

THE EFFECT OF ADMIXTURE ON RACE CATEGORIZATION IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY ^{MAS}

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Forensic anthropologists are often asked to estimate race from skeletal remains. This is one of the most difficult tasks they face, and it is made even more difficult by the pervasive tendency to confuse biological race with ethnicity. Race may be estimated by visual examination of the skull or by discriminant functions analysis, wherein measurements of the skull or other bones are used in a computer-generated formula giving a score that may be used to classify individuals to one group or another. Most individuals of all races

are, in reality, of mixed ancestry. Societal rules tend to classify mixed individuals with whatever non-white race predominates in their ancestry. The effect of such admixture on discriminant functions analysis has been little studied. Using measurements of "pure" Native Americans (Sioux), "pure" Whites, and mixed Sioux/White individuals recorded in databases collected by Franz Boas in the 1800s. I found that individuals who are less than 7/8 "pure" score randomly on discriminant functions for race.