



### A148 The Morphology of Intersectionality: Discordance Between Ancestry Estimates and Social Identifiers

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**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the discordance between the identity formed by ancestry estimation and the application of this identity to a sociocultural label used in forensic anthropological contexts.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showcasing the importance of the intersectionality of the terminology used in instances of forensic identification.

This study underscores the importance of forensic anthropologists fully considering the intersectional nature of identity. Identity is dynamic, in that for a singular individual, it involves a biological identity, a self-identity, and an identity imposed on the individual by public perception. Biological identity can be recognized anthropologically as ancestral estimations, while self-identity aligns with how the individual views him/herself in accordance with their society and culture (social identifiers), and public perception is how others view the individual through the lens of their sociocultural experiences. Social identifiers can include a variety of demographic categories, many of which include physical representation. This presentation will focus on those used by the United States census, which are the racial and ethnic classifiers used in everyday terminology to describe a person's physical identity. In the case of an unidentified deceased individual, one goal of the forensic anthropologist is to generate a biological profile, part of which informs on ancestry (estimation of most likely geographic origin), to narrow down the possible identity of the unknown individual. Yet, forensic anthropologists are rarely, if ever, the authority that assigns a personal identification.<sup>1</sup> Because of this we must relate our ancestry estimate to currently accepted social identifiers.

In this presentation, data from a sample of 13 (11 female, 2 male) living self-identified Biracial individuals demonstrates a lack of agreement between ancestry estimates and social identifiers. Methods employed to estimate the ancestry of  $N=13$  included current dental morphological quantitative methods following Edgar and rASUDAS, and biological distance analysis.<sup>2,3</sup> Results estimated the majority of the individuals to be European, which in the United States sociocultural context translates to a categorization of White. This study showcases that for a sample of Biracial individuals, the methods used were unable to correctly identify them on any level (biological, self, and public) and suggests that forensic anthropological analysis of the biological identity has the potential to hinder identifications. Forensic anthropologists operate within a medicolegal context; therefore, it is important to understand how our scientific interpretations translate to our sociocultural understanding of identity.

#### Reference(s):

1. Christensen A.M., Passalacqua N.V., Bartelink E.J. 2014. *Forensic Anthropology: Current Methods and Practice*. San Diego, CA: Elsevier.
2. Edgar H.J.H. 2013. Estimation of Ancestry Using Dental Morphological Characteristics. *Journal of Forensic Science*. 58:S3-S8.
3. Scott G.R., Navega D, Coelho J, Cunha E, Irish J.D. 2016. rASUDAS: A new method for estimating ancestry from tooth crown and root morphology. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. 159(S62:285-286).

**Ancestry Estimation, Social Identifiers, Biracial Sample**