YOUR PERCEPTION, MY REALITY:

THE CASE OF IMPOSED IDENTITY FOR MULTIRACIAL INDIVIDUALS

A Dissertation

by

NICHOLE CRYSTELL BOUTTÉ-HEINILUOMA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2012

Major Subject: Sociology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,   Joe Feagin
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ABSTRACT

Your Perception, My Reality:

The Case of Imposed Identity for Multiracial Individuals. (August 2012)

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Prior to this exploratory study, issues of multiracial identity development and imposed identity had not been explored in great detail. This study sought to expand the current knowledge base by offering an examination of a) multiracial identity development for different bi/multiracial backgrounds, b) the influence of the perception of race on social interactions (imposed identity), and c) racial identification in the public and private spheres from the perspective of multi-racial individuals. A literature based survey was developed and piloted with an expert panel to increase face and content validity. For the larger study, participants were recruited using snowball and convenience sampling. Forty-five participants provided in-depth interviews and an additional 166 completed the online version of the survey.

Respondents were primarily female (n = 132; 83%), 26-30 years old (n = 37; 23%), from the South (n = 57; 36%), unmarried (n = 106; 67%), childless (n = 97, 63%) and reported a yearly household income of over $95,001 (n = 36; 24%).

Findings from this study support identity development literature as respondents indicated family members were most responsible for their perceptions of race, even in mixed-raced families. Respondents also indicated they had experienced imposed identity based on what others believed their race to be. Perceptions of power influenced whether or not respondents corrected others' mistaken assumptions.

Additionally, respondents indicated their belief that, despite their variances in skin tone, we do not live in a color-blind society, despite widely spread claims that we live in a post-racial society. Further, respondents indicated racial cues (such as skin tone, hair texture, facial structure) are still used to categorize people according to race. Qualitative data provided specific examples of when and how multiracial respondents had experienced racism and/or benefitted from others' beliefs about their race based on skin tone alone. For example, one bi-racial respondent indicated he was placed in advanced classes in high school because he appeared as only Asian, while another indicated his race was questioned at a government agency because of how he looked, but had never experienced that problem when conducting the same business with his White mother present.

To my grandparents, Dr. Alvin J. McNeil and Mrs. Ella Edith Holmes McNeil

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inspiration. From the many lessons you have taught me in my 30+ years on this earth, the one that sticks with me the most is that hard work and dedication will pay off in the end, despite what others think or feel. Thank you for always believing in and never giving up on me. I love you Swiggy Wombat.

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CHAPTER I

IMPOSED IDENTITY: RACE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In the introduction to his 1995 memoir, *Dreams of My Father,* Barack Obama states, "When people who don't know me well, Black or White, discover my background ... I see the split-second adjustments they have to make, the searching of my eyes for some telltale sign. They no longer know who I am" (p. xv). Some 13 years later, in November 2008, citizens of the United States of America went to the ballot box to vote for the 44th President of the United States. It was then that Americans, for the first time in modern history, had to decide with finality whether race would play a factor in the presidency. Prior to the election, many race-based debates occurred in homes, offices, and the media about a biracial man who, if elected, had the possibility of breaking down racial barriers in the United States. However, just over two years later, it seems that the reality of the situation is most Americans see President Obama as just an African American president, regardless of the fact that he publicly acknowledged his biracial heritage time and again. He has continually stated that although he was born of a White mother and a Black father, he is often viewed, treated, and identified as Black (Washington, 2008) and as such now identifies as an African American man. Using this as a foundation, the reality is there are still some who see the mixture of Black + White as equaling only Black.

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This dissertation follows the style of the *American Sociological Review.*

While we are in the 21st century, it seems that many still choose to impose the historically oppressive practice of placing a monoracial persona upon those who do not fit that criterion. While the one-drop rule is no longer the official policy of the land, it does still influence the lives of people who are multiracial, as people who are visibly mixed with Black or another race of color (Native American for example), are often still considered non-White and treated as such. The racial history of the United States shows that to be non-White is a detriment for many non-White skinned people. This most certainly includes those who are biracial and those whose phenotype does not allow them to live as White even if they are allowed to identify as such on paper.

The conceptual idea of imposed identity (in this case, specifically the persona assigned to mixed race individuals based on a monoracial scale using appearance as its main cue) is a topic that merits more study if we are truly going to understand the many ways race remains a part of American society. Does the growing multiracial population show that race has become less important, or has it adapted to include these new categories? Does America still function based on the racial hierarchy that puts Whites at the top and people of color at the bottom or is there a new order in town? Are multiracial people the bridge that links us together or are they just another rung in the racial hierarchy ladder?

While there has been an influx in the literature discussing multiracial identity formation and what it means to be mixed race in American society, few have gone in depth in uncovering just how much outside opinion (whether it be it friends, family, and/or strangers) plays in how one decides to identify oneself. This idea was inspired by

DuBois' concept of double consciousness ("the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.") (p. 5). I propose that many multiracial individuals, not solely the Negro to which DuBois was referring, experience this disconnect as well[1]. Biracial and multiracial individuals navigate their lives based on experiences of where they are singularly both one race and another while simultaneously dealing with being mixed race. Added to this are possible discrepancies between how they self-identify and interactions that occur based on the racial identity society imposes upon them.

While on paper American society has moved forward with regard to utilization of mixed race categories and allowing more than one box to be checked on federal forms, this does not mean that society has changed how they treat those who now can check all that apply. Sundstrom (2001) states that, "those who do not fit into this nation's racial typology are social anomalies, and are unwelcome reminders to society that race is fluid and that taboos against miscegenation have been transgressed" (p. 285). For example, as recently as 2009, a (White) Louisiana justice of the peace refused to marry an interracial couple. While the judge states that he is not a racist, he just does not believe in racial mixing. The judge stated "There is a problem with both groups [Blacks and Whites] accepting a child from such a marriage…I think those children suffer and I won't help put them through it" (Huffington Post, 2010). While this judge and this action may not

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[1] Identity formation is a process that all individuals go through whether they are White or Black, monoracial or multiracial. In essence, everybody has some aspect of their identity which can be seen as other-imposed. The point of this dissertation is not to discount this, but rather to highlight the fact that race is still a very salient issue in the United States and while many point to the multiracial population as a step toward closing the racial divide, if those who are multiracial are still put in monoracial categories is this the case?

be typical of society in the 21st century, the underlying notion that the products of such unions are problems or will have problems is still prevalent in America today.

Perhaps as an unintended result of this unwelcome reminder, many people still try to force those who do not fit the dominant racial categories (i.e. Black, White, Indian, Hispanic etc.) into those narrowly defined categorizations anyway. They do this primarily based on skin tone and/or other racial cues such as hair texture or facial structure. For example, multiracial individuals who are darker skinned individuals are more likely to be treated as Black (i.e. Barack Obama). Those who possess a lighter skin tone, or who are able to pass as White, will be seen (and, as such, treated as) White. These same individuals may have both checked the same boxes on federal forms but their skin tone marks them as different in society. This continued imposition of (racial) identity is at war with the argument in which some suggest: that race no longer matters in society. Instead, it suggests that race is more salient than many would like society to believe.

