

A MERGER OF TWO THEORIES: THE CASE OF MULTIRACIAL ASIAN
IDENTITY

A Dissertation

by

JENNIFER LINH LE

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Chair of Committee,	Jane Sell
Committee Members,	Wm. Alex McIntosh
	Sarah N. Gatson
	Phia Salter
Head of Department,	Jane Sell

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ABSTRACT

This study takes the case of multiracial Asian Americans, as self-identified "part Asian" as well as another (or multiple) major racial group to determine what influences their racial, ethnic, and overarching group identities as well as how those identities affect other variables. Multiracial Asians were studied for their uniqueness being part of the socially-defined model minority racial group. I used three data sets: the ICPSR National Asian American Survey (NAAS) (Ramakrishnan, Junn, Lee, and Wong 2008), interviews, and HapaVoice.com posts. I conducted 60 in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews, informed by the literature and quantitative data from the NAAS, in order to determine what influences their racial and ethnic identity as well as how their racial and ethnic identity influences other things. This descriptive work provides a backdrop against which I merge two major theoretical traditions of identity, namely social psychological identity—using Tajfel's social identity theory—and race and ethnic identity theories—in particular Roquequemoire, Brunsmas, and Delgado's work on multiracial identity.

Numerous trends were found in the data relating to different ways to identify racially, one's cultural exposure and competency, one's perceived discrimination, one's social networks, one's religious upbringing and affiliation, as well as one's sense of belonging and the salience and hierarchy of one's identities. A sense of belonging is conflated for multiracial Asians as they do not feel as though they have a group to which they belong. This is a very important commonality between the two theoretical traditions as is salience and hierarchy. If one does not feel a sense of belonging, there does not

exist a strong in-group/out-group distinction which may leave one without a social identity. This lack of belonging can have significant impact on the group in question, as well as other multiracials, in terms of their ability to feel a part of something and collectively organize for their specific needs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Multiracial Asians are at once members of multiple monoracial groups and also distinct from those groups (Bradshaw 1992; DaCosta 2003; Deters 1997; Espiritu 2001). This marginal position leaves many multiracial individuals with the burden of choosing one of their monoracial groups with which to identify or to identify as multiracial, among other ways to identify (Rockquemore, Brunnsma, and Delgado 2009). Many multiracial Asian Americans [heretofore referred to as multiracial Asians or hapa] have a parent that is a recent immigrant and have been exposed to that ethnic heritage. They are also exposed to the wider American culture and that of their non-Asian parent. The issue of identity is often confounded with emotions resulting from parental approval or rejection and social pressures. These issues are similar to those of the monoracial second generation (having at least one parent born outside of the U.S.), so the multiracial second generation—the population under study—will have similar issues but even more as a result of their multiraciality.

Multiracial Americans, or mixed race Americans, are defined as individuals that can identify with two or more racial and ethnic categories (e.g. white, black, Latino, Asian, etc.) (Charmaraman and Grossman 2010). They are a growing population in the United States as a result of more liberal attitudes towards interracial marriage, decreased stigma attached to racial and ethnic minorities and the offspring of intermarriage, and the 1967 *Loving v Virginia* decision to allow interracial marriages (Brunnsma 2005; Deters

1997). Multiracials have a more complex process of identity formation than monoracial individuals, especially with ethnic identity. Should they choose the race they look most like? Should they choose both? Is identity even a choice? Do race and ethnicity matter in our self-proclaimed colorblind society? Identity formation involves a complicated process of negotiation (Anderson 1999; Bradshaw 1992; Charmaraman and Grossman 2010) involving factors of social class (Brunisma 2005), group membership and social networks (Brunisma 2005; Brunisma and Rockquemore 2001; Dennis 2008), factors of appearance (Brunisma 2005; Brunisma and Rockquemore 2001), language (Anderson 1999), how others classify an individual (Bradshaw 1992; Brunisma and Rockquemore 2001), and family composition (Anderson 1999; Brunisma 2005). The question under consideration in this dissertation is how multiracial Asians identify racially, ethnically, and religiously. Do they feel disconnected from our monoracially-based society? How do they construct their identities and what is important to them? What influences those identities? Multiracial Asians are at once Asian and non-Asian. Therefore, one's Asian-ness is confounded with their non-Asian-ness. One's self and identity are crucial to understanding an individual on a micro level and their actions and interaction on a macro level. The case of multiracial Asians serve as a catalyst to unite the as yet disparate literatures of more descriptive racial and ethnic identity and the more theoretical social psychological identity theories. My research explores the nuanced challenges of multiracial *Asians*, the current model minority—a moniker that comes with particular stereotypes and challenges. While many will conjure up a particular—generally East Asian—image of an “Asian” person, “Asian” can represent a wide array of people

including Middle Eastern (West Asian) and South Asian. However, these populations have a different experience in the U.S. than the phenotypical East Asian populations. My research focuses mainly on those with Southeast and East Asian heritage but also includes people with ancestry from other regions as well.

I take the analysis further and examine the multiracial Asian individual in a religious light. Since religion is a major social institution and affects the lives of many, I believe it is important to examine the relationship between multiracial Asians and religion. The question I attempt to answer regarding multiracial Asians and religion is twofold. First, what is the relationship between ethnicity and religion? Since for some people ethnicity and religion are interconnected while for others they may be disparate, the answers of my respondents highlight similar trends on second generation immigrant religion research. This is also an area of research that has yet to be explored by other scholars.

With this study, I apply both social psychological and racial and ethnic theories of identity to multiracial Asians. Considering the hierarchical nature of identity in social identity theory and the complicated nature of hierarchy of racial and ethnic identity for multiracial Asians, social identity theory was potentially not applicable to this population. I am able to determine this through my research. I hypothesize that a merger of the two branches of identity theory is in order. The particular hierarchy an individual has of their racial and ethnic identities influences those that they claim as their racial identification. These racial identifications may range from a single identity, fluid

identities, multiracial identity, or some other form. I seek to answer what influences this hierarchy as well as how they justify and come to terms with their internal hierarchy.

Understanding multiracial Asian identity is important in itself because of the nation's rapidly growing multiracial population. While countless studies have been conducted of monoracial groups in the past, in a particular sociohistorical and sociopolitical context, multiracial literature is still an emerging research interest. Multiracial Asians, as they are outside of the traditional black-white paradigm receive less attention than perhaps more marginalized racial minorities. However, that does not discount their experiences; in fact, Asians are stereotyped as a model minority which leads to its own significant experiences. Therefore, the benefit of even a descriptive study has the potential to illuminate public policy or social trend issues. This study, however, uses the descriptive case of multiracial Asians to inform the theoretical underpinning of this study; namely, the merger of the descriptive and the theoretical. The social psychological and racial and ethnic literatures, in terms of identity, have numerous commonalities and theoretical linkages. Some of those are explored in my literature review, including the competing ideas of fluid identities and hierarchical identities. It is my hope that through the research, many more links can be found to marry the traditions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Psychological Identity

An important field of study in social psychology is of the self and identity. Self-knowledge is thought to be an important understanding of the self; being aware of one's internal states and mental processes (Baumeister 1987). However, the self is not a completely separate entity from its external environment. The self must also be thought of in relation to society. For Mead (1934), the individual was not a "self" until it was able to understand itself in relation to society; until the "me" was developed. The self is composed of many different and fluid identities that can change depending on the time and context (Gatson 2011; Zurcher 1977). For both Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902), the self was a product of social interaction.

The self, then, can be seen as something that resides in the arrangements prevailing in a social system for its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. (Goffman 1961:168)

Without social interaction, there would be no self. Mead, Cooley, and Goffman's understanding is that individuals come to know themselves through interaction. The interpersonal environment can influence one's identity and help to define the meaning and purpose of one's life (Baumeister 1987). Identity can be thought of as the definition of the individual. One's identity can stem from ascribed characteristics such as gender or race (as per social constructs available at the time) or from achieved characteristics (both

optional and required) such as high school dropout or mother. Other issues of the self, in addition to self-knowledge, involve fulfillment, self-definition, and understanding the relationship of the individual to society. The oft cited Erickson (1963; 1968) argues that “identity contains an awareness of one’s location within the solidarity of a particular group” (Hammack 2008: 227).

Different theories will have different assumptions of the self. There are two fundamental assumptions about human behavior that guide the direction of theories of the self and identity. The first is self-verification. The assumption behind self-verification is that individuals will seek out interaction partners that verify current conceptions of the self (Burke 1991; Burke 2004). For example, someone with a positive self-concept will seek out an interaction partner that verifies their positive self-conception. This also holds for individuals with a negative self-concept. Although it seems counterintuitive, those with a negative self-concept will seek out an interaction partner that verifies their negative view of the self. Specifically, they will choose to interact with someone who also has a negative view of the individual in question. The individual will engage in overt, behavioral and covert, cognitive strategies in their interaction. These include selective interaction, display of identity cues, selective attention, encoding, and selective interpretation (Stets and Cast 2007). The verification of identities can be considered advantageous for the individual in that they are able to access additional resources to maintain identity verification in the future and to sustain verification when verification through others is not possible. This process of self-

verification creates a stable, coherent, predictable, and secure self-verifying environment.

Contrary to this conception of the self is the exact opposite: self-enhancement. This is especially important for those with a negative self-concept. Self-enhancement suggests that individuals will seek out interaction partners that enhance their self-concept. Therefore, an individual with a negative self-concept will seek out someone who will boost their self-esteem. The same holds for those with an already positive self-concept. In fact, all individuals will avoid negative feedback. This process serves to enhance those aspects of an individual that they value while they deny those they do not value. If a devalued aspect of the individual were enhanced, self-rejecting feelings would emerge (Kaplan 1986). Both of these processes, verification and enhancement serve to reinforce the self over time (Stets and Cast 2007).

As previously mentioned, identity represents the link between the self and society (Hammack 2008). There are many theories of identity including but not limited to Kaplan's self-referent theory, Thoits' identity accumulation theory, Burke's identity control theory, Stryker's identity theory, McCall and Simmons's role identity theory, Tajfel's social identity theory and Turner's related self-categorization theory, Heise and Smith-Lovin's affect control theory, and Alexander's situational identity theory. I will briefly explain social identity theory. Social identity theory will be particularly important to this paper as I will attempt to reconcile the literatures of social identity theory and racial and ethnic identity for theoretical purposes.

Of all the social psychological theories of identity, Tajfel's social identity theory is one that potentially relates to multiracial Asians. Tajfel's social identity theory situates the actors in relation to group or category membership. These groups or categories are socially meaningful (e.g. Californian, Cambodian) and may be a distinct, bounded social group (e.g. AFL-CIO, Marine Corps). These categories are one in which one feels they belong. This belonging helps to define intergroup boundaries. These boundaries are especially powerful because they make the group distinctive in relation to any out-group through the use of stereotypes and prototypes as well as normative perceptions and actions (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995). Once membership within those groups becomes salient or relevant to the social context, behavior and self-perception become akin to the in-group norm. This in-group is based on the category or group prototype and thus people act to match that prototype. As this theory assumes a self-enhancement motive, the prototype of the group is almost an ideal-typical representation of the overall group. Therefore, similar to identity control theory, the individual must match the standard. This theory differs from identity control theory, however, in that the group standard serves to enhance one's self-concept. As I alluded to, one can have multiple identities based on category or group membership. These identities are hierarchically organized by relative importance to the individual. For example, one's ethnicity may be very important to one's identity while being a member of a work group may be less important and temporary. This delineation of identities is important to who the individual is. Interestingly, social identity theory which takes into account context groups, categories, and the social context is a theory developed out of psychology. One very psychological

aspect of social identity theory is its sociocognitive element which asserts that identities come to be internalized. This internalized identity transforms the individual into a group member (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995).

Applying these social psychological theories of identity to multiracial Asians is not very straightforward. Tajfel's social identity theory is most closely applicable because the comparison is a group or category. One's racial, ethnic, or cultural group is potentially one group that the individual may try to mimic. Multiracial Asians—like everyone else—have multiple groups from which they could choose. As previously mentioned, a hierarchy is created by the individual of the importance of these groups. Unfortunately, however, the racial and ethnic hierarchy is potentially more complicated, especially for multiracials because the individual may struggle to (consciously or unconsciously) nominate as paramount one racial or ethnic group over another which is perpetually attached to one's parents. A multiracial individual's identity and self are fluid, as are everyone's. This fluidity makes the creation of a hierarchy, and salience of the identities within that hierarchy, especially difficult to imagine.

In the social psychology of identity, specifically ethnic identity, are the issues surrounding biculturals or multiculturalists (can also be termed biracial and multiracial because many scholars imply "multiracial" or "multiethnic" as a result of birth when they refer to multiculturalists). In the culture as groups paradigm, a multicultural individual is seen as problematic (Park 1928; Erickson 1968; Cross 1971; Poston 1990). Culture as groups refers to a bounded, static, internally homogenous, material, reified entity. This particular group has a distinct way of knowing, particular beliefs, values, and practices.

People generally *belong* to a cultural group. The reifying nature of the culture as groups paradigm is one of its fundamental flaws. To regard something that is abstract as concrete solidifies the abstract into an essentialized and stereotyped group (Adams and Markus 2001). Multiracials, under this formulation, are considered problematic because do not fully fit into one category.

However, within the culture as patterns paradigm, one could argue that nearly everyone is multicultural. Under this conception, cultures are abstract, dynamic non-entities that are perpetually in flux (Adams and Markus 2001; Matsumoto 1999). They are patterns. They can intersect, change over time, be influenced, and influence other patterns. We can speak of *engagement* with these cultures instead of membership. The culture as patterns paradigm calls into question the reification of someone being bicultural or multicultural. What does multicultural actually mean? Does it mean one parent is from one cultural group and the other parent from another one? Does it mean you grew up in one place but now live somewhere with a different culture? Again, that assumes a culture as groups outlook. The culture as patterns paradigm, which asserts that a multicultural individual is the product of intersecting cultural patterns, has normalized our conception of the multicultural individual. Social psychological theories of identity, with their assumption of fluidity and emphasis on context, take the culture as patterns perspective.

Based on the literature, I hypothesize that if a multiracial Asian individual assumes a fluid identity, then their social identity will more closely resemble one that is “multiracial” or “mixed” than asserting one racial or ethnic group over the other. Note

that multiracial and mixed are not to be interpreted in the same way. Imagine a blender with juice, fruits, and vegetables in it. Before the blending process begins there are very clear differences between each item but recognition that all are in one container. This I would correlate to being multiracial. As the blender begins to mix all the ingredients into one liquefied substance, this is when the correlation changes to being mixed.

Racial and Ethnic Identity

Racial identity and ethnic identity are often lumped together; however, they have distinct definitions. Racial identity refers to “the genophenotypical ancestry groups one names when asked to identify oneself racially” (Herman 2004:732) or the “adoption of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of a group and the development of an affinity, loyalty, and feeling attached to membership within it” (Hall and Turner 2001:83). This is complicated further with the addition of Rockquemore, Brunσμα, and Delgado’s (2009) distinctions of racial identity. Racial identity can be thought of in three different, albeit overlapping, ways: racial identity, racial identification, and racial category (Rockquemore, Brunσμα, and Delgado 2009). Racial identity refers to one’s self-understanding. This can depend on one’s heritage, ethnicity, importance of their identity, social networks, physical features, etc. (Herman 2004; Rockquemore, Brunσμα, and Delgado 2009). Second, racial category refers to the common conceptions of racial identities that are available for one to choose. These are largely based on currently accepted, generally pan-ethnic, monoracial Census categories (e.g. white, black, Latino, Asian). Lastly, racial identification is how others understand an individual’s race (Herman 2004). This is generally based on one’s physical features and the others’

personal experiences. These categories can overlap but that is not always the case. For those of mixed race, the racial identity can vary, often changes over the life course, does not have a predictable outcome or endpoint, and is dependent on social, cultural, and spatial contexts (Anderson 1999; Rockquemore, Brunnsma, and Delgado 2009). In one study, Brunnsma (2005) found that parents tended to label their multiracial children as multiracial or white, if they are majority group/minority group mixed. This is not to suggest that children simply accept whatever label is given to them. On the contrary, multiracials from childhood to adulthood participate in the conversation of their identity (Deters 1997; Hall 2001). Outsiders often impose racial categories onto multiracials in order to classify them. These classifications tend to be rudimentary and limited, especially to those defined by the U.S. Census to be typical monoracial categories (Rockquemore, Brunnsma, and Delgado 2009). Often times, an individual's racial identity is at odds with how others view them and the racial categories available to them.

Ethnicity is a social construct similar to race as it evolves from historical, social, economic, and political factors. They are both reproduced over time through interaction (Alba 1990; Root 2001). However, ethnic identity involves cultural elements that race does not. Ethnicity can incorporate an ethnic language, food, dress, and customs. One's experiences may also affect the hierarchy of identities that one could possibly have. Kibria's (2002) "racialization of ethnicity" highlights the inherent interrelationship that can emerge, especially for Asian Americans. Therefore, one's race and ethnicity may be thought of as one and the same for an individual. A trend that is found, however, is that the more an individual identifies with their ethnic group, the more likely they are to

racially identify as multiracial or with both racial groups rather than monoracially. Those without attachment to their ethnicity, if Asian-white mixed, are most likely to identify monoracially as white (Root 2001). Such categorizations are further complicated when an individual is Asian and another non-white race. Ethnic identity stems from ethnic affirmation and a sense of belonging to the group; it becomes part of their social identity that then offers the individual a more positive self-concept (Phinney, Romero, Nava, and Huang 2001). There are three features significant to ethnic identity:

(a) the cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors that distinguish ethnic groups; (b) the subjective sense of ethnic group membership (i.e., ethnic identity) that is held by group members; and (c) the experiences associated with minority status, including powerlessness, discrimination, and prejudice. (Phinney 1996:919 cited in Martinez 2011)

Racial identity is just as important as cultural or ethnic identity. These differing identities represent different forms of attachment to a group. A racial group is important on a societal and personal level. As is evident in society, human beings have a strong desire to categorize people. Often these categories are organized around phenotype or historical definitions of ancestry. These social constructions of race have changed over time. For example, during the early years of the nation, to be white generally meant to be a WASP or of British decent. When phenotypically or culturally different Europeans such as the Italians, Irish, and Jews emigrated to the U.S., they were not considered white. Since the influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, the definition of whiteness has expanded to include more whites (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Brodtkin 1998; Deters 1997; Feagin 2009; Guglielmo 2004; Guglielmo and Salerno 2003; Ignatiev 1995; Roediger 2005). However, this whiteness does not just speak to the lightness of

one's skin color. It would seem, by virtue of the already prescribed label of "model minority" of the latter half of the 20th Century that Asians are the next white minority (Paek and Shah 2003). It is prudent, however, to mention that Asians were not the only model minority and such a moniker was only more recently applied after a long history of prejudice and discrimination. Jews are also considered a model minority for their "upward mobility allegedly achieved through thrift, family cohesion, and educational achievement" (Freedman 2005:69). Asians are particularly poised for this title because of achievement factors such as educational attainment and income that are in fact based on early Chinese and Japanese immigrant attainment and modern day South Asians. South East Asian immigrants, especially those that came as refugees, have not seen similar levels of progress. Asians also have the highest rates of interracial marriage, most often with whites (Fujino 1997).

Cultural or ethnic identity, heretofore referred to as ethnic identity, is an equally important dimension to one's self-concept. This identity is also socially constructed but involves perhaps a more personal aspect to one's self. Ethnic identity has four basic components similar to those offered by Phinney (1996) albeit with a slightly different focus, 1) self-identification, 2) ethnic behaviors and practices, 3) affirmation and belonging, and 4) depth of ethnic affiliation and internalized membership (Hall and Turner 2001; Wong 2009). As I mentioned in the previous section, culture should be thought of as a pattern and not as a group (Adams and Markus 2001). This suggests that an individual engages in a dialectical process with cultures and then has the opportunity to develop and flourish. Humans are not passive receivers of information (Hall 2001).

This idea coincides with the literature regarding identity formation and development because one's identity is not a fixed entity nor a given at birth; it is a process that can span a lifetime and change numerous times, a matter that will be tended to later.

David Brunsma and Kerry Ann Rockquemore examine racial identity in terms of context, which can be very influential for a person's identity. These identities, in turn, influence life chances, opportunities, and friend and mate selection. There are four traditional ways to categorize race: 1) singular identity, 2) border identity, 3) protean identity, and 4) transcendent identity (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001). A singular identity is the most basic form. An individual chooses one of the available categories with which to identify (e.g. Asian, "other," white, etc.). A border identity is one in which all or both parts of the one's racial makeup are taken into account. A protean identity assumes either a singular identity or a border identity depending on the situation (Herman 2004). Specifically, "a variety of selves will find themselves ready to adjust and conform to a variety of circumstances" (Dennis 2008:45). Last, a transcendent identity rejects racial classification and assumes a "human" identity.

The research area of Asian identity is lacking or is referred to in the context of psychological treatment and intervention of Asians and multiracial Asians. To identify as Asian generally means that an individual has familial roots in Asia or the Pacific Islands. Literature, in social psychological research, regarding multiracial Asian identity is also scant.

In line with Root's (2001) findings, I hypothesize that if a multiracial Asian individual identifies with their Asian ethnic heritage, then they will be more likely to

adopt a multiracial or mixed label. Without such identification, the individual will be more likely to identify with their non-Asian monoracial group.

Multiracial Identity

There are numerous theories on racial and ethnic identity and the development over the lifespan. Many, older theories understand identity development for multiracials to have a specific, desired endpoint (Cross 1971; Erickson 1968; Hall 2001; Jacobs 1992; Park 1928; Poston 1990; Stonequist 1937). As I suggested earlier, these theories find the multiracial to be problematic. Often the desired outcome of these theories is a prideful identification in one's minority identity or an identity as "mixed." Many of these theories concentrate on the black-white paradigm which specifies the differences between blacks (only) and whites. This is limiting for other people of color as their experiences often differ from that of black-white multiracials.

Rochequemore, Brunnsma, and Delgado (2009) identify the three main approaches to mixed race identity and add one of their own. The first approach is the problem approach. This suggests that being a person of mixed-race is problematic. Robert Park (1928) claimed that these individuals are in a permanent state of crisis because of their *mestizo*. Stonequist (1937) argued that the individual would internalize the group conflict between the heritage groups. This approach itself is problematic. By assuming that there is something inherently wrong with being mixed invalidates their experience. The second approach is the equivalent approach. This approach is based on hypodescent, or assuming identity with the race that is afforded the lowest status. This is a result of the guilt felt if one were to identify with the high status race (Herman 2004).

The third approach is the variant approach. This suggests that an alternative identity should be chosen; in this case, a mixed identity.

Through the Biracial Identity Development Model (Herring 1995; Poston 1990), a multiracial individual will go through a series of stages throughout the lifespan. The first stage is simply one's unique personal identity. The second stage involves a choice of group categorization. At this stage, it is assumed the individual does not have the required level of knowledge of mixed race identities because that understanding is beyond their cognitive development for their age (Herring 1995). The third stage is enmeshment/denial in which the individual experiences confusion and guilt at having had to choose a group with which to identify, thereby forsaking any other possible group memberships. This stage asserts that the mixed race individual is not able to express their full self. The fourth stage is an appreciation of the multiple identities one has. This can resolve the conflicting loyalties that were highlighted in the previous stage (Herman 2004). The final stage is the integration of all the identities one has into an integrated, multiracial identity. This variant approach assumes a clear trajectory for the mixed race individual.

The ecological approach that Rockquemore, Brunsma, and Delgado (2009) propose does not assume a fixed trajectory with a clear endpoint. Instead it is context specific, unpredictable, and can include a transcendent identity. I feel that this approach to multiracial identity development highlights the intricacies and ever-changing nature of the multiracial individual. No two people are exactly alike and the way in which they experience their identity can be different as well.

