that, because blackness brings many disadvantages in America, those Cape Verdean Americans whose tradition most eagerly embraced alternative identities, continue to do so. Arriving between 1966 and 1975 enhances the odds of identifying as BlackSOR rather than Black or SOR. Of course, we do not know exactly what responses are included in the code BlackSOR; however, the most likely answer is the one mentioned by Greenfield (1976): Capeverdean-Black. The surprise here is that Cape Verdeans arriving during a period when African Americans and Africans enjoyed relatively high status do not identify as Black but as BlackSOR. Perhaps this preference reflects ambivalence: on the one hand, solidarity with African origin peoples; on the other hand, distinction from African Americans. Census data provide little insight into the meanings that people attach to the answers they provide.

Finally, an unexpected trend toward identifying as Black rather than BlackSOR or SOR begins with those arriving in the late 1980s and gains momentum with recency of arrival. In looking for an explanation we wonder if recent arrivals are more visibly African than earlier arrivals. There are two reasons why this might be the case. First, the social class composition of most immigrant flows declines over time (Massey et al., 1994). This is partly because, as more and more people from a
Sending country depart, the costs of migration, both financial and otherwise, decline. Since in Cape Verde social class is correlated with phenotype, if recent arrivals are less affluent, they are likely darker skinned than earlier arrivals. Second, research has shown that dark-skinned persons are far more likely to identify as Black than are light-skinned persons. That is not to say that all dark-skinned people so identify, but that light-skinned persons rarely identify as Black (Golash-Boza and Darity, 2008). Thus, if lower-class Cape Verdeans represent a growing proportion of arrivals and these newcomers are darker than their predecessors, a change in skin shade could explain the increase in the proportion identifying as Black.

The natural extension of these observations is to call for further research. One direction is qualitative research on Cape Verdeans. Even if our results were wholly consonant with expectations (which they are not), a phenomenon as fluid as identity requires qualitative research (Kasinitz et al., 2008). Not only do we not know the meaning of the identities we have studied, but we are unable to measure a key independent variable: phenotype. Qualitative research can compensate for both these shortcomings. A second direction is research on Brazilian immigrants. A mixed-race Portuguese-speaking group, estimates of the size of the Brazilian-born population in the USA range from a low of 212,428 to a high of 1,107,000. As these figures suggest, many are believed to be undocumented; even legal entrants are reportedly reluctant to reply to the census (Margolis, 2009). In addition to being larger, Brazilians display more phenotypical variation than Cape Verdeans. While this makes studying Brazilian identity especially interesting, the inability of the US Census Bureau to count Brazilians accurately, as well as the absence of questions about phenotype on census questionnaires, means that the census is a poor source of information on this group. In order to produce some generalizations about them, we recommend a large-scale survey that specifically targets this population. Finally, a more general recommendation is that scholars consider examining the relationship between cohort of arrival and identity. In the Cape Verdiian case, it turns out to matter.

In addition to suggestions for further research, we close with a suggestion for the US Census Bureau. History shows that racial boundaries are malleable. Current indicators of Black–White intermarriage and residential segregation are more favorable than ever before. These developments have motivated some experts to assert that a blurring of the boundaries between Blacks and Whites is possible (Alba, 2009; Alba and Nee, 2003). While this is a minority opinion, we believe the US Census Bureau could encourage this outcome. Since the nation’s founding, its questions have been motivated by politics. Most recently, in response to the increased racial blending of Americans, the Bureau allowed Americans to claim membership in more than one racial category. But only 2.6 percent of the US population took advantage of this option (Perez and Hirschman, 2009). Despite Cape Verdeans’ mixed-race heritage, liberalization of the questionnaire had almost no effect on their identities.