In order to look at this issue more closely, this research project begins with the following research questions;

1) What influences the development of racial identity for multiracial individuals (i.e., family, media etc.)?

2) Do multiracial individuals experience the imposition of race from other members of society?

3) Do multiracial individuals consistently identify as mixed race people or does identification change as the result of environmental factors?

4) As members of blended racial backgrounds, do multiracial individuals believe they live in a color blind society?

5) Do multiracial individuals believe it is okay to deny part of their multiracial heritage/identity in certain situations?

6) Do multiracial individuals participate in shifting to fit more comfortably into one particular racial category or another?

As a foundation for this exploratory research project, relevant theories and literature on bi/multiracial identity are reviewed with the goal of understanding the relationship between society and self in terms of shaping and expressing ones' multiracial identity. However, before one can fully understand issues associated with multiracialism in America, they must first understand the underlying issues of race and racism, both historical and current. The following section addresses the status of race in America today.

Race in the United States

What is race? Does it still matter? Race, as social scientists have shown, is not a biological trait, but rather a social construct that has significant impact in people's lives. According to Templeton (1998) "Race is a real cultural, political and economic concept in society, but it is not a biological concept, and that unfortunately is what many people wrongfully consider to be the essence of race in humans—genetic differences" (Lehman 2009, p. 74). Brunsma (2006) takes this further when stating, "Race is not something one is, but rather an elaborate, lived experience and cultural ritual of what one does" (5). Bonilla-Silva (1999) states "race, much like gender and class, is regarded as a 'social

fact' that is real and historically-bounded, not biological. It is a fact that cannot be fixed or essentialized, but nonetheless is still a central principle by which groups socially organize" (p. 899).

Feagin and Feagin (2008) posited that it was only around the 18th century that race came to mean, "a category of human beings with distinctive physical characteristics transmitted by descent, and set in a racialized hierarchy" (p. 4). Omi and Winant (1994), state that race is "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (p. 55). Sanjeck (1996) suggests that, "race is the framework of ranked categories segmenting the human population that was developed by western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s" (1). It is how White Europeans, and later White Americans, sought to differentiate themselves as superior to everyone else. This construct, some 600 years later, is still used for the same purposes.

When America was founded some 235+ years ago[2], it was already a society that was based on a racial hierarchy in which Whites were on the top and Blacks were on the bottom with other races in between. Bonilla-Silva (2004) suggests that the United States has had a bi-racial order in which the reality was "White versus the rest" (p. 931). This can be seen in American history in which elite Whites worked to keep the races separate though slavery and inheritance laws. Saks (1988; 2003) states, "The criminalization of interracial relations, especially marriage, had begun in the colonial period. Maryland passed this country's first miscegenation statute in 1661" (p. 11). One year later, in

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[2] By 1776, the North American colonies had already been in place since 1607. The first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619 and were the first recorded instances of slaves in North America.

1662, the House of Burgesses in Virginia passed a law in which children of a slave mother inherited her racial status (this went against English common law in which children inherit the status of the father). In 1705, this same legislative body enacted the first slave codes on the North American continent. The elite White slave holders recognized the economic importance of slavery and worked to establish White supremacy as not just the norm in society but as part of the law. By 1776, slavery had been in effect for at least 155 years, and anti-miscegenation laws (in many states) were already in effect. So, by the time America became a nation, race was already the single most dividing factor in and as time went on racism became even more entrenched in the system. While many would like to think that time and progress worked to diminish the effect of race in society, quite the opposite has occurred. America started as and still is a nation where race and racism are entrenched in the very core of its foundation.

According to Omi and Winant (1994) racism is "a fundamental characteristic of social projects which create or reproduce structures of domination based on essentialist categories" (p. 71). While this definition does not encompass the depths to which racism is embedded in our society, Omi and Winant do point out that it creates and/or reproduces domination in society. Racism is not simply individual prejudices but rather, as Kujichagulia (1995) explains, can also be viewed as a totalitarian entity which

> involves physical, psychological, spiritual, and social control, exploitation and subjection of one race by another race. It is the social institutionalization of the psychological concept of White/White supremacy (a man-made ideology of White/White superiority and Black/Black inferiority). This means that racial discrimination and injustice are established, perpetuated and promoted

throughout every institution of society - economics, education, entertainment, family, labor, law, politics, religion, science, and war[3].

Feagin (2006) posits that racism is not a side problem on an otherwise healthy society, but rather is systemic in the very fabric of American society. He explains that systemic racism is "the racist ideology, attitudes, emotions, habits, actions, and institutions of Whites in this society…It is the material, social, and ideological reality that is well imbedded in major U.S. institutions" (Feagin, 2006, p. 2). Reality shows that, in practice, systemic racism

> involves a racialized exploitation and subordination of Americans of color by White Americans. It encompasses the racial stereotyping, prejudices, and emotions of Whites, as well as the discriminatory practices and racialized institutions generated for the long-term domination of African Americans and other people of color (Feagin & Barnett, 2005).

This system of racism was forced upon people of color by White laws, norms and institutions. It happened not by accident, but rather with implicit intent to keeping Whites on top and people of color on the bottom of the racial ladder. Inherent to systemic racism is what Feagin (2010) calls the White racial frame. He further suggests that racial framing combines five features:

1. racial stereotypes (a beliefs aspect);
2. racial narratives and interpretations (integrating cognitive aspects);
3. racial images (a visual aspect) and language accents (an auditory aspect);
4. racialized emotions (a feelings aspect); and
5. inclinations to discriminatory action (p. 10-11).

The purpose of this frame is to support Whites superiority in society while keeping the racial other oppressed. Included in this oppression are those of mixed race backgrounds whose biological structuring cannot be traced to a pure White heritage.

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[3] Definitions of race and racism. The center for the study of White American culture. URL: http://euroamerican.org/images/logot.gif. Last accessed: February 28, 2011.

While people of color have been subjected to the actions that stem from systemic racism and the White racial frame, this does not mean that they have not (tried to) resist it. Americans of color "have frequently developed important counter-frames designed to fight back or to just survive" (Feagin 2010, p. 158). Feagin goes further by stating, "counter-frames have provided important tool kits enabling both individuals and groups to effectively counter recurring White hostility and discrimination" (p. 159). Some of the tools of the counter-frame employed by people of color include protest, using the language of "equality, freedom and liberty and justice for all" (p. 170); developing a "sensitivity to Whites' negative framing of African Americans and to commonplace stereotypes and discriminatory acts" (p. 173); and continued assertions of "positive aspects of Black humanity and achievements, such as the accent on the beauty and a commitment to expanding Black political or economic power" (p. 173).

