

## Multiracial children of single mothers more likely to live in poverty, study finds

April 30 2013, by Amy Hodges

---

(Phys.org) —Multiracial children of single mothers are more likely to live in poverty than white and Asian children of single mothers, but less likely than Hispanic, African-American and Native American children of single moms, according to a new study from researchers at Rice University and Pennsylvania State University.

"Although 45 percent of children raised by [single mothers](#) live in poverty and multiracial youth represent a growing segment of these children, there is little information about their well-being in these single-mother households," said Jenifer Bratter, associate professor of sociology at Rice and the study's lead author.

Between 38 and 48 percent of multiracial children live in poverty, depending on their [ethnic background](#), compared with 35 percent of Caucasian or Asian children. The highest rates persist among their Hispanic, African-American or Native American counterparts (55, 52 and 56 percent, respectively).

The exception to this is Asian-Caucasian children, who are the least likely to live in poverty than any other mono- or multiracial ethnic group. Only 22 percent of Asian/Caucasian children with Caucasian mothers live in poverty, and 30 percent of Asian/Caucasian children with Asian mothers live in poverty.

"There is an evolving nature of racial stratification in the U.S.," said Sarah Damaske, assistant professor of labor studies and [employment](#)

[relations](#) and sociology at Pennsylvania State University, a former postdoc at Rice and the study's co-author. "We see strong evidence that kids with a multiracial background have this 'in-between' status – they're not as well off as their white [peers](#), but they are better off than their monoracial peers of color."

Damaske noted that even multiracial children of Caucasian mothers experienced lower levels of poverty than the multiracial children of other races. Multiracial children (African-American and Caucasian) of Caucasian mothers had a 47 percent [poverty rate](#), compared with 48 percent of multiracial children of African-American mothers. The numbers were 42 and 47 percent, respectively, for multiracial children of Caucasians and Native Americans and 22 percent and 30 percent, respectively, for multiracial children of Caucasians and Asians. The lone exception was multiracial children of Hispanic mothers, who experienced a 38 percent poverty rate compared with 43 percent of multiracial children of Caucasian mothers.

"These findings support previous research that finds there are privileges associated with being white," Damaske said.

When the researchers adjusted for factors such as the age of children and mothers, the mother's relationship status (cohabitating or not) and previous marriage, they found a change among the poverty status of African-American children, who are 41 percent more likely to live in poverty, and African-American/Caucasian children, who are 26 percent more likely to live in poverty. When adjusting for these factors, those numbers dropped to 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

"Poverty is inherently tied to a lot of different social factors, and race is certainly reflective of the way these social factors operate," Bratter said. "For example, one race might be more likely to be a single mother or have less education than another race. Once we account for these factors,

we wondered if race and mixed-race still matter, and it does, although the effects are smaller."

The research was conducted using close to 360,000 survey responses of single mothers with children from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey, a nationally representative monthly cross-sectional survey that collects data from U.S. citizens on race, geography, employment, education and socio-economic status from more than 3 million households a year. Thirty-nine percent of the children in the data set were Caucasian, 29.5 percent were African-American, 19 percent were Hispanic, 1.5 percent were Asian, 3.1 percent were Caucasian/African-American and a little more than 2 percent were Caucasian/Hispanic. Less than 1 percent each were Native American, African-American/Hispanic and [Caucasian](#)/Asian.

Bratter and Damaske hope their research will add to the body of literature studying race and poverty and help better explain how interracial relationships are changing the face of race in the U.S. They also hope the study will account for the growing number of multiracial youth who aren't easily identified and are affected by poverty and other indicators of well-being.

The study, "Poverty at a Racial Crossroads: [Poverty](#) Among Multiracial Children of Single [Mothers](#)," will appear in the April 2013 edition of the *Journal of Marriage and Family*. The study is online at [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10 ... 1111/jomf.12012/full](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jomf.12012/full).

Provided by Rice University

Citation: Multiracial children of single mothers more likely to live in poverty, study finds (2013, April 30) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-04-multiracial-children-mothers-poverty.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.