An additional way to view multiracial individual is that they are “amorphously multiracial” (Gatson 2003). This suggests that the intersecting identities of a particular individual create a web of identities that we are connected to simultaneously (Powell 2008). This does not serve to create a separate multiracial category. Instead it unites the many fluid identities within oneself. This conception of a multiracial self involves an “engaged process of confronting cultural options that use cultural resources” (Gatson 2003:21). An amorphous identity is understanding there is a “self,” and that self consists of various influences and choices. Amorphousness is inherently social, relational, and political in nature; to choose and be influenced by many things and to understand oneself as the amalgamation of those things as opposed to understanding oneself as one identity at one time. Gatson (2003) further argues that there are three main choices for multiracial identification. The first is to identify monoracially with one parent. The second is to identify as “multiracial”—thus lumping and not necessarily disclosing the “contents” of their multiraciality—and the insistence on a multiracial category. Finally, the third option is to identify as amorphously multiracial without a need for a separate multiracial category.

A very personal struggle for multiracials in the process of identity formation is the problem of “choice” (Herman 2004; Poston 1990). When filling out forced choice demographic questionnaires, are multiracials supposed to choose just part of their heritage with which to identify and ignore the other(s)? Are they to go against the norm and “check-all-that-apply?” Alternatively, are they to mark “other” which offers them no sense of identity and belonging? When developing one’s identity, there can be

considerable movement between monoracial, multiracial, and transcendent identities (Anderson 1999; Rockquemore, Brunnsma, and Delgado 2009). This movement can be painful, exclusionary, and unpredictable. Conflict can result from intrafamilial culture clashes (Anderson 1999), discrimination from outsiders (Charmaraman and Grossman 2010), identifying with one parent's race or ethnicity over another (Deters 1997; Herring 1995), and the societal pressure to adopt a monoracial identity (Deters 1997). This "choice" that some outsiders would view as a gift, is instead considered a burden in the experience of the multiracial individual.

The outcome of advocacy for more inclusive race options on the 2000 Census was a check-all-that-apply option. This increased the racial categories available by allowing multiple racial categories to be chosen. Multiracial therefore, as a racial category or identity, had begun to be legitimized (Williams-Leon 2003). Prior to this change the Asian/Pacific Islander category was created through the efforts by groups that, having formed a pan-Asian collective identity, advocated to greater political protection of their identity (King 2000). "The check one or more strategy, while it may satisfy individual multiracial goals, may leave many monoracial groups unable to gain the reparations that they need" (Cohen 1985:195). King argues that this challenge to monoracial categories is in fact, reinforcing them if monoracial categories are used to describe the make-up of multiracials. Alternatively, Espiritu (2001) contends that pan-Asian organizations often ignore or marginalize multiracial Asians. Therefore, the fracturing of these Asian groups, into smaller ethnic-specific groups, seems to be

necessary in order to meet the needs of these specific Asian ethnic groups that experience very different obstacles in society.

I would argue that a theoretically productive way to proceed is to conceptualize the interaction a multiracial individual has with the social structure is symbiotic. The individual's skin color and physical appearance as well as their social networks, engagement with ethnic culture, relative status of the racial groups in question, past experiences of discrimination, assimilation, racial composition of their neighborhood, any cohabitating family, racial composition of their school, and time spent in their "mother" country can all influence how one chooses to identify at a given time (Anderson 1999; Brunisma and Rockquemore 2001; Dennis 2008; Herman 2004; Khanna 2004). This can, in turn, have an impact on self-esteem, belongingness, and the degree of value that they attach to racial or ethnic identity (Charmaraman and Grossman 2010; Deters 1997; Hall 2011). Depending on their racial identification, real world consequences can result.

One issue with multiraciality that little of the literature attends to is the racial hierarchy that exists within multiraciality, even within the multiracial Asian community. Those multiracial Asians with part white/European ancestry—as opposed to Asian/black or Asian/Latino mixed ancestry—are considered the elite of that group (Williams-Leon 2003). This is a result of the mixture with the dominant group in American society which mirrors the racial hierarchy in our monoracially defined society.

One of the most obvious factors involving identity formation is one's physical appearance including skin tone, eye shape, lip shape, nose shape, body size, hair texture,

etc. As I have said, human beings categorize people, even if that means *creating* categories (Bradshaw 1992). The issue with mixed race individuals is that their physical appearance is often racially ambiguous (Bradshaw 1992; Brunnsma and Rockquemore 2001; Deters 1997; Rockquemore, Brunnsma, and Delgado 2009). People who come into contact with a mixed race person are often confused and ask the problematic question, “What are you?” This question is fickle, humiliating, and alienating (Bradshaw 1992; Deters 1997). Multiracials, myself included, have often been asked this question; and it quickly devolves into a guessing game. Once a non-white identity is revealed, as a result of the question addressing racial ambiguity, people are often shocked because the multiracial in question does not fit into their notion of what “pure” races should look like. Idealized racial purity shapes and most likely limits understanding of the countless mixes of people that occur (Bradshaw 1992). Appearances, however, do not have absolute predictive power to determine one’s identity as other factors are taken into account in terms of predictability (Brunnsma and Rockquemore 2001).

A particularly important study regarding multiracial Asians (Khanna 2004). Nikki Khanna (2004) determined through a sample of 110 Asian-white multiracial adults factors that affect multiracial racial identity were: increased physical likeness or phenotype, increased exposure to non-white heritage, gender of the respondent, gender of their Asian parent, immigrant generation, and SES. The strongest factors were phenotype and cultural exposure. Khanna found that reflected appraisals, or individuals’ perceptions of how others view them (Cooley 1902; Goffman 1959; Khanna 2004; Mead 1934; Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1982), affect multiracial Asian identity. Multiracial

Asians may feel legitimated (read: monoracial) if they think others will perceive them as a racial or ethnic minority. Also, labeling themselves as a racial or ethnic minority can stem from guilt by association with the white majority. If they had spent time living in their mother country they are less likely to identify as Asian. A potential reason for this is because a difference can be highlighted between the multiracial individual and the monoracial Asians in the Asian country (Khanna 2004).

There are a few problems to consider when discussing racial and ethnic identity. It is important to realize that identities are not static and can change dramatically over one's lifetime (Bisogni, Connors, Devine, and Sobal 2002; Herman 2004). Also, Asian/white individuals are also more likely to pass as white or multiracial because of their racial ambiguity (Bradshaw 1992). Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, and Anderson (1995) argue that due to increased likelihood for Asian Americans to marry exogenously, the resulting children tend to identify ethnically with their non-Asian background. Individuals that are Asian/white mixed, who are often more racially ambiguous, generally have a much easier time passing as white than a black/white mixed person (Bradshaw 1992). This ambiguity in appearance also influences the feeling by the individual of not belonging or not being accepted by the groups of which they may feel a part (Bradshaw 1992; Deters 1997).

There are many variables to consider, in addition to the ones included in the aforementioned hypotheses. The variables under consideration in this study are phenotype, social network composition, and cultural exposure to their ethnic Asian heritage. Therefore, the more phenotypically "Asian" a multiracial Asian appears, the

more likely they will be to identify as multiracial or mixed. The more ethnically homogenous one's social networks are (read: the more intraethnic opportunities for contact), the more likely they will be to identify as multiracial or mixed. Finally, the more cultural exposure (and therefore more ethnic social capital) they have to their Asian heritage, the more likely they will be to identify as multiracial or mixed. Social networks and social capital will be further expanded upon in a later section.

Alternative Identity

Mary Bernstein and Marcie De La Cruz (2009) describe the multiracial Asian movement, under the banner of Hapa. The term Hapa was first used in Hawaii to describe someone that was part Hawaiian (or Asian, usually Japanese) mixed with European descent. After Japanese migration from Hawaii to mainland U.S., the term followed. Now Hapa is used to describe any multiracial Asian American. Hapas are “mixed-race Asian Pacific American” (723). This term is meant to bridge the gap between Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans. There has been some backlash, however, to this grouping. It is not clear whether this term incorporates those mixed-race individuals with heritage from the Asian continent or solely Pacific Islands. It also does not stipulate how much of the Eurasian continent they are considering “Asian” if it does imply Asian continent membership. For example, does the Asian subcontinent and Middle East count as “Asian” under this term? Additionally, scholars advocate for the Pacific Islander American community to self-identify as Pacific Islander American as opposed to Hapa predicated on the different experiences and hardships between the two groups (Mayeda and Okamoto 2008).

Despite the differences in the conception of who is to be included within the Hapa category, there still may not be considerable traction with the category itself. The majority of the population is likely unaware of the term and those that would be considered Hapa do not identify with the umbrella term, and such fundamental acceptance of the group label seems necessary for collective identity, a “culture of solidarity” can emerge (Nagel 1994). Considering the nature of the multiracial Asian community, if it can be considered a community at all, which needs a stronger and more widespread collective identity, this culture of solidarity would need to involve considerable conscious mobilization. The obstacle for multiracial Asians to form a collective identity is to find common cultural ground on which to establish similarities.

Pan-Ethnic Identity?

Interestingly, the term Asian American did not exist until the late 1960s (Spickard 2001). Instead of a pan-ethnic identity, Asians were split into ethnic groups, ethnic subgroups (e.g. Okinawan Japanese) or simply lumped into the category of “Orientals.” A panethnic coalition began to form after the 1965 Immigration Act (Spickard 2001). Panethnic attempts and the formalization of Asian panethnic coalitions can erase the vast differences between Asian ethnic groups; however, it can also serve as a platform to unite diverse people through their experiences of discrimination and inequality (Powell 2008). Pan-ethnic identification (i.e. as Asian American) can vary by immigrant generation and by ethnic group (Park 2008). Therefore, multiracial second generation immigrants may differ in their desire for pan-ethnic identification as opposed to ethnic-specific identification. Internal boundaries are often created within the Asian

population (Pyke and Dang 2003). Often what it means to be a “hyphenated” American (e.g. Korean American, Vietnamese American, Asian American, etc.) falls on the shoulders of the second generation because they straddle being both Asian and being American (Pyke and Dang 2003).

Social Networks and Social Capital

An individual’s identity, as previously mentioned, can be influenced by phenotype, interaction (or lack of interaction) with family members, social class, group membership, as well as social networks. Social networks can be described as the intersections within peoples’ interpersonal environments. Interpersonal environments are made up of people in their social circle, or directly connected to them, as well as those that are made through connections of those within their social circle. They can roughly be described as friendship or kin networks and acquaintance networks. There is a direct influence of the friendship or kin network on the individual. Often, they share the same tastes, values, beliefs, and there is often a sense of obligation between actors. The contact between these actors is generally more frequent and deeper in level. This is not to suggest that the acquaintance networks do not influence the individual. The individual is still influenced by the actions of those outside their initial social circle (Alba and Kadushin 1976). These networks are generally formed based on the principles of homophily, or the preference to associate with those that are similar to oneself especially in terms of behaviors and opinions, while heterophily, the preference to associate with those that are different from oneself, is the basis of acquaintance networks (Alba and Kadushin 1976; Bojanowski and Buskens 2011; Burk, Steglich, and Snijders 2007).

All of the social relationships described above generate some form of social capital. Social capital can be described in many ways. In more economic terms, “social capital is a metaphor about advantage” (Burt 2000). For Bourdieu (1985), social capital is “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to membership ties in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital” (248). In other words, social capital is a result of the resources that can be gained from social relationships. Coleman suggests that social capital is the result of the social structure producing an advantage; it is not necessarily material in nature, and it is productive (Burt 2000; Coleman 1988). Margaret Somers (2005) offers that social capital involves a network of social relationships that produce a resource “for those who have access to it” (9). She asserts that it is not a material product but a mental state. Nan Lin (2008) similarly asserts that social capital is a resource that can be gained through ties in one’s social network. Finally, for Putnam, social capital is the facilitation of action by the social structure for mutual benefit (Burt 2000; Portes 1998). The common themes of these many definitions are social structure, social relationships, and resources that facilitate action. Social relationships are formed and guided by the social structure. These relationships provide resources to its members that can be used for action.

Social capital emerges from the social structure and the relationships embedded within that structure. It can be used only if one has access to it. Social capital affects the flow of information to the actor as well as influence and solidarity within the social circle. Within each social network there are opportunities for social capital transactions. When it is accessible, one must also have the motivation and ability to harness that

resource. Often actors are motivated by reciprocity, incentives, and shared norms within the group. Without opportunity, motivation, and ability, the social actor cannot activate the social capital that is generated from the relationships (Adler and Kwon 2002). Using a network theory of social capital, this social capital can be both accessed and used. The greater capacity and better used this social capital is, the better the return for the actor (Lin 2008).

There are numerous characteristics of social capital. First, it is relatively long-lasting and can be invested in with the assumption that one will receive higher returns. Second, it can be appropriated and used for another purpose. For example, social capital can be turned into economic or cultural capital. Third, it can serve as a compliment to other forms of capital. Fourth, social capital requires maintenance. It must be cultivated or it will lose its efficacy. Fifth, social capital is the property of the collective. Sixth, as previously mentioned, social capital is located within social relationships; it is not located within a particular individual. Finally, the investment of social capital is unquantifiable (Adler and Kwon 2002). The volume of social capital is dependent on the size and nature of network connections. These network connections can be strong or weak, short-lived or long-term (Bourdieu 1985). In order for social capital to benefit an individual there must be a sense of solidarity, obligation, and trust between actors (Coleman 1988; Portes 1998).

This concept is further confounded with the inclusion of other forms of capital, namely economic capital, cultural capital, and human capital. Economic capital is a form of capital that can be translated to money or investments in more tangible assets.

Cultural capital is a form of capital that can translate directly to education, social class, and can be transferred into economic capital in some circumstances (Bourdieu 1985).

Human capital is the skills and capabilities of the individual that enable one to act. It is possible for human capital to be invested in certain human resources, such as the development of a skill, to then be converted into economic capital. For Coleman, social capital also generates human capital (Portes 1998).

The relationship between social networks and social capital is particularly relevant to the discussion of strong or weak ties in their generation of social capital. Lin (2008) presents a model of these different forms of networks and their respective social capital. Think of a three-layered Russian *matryoshka* nesting doll. The inner layer is called the binding level, the intermediary layer is the bonding level, and the outer layer is the belongingness level. Movement to the outer layers of the model represents decreased contact, decreased density of the network, and an increased diversity of resources available to an actor. The binding level includes shared sentiment and mutual support for one another. The bonding level includes shared information and resources; it can include both strong and weak ties. The strength of ties is determined by the time invested, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocation (Granovetter 1973). The final layer, the belongingness level, is more diverse in terms of resources and includes mostly weak ties (Lin 2008).

As discussed, there are generally two kinds of networks. The first, I will discuss is the friendship or kin network that Lin (2008) calls the binding level. This network is dense—in that the members of the network are all connected to one another—and is

relatively closed off. Burt (2000) refers to these dense networks as networks with closure. There is less diverse social capital in this type of network as a result of homophily based on ascribed and achieved characteristics (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001). However, there is also less risk in social relations among people in this network as a result of trust and the obligation and expectation to abide by the agreed upon norms that have developed (Coleman 1988). These norms provide the threat of sanctions for those who may break them. Interestingly, these threats increase the trust among these dense networks. These networks involve bonding capital (Coleman 1988). To be fully immersed in this dense network with few ties outside of it serves to “encapsulate” the individual “in terms of knowledge of the world beyond his own friendship circle” (Granovetter 1973:1371). Thus, strong ties, while able to breed cohesion within a group, serve to fragment a community. To unite the divergent literatures on race, ethnicity, social networks, and identity one can take the example of race which is the strongest predictor of homophily. Homophily is directly related to self-enhancement motives previously discussed. When interacting with a similar other, the individual is reinforced. Once there is reinforcement, the individual has a more positive self-concept as a result (Wong 2009).

Lin’s (2008) bonding and belongingness levels correspond more directly to what is generally known as loose networks. These networks have structural holes which are the weaker connections between any two social groups (Burt 2000). For those that are able to span these holes and connect the two groups, there is an incredible advantage. These “brokers” (or those with bridging capital) are in control of the flow of information

between groups. They have a disproportionate say in the particular interests served by their connection. This bridging capital allows people from one social circle to have access to less redundant information than can be found within a dense network.

However, the gains for the single broker are dramatically decreased when other members of his or her dense network are able to build a bridge to the same outside network. In these open structures (Coleman 1988), the sanctions that were available in dense networks are unable to be applied and trust is less likely to be formed.

Granovetter (1973) was particularly interested in the strength of these weak ties. In his formulation, all bridges are weak ties but not all weak ties are bridges. Weak ties can provide more direct access to particular resources or information. This suggests that the removal of a weak tie is more detrimental to the potential social capital of an actor than the removal of a strong tie because of the level of redundancy in a dense network. These weak ties serve to connect many more people than strong ties as well. On a structural level, these weak ties serve a function of mobility. Weak ties can be found in formal organization as well as in one's workplace, through friends, etc. They are indispensable for the integration of smaller, closed communities and for the individual in terms of opportunity.

There are obvious advantages to certain social relationships over others. There are positives for strong ties as well as weak ties. Social capital emerges from all ties, albeit in differing degrees of diversity. The link between social structure and social capital highlights the productive nature of social relationships. In terms of ethnic identity, social network and social capital can provide incredible insight into

acculturation, or the adoption of a host culture (Gans 1997), and retention of ethnic social and cultural capital. One's networks can greatly influence the degree of this retention as well as influence one's ethnic identity. Multiracials are also potentially more likely to be brokers that span structural holes which can provide them with structural advantages.

While studies of social networks and social capital provide an understanding of the benefits (and detriments) of particular social relationships, there are some shortcomings for the framework. First, the theoretical link between networks and capital is highly structural. There is little room for theorizing about human agency (aside from seizing certain opportunities) in this formulation. Second, this link tends to underplay the role of the other, important forms of capital, specifically economic and cultural capital. There is a clear bias to social capital and the effects it has on relationships and mobility. However, the other forms of capital receive little attention when discussing social networks. Third, while theories of social capital generate explanations of the sources and characteristics of social capital, there is little attention paid to the generation of social networks, and specifically the generation of weak ties. Many researchers study the efficacy of social networks that are already formed. However, there is little research on the generation of a weak tie. Where do these brokers come from? How can a weak tie be sustained?

Of course after reviewing literature on social networks and social capital one cannot ignore the economic influence. The basic principles are inextricably tied to economics—for good reason. Markets, profit, gain, and calculated choices are key to

understanding these concepts. My focus, however, is not economic. There is also a large portion of literature regarding social networks that has a distinctively mathematical focus designed for in depth analysis. The focus of my research is not the economic forces that drive cooperation and affiliation and a highly quantitative analysis of networks.

Alternatively, my study is on the makeup of individual social networks which in turn influence social and cultural identity. Therefore, this section's main focus will be on those aspects of social capital and social networks with an application on race and ethnicity.

Race and Ethnicity in Social Networks

With respect to identity and social networks, when social networks converge and multiple (perhaps previously segmented) identities are forced together an individual has the "option" to present a multifaceted self or fight for a one of the many fluid identities that compose that individual (Gatson 2011). This presents an interesting problem for multiracials as their options are compounded with issues of race and ethnicity as well as gender, age, social class, etc. This is especially the case with the presence of social media and the wide-ranging presentation of the self to "friends" and family.

Multiracial Asians potentially have bifurcated but more numerous social networks and can act as a bridge. They also may have "dual" or multiple stores of social capital based on those social networks. There are a number of patterns in the research based on race and ethnicity, some on multiracials. Whites tend to have larger, more diffuse social networks comprised of loosely tied friends (Ajrouch, Antoucci, and Janevic 2001; MacPhee, Fritz, and Miller-Heyl 1996). Ethnic minorities, on the other

hand, tend to have smaller social networks comprised of family members. Blacks and Asians, specifically, are seven times more likely to have intraethnic relationships than other minority groups (Currarini 2010). The aforementioned patterns can be the result of a number of phenomenon including proximity and affiliation (Ajrouch, Antoucci, and Janevic 2001; Alba and Kadushin 1976), interpersonal environments (Alba and Kadushin 1976), ethnic boundaries (Baerveldt, Van Duijin, Vermeij, Van Hemert 2004), ethnic group size (Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002; Small 2007), age, gender, acculturation or assimilation (Baerveldt et al. 2004; Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002; Tsukashima 2007), similarity (Alba and Kadushin 1976), social distance (Buchan, Johnson, and Croson 2006), preference and opportunity (Baerveldt et al. 2004; Bojanowski and Buskens 2011; Burk, Steglich, and Snijders 2007; Currarini 2010), ethnic capital (Borjas 1994; Goza and Ryabov 2009), and social structure (MacPhee, Fritz, and Miller-Heyl 1996).

Proximity is a measure of distance. In particular it measures the flow of information. Affiliation, the overlap of interpersonal environments, is one way to measure proximity as well as measuring direct and indirect communication (Alba and Kadushin 1976). When people have more similar backgrounds, including race and ethnicity, this will increase their interaction or affiliation (Alba and Kadushin 1976). Specifically, “the degree to which the interpersonal environment of any two individuals overlap is a [sic] measure of their proximity in terms of affiliation” (Alba and Kadushin 1976:85). This is not to suggest that people with dissimilar ethnicities will not interact or communicate. The position in one person’s social circle overlapping with another creates

opportunities for interethnic contact (Alba and Kadushin 1976). It has been suggested that this contact should reduce prejudice and segregation as well as increase positive racial attitudes. This is the basis of the opportunity hypothesis (Baerveldt et al. 2004) and the contact hypothesis (Sigelman and Welch 1993). Social identity theory, on the other hand, would suggest that people would prefer *not* to interact with those different from oneself in an attempt to enhance their differences, thus resulting in increased prejudice and segregation (Baerveldt et al. 2004). Baerveldt et al. (2004) argues that the social identity argument is unfounded because ethnic minorities tend to have greater interethnic contact despite the importance of intraethnic contact. When one prefers to have intraethnic contact over interethnic contact, ethnic boundaries may potentially be erected; however, the data are inconclusive (Baerveldt et al. 2004). Some research (Baerveldt et al. 2004) has suggested that whites tend to prefer interethnic contact while ethnic minorities tend to *prefer* intraethnic contact despite *choosing* to interact interethnically. Perhaps the preference is a result of increased similarities and shared ethnic capital, which will be discussed later, while the choice is a result of structural factors such as opportunity.

The degree to which an individual has inter- or intraethnic contact reflects the opportunity one has for that kind of contact (Alba and Kadushin 1976); they share bonding capital, common interests that bind people together in a social network (Cheong et al. 2007; Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002; Lin 2008; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Putnam 1994; Reynolds 2007; Reynolds 2010). Many scholars have argued that the larger the size of the minority group the less likely members of that minority group

will engage in interethnic contact (Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002). Bonding capital reinforces the ties within homogenous groups (Reynolds 2010). When social capital, or in this case ethnic capital, is utilized within a bonded network, ethnic enclaves develop and can become virtually self-sustaining markets for the ethnic group. The development of ethnic enclaves and subsequent job markets within one's ethnicity also decreases interethnic contact because it shelters members from external competition and increases segregation (Portes 1998; Tsukashima 2007; Zhou 2005).

The homogeneity of the respective networks is also important to examine. Typically, interethnic networks are less homogenous than intraethnic networks when the network provides emotional support (Baerveldt et al. 2004). These opportunities and preferences, of course, are often mediated by age, gender, minority group size, and even acculturation or assimilation (Baerveldt et al. 2004; Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002; Tsukashima 2007). Revealed preference theory states that one can determine preferences by evaluating the choices one makes compared to the opportunities one has (Currarini 2010).