The Black counter-frame is a powerful response to the White racial frame that keeps African Americans on the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Instead of believing the hype so prevalent in society (i.e. the negative images) African Americans have cultivated this frame to combat, even in what might be perceived as submissive or deferent ways, the racism and discrimination present in their lives. Feagin (2010) states "Each Black American or other person of color individually makes use of elements from the prevailing counter-frame of their group in dealing with a particular situation, place and time" (p. 180). He continues to suggest, "those who are a part of an oppressed racial group in society, such as Black Americans, are particularly likely to have to alter their orientations, statement, or actions so as to please or conform to the imagery of people in

the dominant racial group" (p.180-181). The ability of Americans of color to counter-frame, to continue to fight for social justice and to utilize home-culture frames[4] has enabled them to continue to function in an unjust society. However, while some groups have had centuries to form their home-culture and/or counter-frames, some groups, such as mixed-race individuals, because of their heterogeneous nature (not all mixed-race individuals are of the same two (or more) racial backgrounds) have not yet had the opportunities to do so. The multiracial population is an important one to study to see if the White racial frame is as effective against them or if their mixed-race status serves as a buffer against it.

America, in the 21st Century, is no longer a country where people of color are all at the bottom of the totem pole. We have examples of successful people of color in all aspects of society. People like to point out that Barack Obama is President, Condoleezza Rice was the first African American Secretary of State and Oprah Winfrey is a billionaire. We must be making progress right? It is because of these (and other) high profile African American men and women, and because of the fact that the minority population is growing and changing the demographics in America, that many would like to say that race is decreasing in importance. Rather than this being a positive thing for race relations in society, Bonilla-Silva (2004) suggests that, rather than race phasing out

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[4] The home culture framework is one created and sustained by African Americans, "that incorporates cultural features from their African background, as well as spects of European culture, all of which are refined and shaped in the fiery crucible called North American racism" (Feagin 2010, p. 159). Imbedded in this frame are "many of the family values and moral elements from the African cultures" as well as the creation of African American "religion, art, music, as well as their own perspectives on social oppression and social justice (p. 159). Other Americans of color, utilize home culture and counter framing to the White racial frame as well. "Home cultures can provide an important base for a quiet struggle against White cultural dominance (p. 189). Feagin also believes that counter frames are often built in part out of the elements of the home culture frame. These two frameworks are vital for the continued functioning of African Americans and other minorities who live in oppressed societies.

as America becomes darker, there will actually be a move from a bi-racial system to a tri-racial system in which Whites work to maintain their status in society. He suggests that there will be a new racism, one where "the maintenance of systemic White privilege is accomplished socially, economically, and politically through institutional, covert, and apparently non-racial practices" (p. 934).

Moreover, it is within this new system that we have the opportunity to move from a two tiered racial system with Whites on top and Blacks on the bottom, to one in which there is now a three-tier system "comprised of Whites at the top, and intermediary group of honorary Whites…and a non-White group or the 'collective Black' at the bottom" (Bonilla-Silva 2004, p. 932). Within this system, Bonilla-Silva suggests, that some multiracials (i.e. the lighter skinned) will be allowed by Whites into the top tier (the White group), that most multiracials will fit in the honorary White's category (the intermediary level), and that dark-skinned multiracials will most likely be grouped with the collective Black (the bottom). Within this system, "color-gradations, which have always been important matters of within-group differentiation, will become more salient factors of stratification" (p. 933). If Bonilla-Silva is correct, we have not erased race from society but are instead now focusing on one major phenotype-skin color. This is not an improvement, but rather another hierarchical system where dark skinned individuals lose out solely because of their skin color and those who are exceptions to the rule will be lauded in society in an effort to try to diminish the importance of race, or to eradicate the appearance of just how entrenched racism is in American society.

For the purposes of this paper, race is defined as the categorization of people that

influences their interactions with others solely as a result of skin color. It is a master status experienced differently by people of color and whites. This is especially true in a white, power-driven American society where people of color are often unable to define or respond to situations in the absence of perceived power (Cast, 2003). Historically, non-Whites were severely punished or killed for even giving the appearance of disagreeing with a White person, male or female. Today, a non-white person would most likely not dispute minute issues with a White policeman when stopped at 3:00a.m., or any other time. While a White person would probably not argue with a Black police officer when stopped, the verbal exchange would be more likely to include assertions of power on the part of the White person, as opposed to the Black officer holding the same position as their white counterpart in the previous example.

Indeed, the reality of any situation is that, even if we do not believe all people are racist, many current interactions are influenced by the history of hatred and racism in America. The elite Whites in power will continue to promote legislation that keeps America a systemically racist nation with no foreseeable end in sight. Dr. Marcia Dawkins states, "Historically, racism is equated with segregation, separating people… In turn, we think racial progress is racial mixing. But the problem is, [that progress is] still based on appearance" (Melnick, 2011). So while race itself may be just a social construct and a biological reality, the effect of racism is still felt by every single one of its victims, and is still very much alive and well in America today. It is within this societal framework that one's racial identity is formed.

Identity

What is identity and how is it formed? Identity is "a sense of personhood, of what kind of person one is" (Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, 2000). In addition to the idea that the beholder bestows identity (Jenkins, 2009), it is also based on a sense of self and on how one thinks others perceive them, on self-evaluation and upon notions of self worth. Mead (1943) suggested that, as humans, we go through life portraying who we want to be to others and we check to see how others respond to this display. Cooley (1902) said that we have a looking-glass self and we use this to develop a sense of self-awareness based on how one thinks they appear to others, how one imagines that others are judging this appearance, and then we take this and develop a self-image via the judgments of others. In essence, self-awareness is based on social responses to interactions with others. As these interactions occur throughout the lifespan, identity and identity development processes cannot be reduced to one-time events, nor are they one-dimensional. As such, they are crucial parts of our everyday lives. Weeks (1990) suggests that

> Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others (p.88).

Individuals do not just have one identity, but rather are made up of multiple identities that we rank according to their salience at the time (Howard, 2000). Identity involves a series of links between the individual and the environment around them. It is truly a combination of how one sees oneself as well as how others see you. Sometimes these two things do not always fit because how one sees oneself may not always be

accepted by others and how others see you may not always be how you want to be perceived. Indeed, one does not shape one's identity without the influence of external stimuli and/or pressures (Nagel, 1996). There are thought to be several types of identity that, when tied together, help one to more fully define one's being, including sexual, language, ethnic, and class (Howard, 2000). Those most commonly identified in the historical identity literature are personal, social and group.

Personal identity, according to Bradley (1996), relates to the construction of self. It is the sense that we are unique individuals based on how we perceive ourselves and how we *think* others see us. Bradley posits that, "Personal identity evolves from the whole package of experiences that each individual has gone through, and is highly complex and individualized" (p. 24). Thus, personal identity is akin to your life story. It is continuous, but not fixed or constant. Personal identity is fluid and somewhat unpredictable by all. However, personal identity is still very much dependent on how others view you because their perception of you dictates how they interact with you.