A better strategy for recognizing the racial complexity of America is for the Census Bureau to acknowledge the ethnic complexity of Black Americans.
As explained in an earlier section of this article, in addition to the ancestry question, the 2000 census questionnaire offers every group but Blacks and Whites an additional opportunity to elaborate on their origins. It is not possible to reply to the Hispanic question without providing a detailed ethnic or national origin. On the race question, Native Americans and Asians are likewise pressed to provide more detail. In the case of Blacks, however, there is only one box to check: the person is either ‘Black, African Am, or Negro’ or not. This usage implies that there are many kinds of Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians but only one kind of Black.

An objection to our suggestion is that the census questionnaire is already too complicated. Hispanicity should be *yes or no*; race should be *White, Black, Asian, Native American or Other* (or better yet, *White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American or Other*). Simplifying the options is also a good suggestion. But barring its adoption, why are Blacks unable to display their heterogeneity? If Koreans can be a race, why not Jamaicans or Dominicans? Arguably, Cape Verdeans are too small a group to merit formal mention. But here again, if Asians or Pacific Islanders do not find their racial identity listed, they are free to write one in. There is no write-in option for people of African origin who do not wish to identify as ‘Black, African Am, or Negro’. We believe that official government recognition of Black diversity, and the wider recognition of Black diversity that would follow, would encourage the blurring of the Black–White boundary. We urge the Census Bureau to stop requiring all African-origin peoples to fit into the same mold.

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**Notes**

1. Since 2006, the numbers have risen to around 2000 annually (US Department of Homeland Security, 2010: Table 3).
3. As Waters (1991, 1999) and Butterfield (2004) discovered, neither immigrants with some African heritage nor their children have the same ethnic options that other groups have. Both the dominant group and African Americans label them as African Americans.
4. Ethnic and racial identities also depend on social context; for example, they can change in response to the ethnic/racial composition of the environment (Stayman and Deshpande 1989).
5. Some scholars reserve the term assimilation for cultural change and use terms such as incorporation or integration for changes in educational, economic or residential adaptations.
6. These calculations were undertaken using the ‘Analyze Data Online’ feature of the website usa.ipums.org/usa/.
8. There are other differences between the 2000 US Census and the ACS. One is coverage: before 2006, the ACS excluded persons in group quarters. A second is timing: most
census returns are completed in April; the ACS is administered year round. A third is the undercount. Studies done in conjunction with the 2000 Census yield the following estimated undercounts: native born non-Hispanic Black men 5.1 percent; foreign born non-Hispanic Black men 6.3 percent; native born non-Hispanic Black women 0.52 percent, and foreign-born non-Hispanic black women 5.7 percent (Costanza et al., 2001). One of the few reports summarizing undercounts in the ACS states that, at least in the waves prior to 2005, census undercounts were higher than ACS undercounts. At the same time, the report asserts that the 2000 US Census counted more Blacks, more responses of ‘Some Other Race’ and fewer Whites than did the ACS (Lowenthal, 2006).

9. Obviously, persons of Cape Verdean descent who do not list this origin on the ancestry question are lost to the analysis. Morawska (1994) views such lost cases as a flaw that plagues any study of identificational assimilation. Others consider ancestry an objective trait that is independent of ethnic or racial identity; hence an appropriate criterion for sample selection (Alba and Nee, 2003; Perez and Hirschman, 2009).

10. We experimented with three other indicators of assimilation: immigrants’ age at arrival, detailed generation (2, 1.75, 1.5 and 1) and language spoken at home. In our effort to choose those independent variables that explained the most variance with the least redundancy, these three indicators were dropped.

11. The information needed for this calculation is missing in the ACS for years 2000–04. In order to include these cases in our analysis, we coded them as having zero African Americans in their metro area and then introduced an additional a dummy on which these cases were coded one while those with a non-missing percentage were coded zero.

12. In 2000, 49.1 percent of Cape Verdeans who did not identify as SOR identified as Black, while 21.5 percent of Dominicans who did not identify as SOR identified as Black. Calculations by the authors using the ‘Analyze Data Online’ feature at usa.ipums.org/usa/.

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