Age, gender, and acculturation have also been suggested to significantly affect the size of social networks as well as interethnic contact (Baerveldt et al. 2004; Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002; Tsukashima 2007). As an individual ages, the size of their social circles decreases because of network attrition, a narrowing of interests, declining resources, and fewer chances to meet new people and form new relationships (Fiori, Consedine, and Merz 2011). In terms of gender, one is more likely to interact with members of one's own gender because of commonality and similar interests, although

this does not completely mediate the effect of ethnicity on interethnic contact (Baerveldt et al. 2004; Burk, Steglich, and Snijders 2007; Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002). Acculturation, the absorption of particular aspects of a dominant culture and subsequent dismissal of one's original culture, or assimilation, the increase of social ties within the dominant group, would influence the similarities between two distinct ethnic groups (Gans 1997). Therefore, the more an ethnic minority assimilated into the mainstream group, the greater interethnic contact there would be. Although, the smaller and more similar the minority group—culturally *and* phenotypically—is to the dominant group, the more *likely* the minority group is to integrate (Bojanowski and Buskens 2011; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Especially for adolescents, the greater the number of interethnic ties, the more rapid assimilation will be (Adler and Kwon 2002). A number of other variables—including immigrant status, marital status, and urban residence—also have an impact on the diversity of social networks (Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002).

It is important to remember the individual's personal agency in the matter of social networks. Individuals can select members to interact with, be influenced by the social structure, or both. Selection can be the result of homophily (Burk, Steglich, and Snijders 2007; Currarini 2010; Lin 2008; Zeggelink 1996). The common phrase “opposites attract” contains some truth but relationships founded upon similarity have a much more stable future. Friends and acquaintances are typically chosen based on behavior and opinions one has toward the other group (Bojanowski and Buskens 2011). Homophily would suggest a preference for segregation among ethnic groups in a society

or the erection of ethnic boundaries (Baerveldt et al. 2004); though this is not always the case.

Another way to measure the closeness between individuals is to measure social distance. Social distance influences individual decisions and “other regarding preferences” like trust and altruism (Buchan, Johnson, and Croson 2006). Although it may seem counterintuitive, Buchan et al.(2006) and Pahl and Pevalin (2005) argue, using a cross-cultural social psychological approach, that individualistic cultures—Western societies like the U.S.—have higher tendencies for other regarding preferences as opposed to collectivistic cultures—Eastern societies like China and Japan. The reason for this is because in individualistic cultures, in-groups are numerous and tend to be more temporary and flexible. Therefore, there is less preference between in-groups and out-groups which leads to greater other regarding preferences in terms of out-group regard. In collectivistic cultures, in-groups are few and include more members from primary groups, or those that provide emotional support for the individual. Therefore, nations like the U.S. should have a stronger in-group bias and subsequent lack of social distance (Buchan, Johnson, and Croson 2006). However, when members of collectivistic societies immigrate to an individualistic society it would take time to overcome that orientation, not to suggest that all immigrants desire such a change¹. “The disenfranchised and various new immigrant populations are often made to bear ‘the

¹ It is important to note that, as Matsumoto (1999) critiques, all “cross-cultural” research is fundamentally flawed because asserting that national identity is a proxy for culture is to assume a culture as group paradigm which is contrary to the position taken in this dissertation (i.e. culture as patterns paradigm). This dichotomous view of culture is narrow and limiting. It ignores the possibility for heterogeneity within a nation or region or any collectivity.

weight of the world', bringing their social and cultural 'baggages' into established societies and communities" (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, and Solomos 2007:16). Therefore the levels of social distance of new immigrants or people part of a tightly knit ethnic social network, regardless of generational status, would be higher than those in the mainstream. It is important to note that social identity, specifically their salient in-group identity, was not a mediating factor in social distance (Buchan, Johnson, and Croson 2006).

In line with the literature regarding opportunity is the discussion of social structure. The main argument of these scholars is that the social structure constrains the opportunities and choices that people have for interethnic network membership (MacPhee, Fritz, and Miller-Heyl 1996). (Alternatively, one's particular network membership can constrain and shape one's behavior (Granovetter 1973).) Group identity, prejudice, limited access to social capital, and ideological differences between cultures (MacPhee, Fritz, and Miller-Heyl 1996) all factor into limits on opportunities and choices. However, one of the most important variables that influence social networks is economics. MacPhee, Fritz, and Miller-Heyl (1996) found that among families, economic well-being was a more important variable than ethnicity in terms of differences in networks. It must be mentioned, however, that ethnicity and economic well-being are inextricably linked. Later immigrant generations, specifically second and third generations, are able to achieve economic success more quickly than previous generation because of the ethnic spillover effect (Borjas 1994). This economic success results in greater social capital and opportunities to connect to many different networks.

Race and Ethnicity as Social Capital

Social capital is a resource embedded within a social network (Lin 2008).

Variations within social networks will determine the access and accumulation of social capital, among other types of capital (Lin 2008). The capital that one can accumulate over time, within one's ethnic network, and through intraethnic networks can be affected by all of the aforementioned variables such as age, immigrant generation, acculturation, assimilation, gender, etc.

According to the ethnic capital hypothesis, commonalities of culture will unite members of an ethnic group similar to bonding capital (Borjas 1994; Goza and Ryabov 2009; Reynolds 2010; Zhou 2005). Ethnic capital is defined as "ties to ethnic institutional agents" (Lew 2001:146) or "a form of human capital common to all members of that group" (Borjas 1994:101). This form of capital is functional for ethnic communities to preserve because it strengthens intergenerational ties; it is an investment in the community (Lew 2001). Having social capital allows one to achieve certain ends that would otherwise be impossible (Coleman 1988). For ethnic minorities, ethnic capital, a form of social capital, would provide members with beneficial resources and in turn could potentially benefit all members of that network. As previously mentioned, cultural capital can transform into economic capital (Bourdieu 1985). Depending on the cultural context in which one is situated, differing cultures will have greater economic capital which then will manifest in social capital and opportunity.

Bridging capital implies that ethnic minorities within social circles act as bridges for whites, as well as members of other ethnicities, to engage in more interethnic contact

and eventual relationship due to emerging commonalities (Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey 2002; Granovetter 1973; Reynolds 2007; Reynolds 2010; Zeggelink 1996).

When an individual interacts with members at the outer edge of their social circle, they are more likely to encounter more diverse people and engage in heterophily, by definition (Granovetter 1973; Lin 2008). Bridging capital, however, is viewed as a less stable base for relationships and is often more temporary (Reynolds 2007). On a more macro level, bonding capital may be seen as less desirable for a cohesive society, particularly one based on assimilationist motives (Cheong et al. 2007). Bridging, on the other hand, would be functional to social cohesion (Cheong et al. 2007).

Social networks and social capital are understandably intertwined. Even within the context of ethnicity, ethnic capital (Borjas 1994) that one accumulates during childhood within one's family or that one gains through interaction, can influence one's social networks. Ethnic capital can manifest as ethnic language ability, knowledge (and potentially practice) of customs, and social ties to ethnically similar others. Inter- and intraethnic relationships can be formed as a result of the degree of ethnic capital one has. Bonding and bridging capital can determine to which networks that individual is connected. To take a multidimensional view of this interaction, one must also understand that social networks can affect social capital. For example, if an ethnic minority happened to be the only member of that particular ethnicity in a social network they may have more bridging capital as a result. However, the individual would likely have little ethnic capital. This would suggest that if the individual were to engage in relationships

with members of that ethnic group the ties may be weaker because that ethnic capital is not shared and therefore bonding capital with that group would be weak as well.

Many of the aforementioned factors affecting social networks and social capital are understandably interrelated. One's ethnicity, class, and gender can intersect on a micro level to produce similar consequences that, when looked at separately, will explain a portion of the phenomenon; however, when viewed altogether they explain much more. Opportunity, choice, and social structure view social networks from a structural standpoint leading to the formation of networks.

Language Retention

A smaller, yet important aspect of ethnic social capital that I am choosing to focus on is ethnic language ability. While the first generation immigrants are committed to the perpetuation of their ethnic tongue, the second generation is less so. In fact, desire to use one's ethnic language decreases throughout childhood. Interestingly, however, it increases in college (Kim 2003). Causation is difficult to determine in this case, however a clear correlation remains which could be the result of a selection bias, increased self-knowledge, increased opportunities to explore one's heritage, etc. In college, the second generation often realizes that they will always be considered different from Americans since they are phenotypically Asian. Therefore, ethnic language provides access to intraethnic ties (Kim 2003). It also symbolically represents ethnicity and cultural similarity (Phinney et al. 2001). Oh and Fuligni (2010) and Phinney et al. (2001) found that ethnic language proficiency was a strong predictor for ethnic identity. Ethnic language ability, as one may assume, often stems from parental cultural maintenance

practices. The more important a parent feels that ethnicity is, the more likely they are to try to maintain that ethnic identity in their children (Phinney et al. 2001). Therefore, members of the second generation with weak language proficiency will potentially have a weaker ethnic identity or may be isolated from the group as a result. This relates directly to cultural capital or, more specifically, ethnic capital. The more ethnic capital one has, the easier it is to incorporate oneself in that community and vice versa. However, many second generation immigrants report loss of ethnic language ability (Oh and Fuligni 2010). It is unlikely that the third generation will be proficient since the ethnic language will not be spoken in the home, interracial marriage has become the lived norm for many, and interaction with ethnic grandparents is not constant (Hall and Turner 2001; Oh and Fuligni 2010).

Second Generation

Many of the initial immigrants from Asia after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act now have children that are in adulthood (Park 2008; Spickard 2001). They are termed second generation immigrants. While many are children of two Asian parents, some are the children of mixed parentage. The second generation has potentially a different experience than the later descendants of Chinese and Japanese immigrants from the late 1800s and early 1990s. Children of newer immigrants are potentially more immersed in their ethnic heritage, may have been raised learning the language of their Asian parent in addition to English, and have different familial class backgrounds than children of early Asian immigrants. They also must negotiate between one parent's cultural influences and those considered "American" (Park 2008) and potentially

deemed more relevant to the second generation in adolescence. As Park (2008) suggests, the second generation may create a third culture as a result of those influences and life experiences unique to them. In terms of identity, this could relate to a “bridged” identity of multiracial or multiethnic.

Religious Affiliation of Multiracials

A recent Pew Study (2008) on religious demographics included “other/mixed-race” people. For non-Latinos, the “other/mixed-race” category, which can include anyone *not* monoracially identifying as white, black, Asian, or Latino, is broken down into religious affiliation and makes up three percent of the total sample of 35,000. The religious affiliation of multiracials (all racial and ethnic mixes collectively) is 51 percent Protestant, 14 percent Catholic, two percent as “other” Christian, nine percent Jewish and “Eastern” religions, and 20 percent unaffiliated. They comprise four percent of all Protestants and four percent of all Catholics. Multiracials have the largest portion of religiously unaffiliated, at nine percent, and seven percent are secular unaffiliated. Despite these figures, the mixed-race racial group is not further broken down into subcategories. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the religious affiliation of multiracial Asians or further into ethnic categories within the pan-Asian label. There also may be those multiracials that chose to identify monoracially as opposed to using the “other” category. This Pew Study, unintentionally, highlights some of the basic issues of multiracials generally, and the study of them specifically in terms of religion.

Lived religion, or everyday religion, can differ greatly from traditional religious engagement. While it can be similarly powerful, lived religion permeates all aspects of

one's everyday life. It can be utilized when at work, at home, preparing dinner, going to class, and even being idle. Severe hardship may elicit a potent everyday religion, but an intricate life (with perhaps fewer hardships but with conflicting elements) can do the same. Lived religion can provide meaning; it can be a coping mechanism; it can be a valuable resource for continuing under harsh circumstances. Lived religion can also provide a framework for understanding one's life. It is my contention that discussing everyday religion will be more informative as these respondents may come from two or more strikingly different cultural and religious backgrounds. As Sullivan states, "people carry with them culture, ideas, and values from religious institutions in which they were raised (even if nominally raised), the religious culture of their families of origin, their environments, and American society more broadly" (p.203). Therefore, the religiosity of multiracials *may* be more fractured than so-called monoracials. Sullivan's questions also address social networks in addition to basic questions of religious practices and history.

There are a number of unanswered questions that remain in terms of the multiracial Asian population, the largest multiracial population in the United States (Root 2001). Are they attending religious institutions where the members are predominately of one racial group? Do they transcend race when at such institutions (Marti 2009; Pitt 2010; Wong 2009)? Do they attend ethnic religious institutions because their religiosity is intertwined with their ethnic identity (Pitt 2010)? How is their choice of religious institution influenced by their social networks and racial and ethnic identity? How does their religious institution, and its demographic makeup, influence their social networks and racial and ethnic identity? Alternatively, how do their social networks and

identity influence their religious participation and affiliation? Do they conform to patterns of religiosity of “monoracial” second generation immigrants (Park 2008)? Are they largely religiously unaffiliated? How is their religiosity influenced by their social networks and racial and ethnic identity?

An issue for racially and ethnically identifiable individuals is that “within the constraints of recognition (meaning the way in which most people immediately assign ethnic categories to others), social actors ongoingly choose whether to assert, alter, or obscure their ethnic identity” (Marti 2009:54). Does this change in different contexts? Does this impede their feeling of belonging in a particular context? Does it lead to attempts at cultural retention or further isolation? These are issues that can arise in a religious or secular context.

In congregations with many racial groups present, also referred to as multiracial congregations, it was found that religious identity as well as racial identity were salient to the individual (Marti 2009; Pitt 2010; Wong 2009). When religious identity is salient, perhaps superseding the importance of racial identity, the potential for intergroup relationships increases and intergroup bias and social distance may decrease. This coincides with Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis as increased close and sustained contact with dissimilar others can increase friendship between individuals from disparate groups as a result of dispelled stereotypes and increased positive feelings about the group. This directly relates to Tajfel’s social identity theory (Owens, Robinson, Smith-Lovin 2010). When an aspect of one’s identity is particularly salient, the individual will interact on the basis of that overarching group membership as opposed to individual or

personal characteristics of others. This salience can depend on the context of course. Therefore, once an individual is no longer in a religious context, a shift in the importance of religious identity may occur thereby highlighting once again the importance of ethnic or racial identity (Wong 2009).

Based on the literature, I hypothesize that multiracial Asian individuals, if participating in an ethnic religious organization as opposed to a religious organization that is predominately non-Asian, will be more likely to identify as multiracial or mixed. However, I hypothesize further that if the multiracial individual is phenotypically or culturally set apart from the majority of the organization's other members, they may feel a sense of isolation. In terms of the choice of religious affiliation, if one's social networks are largely interethnic (read: non-Asian), their religious affiliation will mimic that of their non-Asian peers.

Second Generation Religion

An ethnic religious group is any group of people that share similar religious customs and ethnic background. It is thought that the maintenance of these ethnic religious groups is at odds with assimilationist motives that ethnic ties will decrease upon immigration (Kim 2004). However, this retention is important for intergenerational transmission of religion and culture.

Religion and ethnicity are often interrelated (Park 2008). It is for this reason that one's religion can also affect one's ethnic identity; one's ethnic identity and relationships can influence one's value orientations (Chong 1998). The family, including extended family and fictive kin (Cha 2003; Root 2001), is a very important aspect of

cultural maintenance (Park and Ecklund 2007). Through parents, especially the mother, language is transmitted as well as ethnic religious traditions. Transmitting a religion from the first generation to the second generation does not necessarily help to transmit ethnic culture and identity unless there is a strong correlation between the two (Chong 1998); for example, being a Vietnamese Buddhist or an Indian Hindu. If there is a white American religious organization counterpart that a second generation child can attend—especially likely for Catholics and Protestants—the ethnic religious group may lose second generation members to this “American” institution (Min and Kim 2005). The reason for this is because non-Christian immigrants are able to use their religion as an ethnic identifier more readily than Christian immigrants since Christian religious groups in the U.S. are not generally associated with an overarching ethnic identity (Chong 1998; Min and Kim 2005). Therefore, I hypothesize that multiracial Asians engaged in a non-ethnic religious organization will be less likely to identify as a racial minority/monoracially.

One particularly potent phenomenon in second generation immigrant religious research is the experience of Korean American college students (Cha 2003; Chong 2008; Kim 2003; Kim and Pyle 2004; Kim 2004a; Kim 2004b). Second generation Korean Americans represent an interesting case as they are the most religious of any group of Asian Americans (Kim 2004a) and the link between Protestantism and Korean ethnicity is highly important for many of the second generation (Cha 2003). As a result of dissatisfaction with first generation religious institutions—that are predominately ethnically homogenous, hierarchical, and patriarchal—second generation college

students have begun to form their own Protestant organizations on campus. Therefore, second generation groups try to be more inclusive and less static. This “silent exodus” as it has been coined, is a very prominent phenomenon in the Korean American religious community witnessed through interviews and observations (Kim and Pyle 2003). These campus groups are usually separate from the white evangelical groups as they have experienced marginalization from those groups in the past (Kim 2004a; Zhou and Xiong 2005). The second generation Korean American religious groups are influenced by their religious and ethnic history and therefore usually only attract other Korean American Protestants. Worshipping with others that have had similar experiences with parents and a result of their racial and ethnic backgrounds provides the second generation with a feeling of belonging and sense of comfort. The desire for homophily is what brings these Korean American college students together in a religious setting.

It has been argued that the ethnic church helps fight against acculturation (Warner and Srole 1945) but also lends itself to selective acculturation (Warner and Wittner 1998). Selective acculturation is the process by which members of an ethnic community choose to retain important aspects of their ethnicity, religion often being one of them, and pass them on to future generations (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller 2005; Zhou and Xiong 2005). This selective acculturation serves to preserve ethnic language and norms. Creating an ethnic church is often viewed as a defensive move for immigrants to retain their identity despite marginalization and assimilation (Chong 1998; Kim 2003). The second generation, usually, does not wish to eliminate all of their ethnic practices. Therefore, while

incorporating into the mainstream, the second generation will retain some aspects of their parents' ethnicity. Evidence for this is often seen in their ethnic identities, the desire to have intraethnic ties of many kinds, feelings of discrimination and marginalization, proficiency and use of their ethnic language, and consumption of ethnic media and food (Kim 2003). By becoming a member of their ethnic community, the second generation may be one step closer to resolving personal questions of identity and selfhood (Park 1999). However, while the second generation may continue to practice the first generations' religion, in an attempt to become more "American" they may leave their ethnic church (San Buenaventura 2002).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Rationale

There is a separation, or lack of integration, between traditional social psychological identity theories and cultural identity theories. Cultural identity theories are placed within a specific racial or ethnic framework—thereby already assuming a categorical or group based identity, and do not emphasize role identities. For multiracials, there can be many competing group identities. Social psychological identity theories are broader and not necessarily tied to specific ethnic or racial identities; cultural identity theories are more descriptive and compartmentalized. At the same time, social psychological identity theories do not seem to go into the depth on racial or ethnic identity that cultural identity theories do. Despite their differences, it is my contention that a bridge can be built between the two traditions.

Study Design

This study consists of three different data sources. The first source is quantitative from Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR): the 2008 National Asian American Survey. The second source is qualitative from HapaVoice.com. The third source is also qualitative from 60 semi-structured, in-depth interviews. I chose to do a mixed methods study in order to more fully grasp the nature of the multiracial Asian experience.

Quantitative Sample

I am supplementing my qualitative interview data with quantitative data from the 2008 National Asian American Survey conducted by the ICPSR as part of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. This survey was conducted nationally with a total of 5,159 self-identified Asian American respondents. All surveys were conducted over the phone, lasting an average of 30 minutes. The sample reflects “the balance of gender, nativity, citizenship status, and educational attainment of the six largest national-origin groups in the United States, as well as the proportion of these national-origin groups within each state” (ICPSR 2008). To be eligible for this survey, one must identify as having family background in Asia (with the exception of those classified as in the Middle East). Only those respondents that self-identify—using the two racial identification questions provided, neither of which provide a “multiracial” category—with a specific Asian ethnicity or as Asian or Asian American *as well as* black/African American, Native American/American Indian, white/Caucasian, or Hispanic/Latin@. Topics in the study range from racial and ethnic identity, collectiveness with the Asian American community, discrimination, religious and ethnic social networks, basic demographic questions, civic engagement, political beliefs, behaviors, and involvement, and health and financial status (ICPSR 2008).

Preliminary analyses were conducted on the dataset to determine if there were enough cases for statistical power. Those that identify as at least two racial groups (one being Asian or Asian American) or one non-Asian racial group and a specific Asian ethnicity counted 208 out of the total 5,159 sample. There are a total of 4,807 cases in

the sample I used; this eliminates all missing cases or those that did not specify a race or complete the survey. For the tests run with $n=4,807$ —chi square tests, ANOVA, principle components analysis, OLS regression, and logistic regression—very high effect sizes can be used to establish statistical power of .99 (e.g. 1.4 for a between subjects t-test, .35 for ANOVA, and .3 for logistic regression).

None of the previously mentioned hypotheses are specifically tested with this survey as the survey was designed with other purposes in mind. Despite this, the regressions are able to illuminate similar issues regarding multiracial Asians as highlighted in my literature review. Ethnic language ability, ethnic networks, religious affiliation and attendance, personally experienced discrimination, phenotype, place of birth, and parental place of birth are variables in the study that can have an impact on racial and ethnic identity. To create meaningful data, I compare responses of those who identify as monoracially Asian to those who identify as multiracial Asian. For example, are those that identify as multiracial, as opposed to monoracially Asian, more likely to experience discrimination?

I tested perceived discrimination, parents' place of birth, attendance of religious services, and religious affiliation as identity may be conflated with any or all of these variables. In all tests of ICPSR NAAS data, multiracial identity was the dependent variable. Using regression, multiracials in the survey that are foreign born are less likely to perceive their experiences as discrimination and are less likely to experience discrimination. It seems that multiraciality has more of an effect than place of birth ($p = 0.05$; Table A-1). The validity of the discrimination questions (made into a scale during

data analysis) used in the original survey is an important issue; the Cronbach's alpha is .619 which is not ideal. This could be because discrimination was not the main focus of the civic orientation of the survey. These findings served to inform the interview questions. Additional tests were completed after the interviews. One is statistically significantly more likely to identify as multiracial if he or she attends religious services weekly or almost weekly than if never attended religious services ($p = .007$ and $p = .06$, respectively; Table A-2). This suggests that multiracials may be more religious than monoracials. Analyses on religious affiliation suggest that Catholic, Mainline Protestants, and Muslims are much more likely to identify as multiracial as are those with no religion, atheists, agnostics, evangelical and other (i.e. Mormon, 7th Day Adventist) Christian ($p = .001$; Table A-3). Those that are unaffiliated or identify with more conservative religious traditions are less likely to identify as multiracial. This could be a result of the nature of the religious tradition; but it is unclear why those that are unaffiliated would follow the same pattern. As I am examining the religiosity of multiracials in my interviews, this data serves to add more information about hapas to the sample I was able to interview. Multiracials are less likely to send money to their relatives in their home country ($X^2 = 10.561$, $p = 0.001$; Table A-4), more likely to report fair as opposed to very good overall health ($X^2 = 26.607$, $p = 0.001$; Table A-5), more likely to attend religious services ($X^2 = 37.735$, $p = 0.001$; Table A-6) than monoracials. Hapas may be less likely to send money home because of a generational, age, and racial distance between members of the family. Hapas' self-reported overall health may be lower than monoracials because of the stress involved in identity processes, especially

when one does not “fit” in. It is commonly known that one’s stress level can manifest in physical health. Finally, hapas may be more likely to attend religious services for a couple reasons. First, they may be more Americanized and their religious institution may be more congregationally oriented (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). Second, perhaps the stress involved with being multiracial in a monoracial society lead others to find solace through religion. While monetary aid and overall physical health are not specifically mentioned in my interview or HapaVoice.com data, the results provide further insight into the lives of hapas. Monetary aid can indicate a level of intergenerational and cultural attachment. Overall health, as previously mentioned, can indicate the level of stress in one’s life. Please see the Appendix for tables.