According to Alcoff (2006), *social identity* is usually portrayed as how we are socially located in the public sphere. Examples of this include how we are identified on our license and job application forms, and what boxes we check on the Census forms when it asks us to identify ourselves. Bradley (1996) states that it is indeed the way "we as individuals locate ourselves within the society in which we live and the way in which we perceive others locating us" (p. 25). However, Alcoff (2006) takes it a step further when noting that social identity is comprised of both public identities (exterior) and a lived subjectivity (interior). How others view us is the exterior or public identity whereas

lived subjectivity refers to "who we understand ourselves to be, how we experience ourselves, and the range of reflective and other activities that can be included under the rubric of our 'agency'" (p. 93). The identification on the license would be our public identity (male/female, Black/White etc) and an example of the lived subjectivity for the same person would be that the person actually identifies as a Creole rather than Black or White. Public identification and the Census tell nothing about how people live their day-to-day lives. However, because they are often the first things people note about our outer appearances, Alcoff goes on to state that both race and sex are parts of social identity in the public or exterior sense and continues this thought when stating:

> They are most definitely physical, marked on and through the body, lived as a material experience, visible as surface phenomena, and determinant of economic and political status. Social identities cannot be adequately analyzed without an attentiveness to the role of the body and of the body's visible identity (Alcoff, 2006, p. 102).

For people of color (including multiracial individuals) social identity can also work against them. On the basis of skin color alone a person of color may be held to a higher standard or suffer a worse punishment because of the identity imposed upon them by society. From an American historical context, Feagin (2004; 2006) discussed the stigma imposed upon Blacks by Whites who did not want them to have equal access in schools and other areas of community life as a result of difference in skin color. Even today, African Americans are often victims to the imposed racialized identities Whites continue to heap upon them (and others continue to use against them). Their social identities are historically heavy with negative stereotypes that time has not erased, even these many generations later. Chou and Feagin (2008) furthered the concept of imposed

identity when stating "Whites constantly impose racialized identities" (p.90). These authors go on to suggest that Asian Americans often struggle with their "externally imposed and self-constructed identities" (p. 101) and point out that Asians, "frequently note being caught between two worlds. At times, they feel much at home with their Asian heritage, background, and community, yet rarely do they feel fully accepted in U.S. society" (p. 101). These two groups highlight the reality of imposed identity in America. The model minority and the dangerous black man show just how others view of your identity can work against you in your day to day lived experiences.

Social identity is not easy to escape. In order to have a social identity validated that may be different from the one most people would readily identify you by, "the individual must announce that identity to others, most typically through the management of his or her appearance, and behave in ways that others would recognize as expressive of that identity"[5] (Cahill, 1987, p. 303). This is not always easy to do and in the case of multiracial identity, it might often have to be explained to the observer if he/she assumes something different than what you internally identify by. It is this aspect of identity, especially imposed social identity that this dissertation will focus on. However, it is important that we know this is only one aspect of lived identity.

Group identity is another vital aspect of identity because it lets us know where we (think) we belong in relation to others at that point in time. The process of developing a group identity first begins with the family unit and moves with us through life as we engage in school, church, college, fraternity/sorority, and even occupational

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[5] Cahill utilized the ideas of Stone (1962) and Goffman (1959).

groups. When we belong to a group (or multiple groups), we likely derive some aspect of our identity from that sense of belonging with others. We tend to favor those who are in our group and, while we may not actively discriminate against others not in our group, we do maintain an us vs. them mentality (or in-group vs. out-group). The me becomes part of the we in an effort to shift ones perception away from the individual to being a member of a social group. Stets and Burke (forthcoming) state, "the person sees herself as the embodiment of the in-group prototype rather than as a unique individual" (p. 32). Group membership is a fluid process that evolves based on variables such as time, location, and event. For some multiracial persons, one might identify with one group (i.e. Black) or the other (i.e. Japanese) or both (Japanese and Black) or as a separate identity called multiracial (Tajel & Turner, 1986).

Again building on the notion that American society is racist at its very roots and that the one drop rule is still (unofficially) in effect, do multiracial individuals have the ability to self-identify or are monoracial categories imposed upon multiracial individuals by others? Are multiracial individuals able to shape their personal and social identities (and as such their group identities) in ways that suit them, or are they forced to give in to pressures from society to choose one race or another? Do the outside-imposed racialized identities impact their day-to-day lived experiences? The following section will look at some of the key research that has been done in the bi/multiracial identity formation literature before turning to the proposed conceptual framework and methodology for this project.

Summary

Chapter I introduced the conceptual idea of imposed identity (specifically the persona assigned by outsiders to mixed race individuals based on a monoracial scale using appearance as its main cue) and provided definitions of terms used within the framework of the current study. Using the literature as a guide (Bonilla-Silva, 1999; Brunsma, 2006; Feagin & Feagin, 2008), race was defined as the categorization of people that influences their interactions with others as a result of skin color. It is a master status experienced differently by people of color and whites. Power was then presented as a variable that often influences the way that individuals define, experience, and react to social interactions (Cast, 2003), which could be further influenced by social identity. Social identity was defined as the ways we identify ourselves or those ways others identify us, and includes Alcoff's (2006) references to public identity (exterior) and lived subjectivity (interior). The final concept discussed in this chapter was that of group identity, which can be static or fluid depending on the individual and the situation at hand.

While most of the studies mentioned in this chapter focused on self-chosen and self-identities, their findings do show that the imposition of racial identity is at work by those in American society, from the myth of model minority that Chou and Feagin (2008) introduced to the stereotypes imposed upon African Americans during a time when many are positing the existence of a post-race society.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature included historical references to bi/multiracial individuals and includes studies that examine racial identity development among this specific population. The works discussed in this chapter serve as the

foundation from which the current study of multiracial identity development, association, and imposed identity was born.

Chapter III builds upon the literature presented and presents a conceptual framework of multiracial identity development. Chapter IV identifies the purpose of the current study as an exploration of multiracial identity development as told by multiracial individuals. Also included in Chapter IV is a detailed discussion of the survey instrument and methodology. Chapter V consists of respondents' demographic information and findings related to various aspects of their lived realities as multiracial persons. Chapter VI presents findings of cross-tabulations related to racial cues and beliefs about multiracial identification as examined by skin color. Chapter VII presents first-hand, qualitative accounts of how multiracial respondents experience development and identification. Also presented are consistent themes that emerged through their stories. The final chapter (Chapter VIII) presents an overview of the study, a discussion of how the current findings support the concept of imposed identity and strengths and limitations of the current study.

