

Dual identities challenge America's race labels

By Sally Ho
The Associated Press

It was just 20 years ago that the U.S. census began to allow Americans to identify as more than one race. And now, the country is on the threshold of seeing the name of Kamala Harris — proud daughter of a Jamaican father and Indian mother — on the national ballot.

Harris' historic nomination for vice president on the Democratic ticket is challenging America's emphasis on identity and labels.

While her dual heritage represents several slices of the multicultural and multiracial experience, many have puzzled over how to define her — an issue people of diverse backgrounds have long had to navigate.

Harris has long incorporated both sides of her parentage in her public persona, but also has been steadfast in claiming her Black identity, saying her mother — the biggest influence on her life — raised her and her sister as Black because that's the way the world would view them.

"My mother instilled in my sister, Maya, and me the values that would chart the course of our lives," Harris said in her speech at the Democratic National Convention to accept her party's nomination. "She raised us to be proud, strong Black women. And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage."

A 2015 Pew Research Center study found that multiracial people in the U.S. were growing at a rate three times faster than the general population. A majority said they were proud of their mixed-race background, but had been subjected to racial slurs or jokes. And about 25% said they were bothered by people making assumptions about their racial background.

Japan's "flying car" gets off ground, with a person aboard

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view.

The SkyDrive project began humbly as a volunteer project called Cartivator in 2012, with funding by top Japanese companies including automaker Toyota Motor Corp., electronics company Panasonic Corp., and video-game developer Bandai Namco.

A demonstration flight three years ago went poorly. But it has improved and the project recently received another round of funding, of 3.9 billion yen

(\$37 million), including from the Development Bank of Japan.

The Japanese government is bullish on "The Jetsons" vision, with a "road map" for business services by 2023, and expanded commercial use by the 2030s, stressing its potential for connecting remote areas and providing lifelines in disasters.

Experts compare the buzz over flying cars to the days when the aviation industry got started with the Wright Brothers and the auto industry with the Ford Model T.

Lilium of Germany, Joby Aviation in California, and Wisk, a joint venture between Boeing Co. and Kitty Hawk Corp., are also working on eVTOL projects.

Sebastian Thrun, chief executive of Kitty Hawk, said it took time for airplanes, cellphones, and self-driving cars to win acceptance.

"But the time between technology and social adoption might be more compressed for eVTOL vehicles," he said.

Chisato Tanaka contributed to this report.



MULTIRACIAL EXPERIENCES. Benjamin Beltran, 26, poses for a portrait in Washington. For most of his childhood, Beltran identified with his dad's roots as a Filipino growing up. At times, that made his white mother worry he was forgetting her ancestry, which traces to Scotland and Ireland. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

to visiting St. Croix," said Sath Warner, a middle-school principal from Alameda, California. "They are both Black."

The subject is inextricably linked to the "one drop rule," a legal principle rooted in slavery that anyone with even a drop of Black lineage could not own land or be free. Today, it manifests itself in the way people visually categorize others and the social hierarchy between races, said Sarah Gaither, a Duke University professor studying race who herself is Black and white.

No one carries the same experience or should serve as "identity police," said Gaither, who stressed the importance of allowing multiracial, multicultural people to define for themselves who they are, and accepting that a biracial person's identity may evolve.

Officially, the U.S. census claims that about 3.5% of U.S. residents identified as two or more races in 2018, up from 2.4% in 2000. But when Pew conducted its own survey, its number increased five-fold when accounting for people who identified as one race but said that at least one of their parents was a different race or multiracial, as well as people who had at least one grandparent of a different race than themselves or their parents.

And though respondents were allowed to identify as more than one race in the U.S. census beginning in 2000, the race category options still are not all-encompassing.

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Cuomo: Health workers to supervise annual 9/11 light tribute

NEW YORK (AP) — The annual light display honoring victims of 9/11 is back on, according to officials, who said New York health officials would supervise this year's tribute to ensure workers' safety amid concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic.

"This year it is especially important that we all appreciate and commemorate 9/11, the lives lost, and the heroism displayed as New Yorkers are once again called upon to face a common enemy," governor Andrew Cuomo said in a statement.

The announcement came days after the National September 11 Memorial & Museum cancelled the Tribute in Light over concerns the coronavirus might spread among crews creating twin columns of light to represent the World Trade Center in the Manhattan sky.

Alice Greenwald, president and CEO of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, thanked former New York City mayor Mike Bloomberg, Cuomo, and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation "for their assistance in offsetting the increased



costs associated with the health and safety considerations around the tribute this year."

"This year, its message of hope, endurance, and resilience are more important than ever," Greenwald said in a statement.

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation recently decided to hold an alternative 9/11 Never Forget ceremony after the National September 11 Memorial & Museum announced family members would not read the names of the nearly 3,000 victims because of the pandemic.

The foundation's tribute will be held just south of the memorial plaza and relatives will read the victims' names, with mask-wearing enforced and podiums sanitized after each speaker.