Qualitative Study

To provide an understanding of my sample’s identities and the complicated processes surrounding their identities, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured, qualitative interviews. To be eligible to participate in an interview, the respondent was required to be 18 years old or older, a U.S. citizen, and self-identify as part-Asian. While many of my respondents self-identify as hapa, multiracial, or mixed (as they were part of groups with such names) not all of them identify as such nor were found through those groups. Regardless, many understand their racial “makeup” to be mixed but racially *identify* otherwise. This will be further discussed in the Findings Section. It must be noted here that not all respondents in my study are second generation immigrants (born in the U.S. but have one parent born outside of the U.S.). They may have two U.S.-born parents, which affects their identity in different ways. They also may have been born abroad and

moved pre-adolescence (considered part of the 1.5 generation). The racial mix of my respondents also varies—as was the intention so that comparisons could be made between Asian-minority and Asian-majority mixes (Hall and Turner 2001). There is significant variation between these groupings with the “model minority.” For example, past research has indicated that Asian-Black individuals are the least accepted among the wider Asian community while female Asian-white individuals are the most accepted among the wider American community (Hall and Turner 2001). Participants could be of mixed-heritage with other “monoracial”² categories such as white, black and Latino/a³ as well (i.e. white/Asian/Native American). The Asian immigrant in their family could be a parent or grandparent. I had not intended to interview those with an Asian immigrant great-grandparent because of the potential to be too far removed from the ethnic heritage as the second generation immigrant can fall away from their parent’s ethnic culture (Oh and Fuligni 2010). However, I found that these interviews provided important—and sometimes very similar—narratives to those with a more recent immigrant history. The specific Asian heritage of the interviewees also varied. Since the Asian continent covers a vast area, those with ancestry from East Asia and Southeast Asia to the Middle East and South Asia are included as well as those with roots in the Asian Pacific.

A number of studies on multiracial individuals utilize adolescents as participants. However, similar to Khanna (2004) I am studying adults. Aside from a functional reason

² While these categories are called monoracial, it is not without the knowledge that the people subsumed within these categories can be and are very diverse.

³ Latino/a and Hispanic are often discussed as interchangeably ethnic and racial categories while the U.S. Census has another interpretation altogether. This ethnoracial category also includes incredible diversity but is colloquially understood as a group of people with specific ethnic, racial, or national origin similarities.

of IRB approval being easier to be approved of adults than children, I am studying adults because they are old enough to identify their racial preference without parental influence and likely to have passed the “identity crisis” (Deters 1997; Erickson 1968; Herman 2004; Poston 1990) that often occurs during puberty and adolescence.

I recruited participants through selective advertising in Asian-specific publication Goldenroom and Asian internet site Asian-Nation.org, calls for participation on Eurasian Nation, Blasian, Mixed/Half Asian, HapaVoice and Hapa Facebook pages, word of mouth, and snowball sampling. Of course, there was a self-selection bias with these methods of sampling. (For the advertising messages, please see the Appendix.) The people on these websites and answering the call to participate self-identify as multiracial Asian, Eurasian, hapa, or mixed Asian. Additional participants were recruited through the Texas A&M University, Department of Sociology’s social psychology recruiting in classrooms. Potential students offered demographic and contact information as well as availability. Twelve students were contacted because their responses to racial demographics indicate that they are multiracial Asian. Three of the students were available for and participated in my study. Of the 60 interviews, 20 are men, 40 are women; 48 have an Asian-white mix, 12 have an Asian-minority mix; 53 are half Asian, five are one-quarter Asian, two are three-quarters Asian. See Table 1 below for the further demographic information.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Variables Used in the Analysis.

Variable	Description	Range
Generation	Generational status (1 = 1.5 generation; 2 = 2 nd generation; 3 = 3 rd generation; 4 = 4 th generation; 5 = 5 th generation; 6 = 6 th generation)	1-6
Age	Respondent's age (1 = 18-24; 2 = 25-34; 3 = 35-44; 4 = 45-54; 5 = 55-60)	1-5
Gender	Respondent's gender (0 = male; 1 = female)	0-1
SES	Self-identified socioeconomic status (1 = poverty; 2 = working and lower class; 3 = middle class; 4 = upper middle class; 5 = upper class)	2-5
Education	Highest level of education (1 = high school diploma and some college; 2 = in college, Bachelor's; 3 = in graduate school, Master's; 4 = doctorate and professional degree)	1-4
US Region	Geographic location (1= International; 2 = West Coast; 3 = East Coast; 4 = South; 5 = Midwest)	1-5
Asian Parent	Gender of Asian parent (1 = female; 2 = male)	1-2
Asian Ethnicity	Asian ethnicity (1 = Japanese; 2 = Chinese; 3 = Korean; 4 = South East Asian; 5 = The Philippines; 6 = West Asian; 7 = South Asian; 8 = Other Asian; 9 = Mixed Asian)	1-9
Non-Asian Race	Non-Asian race (1 = white; 2 = mix; 3 = Latino; 4 = black; 5 = Middle Eastern)	1-5

I also utilized HapaVoice.com for data. This website serves as a repository for hapas to share a picture of themselves and their personal stories (sometimes including their names, ages, location, and contact information). I randomly selected 200 of these posts regardless of gender, racial mix, and location. Therefore, some of the posts are from hapas that live overseas or have a different understanding of the terms hapa (some Asian mixes as opposed to Asian mixed with another monoracial group). These posts were coded in ATLAS.ti, along with the interview transcripts, for general themes. As will be evident in the findings section, these posts are numbered. However, they are numbered within my files only. The numbers in this paper cannot be tied to posts on

HapaVoice as they were randomly sampled and are generated on the website randomly (and without numbers) as well.

Methods

The following section describes my interview schedule. Most of these questions evolve out of the literature review on identity, social networks, social capital, religion, and culture. Some of the questions regarding religion are adapted from Susan Crawford Sullivan's (2011) interview schedule addressing lived religion. In addition to questions on identity, social networks, and religion, there is also a section on culture to explore the participant's ethnic identity in more detail. As I previously mentioned, ethnic capital can range from ethnic language ability, knowledge and/or performance of ethnic customs, as well as interaction with similarly ethnic others. It is for this reason that I include a section on language ability and customs. Please refer to the Appendix for the complete interview schedule.

Interviews

Each interview was unique as they were generally conversational in nature. As a result, not every question was asked in exactly the same way or in the same order. Questions were asked in a logical way depending on the way the conversation was leaning; however, most interviews generally followed the same pattern (e.g. racial and ethnic identity, cultural knowledge and exposure, social networks, and religion). A few strayed from this pattern by discussing religion in the beginning of the interview. In fact, many questions were answered without prompting in the course of the conversation. Often I would offer details of my own experience as a multiracial Asian to increase

rapport and give the interviewee a sense of a shared experience. At times I found it necessary (and beneficial) to ask follow up questions that were not on the interview schedule. This allowed me to explore themes in more detail.

As I previously mentioned, I am multiracial Asian. My experience inserts a specific bias into this research. As a result of my upbringing and my salient experiences with identity, belonging, religion, cultural exposure, and social networks, I developed an interview schedule to reflect those experiences. Because of this bias, there is a potential that I overlooked a variable that did not affect me but affects others. Therefore, this study and its outcomes are shaped in part by my own bias. Despite this, because of the breadth of questions in my interview and analysis of HapaVoice stories that were not developed under the auspices of my study, some of this bias should be mitigated.

Interviews were conducted over a five month period. Each interview was conducted over the phone, Skype, FaceTime, or Google Hangout with the exception of two face-to-face interviews. The interviews range from 30 minutes to 2.5 hours, with an average of one hour. Because of the conversational nature of the interview, often questions would be answered out of order and without prompting. Additional questions were asked as follow-ups—specifically regarding one’s name and transcendent identity (if any). All interviews were audio recorded. Occasionally, after the interview, the respondent would contact me—unsolicited—to provide additional information or a photograph of themselves or their family. I compensated each interviewee \$20 for their participation, regardless of interview length or quality. Interestingly some participants declined payment so that I could interview more people. The form of payment for most

of the respondents was in the form of an Amazon or Starbucks gift card. Transcription of interviews was conducted by myself or contracted out to third parties for a fee. All qualitative analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti software by me.

Data Analysis Techniques

In this study I am combining different types of analysis. Specifically, in an attempt to find commonalities between social psychological identity theories and racial and ethnic identity theories, it was under the expectation that commonalities would be found in terms of group identity. I analyzed the qualitative data from the interviews including constant comparison analysis, classical content analysis of HapaVoice stories, network mapping, word counts, and chi squared tests. Constant comparison analysis is used to determine relationships among themes with basic coding (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins 2012). Classical content analysis is very similar to constant comparison analysis as themes or codes are used. The classical form, however, counts these codes for prevalence (Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2011). This is used only in the HapaVoice stories as these were written without any prompts. People shared what was most important to them; a count of these themes can be useful to determine what is most important to these hapas. That which is mentioned most often can be considered most salient to this individual. If these themes are recurrent across stories, salience can be generally determined for the population.

I used the same coding scheme for the HapaVoice stories and the interview transcripts. However, I coded the stories first as there was variation in the details they provide and do not follow a specific interview schedule. As I coded the interviews new

codes emerged; however, most of the codes from the stories were applicable to the interviews. Under the umbrella of racial identity, codes include singular, border, protean, transcendent, and American identities. Name type, parent's race and immigrant status, phenotype, change over time, identity struggles, survey questions on race, racial prominence, racial categorization (by others), the idea of racial purity, and their ego and social networks (including lack of hapas and racial isolation) are also important codes for the theme of racial identity. Under the umbrella of cultural knowledge, codes include experience with Asian and non-Asian culture and/or heritage (including symbolic ethnicity and authenticity), a desire to learn more about one or another culture, and history of international travel. Another significant overarching theme was discrimination. These codes include a discussion of the "what are you?" question, the sexualization of hapa women, overt discrimination, and use of stereotypes. Under the umbrella of hapa identity, codes include mention of hapas as interesting or exotic (by themselves or others) as well as themselves being unique, usage of the hapa term to describe themselves or others, a hapa community, a desire to help or meet other hapas, a past desire to not be hapa, and awareness of the term. Separate codes are used for belonging and hierarchy. Since religion was often not included in the HapaVoice stories the code was simply religion. Upon coding the interviews, however, I would use multiple codes in addition to religion to further specify the theme. For example, family (including their parents), marriage, kids, social networks, a philosophical understanding, extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity, religious affiliation or identity, spirituality, religious relativism, discrimination, racial isolation, belonging, the idea that race was not

important in such a setting, and feelings toward organized religion are common topics that weave into a discussion of religion. Demographic codes included immigrant generation, racial mix, Asian ethnicity, U.S. region, age, gender, SES, and education.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Statistical analyses were conducted on the interview data. While there were only 60 interviews, only 68 is needed for statistical power of .8 with an effect size of 0.40 for logistic regression. As a result of the small sample, significant findings should be interpreted with care. Chi squared test were used on my interview data because instead of operating under an assumption of normality the test uses the association between rows and columns, and is a nonparametric test. A number of the variables required recoding to meet the general rule of five expected cases per cell. There are a number of important variables under consideration in these tests: racial identity, cultural identity, hierarchy, sense of belonging (in binary and categorical form), experiences with discrimination, religious identity, ethnicity of name, ego networks, and phenotype—all of which are either categorical or ordinal. Demographic variables include immigrant generation, age (ordinal), gender (binary), level of education, socioeconomic status, geographic location, gender of Asian parent, Asian ethnicity, and non-Asian race. Based on the literature and trends found qualitatively, I conducted statistical tests to answer the following questions: 1) how does discrimination, racial identity, cultural identity, hierarchy, ethnicity of name, ego networks, and phenotype influence one's sense of belonging? and 2) how does one's sense of belonging influence discrimination, ego networks, racial identity, and hierarchy? Khanna (2004) found that a higher SES and increased exposure to Asian culture influenced one to identify as racially Asian.

Racial Identity

The racial identity of my respondents varies incredibly. Some of my respondents identify solely with their Asian heritage, some with solely their non-Asian heritage, some as mixed/multiracial/biracial, some with different identities based on the situation and surroundings, others with a race to which they do have any racial ties, and some as raceless. This highlights the variety of racial identities that Brunnsma and Rockquemore (2001) propose as possible identities for multiracials.

Singular Identity

One of the first ways to identify is to “choose”⁴ one identity:

Although I never met my other relatives. I’ve always identified myself more comfortably as European rather than Asian. (HV post #44⁵)

The previous post highlights a non-Asian identity whereas,

To be frank, I like being Filipino more than being Tunisian. (HV post #22)

highlights an Asian-only identity. Both of these ways to identify are considered singular identities (Brunnsma and Rockquemore 2001). Depending on any number of factors, this identity often varies between Asian and non-Asian.

My father never really embraced his German or English culture so I usually just identify myself as Filipino/Canadian to make it easier on people. (HV post #25)

For the longest time people, including myself, identified me as white. (HV post #60)

Ever since I was a child I’ve always identified myself as Swedish since that’s all I really knew. (HV post #90)

⁴ I put choose in quotations here because for many multiracials their identity is not a choice despite others viewing it as such.

I do find it difficult, sometimes when you have to be classed as one nationality. I tend to be bias and go for my English side. Because my name is completely English, some expect to look like one. (HV post #122)

I identify mostly with my paternal [non-Asian] side because I was raised by my father's parents. (HV post #143)

Some respondents make direct references to the racial and ethnic makeup of their location or their social networks:

I ended up settling in Orange County where I mostly identified with my Asian side due to the many Vietnamese friends I made. (HV post #167)

Growing up in the Midwest, there were very few Hapas around. Aside from my three older brothers, most of my best friends were Caucasian or African American. Consequently, while I was in lower school I associated myself as more "white" than anything. (HV post #179)

I think my brother and I both kind of felt like we were more white we were like raised in a really white area. (Shannon⁶, 27, Filipina/Jewish)

Cultural exposure, or lack thereof, is often used to justify a singular identity:

I grew up embracing my Chinese heritage—it was easy since my parents signed my brothers and I up for a plethora of classes ranging from Chinese language to traditional Chinese dance and painting (which my brothers were miraculously excused from). (HV post #23)

I still identify more with being Japanese since I think I grew up with that culture more. In many ways, a part of my heart is always in Japan because I could identify with the culture so much. (HV post #40)

I was obviously aware that my dad was white, but I grew up in a household that leaned toward my Asian side. I had high grade expectations, learned the piano at the age of 3, and have plenty of memories of a yelling mother regarding both of those and more. I even attended these math tutor classes every Saturday morning (all of which were filled with Asian kids) so I grew up considering myself an Asian. (HV post #127)

Being raised in an Asian American household, I've always easily identified with my Asian roots, even though I look 100% Caucasian. (HV post #194)

⁶ All names of interviewees are pseudonyms which reflect the ethnicity of their real names.

Others referenced their phenotype:

My appearance has always been commented on, positively or otherwise, and as a result I felt more connected to my Japanese side. (HV post #178)

Even still, some identified with one of their heritages more but made sure to “pay respects” to their other heritage:

Now I identify more with my Asian side but also love my White side. (HV post #184)

I love my Dad very much and there are aspects of his culture that I find interesting but over all I’m more comfortable with my Filipino heritage and generally identify myself as Filipino American. I’m very much aware that I don’t look like the typical Filipino but that’s how I feel inside. (HV post #35)

The majority of interviewees and HapaVoice posts suggested that at one time or another, they used a singular identity to understand themselves and navigate their social world—although they did not use the specific distinction of “singular” identity, that is a classification gleaned from their discussion of themselves. It can be “easier” to identify with one race as the majority of society sees themselves as monoracial and tries to classify multiracials with one race as well. This mindset is further supported by outdated literature on multiracials and their “identity problem” which should culminate in choosing one or the other (Erickson 1968; Poston 1990).

Border Identity

Some of my participants discuss an environment in which they were raised that positively reinforces their mixed heritage. This mixed identity is considered synonymous with a border identity. One of my interviewees, Shannon, says

Growing up my parents really tried to emphasize that I was mixed and how that made me really special and how that was like two times the cultures and two times more...I see my experience much more as one of being a multiracial

person than the typical Jewish/white experience or the typical Filipino experience. (Shannon, 27, Filipina/Jewish)

Another young woman states,

I don't primarily identify as either. I primarily identify as both. My identity is that I'm biracial. And that's how I see myself. (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

This is further reinforced by her statements that she feels connected to both parents and both of her heritages. Sarah is proud to be both; proud to be mixed. Under Brunnsma and Rockquemore's (2001) conception, Sarah and Shannon have a border identity, one that takes into account all aspects of one's racial heritage. For these women especially, a border identity seems to have a significant and positive effect on one's self-concept. This is further reinforced by two things. The first is the notion that if one has embraced a border identity, they are not internalizing the pressure to "choose" but have transcended such pressure. The second is the positive nature of the responses from those with a border identity when discussion said identity.

Chi square tests reveal that those who identify as mixed or hapa are more likely to feel like they belong nowhere or with the hapa community ($X^2 = 2.9497$, $p = 0.09$; Table A-7). This is illustrated by a quote from an interviewee.

When you are hapa you fit in everywhere, but you fit in nowhere at the same time. You feel a lot more when you fit in nowhere. (Abigail, 19, Taiwanese/black/white/Native American)

This lack of belonging is highly problematic and will be discussed in a later section.

HapaVoice posts vary in their detail as the posts are up to the discretion of the author.

However, the following posts share a similar message to some of my interviewees:

I have many cultures running through my heritage, but my upbringing was predominantly European. As I learn more about my ancestors, I realise I don't just identify with one culture. (HV post #106)

I do not like to identify as half-anything. It is too simple, too formulaic, too divisive. It implies that I must keep my identities separate. (HV post #151)

As the following example illustrates, racial ambiguity and discrimination can be important influences on one's identity. Despite—or perhaps in spite of—challenges faced, a border identity emerges:

When I was little and even 'till now people have no clue what I am. I would get called Black kid, the Chinese kid, or the Mexican kid in my early years of elementary school. It still even happens now. When I was little I would always define myself as white, being raised by my white mother. Now I don't define myself as anything but a proud multiracial and only that. :). (HV post #128)

With what geographic data was available to me on HapaVoice and the data gathered through interviews, the majority of people who had a border identity, especially a hapa identity, were in geographically diverse locations (i.e. the U.S. West Coast). As discussed in the literature review, hapa is a relatively new term which is gaining momentum in the U.S.

Needless to say, I'm glad I've come to my Hapa-realization. :) I've also come to equally embrace both Filipino and Western culture. Proud to be Hapa! (HV post #117)

Hi, I just saw this site and I love it! I finally feel like it's okay to be Hapa! (HV post #88)

However, it seems that the term is as of yet mostly known on the coasts. It is important to note that geography is not the only important variable in predicting one's racial identity which will be discussed in another section.

Protean Identity

Another way for a multiracial individual to understand themselves is for it to be situation dependent; this would be classified as a protean identity (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001). As identity is fluid, that fluidity is perhaps more salient for multiracials because of the disparate aspects of their racial and ethnic identity.

Our scarcity makes it difficult to connect to ethnic groups, and our surroundings more or less determine our cultural identification. (HV post #141)

I just think it's fluid. I think it depends on the context and time of my life and you know, when I was living in the Philippines I think Filipino was really important to me and on my bat mitzvah probably being Jewish seemed important. (Shannon, 27, Filipina/Jewish)

For Shannon, particularly, this protean identity can be used to one's advantage:

And there have been times I think it was helpful to emphasize my minority status as opposed to my white status because like then I don't know I was more like on the same team and less a person of privilege going into a under privilege community. (Shannon, 27, Filipina/Jewish)

This advantage is most understandable in adolescence:

I don't know if I've ever truly "embraced" my heritage. Because I moved around so much (I changed schools basically every two years), I struggled with my self-identity and tended to become like a chameleon; I would try to blend in with whatever surroundings I was in. (HV post #13)

Regardless of the reasons for one's protean identity, this identity is the most flexible and allows for movement between singular and border identities based on the context. This is highly related to social identity theory and the contextual nature of group identity.

Transcendent Identity

The following HapaVoice post reflects a less typical response but one that fits into the typology (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001):

Culture-wise, I regard myself as human. I disregard the fact that I have to know how to speak 4 different languages to communicate with all my family or the fact that I sometimes alternate going to temple, church, and mosque. I'm not always politically correct, but I'm always correct when I say I'm a citizen of the world. (HV post #54)

Hi, I'm [first and last name], and I am a human being. (HV post #198)

I guess now that I am older I can embrace both sides but to be honest, even today, sometimes I don't really know what to identify myself as...I guess I'm just human ;) (HV post #51)

I don't know what it's like for other people, but I genuinely don't see colour, I just see people. I really believe there is only one race: the human race. (HV post #72)

These respondents choose to identify primarily with the human race as opposed to the socially constructed racial categories. Another post broke down their racial makeup punctuated with transcendence:

50% Vietnamese. 50% Caucasian. and 100% human. (HV post #96)

This is considered a "transcendent identity" (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001).

Interestingly, some of my participants, when asked about this transcendent identity, wish they could identify as such. However, they claim that due to the nature of our society, race will continue to have meaning as it currently does.

That would be nice but because I'm in America It's just your face all the time...It's just I think it's just something that we can never get rid of because it's just so in rooted in this country especially the south. (Aurora, 34, Japanese/black/Honduran/white)

But I think the most important thing I take from it all: We all (as human beings) are more alike, than we are different. If we can all teach, learn, and share our own unique experiences with one another, we'd all see just how close our connection is to one another. So why not just consider ourselves "human beings"? Where's that check-box on all of the standardized tests and questionnaires? (HV post #198)

They do hope, nevertheless, that one day—perhaps in an ideal world—that this could be how we all identify.

Alternative Identity

Outside of one's racial heritage, there is another identity that I did not anticipate interviewees to say. Often, one feels more "American" than anything else as a result of living in the U.S., being socialized here, and having "American" networks. When asked about cultural identity, this answer often came up. However, there is a double meaning to this term which is easily identifiable when analyzing the interviews.

Do you think your identity of race and cultures have changed over time (since you were little until now)?

Honestly, I think they have, just growing up, in an environment you take that as a status quo and you don't question it when you are little. I used to think that I was a white kid, like the way I use white is uh... it's to me, it's any other normal American kid sort of term. (Chad, 19, Bangladeshi/Mexican/white)

Thus, when someone says American in these kinds of conversations the implication is that the person is white. Therefore, it can be extrapolated that someone who grew up with "not particularly 'ethnically-cultured' American roots, which I guess might define me more than my actual Chinese and European roots" (HV post #12) or one who has not "really looked that deeply into any of my cultural backgrounds, I've just lived my life as a typical American" (HV post #52) feels a part of the overall white American community and culture and does not see or feel a racial and ethnic difference between themselves and others. A reference to their lack of ethnic exposure is used as a reason for their American identity:

I think my sisters and I tend to identify being 'American' rather than 'Vietnamese' or even 'Vietnamese American' due to not being taught the

Vietnamese language and having limited cultural exposure to Vietnamese life. (HV post #118)

I do not consider myself to be truly Korean, I only speak a little Korean and culturally I feel very American. (HV post #81)

Since I've grown up in the United States, I mostly identify with being an American more than being a Korean. (HV post #140)

Others, however, took on American as a true national identity:

I'm often asked my nationality or asked outright if I'm Asian. I would always say first that I am American. (HV post #58)

Even though this does not conform to Brunsma and Rockquemore's (2001) typology of multiracial identities, it most closely relates to the transcendent identity—although not entirely.

Racial Purity

Many respondents discussed their race, and that of others, in terms of percentages and being “full” or “half.”