CHAPTER II

BI/MULTIRACIAL IDENTITY FORMATION

Challenges to Counting Multiracial Individuals

A multiracial/multi-ethnic individual is one who identifies with more than one racial group (Root & Kelley, 2003). Hiltin, Brown and Elder (2005) state "The Census defines multiracial simply by tabulating individuals who choose more than one race when presented with their list of options" (p. 7-8). As early as the mid-1800s, efforts to identify multiracial people were undertaken when the census-takers utilized a mulatto category to highlight those who were not White (Bullock, 2010). However, it is important to note that, in these instances, it was the census-taker who was identifying the person, not the multiracial person themselves, and there was not the option to identify as anything other than mulatto when referring to a multiracial person. Further, racial tensions present at the time complicated by the inability to read and/or write hindered the ability of many mulatto people to even know if they were being classified as such. Therefore, we have no real idea of how many mulatto and other mixed race people lived at that time. Even more complicating is the fact that the Census Bureau then underwent a period of constant change with regard to racial classifications and inclusion (Hochschild & Powell, 2008). It was not until the 1930 Census that this instability ceased, mulatto was removed as a choice, and anyone who was mixed with a combination of white and any other race was listed solely as the other race, not mixed, not white, with these instructions coming directly from the Census Bureau (Census.gov). It remained this way

for a number of years. Only as a result of large-scale efforts during the 1980s and 90s, the 2000 Census once again allowed for selection of choice and broadened one's ability to select more than one racial category (Bullock, 2010).

The results of Census 2000 show that some seven million individuals, or 2.4% of the American population, now identify with more than one race that is listed on the U.S. Census (U.S. Census, 2000). On Census 2010, some 9 million individuals, or 2.9 percent of the population identified as more than one race, a change of about 32 percent since 2000 (U.S. Census, 2010). The results of the 2010 Census show that in people under 18 years of age, those who are listed as more than one race has "increased almost 50 percent, to 4.2 million, since 2000, making it the fastest growing youth group in the country" (Saulny, 2011). However, Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) suggest that this number might be an underestimate as the one-drop rule[1] might suggest to bi/multiracial individuals that one drop of Black blood makes you Black and thus they do not feel as they have a choice about their racial identity options. Washington (2010) states, "It's impossible to know how many of the 35 million people counted as "Black alone" in 2000 have a White parent. But it's clear that the decision to check one box — or more — on the Census is often steeped in history, culture, pride and mentality" (Washington, 2010). The data from the 2010 Census supports this point as Saulny states, "that, among the races, American Indians and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are the most

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[1] The classification of a person as African American if he/she has one single drop of Black blood in his/her ancestry (Johnson 2003, p. 97). This was also known as the hypodescent rule. This rule provided an extremely expansive and rigid definition of African American which was crystalized with the rise of Jim Crow and allowed for the efficient segregation of the races (p. 97).

likely to report being of more than one race. Blacks and Whites are the least likely"

(Saulny, 2011).

Contrary to what some suggest, race mixing is not a new phenomenon. Okizaki

(2000; 2003) states, "Almost all Americans, by definition, are of mixed race heritage; it

is estimated that most African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, and even a large

number of people who consider themselves to be White are multiracial" (p. 127). Nash

(1999) states, all US racial groups represent multiracial populations. However,

multiracial individuals are now one of the fastest growing minority groups in the United

States (Shih & Sanchez, 2009). It is this "mixing of races" that now provides researchers

a natural laboratory for measuring perceptions of new racial identities that diverge from

older notions of race purity[2] (Shih & Sanchez, 2009). It is estimated that by 2050, one in

five people in the United States could claim a multiracial background (Lee & Bean,

2004). This growing population is now being studied in many disciplines, sociology not

withstanding. However, for many years, those who were the product of interracial sex

were largely ignored in the identity formation literature (unless it was to call them the

marginal man, or the tragic mulatto[3] etc.). It was assumed that most mixed individuals

assumed the identity of their minority parent and progressed accordingly. As such many

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[2] In the United States Whites have clung to the belief that their racial heritage is pure (Johnson 2003, p. 97).

[3] Bullock (2010) suggests that this and seven other themes persist about multiracial Americans. These themes include: 1) tragic mulatto syndrome, 2) having to choose creates no community, 3) mixing races is a contemporary phenomena, 4) the black and white binary is applicable to all, 5) multiracial people do not face discrimination, 6) passing for mixed, 7) there is a global multiracial history, and 8) identification as mixed race is a person, political and historical process. Some of these are dealt with in the findings of this research project (p.46).

multiracials were subsumed under racial identity development theories that were geared toward monoracial identity.

Racial Identity Development

Racial identity is the "the degree to which a person feels connected to or shares commonalities with an ethnic-racial group" (Johnson, 2002 p. 73). Poston (1990) defined racial identity as "pride in one's racial and cultural identity" (p. 152). According to Hitlin, Brown and Elder (2005) racial development is inherently social, as racial differences in the American context are shaped within racially-structured, sometimes discriminatory, practices and interactions" (p. 1). As such, the racial identity of a White person differs from that of an African American person and so on. For people of color (i.e. African Americans, Asian Americans, multiracial Americans) racial identity involves "a White imposed racial identity versus an internal self striving to have one's own identity free of that racially imposed identity" (Chou & Feagin, 2008, p.121). One's racial pride and self-identity is often at war with the stereotypes and myths that are so pervasive in society about your racial group (imposed identity). As DuBois suggested, one may be constantly forced to deal with the twoness society forces upon you. As Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) state "racial identity is a surface-level manifestation based on what we look like yet has deep implications in how we are treated" (p. 40). Racial identity formation occurs within the context of not just self-identification but public identification and even imposed identification as well.

The racial identity formation literature now suggests that multiracial individuals' personal identity formation process is different from that of a monoracial person[4], but for many years, except in the cases of Park (1928) and Stonequist (1937), the literature focused on using minority identity development models to explain multiracial individuals' identity development. The first sociological literature that focused on multiracial identity was that of Park (1928) and Stonequist (1937). The idea of the marginal man was not focused solely on the 'tragic mulatto[5]' but it did state that the racial hierarchy in the United States forced those who were White/Black to ignore their White heritage due to the one-drop rule and accept the status of Black in America regardless of their mixed race heritage. According to Stonequist, White/Black individuals were not ever going to be in a position to be White because racial segregation and discrimination would not allow it so instead they must be part of the subordinated group (Black). According to Bullock (2010), the tragic mulatto, "is a play on Freud in which the multiracial person is constantly battling the impossibility of being one race, and is always in a constant struggle with the self to be one race of to fit seamlessly into a monoracial identity" (p. 47). Because of the inability to integrate the

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[4] Waters' (1990) work on optional ethnicities goes against the notion that all Whites choose their racial/ethnic identity in the same way. According to Waters, White Americans of European ancestry have choice in terms of their ethnic group identities. They have the option to claim any part of their ancestry and be (for example) Irish Americans or they can just be White. They have the ability to claim symbolic ethnicities when it suits their wants or needs, in ways that non-Whites do not, because in the "Yes" of the dominant group, they are just all non-White. She suggests that these individuals have "four factors that influence their choices: knowledge about ancestors, surname, looks and the relative rankings of the groups" (p. 57). Looks and surname are key factors when deciding about self-identification. Waters says "examination of these factors shows how people decide their own self-identification by taking into account how others identify them" (p. 64).
[5] The "tragic mulatto" is a mixed race person (a "mulatto"), usually with one White parent and one Black parent who is light enough to pass for White. This fictional person (often written about in popular literature) is one fails to fit into either side of his/her racial background. They were often painted as emotionally stunted or unstable and as victims of a society divided by race.

two parts of his identity, the biracial man is now the marginal man. This individual

would never be complete because he had to ignore a part of himself.

After Park (1928) and Stonequist (1937), many researchers continued to assume

that to be multiracial (specifically White/Black multiracial) was still to be a part of the

Black community, and as such they were expected to develop their identities along the

same lines as Blacks. Cross's Nigrescence Theory (1971) was one that was most often

cited for developing a healthy African American identity and was often utilized to

describe the identification development of multiracial persons as well.

This model involves five stages: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion,

Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment (Cross, 1978). Pre-encounter is the

stage where identity development has not yet begun and where self-hatred runs rampant.

In this stage an adolescent may either not acknowledge their ethnicity[6] as a part of their

identity or they may express very negative feelings about being African American.

According to Cross, the encounter stage occurs when an adolescent experiences

one or more events that shatter their current perception of their identity. Guilt, shame

and depression are brought about because of their experience(s) and do not end until one

internalizes their experience(s) and moves on to the next stage: Immersion-Emersion. In

this phase the individual works to "Destroy all vestiges of the old perspective," while

simultaneously experiencing, "an equally intense concern to clarify the personal

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[6] Cross talks about ethnicity rather than race in his model. According to Ott (1989) ethnic identity seems most often to be a frame in which individuals identify consciously or unconsciously with those with whom they feel a common bond because of similar traditions, behaviors, values, and beliefs (Chavez and Guido-DiBrito 1999, p. 40-41). If one talks about ethnicity rather than race we can ignore the power that race and racism have in society. While talking about ethnicity does provide structure from which to learn pride in one's culture, it should not be used to make the issues associated with race invisible.

implications of the new frame of reference" (Cross, 1978). People are able to do this first by immersing themselves into African American culture completely to the detriment of all else and it is only when one starts to emerge from this experience and starts trying to regain control of their lives through interactions with their role models and starts to emulate them. It is now that they can accept their Blackness, while also understanding that what is White, is not all bad. They have now progressed to the fourth stage: Internalization.

The Internalization stage is characterized by resolution of the conflicts between the old and the new and being more secure in their own identity. People can now have White friends but African Americans still remain their primary reference group. The last stage, Internalization-commitment, is marked by a long term commitment not just to the betterment of their community (i.e. Black community) but also to society as a whole. They have accepted a positive African American identity and are able to function as members of the world community, not just their own. "As racial identity models developed that considered mixed-race and Black people analytically equivalent, researchers assumed that the mixed-race experience was a linear progression toward a centered, meaningful Black identity" (Rockquemore, Brunsma, & Delgado, 2009, p. 18). Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) suggest "Cross's model is helpful in outlining racial identity as a dynamic progression, as influenced by those in a particular individual's ethnic group as well as those outside it, and in acknowledging ethnocentric and multicultural frames". However, it is flawed as it starts from the premise that Blacks are

unaware of both their race and the race of others-something known to be impossible in a race conscious world (Chavez and Guido-DiBrito 1999).

Another model that focused on identity formation for minorities is Helms' People of Color Racial Identity Ego Statuses and Information-Processing Strategies. This model is based on the idea that people of color in the United States have been subjected to different conditions that their White counterparts based solely on their skin color. According to Helms (1994), "one consequence of differential treatment of people according to their racial classification is that negative racial stereotypes of the affected groups of color become automatic societal themes that can be called upon to explain the circumstances of the deprived groups" (p. 189). This model has five different statuses and strategies that people of color use to shape their racial identity.

1. Conformity (Pre-Encounter) Status: external self-definition that implies devaluing of own group and allegiance to White standards of merit.
2. Dissonance (Encounter) Status: ambivalence and confusion concerning own socioracial group commitment and ambivalent socioracial self-definition.
3. Immersion/Emersion Status: Idealization of one's socioracial group and denigration of that which is perceived as White. Use of own-group external standards to self-define, and own-group commitment and loyalty is valued.
4. Internalization Status: positive commitment to one's own socioracial group, internally defined racial attributes, and capacity to assess and respond objectively to members of the dominant group.
5. Integrative Awareness Status: capacity to value one's own collective identities as well as empathize and collaborate with members of other oppressed groups. (Helms, 1994, p. 186).

While both of these models are still used when discussing the evolution of racial identity formation literature and the racial identity formation of African Americans, the literature has moved past the idea that bi/multiracial individuals are equivalent to Blacks. Johnson (2003) suggests: "The legal simplicity of the 'one drop rule' runs head on into

the complexities of racial identity for mixed race people in modern social life. The complexities increase exponentially once one looks beyond Black-White mixture" (p. 97). When one starts looking at all of the mixed race groupings that exist in the United States, it behooves us to move beyond the idea that one size fits all, which is evidenced in the work of Root (1990) and Poston (1990).

Instead of focusing on equivalency (the idea that models such as Cross and Helms could be easily imposed upon White/Black multiracials), Root (1990) and Poston (1990) both decided to focus instead on the healthy identity development of biracial individuals. Poston's Biracial Development Model suggests that biracial individuals go through five developmental stages: personal identity, choice of group categorization, enmeshment/denial, appreciation, and integration. In the personal identity stage individuals (children) hold a personal identity that is not yet tied to their racial group, but rather the biracial child is dependent on their family to feel safe and secure. The second stage (choice of group categorization) is usually based on personal factors (appearance is key) and in it the individual must decide either to have a multicultural existence (based on both parents racial backgrounds) or one that is based on one parent's racial background. This confusion leads into the third stage of enmeshment/denial where the individual experiences guilt at not being able to identify with all aspects of his background and this can lead to depression and/or self-hatred to name a few. One must come to grips with the anger and guilt if one wants to proceed to the next stage: appreciation. In this stage one learns about all aspects of their background and even though one may choose one or the other racial group, one has learned to appreciate them

all. The final stage in Poston's model is integration. An individual embracing all aspects of his racial background characterizes the integration stage.

Root (1990) believed that biracial teens that had White heritage could not reject their White heritage and adopt solely the identity of their minority parent. She contended that dating brings racism to the surface and tokenism is also a problem as well. As such, Root put forth the idea that biracial individuals had not just one, but rather four different answers to resolving the tensions associated with being biracial:

1. Acceptance of the identity society assigns. Accepting the usually minority identity that others assume the biracial individual most belongs, Can be positive if one has a strong allegiance with said group.
2. Identification with both racial groups. Identifying with both parts of one's ethnic background while understanding that this does not change others behaviors. (This only works well in parts of the country where biracial children and interracial marriages are accepted.)
3. Identification with a single racial group. "In this strategy the individual chooses to identify with a particular racial/ethnic group regardless if this is the identity being assumed by siblings, assigned by society, or matching their racial features" (p. 200).
4. Identification as a new racial group. "This person most likely feels a strong kinship to other biracial persons in a way that they may not feel to any racial group because of the struggle with marginal status" (p. 201).