Um, my father is full well he's full black. He never really told where he was born. But he was born in the United States and my mother is full Korean. (Xander, 20, Korean/black)

They are full Chinese, have parents, and actually fit into a group and was accepted by their own people... Everyone around me said that I didn't look full Chinese and always guessed what I was mixed with. Since I didn't know either, I always replied by saying how all Chinese from China don't look “full Chinese” either. (HV post #129)

I am half Kiwi (New Zealander) and half Japanese. (HV post #116)

For a while, I wanted to be just full Taiwanese, full Japanese, or full Korean. (HV post #138)

People usually think I'm pure black until I grow my hair out, then they say I look Indian or Latino. (HV post #4b)

I have one full-blooded, older sister named Melissa. (HV post #8b)

Living in a predominantly white area of a big city was probably the biggest challenge growing up. I used to be extremely ashamed of the fact that I was mixed. I thought being mixed was rather strange and that it was more appealing to be of 100% of something than half. (HV post #62)

Okay. Um, my dad is Chinese. Full Chinese. And my mom is mostly Irish. But she's a little of a...a mix. (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

This highlights the dominant ideology that is pervasive in American culture about racial purity and a tendency to understand the world in monoracial terms. Despite the liminality of all of the interviewees and the sample of posts from HapaVoice, they still understand themselves and others in a monoracial frame.

Parental Background

The majority of my interviewees' Asian parent was their mother (nearly 70 percent). It was also the most common relationship structure among HapaVoice posts as well. This is the more typical arrangement that we see among multiracial Asian parentage (Wang 2012). In some, but certainly not all cases, the father of a second generation immigrant was in the military overseas. During courtship, sometimes a child would be conceived or the woman would accompany the man back to the States to live. This was often times followed by one or both parties being disowned for a significant portion of their lives because of the interracial aspect of their relationship. The other 30 percent of interviewees had either an Asian father or had both parents with an Asian background (i.e. two hapa parents, one Asian and one half-Asian parent). The gender of the Asian parent has the potential to influence how attached one becomes or how much exposure one has to their ethnic heritage. However, the parental dynamic, the presence

or absence of one of the parents, and the parental decision for cultural transmission to the children can all have a significant effect on the child.

Name

One's name can be very important to one's identity. Names can define someone in terms of their culture and ethnicity (Aceto 2002).

Even when I was a reporter, my byline would appear in the paper and I would write about a Japanese-American issue and I would get letters from Japanese stating, "Wow you really understand our culture so well." They would presume I was white. So I think the name is a big identifier. (Kirby, 47, Japanese/white)

Of the HapaVoice stories that contain names and my interviewees, peoples' names range from non-ethnic (both last and first name as non-Asian), mixed-ethnic (a mixture of last, middle, and first names that are non-Asian and Asian), and fully-ethnic (both last and first name as Asian). The majority of my interviewees, 42 out of 60, have non-ethnic names. Some of these respondents mentioned that they prefer to have a name that more fully represented their racial and ethnic heritage yet were still happy with their given names including their first, middle, and last name.

Sometimes I do especially if I feel outside of something or if people are like I can't really see it or something. So yea sometimes that validation or whatever. (Lauren, 39, Japanese/white)

Now your name...does not signify that you're Asian at all. Do you ever think about that?

No, I've never thought about it. You know that I wish it was a little bit Korean, you know, I guess my dad named me so you know... (Xander, 20, Korean/black)

I don't even have like a Filipino middle name, I don't have my mom's maiden name as my middle name, so, no part of my name gives away, you know, any sort of ethnic clues or ties.

Did you, as a child or even now, did you ever wish that you had a more Asian name?

Um, I do wish that I had my mom's maiden name as my middle name, um, just to have that connection to that side of the family. (Alysa, 29, Filipina/white)

Choosing to present oneself with a particular name can be a reflexive and social exercise in defining oneself as “different names for the same referent may be valued differently” based on the values, hierarchies, and expectations of a particular social space (Aceto 2002:577). Often during adolescence, someone with a name of mixed ethnicity would wish they had a “normal American” name so they could better fit in. Their name—especially a first name—immediately signifies their ethnicity and, often times, their difference to others. During high school, fitting in with peers is often of utmost importance. Ethnic names are often deemed inferior at this crucial time in one's identity development (Ruiz 1990).

Do you ever wish you ever had a more ethnic name? Or have you ever thought about it?

Not at all, I don't really care.

Well and then when you went through the not-wanting-to-be-Asian phase I bet you loved that!

Yeah, I mean, if I had like an Asian first name I probably... wouldn't like that. (Lidiya, 20, Japanese/Korean/white/Native American)

I feel like I think it's an advantage to have a more white name in America (Annie, 18, Filipina/French)

On the other hand, those with non-Asian names often wished for the opposite during adolescence;

When you were younger or even now did you ever want more of an Asian name to kind of prove to others that you do have Asian roots?

Yeah. And actually my mom tried to give me nicknames and they never stuck... but, yeah, I kind of do wish I had something like that. (Celine, 36, Thai/white)

or perhaps, for functional reasons,

I have known, especially, like I said I worked in the media for a while, there is a lot of newscasters who have adopted their mother's maiden name for an ethnic feel. (Kirby, 47, Japanese/white)

Name changing—or, in this case, wishing to change one's name—can be interpreted as a defense mechanism (Kitano 1982). It can also be interpreted as the desire to identify with one's culture.

Statistically significant results were found between the gender of the Asian parent and the ethnicity of the interviewee's name. Mothers were significantly most likely to have a child with a fully non-ethnic name ($X^2= 16.1-34$, $p = 0.001$; Table A-8). As trends in American culture dictate that a woman take her new husband's last name, any children of such a pairing would often be paternal. Therefore, simply by having an Asian mother as opposed to an Asian father would reduce the chances in having a fully ethnic name.

Change Over Time

Few of my respondents have maintained the same racial and ethnic identity throughout their lives. I intentionally sought out respondents that were 18 years old and older as they are nearing the end or finished with their identity "crisis" (Erickson 1968). Some of the respondents even mentioned their own crisis:

A year ago, I went through an identity crisis that left me depressed and more confused than ever. I used to not care what people thought of me, but living in Japan and being doubted has made me feel the need to prove myself. (HV post #93)

Growing up, I felt like it was somewhat of a challenge to fit in and relate to others because I didn't really know other Hapas aside from my siblings. Like most Hapas I can admit I've been through the "identity crisis" phase. (HV post #36)

As previously mentioned, high school can be a time when one's identity is in flux for reasons of incorporation. This is one of the few reasons that my respondents cited for a change in their racial and ethnic identity. Other factors included delayed cultural exposure, an incident that highlighted their racial or ethnic difference (or eventual realization of such), a search for one's heritage in adoption cases and cases with absent parent(s), and travel experiences abroad.

Identity Struggles

From an outsider's perspective, multiracial individuals have the best of both worlds. They are able to identify as one, another, or many races. In fact, they can sometimes pass as another race altogether as a result of racial ambiguity. From the hapa, perspective, however, it is a much different story. The HapaVoice stories contained many personal anecdotes about identity struggles, questions, or searches.

It was hard for me to identify myself and relate to others because I didn't know very many Hapas. (HV post #37)

"My white friends call me their Asian friend," "My Filipino friends call me the white girl..." You go through that phase of feeling like you have to prove how much of one side you are versus the other side. (i.e. "I am this Filipino because I know these many words, because I know these many celebrities, because I eat these types of foods" etc.) (HV post #49)

Throughout my life I've been stuck wondering what side I'm closer to... Being Hapa has been a struggle for me, but I wouldn't have it any other way. (HV post #59)

As with the stories of others, my relationship with race has brought confusion, frustration and pride. (HV post #63)

For those that do not fit within the dominant racial structure, questions about one's identity are understandable. Often these questions come as a result of being forced to

choose a monoracial identity which can in turn lead to a negative self-concept. The idea of “choice” or “choosing” is a common theme for hapas.

Being biracial I am faced with the challenge of having to “choose” between whether I am White or Asian. I feel that if I was 3/4 of one race, and 1/4 of another, it may be easier for me. (HV post #114)

Some took the burden upon themselves, saying they were wrong to feel like they had to choose.

I was wrong for feeling like I had to choose. I shouldn't have to choose between races. I should just think of myself as a person :-). (HV post #144)

There are times in which I imagine if the US went to war against China. Where would I stand in a battle that pitted both my relatives against one another? As such, there are instances in which being Hapa is like standing in the middle of a tug-of-war, both sides of our heritages plucking and pulling our limbs in divergent manners. The solution is not to resist nor to identify with one particular side, but rather attempt to peacefully reconcile each opposing member. (HV post #32)

In some cases, a choice is forced upon someone by their own family. For the following individual, the negative comments about his Korean heritage and the pressure by his grandmother to choose the “right” racial identity leads him to have a negative experience.

One day, I came in from playing outside and found Melissa talking with my grandmother. As I entered, she said, “Watch. Vicky will say it.” She turns to me and asks, “Vicky, what are you: Black or Korean?” Confused, but without hesitation, I say, “Both.” It wasn't the answer she wanted, and my grandmother proceeded to tell us, “No. You're black because your dad is black. That's it!” It was my introduction to the One Drop Rule. My sister told me that the conversation came up because she had to choose her ethnicity for a school form. We both agreed that we felt my grandmother was wrong, and we backed each other up on this subject from then on. Unfortunately, there would be a few instances where my grandmother brought up my Korean half as a negative when I was a teenager, living with her after my dad retired from the Army. Because these things happened during some of the more sensitive stages of my life, I had quite a bit of resentment towards my “black half.” It tore me up thinking that I

despised being black but had so much love for my dad and other black relatives and black friends, including my best friend. It wasn't pretty, and it damaged my (and my sister's) relationship with my paternal relatives for years after I moved out of my grandmother's house. (HV post #209)

However, it is not just a feeling but sometimes a requirement by others or by society to choose.

I made sure to alternate between "Asian" and "Hispanic" during my elementary school years, for fear that my parents would find out and get upset with me for denying either side of my heritage. (HV post #33)

You all have had this question asked, especially if you're a halfie, but what really bugs is the question, "What side do you identify with more?" (HV post #165)

My mother insisted that I keep in touch with my Chinese roots, but my father said that since we live in America, I should be totally "Americanized." There was always a constant pressure to pick one or the other, and growing up I tried to maintain that I was neutral towards my ethnicity and that I didn't care. It was disturbing to me that I not only felt pressure from my parents to pick an ethnicity, but my college applications, forms, grants, and loans also wanted me to pick out what I was... It was frustrating that I had to pick only one term to define who I was to other people. Then it dawned on me that I was annoyed about just picking one race to describe myself because that's not how I felt; I wanted to be both. (HV post #187)

One individual commented that the contiguous U.S. is much more racially divided than Hawaii:

Since my family and I moved to the Mainland, I've noticed a shift amongst cultural communities as needing to belong and be accepted into your exact ethnic parameters. (HV post #109)

This can be a more difficult atmosphere for multiracials as they cross the boundaries of two or more racial and ethnic groups. This "choosing" conversation is problematic for multiracials as a racial binary is imposed on them from the outside. While some internalize this binary distinction, others struggle to cope with it as they do not fit into the racial system as it is currently structured. Fortunately, many of these stories—in fact,

the vast majority of them—end on a positive note because the individual has come to terms with their multiracial identity or has found a community to which they can belong—namely the hapa community.

It is evident that hapas often undergo an identity struggle because of outside pressure to “fit” into the monoracial system. No matter where they turn—if there is no hapa community available—they are getting information that they do not quite “fit” in and potentially have a negative identity so they are constantly engaged in an identity struggle or search for confirmation of identity. This struggle can be interpreted as a broken identity feedback loop which in turn creates stress for the individual (Burke 1999). The way in which an individual fixes their broken loop, and decreases the stress and resulting anxiety (or potentially physical symptoms, as previously mentioned) from a broken loop, can be the construction or assertion of a multiracial, mixed, or hapa identity and to seek out hapa groups or those that appreciate and celebrate diversity. Once a hapa identity is affirmed, that person is then verified through that group identity. In this way, those that identify with a border identity are using both self-verification and self-enhancement throughout the course of their lives. A hapa identity is therefore a creative way to both verify and enhance one’s self-concept in a racial system that does not yet fully allow for such an identity.

Survey Answers

An important and often conflict-ridden aspect of one’s identity “crisis” is “the race question”—the standard demographic question on surveys that ask about one’s race.

The question itself, its very existence, often confounds multiracials. How are they supposed to respond when constrained by typical answer choices?

My struggle to categorize myself ethnically has been similar to that of many other mixed-race people. Every day, we are constantly reminded of being different- whether it's by the not-so-subtle double-takes on the train, or by those little boxes on applications that ask for your racial background, which rarely have "mixed." (HV post #141)

Checking boxes for your race is one of my least favorite things to do. Why should I have to choose between my mom and my dad? Some people say that hapas have an advantage. They can choose any one race, but why would I want to choose? If you asked me what I was, I would now say that I am half Chinese, half white, and 100% proud of it. (HV post #181)

Quite often, people will change how they answer this demographic question depending on the reason for filling out the form or how they feel that day.

When you are filling out a survey for a class or something, and you go to the race question and you are only allowed one option what do you say?

You would have to tell me what the options are, 'cause that's where I would decide.

So if they are the main racial categories of white, black, Latino, and Asian and Native American.

Uh, Latino definitely.

And if they allow you do Latino and Asian or Latino, white, and Asian?

Yea, if I can put more than two then I'll put all three. They all apply to me so, equally to me, they're as important and unimportant but that...you get more money if you put Hispanic or Latino, but that's just true. I've been told as a kid always put that. (Chad, 19, Bangladeshi/ Mexican/white)

Sometimes it says Pacific Islander/Alaskan or Pacific Islander so whichever one and then white. Um... sometimes I put two or more races if that's an option, but then you don't get to say the specifics ones. And usually if it is just one, I just put the minority one. But there are like—the other day I had to do a background clearance and there was like a small box of no specification and I asked the guy what I should put and he was like “well you're white... cuz you look white.” And I was like, I'm going to put “other” cuz I just feel like that was mean. So I just kind of play with it. (Shannon, 27, Filipina/Jewish)

While there are a number of choices one may pick from on these questions, the general format includes the basic monoracial categories (white, black, Asian, Latino, Native American) with the occasional option to choose all that apply, a mixed race or multiracial/biracial category, and sometimes an “other” category. When asked if they would choose the multiracial category, most people said they would, mostly if they were unable to choose all that apply (for some, however, “multiracial” would be their first choice). When I asked my interviewees specifically if they would choose the “other” category, I got decidedly mixed responses. Some seemed to take offense to such a category:

See that’s where I would just pick all three...because “other” to me means like human, not human, I mean I don’t know it could be anything. I don’t see how putting other helps anybody understand anything. So I, I would probably not use other if there were the three that you mentioned. I would probably check box all three, or if there was a multicultural I would check box that. But pretty much don’t think I’ve ever used “other.” (Chad, 19, Bangladeshi/ Mexican/white)

As these demographic questions are helpful to any and all social scientist, employer, or corporate research team, they can be particularly stressful and are very often a nuisance to multiracials.

Racial Prominence

Often, multiracials will stick out because of their looks and as a result of the monoracial assumptions and categorizations of our society. Some multiracials look very much like one side of their family while others are more ambiguous in their looks. It is for this reason that many of my interviewees said they feel more Asian around whites and other non-Asians and feel more white (or black, Latin@, etc.) around Asians. They

never feel like they truly fit in. Another issue is that the racial categorization by others often reflects (or perhaps is the cause of) the aforementioned relativity of identity.

In the Philippines people see me more as European and in Austria they identify me as an Asian girl. (HV post #27)

When I was with people who were not Chinese I instantly became “super Asian,” while when I was with Chinese people I would be considered almost unbearably white. (HV post #12)

Such distinctions can often lead to discrimination:

While living in Japan, I was almost immediately made aware of my distinctions. In all my schooling in Japan, everybody else was full Japanese. My father would tell me of when I used to deny the fact that my hair color was brown — an after effect of being harassed for not having black hair. (HV post #29)

Or a disbelief in one’s own parentage, which can be rather disparaging to a young person:

My father has blonde hair and blue eyes so when I am with him I am perpetually perceived as adopted. And with my mother, to other Koreans, no one recognizes me as her son. They ask her “Who is this standing next to you?” When my mother responds that it’s her youngest son they gasp in disbelief. (HV post #186)

When I was little, I’d be in a store with my Icelandic (and extremely fair skinned) mother, and people would ask where I was adopted from. My White friends call me “exotic” while my Asian friends and family say I’m “western.” I just consider myself “well-balanced”? (HV post #198)

These stories were often told as a background to one’s “identity crisis” and experiences with discrimination.

Networks

Ego Networks

Generally speaking, all of my interviewees had varied ego networks. However, a few trends emerged. For some, they tend to have friends that are very similar to themselves based on their own racial and ethnic identity

So yeah, all my friends are racially ambiguous slash confused... Yea, I just find myself in places where like everyone is kind of confused and mixed. (Shannon, 27, Filipina/Jewish)

For others, their personal identity is valued highly when structuring one's ego networks.

Um, let's see... another one of my good friends, neighbors, musicians, well actually when I'm coming to this list a lot of these people, a lot of what these people have in common with me is music so I think that's what maybe for me defines who's important in my life whether I talk to them still or not. (Chad, 19, Bangladeshi/ Mexican/white)

All of these responses follow the homophily principle. However, this principle is slightly narrowed as her friends are similar to her on one significant category as opposed to multiple. This trend is less likely to result in the multiracial individual acting as a bridge between monoracial groups. As some of my interviewees were actively engaged in an ethnic or hapa network, they did not express a desire or actual activity in engaging with non-ethnic groups. Those that had the opposite trend—of engaging solely with non-ethnic groups—also did not express a desire to engage with ethnic and hapa groups. Lastly, one's closest friends may be further constrained by their location

You have a very diverse group of friends. And there's no white people or no black people, just Asians and Mexicans.

No, not my top five but I do still hang out with [inaudible]. She's half Mexican, half white. There aren't a lot of African-Americans around, not where I grew up. We're not close to many African-American people. I had one friend in high school but we don't talk anymore.

Well, if you don't have exposure to them, you can't be friends with them.
Exactly. (Stacey, 28, Japanese/Mexican)

Of course it can be asked if one's identity influences who is in their ego network or does one's ego network influence their identity. In this case, it can be both. For the aforementioned interviewees, Stacey and Shannon identify as mixed while Chad identifies as a "mutt." Others who identify as American or white, who live in or moved to a less diverse area tend to have more white friends than anything else. There is, however, a correlation between one's racial and ethnic identity and the racial and ethnic makeup of their ego network. One's social network was hypothesized to be a significant factor in one's racial and ethnic identity. While the qualitative data suggest a relationship, there were no statistically significant factors found in the analyses.

Social Networks

There is an interesting relationship between racial identity and the group one is in. The majority of my respondents felt more Asian around whites and other non-Asians and felt more non-Asian around Asians. For the others, while they still felt more non-Asian around Asians, they felt very much at ease and as they racially fit in with non-Asians. A few explanations for this relationship can be posited. Those in the former category were more likely to have diverse networks but have varied phenotypes and cultural knowledge. Those in the latter category often had overwhelmingly white networks and little cultural exposure to their Asian heritage. Some of these respondents felt "inauthentic" as Asians, partially because they were only "half" and partially because of their lack of cultural knowledge.

Does it do you sometimes feel like not authentic enough, like you're not authentically Japanese enough?

Uh, no. Probably partially because I'm only half. (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

Do you not feel like a very authentic Chinese person because you can't speak the language?

Yeah, kind of, yeah. That and just the fact that I really don't know much about [the culture] at all. (Hannah, 18, Chinese/white)

Some even felt that they had to prove their cultural knowledge in order to be accepted.

Do you feel like you have to prove yourself almost?

Definitely, definitely, yeah. And I, it's not, I hate to be the type of person to like, drop names or like drop, like, Indian vocabulary or, or like mention food or anything like that, you know, or say like, oh, I just made this, it just feels unnatural but, um, I also wanna like relate to them and become friends with them. (Pratima, 24, Indian/white)

Racial isolation was another common trend when discussing social networks and belonging.

I didn't have any "mirror" that reflected me or my experiences — not in movies, TV, books, or billboards (HV post #2)

Growing up in a country where Asians are rare, it was challenging for me. I really had a hard time here. I'm half Tunisian but I never fit in with Tunisian traditions. Deep inside, I feel alienated. (HV post #22)

Lonely is the best way I can sum up growing up. I have never spoken to anyone who had experiences similar to mine, nor have I met many Japanese people, which quite honestly still makes me feel isolated as I consider myself, to the fullest extent of the meaning, a Japanese American. (HV post #29)

Social networks can often serve as a mirror to oneself. Without a racial or cultural similarity in one's ethnic groups, feelings of isolation and challenges one's ethnic authenticity.

Cultural Knowledge

My respondents vary in terms of their cultural exposure and practice. Many of my respondents had travelled to a country of their identity or desire to do so. Most, however, did not speak the language of their Asian parent (later generation immigrants' parents often did not even speak the language either). The Asian parent chose not to teach their children their ethnic language as a result of difficulty in teaching in an American context or desire for children to successfully Americanize and therefore fit in.

I do not know the language. She said she would not teach it to me because I was not taught it as a child, it would be a difficult process to teach (Xander, 20, Korean/black)

My parents, my dad never, and maybe it was their relationship, but he never really introduced us to the language or the culture of being Bangladeshi. So I never learned the language. He never wrote, he never spoke. (Chad, 18, Bangladeshi/Mexican/white)

On the other hand, some interviewees choose to learn the language on their own, outside of their family context as a way to become closer to their Asian roots.

Unfortunately, my mother and I didn't have the chance to learn Chinese, but I try to learn it by Mandarin programs, even if Cantonese should be the language we speak. (HV post #121)

So I took Japanese cause I thought that um, it would be really interesting um, just to learn more about my culture and my grandma I thought it would make her happy because she speaks Japanese. And it did so whenever I went home and I was working with my flash cards or doing any kind of Japanese homework she got she just got so excited. (Lidiya, 20, Japanese/Korean/white/Native American)

For some, lacking ethnic language ability is a significant barrier to their ability to identify with their ethnic heritage.

I don't speak the language so how can I...that's a big barrier that I can't identify with. (Alexander, 19, Filipino/black)

Alexander felt that because he lacked language ability, he is unable to identify as strongly with his Filipino heritage. In fact, compounded with his phenotype of a black man, Alexander identifies more with his black American heritage. His father's military history and Alexander's military pursuit (through ROTC) lead him to prefer to identify as American above all else. Even if someone learned some of the language, they do not practice it enough and are not familiar with enough speakers of the language to keep it up.

I don't know much about the language at all I don't know anything about language actually. Except food words. (Chad, 18, Bangladeshi/Mexican/white)

When I did go to the Philippines, I learned some tagalog and I practiced with my mom but it's you know like I just wasn't using it regularly enough so it didn't really stick. (Courtney, 30, Korean/white)

Language ability, for many, is an important part of being an authentic member of their Asian ethnicity or at the very least being in touch with their culture. Even more important, however, for nearly everyone was knowledge and consumption of ethnic food.

Aside from language ability, cultural knowledge also varies in terms of knowledge of customs, foodways, holidays, and superstitions. The majority of respondents—when asked if they were aware of or participated in customs from their Asian ethnic heritage—have knowledge of mostly *symbolic* ethnic customs (Gans 2009). The most oft cited example was the fact that they ate rice regularly.

I love to eat rice with everything! I guess that's the Filipino in me. Chicken Adobo and Lumpia are my favorite. :-) (HV post #32)

In fact, the first response after being asked about their cultural exposure was to mention food.

When we're at home my dad does cook Chinese food. But yeah, but other than cooking Chinese food it's not a particularly Chinese household. (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

However, this was not only prevalent in my interviews; HapaVoice posts also often made mention of ethnic food. These posts are entirely open ended.

I mostly grew up with my mom so I grew up in a very typical household with a little bit of an Asian influence. I remember having rice at most meals and eating a lot of Japanese food when I was younger but that was about it. (HV post #40)

He did what he could to try to keep the Korean culture in our lives, mostly through food, and we love him for doing that. (HV post #8)

I do like Asian food though and that's really the only thing I can identify with as being part Asian. (HV post #44)

I am, however, still learning about the Indian culture. I've tried Indian food, but am still getting use to the spiciness (HV post #5)

Today...I am a professional chef, specializing in Japanese dishes, everything from homemade miso to takoyaki. I feel that Japanese food brings me Japanese culture and I get the connection with Japan even though I live half a world away. (HV post #30)

I am now participating in a gap year in the UK and, to my dismay, am now in a community where there is very little Asian influence. As such, I'm missing home and the food that I'm used to (it's the little things). (HV post #82)

All of these posts highlight the importance of food for one's connection to their ethnicity and sometimes the only connection one has. According to Herbert Gans (2009), symbolic ethnicity allows one to enjoy their culture without any other cultural participation or exposure; it is a passive form of ethnicity as opposed to active forms such as attending cultural events, living in an ethnic enclave, etc. Although Gans (1979)

was referencing later-generation immigrants, multiracials of all generations seem to be practicing symbolic ethnicity as well.

It was a process, I was yellow washing and because I thought I couldn't identify with anything but Asian I tried to be more Asian. Growing up as an American I don't really have experience with Asian culture at all. My mom would tell me about it, but I only speak English. I don't speak Chinese or Taiwanese. I just wanted to fit in. (Abigail, 19, Taiwanese/black/white/Native American)

According to the literature on ethnic food consumption, this selective retention or seeking out of specific aspects of cultural identity is considered a facet of ethnic identity as opposed to acculturation (Laroche, Kim, Tomiuk, and Belisle 2005; Tuan 1998). This can serve the purpose of highlighting for others their ethnic heritage and identity which can often result in the ability for the multiracial to publicly assert their Asian identity, non-Asian identity (i.e. Italian, Jewish, etc.), or multiraciality (Khanna 2011). As Khanna (2011) found that this symbolic ethnicity is intermittent and context-specific, my interview data and the HapaVoice stories also indicate such fluidity.

Another often cited example was the practice of taking off one's shoes upon entering a home. The following examples mix different forms of passive or symbolic ethnicity.

I did like I you know in an Asian household we always take our shoes off in the front of the house and we always eat together as a family. And we sit at a small table with rice and kim chee and a few other delicacies and um we all just we rarely watch tv and we always just talk. (Xander, 20, Korean/black)

I had an Asian upbringing with the whole take off your shoes when entering a house, do good in school, respect your elders etc. But I think the thing that I enjoyed the most while growing up was the amazing of traditional Chinese and Korean food that both of my grandmothers made. (HV post #200)

Few knew of cultural superstitions or participated in holidays or other customs. Some had learned how to prepare traditional foods and had cultural artifacts in their household. Very few participated in intergenerational conversations with parents and grandparents about their heritage or consumed media from their mother country.

Some respondents felt their Asian culture in a different, less obvious sense.

Nick—a second generation, 20-year-old who is Pakistani, white, and Cajun—feels that his attitude and worldview are much more Eastern than Western or American. Mishiko, a third-generation 47-year-old, Japanese/black woman, also finds her values more aligned with traditionally Eastern thought. She mentioned values of what is right and wrong and described a more collectivistic orientation to life.

My mom's Filipino culture and upbringing were relevant in my life and really shaped my values, and I think it, it's in a way it's different than a lot of my just my friends and a lot of people in my community. It was in more subtle ways. I don't necessarily eat a lot of Filipino food, or I don't speak Tagalog. But I think that her values and the things that make her who she is also make me who I am, and that's relevant. (Shannon, 27, Filipino/Jewish)

However, this type of ideology was much less common than an “individualistic, American” ideology.

Perhaps as a result of a lack of cultural knowledge, very few participants desired to teach their future (or current) children about more than the history of their Asian heritage. The following posts, however, perhaps as a result of the pride in their border identity were excited about such an opportunity.

I am proud of my heritage and will always continue to learn more about it so I can pass it on to my daughter. (HV post #106)

Being Hapa makes me feel beautiful, inside and out. I can't wait to pass on my heritage and stories to my children someday. (HV post #132)

I will teach these traditions to my own children; I am very proud of my culture and I will teach them to be proud too. (HV post #178)

I am proud to be Hapa, and am passing the Asian culture onto my daughter. She's learning Mandarin. (HV post #194)

Some were very much indifferent about such cultural transmission.

Um, I mean I wouldn't be opposed to it, but I don't think that would be anything that would cross my mind.

So you wouldn't go out of your way to teach them stuff most likely?

Um, probably not. I mean no, unless that's what they wanted. (Lidiya, 20, Japanese/Korean/ white/Native American)

Most interviewees do not think cultural transmission is as important as passing on the knowledge of family history.

If you or when you have kids would you want to tell them about their culture or try to pass on anything Japanese to them?

Um, yeah probably at least a little bit.

Like what?

Um, I really...would let them know about...somewhat about like our family and what not.

Mmkay.

Particularly where our grandma came from and that kind of thing.

Yeah so like your family history and whatnot?

Yeah at least a little bit. (Nate, 21, Japanese/white)

You've got to know where you're coming from because, you know, you're a product of everything that came before you. And when you think about it it's kind of miraculous because we've survived to be here today. Like our relatives have survived like famine, pestilence, war and countless other things and then here we are. (Mark, 26, Japanese/white)

Language, food, and customs were very debatable. Many women explained that it depended on the race of their partner as to how much would be taught in the way of customs.

If you were to have kids, would you want to try to pass on your Japanese culture?

Oh yeah, I definitely would. I would want to dress them up in kimonos, you know, things like that. I think I would want to keep it going. Like I said, my boyfriend right now, he's Mexican but he does a lot of Japanese-oriented stuff,

he's into Japanese martial arts, all his friends like Japanese culture, so I think if we end up together it wouldn't be an issue, which would be really nice. Like I said, he loves Japanese culture, he loves Japanese food too. I think it would be easy to incorporate Japanese culture. You know, I would want my kids to be exposed, even if they're just a small fraction Japanese, I would want them to be exposed to it. (Stacey, 28, Japanese/Mexican)

I think that would be great, I think it probably mattered who I married. My boyfriend, who I've been with for a million and a half years, is Jewish and Russian and a French Canadian. So he has no crossover at all. Um and I think I might do some bargaining because I think he wants our kids to like go to Hebrew school. So I might like bargain a little bit...I would really like my kids to learn Mandarin. (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

I was made aware of a separate but interesting phenomenon for Japanese Americans in terms of cultural exposure and transmission. For families that have been in the U.S., generally mainland, throughout WWII there was a higher likelihood for some or much of the family to have been interned at the time. I initially thought this would increase one's desire to hold onto their ethnic culture; the opposite turned out to be true.

Internment was a factor that basically said, "Oh, you're being interned and you're being isolated because of your Japanese-ness." And then so what a bunch of them I guess unconsciously did was they just did not pass on a lot of those, um, a lot of those, you know, the old traditions, the language and the various ways of life. Like if you look at Korean Americans like they are very, very proud of their heritage... No matter how long their family has been in the states they are very proud of who they are, um, and they're very homogeneously Korean. However, if you look at Japanese Americans you notice most of them have assimilated and kind of more or less resemble—to lack a better term they more or less resemble culturally white people... Like they don't know a lot of their, a lot of their history, uh, their family histories at least and so. (Mark, 26, Japanese/white)

As a result of not having knowledge of family history and ethnic customs, language ability, or even Eastern ideology, these Japanese Americans—although phenotypically set apart from the majority—are more like white Americans. This assimilation process Americanizes each subsequent generation so that they have little to no knowledge of

their culture. When I followed up with Mark as to whether he wishes he knew more he cited only language ability as he knows some of his family history. Chi square tests suggest that living on the West Coast, one will be more likely to identify as culturally Asian or mixed ($X^2= 11.1081$, $p = 0.03$; Table A-9). This could be the result of living in a more diverse—and many times, Asian—area. The West Coast is widely known to have high populations of numerous Asian ethnic groups. There is a higher likelihood of encountering people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as cultural events and groups. This exposure may lead to the identification of being culturally Asian or mixed as a result of their engagement or awareness of such diversity.

Authenticity

In some of my interviews, my interviewees mentioned that they did not feel authentically Asian. There were many reasons for this including their biraciality, their mixed cultural exposure and sometimes limited Asian cultural exposure, as well as their related limited proficiency in their cultural customs and language.

Does it do you sometimes feel like not authentic enough, like you're not authentically Japanese enough?

Uh, no. Probably partially because I'm only half. (Nate, 21, Japanese/white)

I think with my current job, I've done a lot of work in the Filipino community -- but even then, um, you know, like, my authenticity as a Filipino is often questioned...so, I still at the, at the end of the day usually mainly identify as being mixed race. (Alysa, 29, Filipina/white)

Do you not feel like a very authentic Chinese person because you can't speak the language?

Yeah, kind of, yeah, that and just the fact that I really don't know much about it at all. (Hannah, 18, Chinese/white)

Not only do hapas feel this way about themselves but they also perceive to be thought of (or treated) as inauthentic by others. As these individuals do not have the same experiences as someone with two Asian parents and their “biology” only consists of half Asian, they are not seen as “full” or “pure” Asian, much to the chagrin of these hapas.

Travel

A common thread in both my interviews and HapaVoice posts is international travel and the effects it has on multiracial individuals. In most cases, traveling outside of the U.S. provides the individual with a wider perspective on their own race and ethnic identity. This often serves to instill a border, protean, or transcendent identity. It is much less likely for one to have a singular identity after such eye-opening experiences. For many interviewees, international travel at a young age would alter the person’s identity, generally from singular to a more mixed or multifaceted identity.

I think it’s uh, you know, living in Japan, that was, that was um, the first ten years of my life and I really did have a good influence on what I, what I stuck it out as school and education and uh, values I think... Having traveled and lived in other places um, I think that you, you, whenever you use the time in a completely different culture, you realize there are so many things that are very different from, from where you’re coming from. There are also so many things that are exactly the same. (Anna Lee, 26, Chinese/white)

I’ve learned to fluently understand Korean and have had the benefit of eating some DELICIOUS home cooked Korean food. I have also had the wonderful opportunity to visit relatives in Seoul and experience my Asian culture more in depth. (HV post #36)

The trip changed how I felt quite a bit; I still identify more with being Japanese since I think I grew up with that culture more. In many ways, a part of my heart is always in Japan because I could identify with the culture so much. (HV post #40)

Sometimes you feel out of place or different from others. But I think many of you would agree with me that it also makes you feel as if you are a citizen of the

world, which is so empowering! Both my brother and I are avid travelers, love meeting people from different cultures and seek out diverse experiences. (HV post #53)

As is evident from these quotes, cultural identity can also be asserted as a result of international travel to one's ancestral home country. This travel experience often opens peoples' eyes to the great diversity of the world and within oneself.

International Hapas

While my interviewees were all domestic, some of them were living internationally. In the randomly selected HapaVoice posts (and not narrowing the search to only U.S. posters), many of them are international living in countries as varied as Denmark, the Philippines, Australia, Japan, Germany, and Canada. These individuals tended to share a more similar identity to the domestic interviewees that had traveled around the world in that they saw themselves in a more multifaceted way. Exposed to U.S. media, ethnic culture, and racial categorization and isolation in various places, these hapas see the world in more "color" and voice genuine appreciation of and love for that diversity.

Discrimination

Discrimination can take many forms. The hapas in my study have experienced overt discrimination in the form of racism and sexism as well as through the use of model minority stereotypes. They also experience a particular form of discrimination that racially ambiguous people are accustomed to but is not always interpreted as discrimination: the "what are you?" question.

What Are You?

Every interviewee has been asked the question “what are you?” or the similar “where are you from?” Many HapaVoice posters chose to write on this topic as well. For some, this is a daily occurrence. Only a few people are offended by the question.

I cannot say, that at times I am not irritated by the questions, I receive, such as who are you? Where are do you come from? Like I am some alien form. (HV post #112)

I’ve gotten tired of answering that effin’ annoying question. (HV post #158)

“What are you?”: this is probably the only thing that has bothered me. Sometimes people will look at me in disbelief and actually question what I tell them as if I were lying! (HV post #171)

Most have come to terms with being asked repeatedly by strangers and new acquaintances. Often there is something about the person’s appearance that triggered such a question—for example, being phenotypically East Asian but having a lot of freckles.

People ask me that ALL the time. My friends, when I was in college, and this started happening every day, I’m not kidding. I get asked my ethnicity almost every day. But they don’t ask “what’s your ethnicity?” They say “what are you?” And my friends started responding for me “she’s a unicorn.” (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

Other hapas enjoyed the question and even reveled in being asked. One respondent felt proud to be “unique” and loved to indulge people’s curiosity. A guessing game is a common outcome.

I have no idea how many times I have been asked the question “What are you?” or the more politically correct “What is your ethnicity?” I love it. I thrive on it. I almost beg to be asked. (HV post #42)

I love being Hapa. It is part of who I am. That's why I love the question "What are you?" It gives you a chance to tell people that I am unforgettable in a very unique way. It is something to be proud of. (HV post #84)

When people ask me "Where are you from?" I first let them play the "guess my race" game. I think it's funny because some say I am Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Turkish, etc. (HV post #27)

I love when people play the guessing game as to what ethnicity I am, and I can sure say I've gotten some pretty crazy answers. Very few people can guess right the first time, but I always enjoy revealing what I am which often leads to some surprised expressions. (HV post #36)

At times, some respondents become challenging with those who ask about their race and ethnicity. Some make the person ask the "right" question or beat around the bush, knowing full well what the person is asking.

Like by myself if asked usually people will just ask "where are you from?" And then I'm like "I don't think that you are looking for the answer 'New York' but that's where I'm from." (Courtney, 30, Korean/white)

Um, I play along and then I tend to get a little more snarky...Just to, uh, just to show them that, uh, I guess that maybe they should approach the question differently...You know and I'm a little more upfront about it once I get a little more snarky, and I mean a lot. (Mark, 26, Japanese/white)

A lot of times I know what they mean and I just be mean so they're like "oh where you from?" and I say "California. LA."...And they were like "where your parents from?" [laughs] You know, then I'll tell them "California." Yeah well so it depends and I was like what are you try to ask are you trying to ask my ethnicity or are you trying to ask like "what's your nationality?" And I'm like "American." (Aurora, 34, Japanese/black/ Honduran/white)

And I always like I give people sort of a hard time, not in like a bitchy way. And like I make them ask like the right question...but they'll say like "where are you from?" and I'll say like "Los Angeles." And then they say, "no but like where are you really from?" "Los Angeles, I'm from California." "Where were you born?" "California." ...And then they'll say "what's your nationality?" And they just struggle so much and I'm like "I'm American! I was born here. I am American. That's my nationality. If you're asking me my ethnicity, I'm half Chinese and half Irish." But until you get to that question I'm going to make you get there. (Sarah, 25, Chinese/white)

This defensive tactic is employed by those who have become fed up with being asked this question by strangers and acquaintances. While the racial ambiguity of hapas is fascinating and confusing to some, prompting the “what are you?” question, the continued reminder that hapas do not fit within the dominant racial structure leads hapas to attempt to quell some of the questions and at times “teach the ignorant” the appropriate way to interact. This “teachable moment” can highlight the inappropriate nature of the question generally or simply instruct the person to ask the question they are meaning to ask. Interestingly, some interviewees find that they are asked “what are you?” more often in certain contexts.

And do people ask you more here [a very white area] or in Houston?

Oh out here for sure.

Really? Why do you think that is?

I just think that’s because I mean...I don’t know how to say this but I think there’s more white people out here than there are in Houston and they’re just more curious I guess. Like if you hang around them they want to know if you’re one of them or not. (Nick, 20, Pakistani/white)

The context one is in can often have an effect on the perception of one’s (and another’s) race. If the context is highly multicultural—like Hawaii—the question is asked with genuine curiosity or is not asked at all because one’s race is less prominent. The more racially prominent one is (i.e. a hapa living in a Midwestern suburb) the less likely people will have had interaction with someone of that background and potentially the more curious or prejudiced they will be toward them. This follows the contact hypothesis (Sigelman and Welch 1993).

While most hapas are asked “what are you?” the response to such a question differs. As of yet, there are no definitive trends that may determine how one will

respond. However, there does seem to be a correlation between those who admit to having had a struggle with their identity, as discussed earlier, and those who embrace diversity to leaning toward playing a guessing game with others.

Chi square tests revealed that those who feel that they have a group to which they belong perceive more discrimination than those that feel they belong nowhere. However, this test only approached significance ($X^2= 10.7470$, $p = 0.10$; Table A-10). This significant relationship may indicate that when race is salient, one is more likely to interpret interactions as discriminatory, or they could be interpreted as discrimination being more likely for those who “perform” or “signal” their ethnicity in public settings.

Sexualization

Many of my female interviewees—when asked the question “what are you?” or discussing their race and ethnicity with others—is often sexualized by the person (generally a man) asking the question as a result of her Asian heritage.

Some people think they’re complementing me by saying “Eurasians are sexy.” Give me a break. As with any race some people are and some people aren’t, and the only person I want to be sexy to is my boyfriend. (HV post #39)

The only thing I don’t like about being Hapa is being hit on all the time by those guys who have preconceived ideas about what Asian girls are like (‘mysterious’, ‘exotic’, ‘ladylike’, ‘submissive’, etc.) I hate when they randomly ask me where I’m from – on the train, in the street, at work – partly because it’s none of their business, and partly because I really don’t think it should matter. (HV post #72)

This is in line with research of media representations of Asian women that suggests they are sexual beings, exotic, and something to be desired (Kim 2004). Not surprisingly, this phenomenon is not present in the men’s narratives. This also mirrors the American cultural notion that Asian men are feminine, asexual, and passive (Kim 2004). However,

this asexual narrative is not discussed by the men. An absence of an externally imposed sexualized identity (or an asexualized one) suggests that these men are not being sexualized by others nor do they understand any of the fleeting “what are you?” interactions as sexual in nature.

Overt Discrimination

While the “what are you?” question (and subsequent sexualization of females) can be construed as discrimination in its own right, many hapas have experienced more overt forms of discrimination including name calling, physical abuse, and general bullying. This experience, understandably, was a painful time for these individuals. Many, but not all, of these instances occurred during childhood.

When I was in school, I was not comfortable being Asian. Kids were mean to me and my brothers. They called us names. I kind of hated the school at that time. (HV post #22)

Appearance-wise, occasionally it can be fun to stand out. But I would never have chosen to be different – it’s painful for kids, and we’ve all been picked on. I’ve been stared at, accosted, prodded, even stalked and assaulted. Strangers can be incredibly rude, either ignoring me when I’m talking to them, or calling me everything from “weird” to “mongrel” before I’ve even opened my mouth. (HV post #39)

I got bullied in school for being part Asian, especially during my younger years, and it made me hate my appearance and dream of just being “normal.” I remember crying and crying because it wasn’t my fault — I was born like this. (HV post #59)

But when I entered kindergarten and as I got older I noticed that people would treat me differently. The Caucasian and African-American kids would tell me that I was too light to be black and that my hair wasn’t “like a black person’s hair.” They would torment me by calling me a mutt and a half-breed. I never really fit in with anyone. It was almost like it was better to be half black and half white than half Asian — they looked at me like I was some sort of alien life-form... I was called all sorts of racially derogatory names, girls chopped off parts of my hair, they would take my stuff, broke my glasses twice. (HV post #202)

Many children, and sometimes adults, feel the need to point out racial difference. This difference is often considered “abnormal” or inferior. The impact this would have on one’s self-esteem can be very great and would likely have an effect on one’s racial and ethnic identity, sense of belonging, cultural participation, and makeup of one’s ego and social networks. This discrimination does not only occur in the U.S., however. It occurs internationally as well. Japan is the most common location mentioned with a bias against mixed-race Japanese.

Although my childhood in Japan was great there were bad times where I faced bullying at school because I was different from others — I was the only kid in the entire school who was not 100% Japanese — so I was lucky to have one best friend that was there for me in those times. (HV post #30)

This pattern was also found in my interview data for those who have lived or traveled to Asian, including Peter (42, Japanese/white) and Minh (49, Vietnamese/white). However, as mixed race actors are becoming more common in Korean and Japanese media, the negative perception of multiracials is beginning to change (Anna Lee, 26, Chinese/white). For those that have experienced discrimination, many have turned the negative events in their lives and come out with a more positive personal identity.

I grew up in Massachusetts in a very white neighborhood and used to talk with pride about being Korean. It didn’t take too long however, for kids to start making fun of me with racial slurs. I think having undergone severe discrimination makes me identify with my heritage even more. I can at least say that now my peers are always interested by my distinct background and consider it pretty cool. (HV post #53)

There have been times where I’ve faced racism and had to define who I am or prove my worth, but for the most part, Hapa identity is more visible and accepted than when I was younger. (HV post #79)

Looking back at all the things I've been through, growing up being mixed is one of the reasons I'm proud to be Hapa, because I endured hell for years and I'm still standing. (HV post #203)

This particular theme follows the common mantra of becoming stronger by experiencing adversity. One way to cope with such adversity is to transcend it and assert a border identity—one that others do not often grant the multiracial. Unfortunately, some must endure these negative sentiments from members of their own families.

One internal dilemma I had was when my mother would badmouth black people, even going so far as to say the Nword. She never called us children that, but still, I never knew how to respond when she said such hateful things. She must have felt we were different, but that's not how the rest of the world would see it. (HV post #204)

In cases of discrimination, family is often whom the multiracial turns to for support or to help understanding the experience. If one's family is not a viable option for this support, they may internalize the negative experiences which, as previously mentioned, can have a significant impact on many other important variables. Unfortunately, hapas of all ages have experienced discrimination in their lifetime, and some continue to experience such.

Stereotypes

Another aspect of discrimination tends to be more “lighthearted,” and as a result of the model minority stereotype, can be construed as positive.

Yeah well I mean there's the whole Asian versus white stereotype which happens sometimes.

What do you mean by that?

Uh well I mean it's part of it...is like I tend to I got really good grades so it's...that people will playfully be like well you're smart...

...You're asian!

That kind of thing. It's more joking and socially than that. I've never felt uncomfortable about any of it. (Nate, 21, Japanese/white)

You know, of course and I know the same with my sister, you know, we've had like jokes, you know, by our friends kind of just funny jokes that we think are funny too. You know, just because I think just because we are Asian and, you know, all of our other friends aren't. And so, you know, they find funny things to say whether it's about how small our eyes are or, you know. (Hannah, 18, Chinese/white)

On the other hand, when these stereotypes—even when “positive”—are so pervasive and when the very personal aspects of oneself are the target of such stereotypes, they are understandably taken negatively.

I've had to suffer stereotypes my whole life and I can't stand it. The main problem I have with that way of thinking is that I can't be an individual. If I was good at playing basketball, people would say “His black side is coming out!” After my piano recitals, I would hear “Asian level!” I could never get credit for myself and my OWN hard work. It was always because I was Black or Asian. I know that this problem isn't unique to just those of multi-ethnicities, but it sure does cast a wider net over what you're “destined to be capable of.” Also, there's this: “If you're half black and half Asian, what size is your d**k?” This odd, perverse question is brought to you by stereotypes. You'd be amazed how often I hear that. (HV post #204)

As opposed to being seen as a full and complex human being, the previous post illuminates that stereotypes are often placed on one specific aspect of their looks or behavior. Whether said jokingly or not, these sentiments often have a negative impact on the recipient.

Religiosity

The final section of my interview schedule addresses religion. Many of my respondents considered themselves religious while slightly fewer were “spiritual” but not religious for various reasons.

Um, yeah I guess more spiritual. I'm not a huge proponent of organized religion. (Nate, 21, Japanese/white)

I think that my sense of spirituality is very important to me um, even though it's kind of I don't really know what it is. I guess the idea of the positive ideas that are out there for me, like that are um... just about higher purpose or higher thinking or that were all connected things like that are important to me. As opposed to just feeling like there's no point...Not that it has to be that one or the other but... (Lauren, 39, Japanese/white)

Despite sentiments and an expressed belief in Jesus or Christianity, both of the following interviewees identify themselves as spiritual instead of religious.