Root (1990), unlike Poston (1990), allowed for the impact of societal racism on a biracial persons' identity. She was also the first to introduce the possibility of a new category-the ability to consider oneself as being biracial or multiracial. Her resolutions suggested that identity development might not be linear, but rather there might be some ability to shift from one to another depending on situation and context. Renn (2000, 2004), building on the work of Root (1990), in her studies of biracial and multiracial college students, suggested five patterns of identity for multiracial individuals:

1. Student holds a monoracial identity. Choice of one racial background or the other.
2. Student holds multiple monoracial identities, shifting according to the situation. Personal and contextual factors affect which of an individual's heritage groups he identifies with at a given time.
3. Student holds a multiracial identity. The individual elects an identity that is neither one heritage nor another, but of a distinct "multiracial" group on par with other racial categories.
4. Student holds an extra-racial identity by deconstructing race or opting out of identification with U.S. racial categories. This pattern represents an individual's resistance to what he or she may see as artificial categories that have been socially constructed by the dominant, monoracial, White majority.
5. Student holds a situational identity, identifying differently in different contexts. Situational identity describes a fluid pattern in which an individual's racial identity is stable, but different elements are more salient in some contests that in others (Renn, 2008, p. 16-17).

Another researcher in the field of multiracial identity formation is Robert E. Hall. Hall (2001b) posits that, for the biracial individual, "identity is multifaceted, subject to change and a malleable component of the social universe" (p. 330-31). He suggests that identity development should not be looked at in a linear fashion, but rather one should see identity as a "fluid social construct that extends across the life span of human development" (p. 335). By looking at just more than what race a person is and delving into life experiences, you will be able to see that one's identity may change over the course of one's lifetime. Gatson (2003) offers that race "as an ascriptive rather than achieved category" is "very dependent on history and geography and, at times, individual choice" (p. 27), which is why she refers to being multiracial as being "amorphous". Rockquemore and Delgado (2009) noted that other researchers have shown "how racial identity is dynamic and changing as their mixed-race respondents move through their lives, shifting and changing as their lives are linked to social, material, cultural, economic and institutional forces" (p. 21). In addition, Gatson (2003)

and Parham (2008) suggest that the importance of family racial history cannot be ignored as an influencing factor on the acknowledged experiences of racial identity of the multiracial person.

The models associated with multiracial identity development have evolved as more studies have been conducted with the multiracial population. We have moved from the idea that a multiracial individual is a marginal man, to the idea that multiracial individuals do have a choice, as they are seen as "straddling the color line" (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001, p. 226) in a society where that line still matters. Using the models noted above, research has been conducted to see just how multiracial individuals handle being multiracial in a society that still views them as anomalies. The following section will touch on some relevant studies to highlight the work in the field as well as to see just from where my proposed research is stemming from (Bratter & Heard, 2009; Butcher 2009; Harris & Sim, 2002; Herman, 2010; Hiltin, Brown & Elder, 2005; Khanna 2004, 2010; Rockquemore 1998; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2001, 2008; Sanchez & Bonam, 2009; Sanchez, Shih & Garcia, 2009).

Recent Research on Multiracial Identity Development

Bratter and Heard (2009) and Hitlin, Brown and Elder (2005), focused on understanding the racial development process of adolescents. Using data from 706 bi/multiracial adolescents from Wave I of Add Health, Bratter and Heard (2009) studied the role of parent-child relationships and how it contributed to the shaping of children's identification with either parent's race (p. 2). Their study "interrogates the role of parent-child relationships in the transmission of racial identity, and specifically examines

whether fathering carries a different relevance than mothering" (p. 4). In doing so, they explored the three key areas: 1) how often the adolescent identified with either the mother's race or the father's race as opposed to selecting both races, 2) the associations between racial classification and mother and father involvement, and 3) to what degree parent-child relationships might explain gendered tendencies toward racially identifying with the mother or father (p. 4). The results of their analysis indicate that gender does influence how the child incorporates the parent's race, but it depends on parent's racial combination (i.e. in Black-White households, there is a greater tendency to match the father's race). They also found that parental involvement "has more of an influence on the propensity to racially identify with fathers than with mothers" (p. 22) and that "parental gender is more important than the type of parental involvement in shaping adolescents' racial identity" (p. 24). Looking at their work overall, they find that "adolescents exhibit few consistent tendencies to match either mother's or father's race, suggesting that adolescents' racial self-classifications may conflict with their parents' early impressions of their racial identity" (p. 27). The authors continue by suggesting that, even at an early age, there is fluidity to racial classification but sometimes the monoracial labels continue even when people are given a choice (p. 32)[7].

Rollins (2009) examined racial socialization messages used by mothers' and how these influenced the racial socialization of their youth. In this study, Rollins utilized secondary data for 104 mother-child pairs obtained from a "public-use subsample of the

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[7] Bratter and Heard (2009) ignore the socially imposed identity by peers, teachers etc. The interactions that flow from these socially imposed identities impact students' experiences in different situations.

longitudinal Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study" (p. 36). The researcher sought to identify the kinds of messages mothers use with their biracial children, whether the messages were different based on mothers' racial identification, and whether these messages influenced racial identity of the adolescent child. Findings indicated that most mothers (61%; n = 63) in this study did use racial socialization messages, some using messages that were singular in nature (41%; n = 26) and others using more than one message (59%; n= 37) when it came to socializing their child racially. Of the 41 respondents who did not use racial socialization messages, White mothers (47%; n = 19) were more likely to report not having done so. Black mothers were more likely to have reported using messages designed to prepare and protect their children from racially discriminatory acts by others. Finally, youth who received messages designed to protect them "when compared to those who received no racial socialization, were less likely to acknowledge their racial background as an important part of their daily life" (p. 69). This finding suggests that the use of such strategies may actually hinder racial identity among adolescents.

Hiltin, Brown and Elder (2005) studied the consistency of racial self-identification across time. The three questions they asked were: 1) Are there different pathways of racial identification across adolescence? 2) Are there psychological and social differences across these pathways? 3) Can we predict who enacts these different pathways? Using data obtained about self-identified race from Wave 1 and Wave 3 of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), these authors studied 11, 671 non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks, Asian Americans and Native Americans

in order to do a cross-time comparison of the consistency in monoracial and multiracial identities exhibited across six possible pathways of racial identification (p. 12). The results of their study show that "the overwhelming majority of respondents identify themselves using the same single race category in both surveys", but "the second most common pathway consists of those youth who chose a single race at the baseline, but added one or more races to their identification in the third wave (Diversifiers)" (p. 15). They posit "Younger individuals are more likely to claim a multiracial identity, lending support to the idea that social influences are the primary influence on developing self-identity" (p. 22). What this suggests is that racial identity is fluid and even more so among multiracial adolescents. They suggest that future research should "explore the idea that skin color affects the social interactions that such individuals have, which in turn influences self-identification" (p. 20).