Like, I don't really like to identify. I don't care too much about this theology or this method of theology or whatever. It's just, I love Jesus. (Mark, 26, Japanese/white)

I would say I have Christian beliefs; but I will you know, I would say spiritual...I wouldn't really consider myself like a practicing Christian...more spiritual than religious. (Aurora, 34, Japanese/black/Honduran/white)

Very few of my interviewees attend religious institutions. Those who do attend regularly pray or meditate and read religious texts occasionally. One of the major themes for my interviewees was for those who identify as mixed or multiracial and live on the West Coast tend to be more "open" or relativistic in terms of others' religious affiliation. However, nearly all interviewees dislike the idea of partnering with someone who was "too" religious or fundamental.

Do you care what religion your future husband would be?

No. I mean, if anything, it would probably, it might be more difficult if I married someone who was religious because I'm not religious, but it wouldn't, you know, but if he were religious, I would be accepting of it, but just say like, I probably wouldn't convert. (Alysa, 29, Filipina/white)

Yeah, I think that if I were to be involved with someone who were religious that would take away from our relationship, um, as two human beings. So yes, I would prefer that they are undecided in their preference to not have religion or and that they would prefer not to have religion. (Chad, 19, Bangladeshi/Mexican/white)

For my participants, religion did not seem tied to racial or cultural identity. In fact, most of my interviewees denied such a pairing. As previously mentioned, statistical analyses conducted on the data from the Nation Asian American Survey indicate that multiracials are more likely to attend religious services often ($p = .001$; Table A-3) and, if Christian, be Catholic, Jewish, or Mainline Protestant (all $p = .001$; Table A-4). A multiracial's attendance is influenced by their denomination (evangelicals and Fundamentalists are more likely to attend ($p = .009$; Table A-11)) and their level of perceived discrimination (those perceive more discrimination are more likely to attend ($p = 0.001$; Table A-12)). While the first finding is intuitive in that attendance is a major component in these evangelical and Fundamentalist denominations, the second is less so. This finding is similar to that of overall physical health. If one has more stress and worse health, one may feel that religion can be very helpful. Discrimination could be another source of stress (in addition to identity struggles and issues of "fit") that may lead to seeking out religion.

Religion and Identity

The HapaVoice stories rarely mention religion, except to identify one's beliefs in God, Jesus, and/or God's blessing. It seems that one's racial and ethnic identity was not a salient corresponding category to religion when drafting their stories. It is for this reason—a perceived lack of salience—that a section on religion was included in the interview schedule. When asked outright if there was a relationship between their religious, ethnic, and racial identities, very few saw a connection. For Filipin@s and Latin@s, the relationship seemed present as they identified as Catholic. This also

seemed to be the case for a select few East Asians that followed no particular religious tradition or considered Buddhism as an approach toward life. While other did not see a connection, I was able to ascertain that there were a few important variables that affected one's religiosity and identity.

For some, a mixed ethnic background also mirrors a mixed religious background. Often the non-Asian parent is from a very different religious tradition than their Asian partner. How then should one raise a child that comes out of such a relationship? A compromise is often reached wherein the child will attend the religious institution of one on Sundays and the religious institution of the other on Saturdays. However, religion may not be the main focus of both of these excursions; cultural exposure and ethnic language attainment is at times the primary function of the visits to the Asian parent's religious institution. For a child, this can result in significant confusion in their religious identity. This then affects religious path and their identity as an adult.

So my dad is technically Episcopalian but then we went to a Methodist church, um, yeah. I, I hated being both. It was just weird and confusing and it was more about the cult -- like the actual crutch of like both religions were pretty much the same, it was just the cultural part of it was just frustrating it. Like, Hinduism, there's all this, like, all of these like, rituals and, like chanting and I just didn't identify with it and I didn't understand it and I was like this is weird. But then at the same time, like, everybody at church was white and like, Jesus is the only savior and it's like, okay, but I'm in another religion so it was confusing and it was also time consuming to go to both. Um, there were like no overlaps.
(Pratima, 24, Indian/white)

Despite a confusing upbringing, Pratima identifies as Hindu. She does not, however, attend any services as she feels like that would require too much patience for something she still does not fully understand. Other interviewees that had similar experiences also

do not attend religious services but tend to have a less defined religious or spiritual identity.

In terms of religion, while a deeply personal issue for many respondents, affiliation was not related to ethnic identity for the majority of respondents (only seemingly for Catholic Filipinos and Mexicans). The demographics of one's religious institution did not factor into one's identity nearly as much as their sense of belonging. Otherwise there was a pattern of religious transcendence in that race was not an important issue. Very few respondents chose to attend an ethnic religious institution, outside of their parents' choices. Those who did attend an ethnic religious institution did not have significantly different social networks or cultural capital. As multiracials often do not feel accepted fully by any of their heritage groups (Hall and Turner 2001) this can complicate matters further. Chi square tests reveal that Japanese interviewees ($n = 23$) are the most likely to identify as spiritual ($X^2 = 5.6357$, $p = 0.57$; Table A-13). This could be the result of a long-standing tradition of affiliation with Eastern religious groups for Japanese. Straying from the religious aspects of such an affiliation over the generations can leave spiritual remnants and lead hapas to identify as spiritual. This is further corroborated by one interviewee that argued that as Japanese tend to be less religious and more spiritual or philosophical, this related to his religious identity as a part Japanese man.

Race and Belonging at Church

Unfortunately, discrimination is also present in houses of worship for these hapas and their families. For many young families, the interviewee, their siblings, and their

parents would attend a typically monoracial church. Because of their racial diversity, these families tended to stick out. In some cases, the family would be cast disapproving looks.

Officially, like as an interracial, like if we all went together, like my White dad, my Filipino mom, me and my sister are like, we're like only, if anything, we were like the only interracial couple or interracial family...so we, yeah, we definitely stuck out.

Did it make you think about your race since you were, you know, so obvious?
I mean, at times it did. Um, but it was like, man, we're supposed to be going to church where people don't judge you. And then, here we are like getting weird looks walking down the aisle. It was very strange, but I tried to ignore it. (Alysa, 29, Filipina/white)

Despite the idea that all of those present are part of the same religious community, this family did not feel they fully belonged to the church because of how others treated them. This, fortunately, was not always the case. Many interviewees did not often think about race when at church and always felt part of the community.

Belonging

In our monoracial society, multiracials find themselves in a predicament. They are often forced to choose a singular identity as border identities are not yet fully accepted by society and multiracials themselves. This illustrates the pervasiveness of the racial binary and the internalization of that binary. One must be either non-Asian or Asian, not both.

I used to feel lost, like I didn't have an identity. I moved everywhere, constantly changing schools. I would feel like there was a tug-of-war going on between my parents. There would be conflict on how to raise me. Now I have a new little sister, I don't want to feel the same as I did, so I hope that she finds her identity sooner than I did. (HV post #182)

As this individual has posted this story on HapaVoice.com, one can deduce that she has a hapa identity. This post goes on to say that she resents having to choose one race; she instead identifies as half Chinese and half white, a type of border identity that defies the binary system.

The issue of belonging directly relates to the imposed racial binary and is perhaps the most depressing topic discussed in my interviews. For Alexander, the issue was discussed with regret and longing in his voice:

I just get like negativity from all sides. And I can't really affiliate with either one.
Do you feel like you belong anywhere?
Sometimes no. More often, not. (Alexander, 19, Filipino/black)

It doesn't matter who I am with. I always feel out of place to some extent.
Racially?
Yeah. I'm the mixed girl. I fit in everywhere, but I fit in nowhere. (Abigail, 19, Taiwanese/black/white/Native American)

Feeling that they belonged nowhere was a common thread amongst my interviewees and even on HapaVoice. Whether it was their phenotype, racial isolation, cultural knowledge or lack thereof, they did not fully belong in their Asian group or their non-Asian group.

All my life I think I really tried to be thought of or accepted as Japanese, I don't really look Asian (my dad has very strong genes!) I had a really hard time growing up being Hapa because I felt like I did not belong but as I have met other Hapas and have grown older. (HV post #159)

As a child it was a challenge to embrace my heritage because I grew up in a small town occupied mainly by upper class caucasian citizens. Being so young, I had very little understanding of myself or the world, and felt as though I did not "fit in." (HV post #97)

I like being mixed and learning 2 different cultures at the same time, but sometimes I get annoyed of being mixed because I feel I can never really fit in with either my Polish side or my Chinese side. (HV post #64)

Some of my Hapa friends have the same sort of problem; you can flit between the Asian community and the white community but you don't really fit in either. (HV post #82)

I used to watch the flight path on the plane flight to and from Japan and at exactly the half way point I'd look down and wonder if that was where I belonged. (HV post #101)

Some felt that they belonged or fit in well with "Americans." This was more likely when the interviewee had mostly white social networks as well being racially isolated.

Alternatively, some hapas discussed the issue in relatively positive terms.

While I don't necessarily "belong" in any one culture, I embrace the challenge. To me it's more about individual happiness with one's true and chosen identity (HV post #42)

Being Hapa can make you feel like you don't belong anywhere, but it also allows you to transcend racial divisions. (HV post #72)

Yet as hard as it is to identify with both heritages, and as hard as it is to reach a feeling of 'belonging,' I've recently understood that being a part of America's smallest and overlooked minorities is, for lack of better words, special. (HV post #141)

For others, particularly those on the West Coast, the hapa community is the group to which they feel as though they belong.

The idea of this thing called Hapa exists; when I found out about that in like 2004 whatever 2005, I was so excited cuz I was like 'Hey! That's, I, I'm part of that group' and that's really cool! And I felt very happy. (Bridget, 28, Japanese/white)

Sometimes it is hard to be Hapa because I feel like an outsider amongst people of my own races, (sometimes my own family). As I get older I have learned that I do belong, I belong to a beautiful group of Hapas. I belong to a much larger group of all people who are minorities and I belong to the future. (HV post #81)

It's fascinating to see other Hapas like me and to be able to read their stories. Finally I feel that I'm part of something. (HV post #86)

The West Coast has a higher than average concentration of hapas as a result of the higher than average concentration of Asians. Many in these locations feel more comfortable and that they have a group to belong to because they are not alone. On the other hand, many of my respondents in the Midwest were the only Asian or multiracial Asian person in their school and social networks.

Using ATLAS.ti network mapping, I determined the theme of belonging was related to nearly every other variable under study. In many cases a variable has a direct impact on one's feeling of belonging to a certain heritage group, a non-heritage group, a mixed group, or nowhere. Specifically, one's phenotype and ability to "pass," cultural—especially language—knowledge and exposure, social networks, an identity "crisis" and a negative identity, experiences with international travel, being forced to choose between identities, racial prominence in certain contexts, racial isolation and loneliness, discrimination, and presence of a hapa community have a significant influence on belonging.

Statistical analyses determined significant relationships between belonging and other variables. As previously mentioned, chi square tests reveal that those with a mixed racial identity more frequently feel a sense of belonging in hapa groups or nowhere. This finding is both intuitive (that they feel a sense of belonging with hapa groups) and counterintuitive (that they feel that they belong nowhere). When their geographic location and social networks are taken into account, however, this significance begins to make more sense. Also mentioned previously, when discussing region and networks, the more diverse the area is (with larger hapa populations) the awareness of and interaction

with these groups the individual has increases. If one were to identify as multiracial, it would make sense that they would feel that they belong with hapa groups. Without such groups available, it would make sense that they would feel they had nowhere to belong.

Hierarchy of Identities

The final question for my interviewees was often described as the most difficult question of all. This question asks the individual to rank order their identities—which one is most important to them, if any? I left this open ended to see how the interviewee understood the question and if they did indeed rank identities or just named their most important. Many interviewees chose their multiracial identity as of utmost importance to who they are. This could, of course, be a result of race being primed as it was an inclusion criterion for this study. However, since a border racial identity—or at the very least racial makeup—was specifically primed, answers that were singular, protean, or transcendent in nature require additional analysis.

I mean definitely the fact, the multiracial aspect is the most important. Because it, I believe it has really made me who I am. If I was just one or the other, I wouldn't be me. I wouldn't have the mindset and the kind of what I hope is like an open minded way of looking at things like a more welcoming way of looking at things...So I feel like I would not be myself if it were not for my ethnicity and who my parents are. (Bridget, 28, Japanese/white)

Mmm, mmm, big question, um, I would say probably biracial 'cause I don't like picking one or the other. I like to think of myself as a blend. I am heavily influenced by my mom's Indian culture but, like, it, again, it's hard to tell like what is Indian and what is white American. (Pratima, 24, Indian/white)

It's the fact that I'm not specific to one, so I would say that maybe the mutt group, being multicultural in definition would suite me best... I think being a mutt or multicultural gives me, I don't know, a different understanding of other cultures and other people in the sense that maybe people are from one group specifically can't see or understand. (Chad, 19, Bangladeshi/Mexican/white)

I would say with a caveat, I would say white/Asian biracial... I mean, you know, I feel like if anything that I'm white but I'm not. I'm authentically Asian and so I guess white/biracial Asian... For me it's the same thing. I don't know how to separate those things out. (Shelby, 45, Mongolian/white)

I guess being mixed—that's the thing that I'm most proud of because like I said, it makes you a little more distinct. (Jack, 34, Chinese/white)

A singular identity was another common answer to this question. For example, Ari (56, Japanese/white) said her Japanese identity was most important and Kirby (47, Japanese/white) said Japanese-American. These two interviewees are highly involved in their ethnic communities and live in California where there are large Japanese communities. For Ari and Kirby, a Japanese identity is understandably very important to them. As race was primed for this study, a singular identity is a logical response.

Because of their experience and involvement with their ethnic community, however, one race is more salient than another. Race, however, was not the only important identity named at the top of the hierarchy. Other identities chosen were based on gender,

[Being a woman], and I feel like because I'm taking [sociology] that my eyes are open to a lot more things now, considering being a woman... I think being a woman though is huge. (Lidiya, 20, Japanese, Korean, white, Native American)

religion,

Of all my identities, I think it would be my Buddhist identity would be the one that would be on top. Because I apply so many of the Buddhist principles to my life. It's not just Japanese stuff, that's just how I'm supposed to live my life. I'm supposed to think about others. I think that is more malleable verses how my ethnic side is, things like that. It's just a way of life. My Buddhism is a way of life. It doesn't matter what you are, [inaudible] to live the best life that you can. So that would be my top identity. (Stacey, 28, Japanese/ Mexican)

nation or statehood,

[When asked what identity is at the top of his hierarchy]

American. I don't know if that's too generalistic or too patriotic. (Alexander, 19, Filipino/black)

or occupation

[Out of] all of those different identities which one, if any, are more important to you?

Being a nurse.

Your job is more important.

Nurse, mother and then everything else. (Joanne, 38, Korean/white)

while only a few interviewees—nearly all men—said that all identities were on equal footing.

I wouldn't really put any one of them above the others. So they more kind of on equal footing with each other. Yeah they just kind of blend together and me. (Nate, 21, Japanese/white)

Do you think that any one of those things are most important to you?

I wouldn't think so at all. I think they're all making me who I am today. (Xander, 20, Korean/black)

However, many mentioned that their identities were fluid or situation-dependent indicating that they have a protean identity.

Identity is so fluid, right? Like it depends on the time of day and the situation, and, and who you're around. (Alysa, 29, Filipina/white)

I don't think any—I think all of them change with the environment. I don't think—I mean, if I'm in my academic, then being the professor is most important. If I'm in Vietnam, then being Asian is most important. If I'm in the United States...so I reinvent myself with each environment that I find myself in. (Minh, 49, Vietnamese/white)

I think that I wouldn't say that they all have equal footing, but I wouldn't say that any one of them is more important than the other. I would definitely say that each of them has greater and stronger influences in different areas. (Mark, 26, Japanese/white)

A protean identity was not specifically primed—as contingent for participation nor during the course of the interview. Fluidity, however, is particularly important in identity

theory as context has a significant impact on how one is perceived and how one understands oneself. While most interviewees did not say they had a fluid identity most did admit to feeling racially prominent—more Asian in some contexts and more non-Asian in others.

Depending on who I'm with, you know, the group I'm in, the part of me that stands out is the part that's different. (Anna Lee, 26, Chinese/white)

This hints at an understanding of their fluidity without the fluidity being especially salient.

Finally, two respondents chose “human” as their most important identity. Again, transcendent identities were not primed, that is, until *after* they were asked about hierarchy. This particular identity does not fit within the social identity theory group model when discussing race. It does, however, suggest that the “social group” that they are attempting to be the prototypical member of is the human race. By suggesting that all humans are and should be treated equally without any differentiating characteristics, the individual has fully accepted and become the ideal member of that group. While there were varied answers for the question about hierarchy, there was a general trend that race and ethnicity were very important to most of these individuals. However, they understood themselves and negotiated their surroundings differently based on the continually fluctuating salience of that particular identity and others.

Statistical analyses determined significant relationships between hierarchical identity and experiences with discrimination. As previously mentioned, the more complex one's hierarchical identity (i.e. fluid, transcendent, multiple identities) the less likely one is to perceive or experience discrimination. This is supported by the

qualitative data. For those with a complex hierarchical identity, a general ideology of appreciating diversity, seeking out similar people (homophily), and less overt discrimination experiences were common.

Aggregated Differences

Immigrant Generation

In both my interview sample as well as the HapaVoice sample, there are individuals from different immigrant generations beginning with 1.5 generation up to sixth generation. Those in the later generations tend to be Japanese or Chinese whose family had lived in Hawaii for a few generations and/or had endured internment. The more recent generation immigrants, however, have family all over the Asian continent and nearby Pacific Islands.

Ethnicity of Name

As discussed in a previous section, the names of interviewees can range from non-ethnic, mixed-ethnic, and ethnic. As one's name can be an important driver behind one's own identity and classification by others, it is important to determine if there are significant differences in identity by different name types. As previously stated, if one's father is Asian the individual is more likely to have an Asian ethnic name as a result of handing down surnames. Intentions by parents to help their child assimilate may also increase the likelihood of giving a child a non-ethnic first name as well. As 42 out of 60 interviewees had a non-ethnic name, there could be a number of reasons for this including assimilation motives, gender dynamics in baby naming and surname traditions, and desire for Asian cultural identity of one's offspring, etc.

Racial Mix

The Asian population in the U.S. is the most likely to marry-out (marry interracially) (Pew Research Center 2010). Intermarriage is most likely to occur in the West and Southwest U.S. Of all Asian interracial relationships and marriages, Asian-white is the most common mix (Pew Research Center 2010; Wang 2012). While the most likely racial mix was Asian-white in my interview sample and HapaVoice sample, as well as the multiracial Asian community generally, there was still a significant minority-minority population (Asian-black, Asian-Latin@) in both samples. As the literature review suggests, a minority-minority mix will likely experience discrimination—sometimes to a greater extent—and have an overall different experience than Asian-white hapas.

Asian Ethnicity

In terms of the different Asian ethnicities, one of my interviewees noted that “there is an Asian pecking order”:

Sometimes it's offensive. They make a presumption, “Oh are you this? Oh are you that?” They may get offended: “I'm not that; I take pride in being this!” (Layton, 40, Chinese/ white).

We all know the stereotypes and prejudices Asians have against other Asian countries. (Viets think Chinese are dirty, Koreans think Vietnamese and Chinese are inferior etc). It's embedded in many Asian people of older generations and even generations of today to do this. The same applies to Hapas. (HV post #96)

This prejudice is not only present in the U.S. but also abroad. As previously mentioned, there can be considerable prejudice present in Japanese society. The following interviewee has lived in Japan for the last eight years.

I know that they find something, Asian minorities in Japan to be, they consider them to be dangerous or threats. And if they think of me as a threat and they don't want to clarify and ask me who I am, I feel that puts me in a kind of different place. You know, and I understand that from some of the stories I use to hear from my mom when I was a kid, you know... Well a lot of people here in Japan, ah, have grown beyond this but there still some people who still look down on Chinese and Koreans and Thai and Filipinos and if, how can I say? If you're associated with those, these here. Um, certain people will not necessarily want to associate with you. (Peter, 42, Japanese/white)

Other Asian countries can have prejudice against multiracial Asians as well.

My mother was so persecuted in a sense and looked down on because she was married to a, a white man in Vietnam that she kind of instilled in us that there—we have to be very careful about how you identify yourself [when in Vietnam]. (Minh, 49, Vietnamese/ white)

Based on the above quotes, it is clear that within the Asian and Asian American community the way one is treated, presents oneself, and understands oneself may differ based on Asian ethnicity and context.

Geographic Location

After initial interviews, I suspected that where one was located in the U.S. would have an effect on one's racial identity. As previously mentioned, this variable is significantly associated with racial identity. Specifically, those living on the West coast are more likely to culturally identify as Asian and mixed race. This highlights the demographic concentration and large ethnic enclaves for long-established Asian immigrant groups such as Japanese and Chinese on the West Coast. The prevalence of these communities normalize Asian and hapa identities for multiracials as well as interracial relationships.

Phenotype

As previously mentioned, one's (categorical) sense of belonging is related—albeit not statistically significant—to one's phenotype. The more phenotypically non-Asian (read: white, black, or Latino) one is (according to self-report and interviewer observation), the more likely they are to feel a sense of belonging to non-Asian groups. Another association, again not significant but approaching significance, is between phenotype and Asian ethnicity.

Trends within Demographics

Age

While no significant statistical relationships were found in the interview data based on age, the older interviewees in my study tended to have significant exposure to and interest in their Asian culture. This relationship could be a result of the self-selection bias as most older participants were recruited through Facebook groups and snowball sampling; therefore this relationship may be specific to my sample. Other reasons, however, may exist. Another potential reason could be a return to one's ethnic culture after the major years of raising children (before and during their formative years) in an attempt to infuse the child's life with at least some of their Asian culture. As a result of their perhaps lack of exposure or engagement in their ethnic culture, they may wish for their children to have what they did not. When asked about the desire to transmit one's culture to the next generation, many expressed a desire to at least share the history. Younger respondents and those without kids tended to have less of an interest in exposing their future children to cultural practices but this was not always the case.

Gender

Gender is not statistically significant for any variable, quantitatively speaking. This, however, does not deny its significance qualitatively. The major difference found in my interview and HapaVoice sample is the sexualization of hapa women. This was not a separate variable in the quantitative codebook and therefore a relationship would not have been found. As previously mentioned, this sexualization mirrors the stereotype of Asian women commonly found in U.S. media. The fact that hapa men were not sexualized mirrors the often asexual nature of Asian men in U.S. media. Another theme that emerged was that hapa women in my study were more likely to name gender at the top of their hierarchy. As women are generally still more marginalized than men, gender is more salient in their everyday lives.

Socioeconomic Status

Those interviewees that self-identified as working class and lower middle class were more likely to identify as racially Asian or mixed. This could potentially be understood as a measure of acculturation. For those in the higher classes of society, one may engage in fewer ethnic activities and more high brow (and less ethnic) activities. Perhaps in order to fit in socioeconomically, one feels the need to discard their ethnic cultural ties.

Education

As mentioned in the previous section, however, reliability of tests based on the ethnicity of the parent must be questioned. Based on the qualitative data, however, it was clear that the experience one has in education had effects on one's life. It was in the

social institution of education that hapas were more likely to experience overt and subtle discrimination as well as open up one's networks in the case of international schooling and racial isolation in both domestic and international education contexts.

Theoretical Linkages

The most relevant questions to the proposed merger of the social psychological and racial and ethnic identity literatures are the aforementioned hierarchy of identities and belonging variables. As previously mentioned, belonging helps to define intergroup boundaries. Because most of my respondents—specifically those *not* living on the West Coast—do not feel that they fully belong in any group in which they have cultural and biological roots nor even the mixed race group as a result of lack of knowledge of or availability of said group members, group boundaries are not able to be erected in the same fashion that it is for monoracials. Multiracial Asians, therefore, can potentially join any group but most do not have an outlet with which they may feel fully comfortable. This has a direct impact on the formation of in-group pride and out-group bias. The liminality of these hapas interrupts such a process in that they often do not have a racial or ethnic in-group (other than the occasional “white American”) and feel as though they are “floating” around. However, those that do have a sense of belonging in the “hapa group” tend to have a diminished sense of out-group distinction as their in-group encompasses a wide range of people—often times one that is boundless and in search of diversity in every form.

In terms of authenticity and belonging, hapas are often seen as or see themselves as “only half” and therefore not authentically Asian. Also, as a result of limited cultural

exposure they also feel less authentic. This has a direct impact on one's sense of belonging especially if that their authenticity is directly challenged by others—even family members—as well as themselves.

This finding has many implications for the future of our multiracial society. Our world is going to have to dismantle the socially constructed boundaries of race and ethnicity if anyone is to feel that they fully belong. However, to challenge the dominant racial ideology of the time proves to be an insurmountable task for the near future.

In regards to a hierarchy of identities, social identity theory asserts that identities come to be internalized. This internalized identity transforms the individual into a group member (Hogg, Terry, etc). I hypothesized that if a multiracial Asian individual assumes a fluid identity (in either hierarchy or belonging), then their social identity will more closely resemble one that is “multiracial” or “mixed” than asserting one racial or ethnic group over the other. For my interviewees, I found that if one were to have a fluid identity they did indeed identify as mixed race but also nearly equally as likely to identify as Asian or with their Asian ethnicity. Not a single interviewee that asserted a fluid identity identified with their non-Asian lineage. This highlights perhaps a connection between fluidity and openness or a deep appreciation for racial and ethnic diversity wherein their own racial and ethnic diversity is embraced and/or stressed. Fluidity then is something a hapa—if they identify with such border identity—has embraced even if they are not fully aware of its salience. If one understands their own contextual nature of their identity they are more likely to be open to how others identify and to others that may have similar experiences. This, again, follows the homophily

principle as well as the combination of self-verification and self-enhancement biases described in a previous section. It is through the use of these processes that hapas have created an identity and atmosphere in which they are affirmed (read: verified) and enriched (read: enhanced).

It is also important to address this issue from the standpoint of the racial and ethnic theory; to reverse focus and use the concepts applicable to Rockquemore, Brunσμα, and Delgado (2009). For those specifically with a border identity—or one that was a mix of their racial and ethnic heritages—one-third of them did not feel a sense of belonging to any group. Another one-third felt that they belong with the hapa group. This, however, was constrained by knowledge of and access to these groups. Thirty percent of those with border identity specified race⁷ to be at the top of their hierarchy, that which is salient to most aspects of their life. The data is less conclusive for those with a singular, protean, or transcendent identity specifically because of the number of cases in each category as well as significant variation in answers about hierarchy and belonging.

⁷ It is important to mention, however, that since the nature of this study was very much focused on race and ethnicity, it is possible that they were primed with that bias.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The multifaceted nature of this mixed methods study was highly enlightening as to the many issues and idiosyncrasies of the multiracial Asian population. Many variables that were not considered for the interview schedule ended up being very important to one's identity and experience (e.g. travel, gender of the Asian parent, racial purity and isolation, etc.). This study serves to fill the gap in the literature of an in-depth look at multiracial Asians of all racial mixes from both a quantitative and qualitative standpoint as well as contribute to the development of a relationship between social psychological and racial and ethnic identity theories. While there are many similarities between multiracial populations, hapas have a slightly different experience as a result of the model minority stereotype.

Research Questions

The research questions driving this study include 1) how multiracial Asians identify racially, ethnically, and religiously; 2) do they feel disconnected from our monoracially-based society; 3) how do they construct their identities and what is important to them; 4) what influences those identities; and 5) how does racial and ethnic identity relate to group identities? The descriptive case of multiracial Asians serves as a backdrop for the merger of racial and ethnic identity theories, specifically that of Rockquemore, Brunsmas, and Delgado (2009), and social psychological identity theories, specifically Tajfel's social identity theory. Data from the 2008 National Asian American

Survey conducted by ICPSR was utilized to inform the interview schedule. Sixty, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted regarding racial, ethnic, and religious identity, cultural knowledge, and social networks. Personal stories of multiracial Asians were gathered from HapaVoice.com. Both sets of qualitative data were analyzed using constant comparison analysis and classical content analysis. Relationships between important categorical and ordinal level variables from the interview data was further analyzed quantitatively using Chi Square. A broad portrait of multiracial Asians was painted from the data. The aforementioned analyses of empirical data highlight the variables that best combine the disparate theoretical traditions.

Empirical Findings

Many of the identities of my interviewees are influenced by their cultural exposure, parental socialization, and peer socialization. After years of grappling with a complicated identity, many respondents have chosen to explore their multiracial Asian identity further and have considerably diverse social networks. Based on the literature, I hypothesized many relationships about racial and ethnic identity, cultural exposure, and social networks. I hypothesized that if a multiracial Asian assumes a fluid identity, they will most likely identify as multiracial or mixed than identifying with one racial group over another. This was partially supported by the data. For those that had a fluid identity in terms of belonging or hierarchically, interviewees were more likely to identify as multiracial or mixed as well as Asian. Their non-Asian heritage was not a likely candidate for identification. I further hypothesized that if a multiracial Asian individual identifies with their Asian ethnic heritage, then they will be more likely to adopt a

multiracial or mixed label. Alternatively, without such identification, the individual will be more likely to identify with their non-Asian monoracial group.

In terms of phenotype, I hypothesized that the more phenotypically “Asian” a multiracial Asian appears, the more likely they will be to identify as multiracial or mixed. Phenotype is not significantly related to racial identity, hierarchical identity, a sense of belonging, or other important variables. Social network diversity was hypothesized to increase the likelihood to identify as multiracial or mixed. As for phenotype, no statistically significant relationships were found to support that hypothesis. It may be the case, that I did not adequately conceptualize and measure “phenotype” since it is self reported. In fact, because it is self reported, it is conflated with other identity issues including identity performance.

The respondents’ experiences with their ethnic culture, wider American culture, and the people closest to them have affected them in different ways. It seems that one’s cultural exposure and capital can have significant effects on one’s feelings of belonging in major racial groups. For those respondents that identify with the white race, it seems that one’s lack of cultural exposure combined with their white social networks results in this identification. For those that are attempting to increase their cultural capital, this is more of an attempt to connect with one’s roots than for purposes of utility in their daily life.

Increased Asian ethnic cultural exposure was hypothesized to similarly increase the likelihood to identify as multiracial or mixed. Again, this relationship approached but did not reach significance. The qualitative data, however, told a different story. Ethnic

language ability is known to decrease with later immigrant generations. If any interviewees has ethnic language ability—and were not 1.5 generation—they were much more likely to have personally sought out this education in a formal setting. Very few interviewees had learned the ethnic language from their parents. This seemed to be a significant barrier to cultural identity, authenticity, and belonging. Despite this lack of ethnic cultural capital, these later generations are able to “create” an alternative group to which to belong because of their border crossing between American and Asian. As Park (2008) suggested, this outcome is indeed present in my interview and HapaVoice sample. I hypothesized that this would result in a multiracial or multiethnic identity. While this was true for some, many used a “hyphenated” identity (*Asian American*) and explained that this was the result of their liminality.

While much of my interview sample was obtained through the Hapa Facebook group and the HapaVoice stories indicated knowledge of the term “hapa,” there were still some people that did not have knowledge of the term or access to or knowledge of a local hapa community. Very few of my interview sample chose to identify with the term hapa—a few, however, used the term *blasian* or *Eurasian*. The rest, however, identified with other terminology to express their multiraciality, specifically outlined their “halves” or “parts,” hyphenated their identity with American (read: Japanese American, Asian American, etc.), or “chose”⁸ one of their identities. As previously mentioned, those on the West Coast were more likely to have knowledge of hapa communities and identify with the term. There is a significant collective identity in parts of California and Seattle.

⁸ I put chose in quotation marks because the idea of choosing between one’s identities or being able to or forced to choose is highly problematic for multiracials.

The importance of such border identity terms (hapa, mixed, multiracial, biracial, Eurasian, blasian, etc.) cannot be understated. Similar to how important one's name is to their personal identity, the existence and use of a border identity term provides an individual a name for who and what they are which in turn validates their experience and identity. This validation, which monoracial individuals often take for granted, is of utmost importance to one's self-concept and self-esteem. Without such validation, one is not fully embraced for who they are not are they generally fully understood by outsiders or even themselves.

In terms of religion, I hypothesized that multiracial Asians that participate in an ethnic religious organization will be more likely to identify as multiracial or mixed. However, too few of my interviewees actually identified with an Eastern religion, or an ethnic religious organization, so I lack information. There was, however, data to partially support a hypothesis on phenotype and belonging, and I found important correlations between religion and ego networks, cultural identity, discrimination, and geographic location. If one is phenotypically or culturally set apart from the majority of the religious organization's other members, they may feel a sense of isolation. There were many interviewees that are racially isolated in their religious institution. However, only a few of them felt such that they "stuck out" or did not belong as a result of their race or ethnicity. The more common sentiment was that race was not salient at their church or temple. As for the hypothesis regarding similarity in affiliation with their non-Asian social networks, not enough data was gathered on religious affiliation of their ego networks to determine a relationship between these categories. There were, however,

very few friendships within the religious context for my interviewees. It is important to mention that a significant majority of my interviewees do not attend and/or are not affiliated with a particular religious organization. It was further hypothesized that the second generation would leave their ethnic religion behind in an attempt to be seen or see themselves as more “American.” Again, however, there was not enough data to support this claim.

Theoretical Implications

The most important variables found between the two identity theories are racial and cultural identity, a sense of belonging and authenticity, and one’s hierarchical identity. One’s sense of belonging and authenticity are directly correlated with cultural and racial identity as found in both the quantitative or qualitative data. This is not a unidirectional relationship, however. These variables can have a causal relationship on one another. For example, one’s racial identity (potentially influenced by other factors) can have an impact on one’s belonging; one’s sense of belonging can have an impact on one’s racial identity. Mediating factors include ego and social networks, geographic location, racial isolation, discrimination, cultural capital, gender of their Asian parent, SES, Asian ethnicity, non-Asian race, phenotype, and ethnicity of one’s name. For my dataset specifically, trends of social psychological identity relates best to those with a border identity although has the potential to relate to singular, protean, and transcendent multiracials as well if the sample is larger. As outlined above, I was able to find such linkages and am able to highlight the importance of external and internal variables on one’s group identity or lack thereof. I believe it is important for discussion between

theoretical paradigms in order to advance them. Insular thought does not lead to innovation. In this case, the advancement of this discussion highlights the need to bridge these theoretical gaps as a result of the changing demographics of the United States. I believe this study to contribute such bridging.

Policy Implications

When conducting research on a growing and unique population in the United States and beyond it is important to consider the larger ramifications of one's findings. As one of my most significant findings was a lack of a sense of belonging, this is particularly troubling. How should such a large population understand themselves in relation to wider society, especially one that is oriented toward seeing people in a monoracial way? They do not quite belong anywhere. That is, however, unless that hapa community can increase its visibility, its power, and its reach. Once such a collective identity is achieved, this community can mobilize to attain its goals. Those goals are potentially challenging and potentially deconstructing the dominant racial ideology, creating and sustaining a community in which racial, ethnic, and religious diversity is appreciated in all of its intricacies, and giving political and community-based power to its members. Major barriers in the way of such a formation, however, are the lack of knowledge of the term and community (hapa) by not only multiracial Asians themselves but the wider American community as well as the isolation of these communities to particular parts of the country. A "culture of solidarity" (Nagel 1994) cannot be achieved until such barriers are dismantled. The fact that the multiracials in the study discussed themselves and others in a monoracial frame is another challenge to achieving these

goals because in order for the dominant racial ideology to change, the population that it most affects must first begin to think that way. This study highlights the importance of dismantling the racial binary that is imposed upon everyone in society.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the multifaceted nature of my study using multiple data sources and analysis techniques, I did not have information about different social networks. A more detailed analysis should be done on ego and wider social networks to determine hapa community breadth and the potential ability to organize into a larger interest group. As religious affiliation was low, a study examining the non-affiliation of multiracials—not limited to second generation—would be highly applicable as their multiracial, multiethnic, and often religiously plural upbringing can inform the study of religion on a rapidly diversifying nation. Another interesting extension of this study would be on the children of hapas (“quapas” if they are one-quarter Asian or those that are three-quarters Asian) and their identity in terms of race and ethnicity. I was able to obtain five such multiracials—raised by one hapa and one multiracial; however, a larger sample is needed to better understand their particular experience. A discussion between the hapa parent and quapa adult child (as well as separate interviews) would further enlighten trends of cultural transmission.

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APPENDIX A

Tables of Statistical Tests

Table A-1. Regression Coefficients of Multiracial Identity and Country of Birth on Discrimination Using ICPSR NAAS Data

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.713	.018		38.731	.000
	Multiracial	-.162	.083	-.033	-1.944	.052
	US	.027	.059	.007	.453	.651
	multixUS	.124	.193	.011	.641	.521

+ approaches significance

Table A-2. Logistic Regression Coefficients of Propensity to Identify as Multiracial on Attendance of Religious Services Using ICPSR NAAS Data

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Attend Often			30.131	2	.000*	
	Rarely Attend	.882	.395	4.983	1	.026*	2.415
	Never Attend	.045	.407	.012	1	.911	1.047
	Constant	-3.274	.385	72.318	1	.000	.038

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: attend; * significant

Table A-3. Logistic Regression Coefficients of Propensity to Identify as Multiracial on Religious Affiliation Using ICPSR NAAS Data

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Catholic			110.818	8	.000*	
	Mainline Protestant	.832	.231	13.012	1	.000*	2.299
	Evangelical Protestant	.530	.458	1.334	1	.248	1.698
	Other Christian	-17.765	15191.515	.000	1	.999	.000
	Jewish	1.449	.211	47.225	1	.000*	4.259
	Muslim	24.641	40192.969	.000	1	1.000	502951167 74.092
	Eastern	-17.765	10742.023	.000	1	.999	.000
	Atheist/ Agnostic	-.423	.256	2.744	1	.098+	.655
	None	.083	.616	.018	1	.893	1.086
	Constant	-3.438	.185	343.616	1	.000	.032

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: relig; * significant; + approaches significance

Table A-4. Chi Square Test of Multiraciality and Sending Money Back to Home Country Using ICPSR NAAS Data

Multiraciality	Sending Money Back to Home Country		
	Yes	No	Total
Monoracial	1564	2931	4495
Multiracial	64	193	257
Total	1628	3124	4752

Pearson $X^2(1) = 10.561$ P = 0.001

Table A-5. Chi Square Test of Multiraciality and Overall Physical Health Using ICPSR NAAS Data

Multi-raciality	Overall Physical Health					Total
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	
Monoracial	212	837	1627	1181	668	4525
Multiracial	21	74	84	46	35	260
Total	233	911	1711	1227	703	4785

Pearson $X^2(4) = 26.607$ P = 0.001

Table A-6. Chi Square Test of Multiraciality and Frequency of Attendance of Religious Services Using ICPSR NAAS Data

Multi-raciality	Attendance of Religious Services						Total
	At least every week	Almost every week	A few times a month	Only a few times a year	Hardly ever	Never	
Monoracial	1030	513	524	666	300	185	3218
Multiracial	83	58	24	21	14	7	207
Total	1113	571	548	687	314	192	3425

Pearson $X^2(5) = 37.735$ P = 0.001

Table A-7. Chi Square Test of One's Sense of Belonging (Binary) and Racial Identity (Recoded)

Sense of Belonging	Racial Identity		
	Monoracial	Multiracial	Total
Nowhere	2	12	14
Somewhere	15	23	38
Total	17	35	52

Pearson $X^2(1) = 2.9497$ P = 0.086

Table A-8. Chi Square Test of Gender of Asian Parent and Ethnicity of Respondent's Name (Recoded)

Gender of Asian Parent	Ethnic Name		
	Yes	No	Total
Mother	6	35	41
Father	11	5	16
Total	17	41	60

Pearson $X^2(1) = 16.1034$ P = 0.001

Table A-9. Chi Square Test of Geographic Location (Recoded) and Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity	Living on the US Coast		
	Yes	No	Total
Asian	12	2	14
Mixed	11	2	13
Non-Asian	3	0	3
American	6	9	15
Other	1	1	2
Total	33	14	47

Pearson $X^2(4) = 11.1081$ P = 0.025

Table A-10. Chi Square Test of Perceived Discrimination and One's Sense of Belonging (Binary)

Discrimination	Sense of Belonging (Binary)		
	Nowhere	Somewhere	Total
None	3	4	7
Some	5	20	25
A Lot	7	14	21
Total	15	38	53

Pearson $X^2(6) = 10.7470$ P = 0.097

Table A-11. Regression Coefficients of Fundamental Denomination on Frequency of Attendance Using ICPSR NAAS Data

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.404	.017		83.926	.000
	Fundamental	-.210	.024	-.203	-8.649	.000*

* significant

Table A-12. Regression Coefficients of Level of Perceived Discrimination on Frequency of Attendance Using ICPSR NAAS Data

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.537	.012		127.98 2	.000
	Level of Discrimination	.030	.009	.055	3.204	.001*

* significance

Table A-13. Chi Square Test of Asian Ethnicity (Recoded) and Religious Identity (Recoded)

Asian Ethnicity	Religious Identity			
	Monotheistic	Eastern/Spiritual	Atheist/Agnostic	Total
Japanese	4	12	5	21
All Others	18	11	7	36
Total	22	23	12	57

Pearson $X^2(2) = 5.6357$ P = 0.057

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule

Identity

1. Tell me about your racial and ethnic heritage as well as that of your parents.
2. How do you racially identify?
3. How do you ethnically identify?
4. How has your racial and ethnic identity changed over time?
5. How do you usually identify on a survey?
6. What experiences have been influential in your racial and ethnic identity?
7. How important is your Asian heritage to you? In your everyday life?
8. How important is your non-Asian heritage to you? In your everyday life?
9. How do others classify you racially/ethnically?
10. Have you ever been asked “what are you?” How does this question make you feel?
11. How do your racial and ethnic identities affect your cultural identity?
12. Do you think your looks (i.e. physical features) affect your racial identity?
Explain.
13. Where do you feel like you most “belong”?
14. Describe your experiences with wider America (including feelings of discrimination, marginalization, incorporation).
15. Incorporated within the question regarding ethnic identity: do you have a panethnic or ethnic specific identity? Do you feel a part of your ethnic community?

16. Do you have any physical features that serve as cues to your racial heritage to others?
17. Does your racial identity become more prominent among like and dissimilar groups of others? How so?

Cultural Capital

18. Tell me about what language you speak at home, with friends, and with your family.
- a. How well do you speak the language of your Asian parent?
- b. Does your Asian parent still speak the language?
19. What are some of your Asian customs (familial or larger cultural)? How did you learn of these?
- a. Do you participate in any of them? If yes, how so? If not, why not?
- b. Do you participate in any of these customs with other people? If yes, who?
- c. Do you feel any obligation to engage with these customs? Explain.
20. If you do or were to have kids, what (if any) cultural traditions would you attempt to pass on? Is it important for your (future) kids to speak ethnic language?
21. How often do you do the following and how important are they to you? 1) Intergenerational relationships, 2) consumption of ethnic media, 3) consumption of ethnic food, and 4) general cultural retention.

Social Networks

22. Who would you say are your five closest friends? How would you classify them racially? (How many are Asian or your ethnicity? How many attend your religious institution? Also, what is their age/gender/SES?)
23. What is your frequency of contact with parents (by ethnicity).
24. How would you describe your social networks (of close friends and that of acquaintances)?
25. What was the racial composition of your neighborhood growing up? School?
26. What is the racial composition of your neighborhood currently? Work/school life?

Religion

27. Were you raised in any particular religion? If yes, which one?
28. Did you go to a particular religious institution as a child? Now as an adult?
 - a. How often did you attend an ethnic religious institution in high school?
 - b. What was the racial/ethnic makeup of that institution? Did you interact with other members often? What things did you have in common with these people?
 - c. Did you ever think about your race or ethnicity when at this institution?
Alternatively, do you feel that race and ethnicity were never important?
 - d. Did you feel like you belonged?
29. Tell me about your current religious or spiritual affiliation and participation as well as that of your parents.

If religiously affiliated:

- a. How often do you attend religious services?

- b. Do you pray privately? If yes, how often?
 - c. Do you have close friends and acquaintances from your religious institution?
If yes, how many? What kind of interaction do you have with them?
 - d. Do you read religious texts? For example, the Bible. If yes, how often?
30. How important is religion to you (very, moderately, little)?
31. Do you feel that your identity has influenced your religious beliefs and affiliation in any way? If yes, how so?
32. Do you feel that one aspect of yourself is most important to you? For example, is one part of your ethnic/racial heritage more important?
Alternatively, do you find that they are on equal footing and/or competing with one another (also, depending on the situation)?
33. Is it important for you to marry ethnic or same religion? Do your parents have a preference? To participate in ethnic religious institution? Why?
34. Demographics (age, gender identity, SES, education)

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Material

1. Advertisement on AsianNation.org and in Goldenroom Journal

Texas A&M University doctoral student, Jennifer Lê, is conducting research for her study on multiracial Asian American identity. She is in need of participants to complete interviews that will last at least one hour to be conducted over the phone, Skype, or FaceTime and be audio-recorded. Anyone that identifies themselves as “part Asian” (mixed with any other racial group; for example, white/Korean or Latino/Thai) is eligible to be a participant. All participants that complete the interview will be compensated for their time. Any and all personal information will be kept confidential. If you are interested in participating in this study please email Jennifer at jennyle@tamu.edu for more information.

2. Post on HapaVoice.com, MixedAsians.com/forum/, email, and social media recruitment

Hi! I am Jennifer Lê, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University. I am doing my doctoral dissertation on multiracial Asian American identity and am in need of participants. If you or someone you know identifies as “part Asian” (mixed with any other racial group; for example, white/Korean or Latino/Thai) that makes them eligible to be a participant. In-depth interviews will be conducted; they will last at least one hour to be conducted over the phone, Skype, or FaceTime and be audio-recorded. All participants that complete the interview will be compensated for their time. Any and all personal information will be kept confidential. If you are interested in participating in this study please email me at jennyle@tamu.edu for more information. Thanks!!

3. Verbal

I am conducting research on multiracial Asian American identity and need participants to complete interviews. They will last at least one hour and be conducted over the phone, Skype, or FaceTime and be audio-recorded. If you or someone you know identifies as “part Asian” (mixed with any other racial group; for example, white/Korean or Latino/Thai) that makes them eligible to be a participant. All participants that complete the interview will be compensated for their time. Any and all personal information will be kept confidential. Would you be interested or know someone that may be interested in participating in this study?

APPENDIX D

IRB Consent Form

CONSENT FORM Multiracial Asian American Identity

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying the identity of multiracial Asian Americans. The purpose of this study is to examine what influences their racial and ethnic identity as well as how their racial and ethnic identity influences other things. The major influences I am concerned with specifically are social networks, ethnic cultural capital, and religious experience, and more supplementally their phenotype, personal history, parents' history, name, social pressures, and experiences with discrimination. You were selected to be a possible participant because you self-identified as "part Asian."

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer questions in an interview format relating to your racial and ethnic identity, social networks, Asian ethnic culture, and religion. If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you are free to skip them. The interview will take approximately 1.5 to 3 hours. Your permission to have your interview audio recorded will be requested.

Please check one of the following:

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, the investigators will better understand the complex identity processes of multiracials which then have the possibility to influence policy decisions

Will I be compensated?

For the completion of this interview, you will be compensated \$20, in the form of gift card or cash.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher, Jennifer Lê, will have access to the records.

If you choose to participate in this study, you may be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the researcher, Jennifer Lê, will have access to the recordings.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Jennifer Lê at 651.249.5240 or jennyle@tamu.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Office of Research Compliance at 979.458.4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Signature

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____