Harris and Sim (2002) demonstrated the complexity of lived race by examining youth who self-identified as multiracial when they answer race questions that allow only single race responses. Like Bratter and Heard (2009) and Hiltin, Brown and Elder (2005), Harris and Sim utilized data from Wave 1 of Add Health specifically looking at four different measures (school race, home race, best single race, and parent based race) to assess the fluidity of race in America. They studied White/Black, White/Asian, and White/American Indian biracial adolescents. Results of this work highlight that context did affect racial identity for all three groups studied. They found that "there are two social factors that are important to understanding patterns of racial fluidity" (p. 624). First they observed that, "shifting racial regimes exert a significant influence on racial

classification patterns" (p. 624). Second, they observed that, "patterns of racial classification vary because multiracial groups comprise socially distinct monoracial groups" (p. 624). They show that for Black/White multiracials there is still some aspects of the one-drop rule remaining. White/American Indians are the least committed multiracial group, and that for Asian/Whites mixed individuals racial identity is optional.

According to Sanchez, Shih and Garcia (2009) self-identified multiracial adults have the ability to identify with different racial identities across different social contexts (p. 3). This malleable racial identity allows a person to feel closer to one racial identity or the other depending on social context (p. 3). In their study, they wanted to show if there was a link between having a malleable racial identity among multiracial individuals and lower psychological health. They hypothesized that multiracial people with malleable racial identity would be associated with poorer psychological well-being (p. 7). They test this while still understanding that having a multiple racial identities may be beneficial as one could be buffered from the negative effects of stereotypes on performance (p. 7). From the results of their three studies utilizing internet surveys on people who self-identified as multiracial, they found "compelling preliminary evidence that greater malleable identification is associated with poorer psychological health, and that this relationship is stronger among those who have low dialectical self-views" (p. 23). Since multiracials face the unique challenge of having multiple racial identities, it is important to understand what negotiating those identities means to the wellbeing of those individuals.

Rockquemore (1998) sought to conceptualize what biracial identity means to the

biracial population. In her study of Black/White biracial individuals suggested that there are four types of racial identity options from which biracial people can negotiate: a) Traditional identity (singular Black or White) b) border identity (exclusively Biracial) c) protean identity (sometimes Black, sometimes White, sometimes Biracial), or d) transcendent identity (no racial identity unless pressured). While noting that there is a link between physical appearance (physical features, language and clothing) and racial identity, it is not always that clear cut, as one may not choose to self-define based solely on their appearance. Rockquemore also noted that there is a link between social status, specifically the higher status group of one's parents, and the more time that one might have access to their White peers. Rockquemore posits, "The more time that an individual spends in White peer groups, the more likely they are to cultivate a degree of cultural savvy to fit in with their peers and to see both Whiteness and Blackness in their self-understanding and interactional presentation of self" (p. 207). Since, as Rockquemore points out, identity is tied to interactions, social contexts and experiences do matter. "Interactions set the parameters of meaning, from which the biracial individual identity is constructed, negotiated, challenged, reshaped, validated and ultimately sustained" (p. 210).

Brunsma and Rockquemore's (2001) work focused on the link between identity and appearance when they studied Black/White biracial individuals and the choices that they make about their racial identity. They postulated, "The most salient symbol representing group membership is bodily appearance" (p. 226). Stepping beyond the idea that having one Black parent makes you Black, they suggest that physical appearance

matters. Using Rockquemore's racial taxonomy they hypothesized three ideas; 1) that self-perceived skin color would not directly affect racial identity (H1) (p. 230) 2) that an individual's socially perceived appearance will affect racial identity even after controlling for self-perceived skin color (H2) (p.230) and 3) "that a variety of social factors, including the racial composition of pre-adult social contexts, parental socioeconomic status, and negative treatment by Whites or Blacks will alter the appearance-identity link" (H3) (p. 230). With 177 viable cases for analysis garnered from their Survey of Biracial Experience, they were able to thoroughly test their three hypotheses. For H_1, they found that there was no association between skin color and the way that biracial individuals racially understand themselves. For H_2, they did find a strong association between appearance and identity in their sample. They also found a very strong association between skin color and the way these individuals understand their appearance (H_3) (p. 238). So, while skin color may not shape racial identity, it is perception of appearance and understanding of appearance that do influence biracial identity development in Black/White biracial individuals. This suggests that racial ambiguity is often dependent on social context and relationships of the actors involved (Brunsma & Rockquemore 2001).

Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) fleshed out the ideas noted in their 2001 work to further explain why multiracial individuals do not racially identify the same (i.e. traditional, border, transcendent, or protean identity options). This variation was counted for by the differences between individual, structural, and contextual factors. The authors posit, "being mixed-race means different things to different segments of the population

and people construct their racial identity based on varying sets of social experiences" (p. 73). There is no one single mixed raced identity option for Black/White biracial individuals. Their research indicates that appearance is a key aspect of identity development (even if in counter-productive ways). They state,

> We use appearances to evaluate ourselves and others, just as we use appearances to present particular aspects of ourselves to others. Appearances are also the terrain on which the discourse of race is fueled because they present our identities to others in social interaction. At the same time, they allow us to infer other's identities, help to define the situation, and provide a cognitive context for the social actors involved. In this sense, appearances can become a reality in and of themselves (p. 77).

The appearances of multiracial individuals often lead to a question such as, what are you? Or, where are your parents from? Butcher, (2009) in a qualitative study, examined how five biracial females interpret and answer this racialized question. Butcher sought to increase understanding about the role of "social legitimacy in classifying racial identities" (p. 2). By conducting in-depth interviews with five females of African ancestry who are biracial, she was able to understand that for some, there is no escaping using appearance as a signifier of race. Butcher states. "Their inability to discard appearance as a signifier further emphasized its relationship to the construct of race in the U.S." (p. 20).

Many people suggest that multiracial individuals have the best of both worlds because they have choice in how to define and can live comfortably in both worlds. It is this stereotype that leads to the belief that multiracial individuals do not experience racism and are the bridge that is going to tie all the races together. According to Sanchez and Bonam (2009) this is not exactly the case. Their research encompassed two studies

to assess how biracial individuals are viewed in terms of competence and warmth and if they are seen as deserving of minority scholarships. The third study focused specifically on whether or not biracial people should disclose their biracial identity to others. Their overall findings of the first two studies show that if a biracial individual chooses to indicate their biracial background on college applications, may be "vulnerable to more negative evaluations" by application evaluators compared to White or minority monoracial candidates (p. 139). The findings of study three suggest that when biracial individuals disclose their heritage to evaluators, "they may become more vulnerable to negative feedback compared to not disclosing their racial heritage" (p. 146). Biracial individuals are actually penalized for being biracial in the eyes of evaluators. This is completely opposite to the notion of a discrimination free existence for multiracial individuals.

Khanna (2004) studied the role of reflected appraisals (how individuals think they appear to others) when looking at multiracial Asians. Using survey data on 110 Asian-White adults (obtained from snowball sampling), she studied factors (phenotype and cultural exposure) that might be strong determinants in shaping racial identity. Khanna proposed three hypotheses for study:

> H_1: An Asian-White individual's phenotype and cultural exposure will be the most important factors influencing racial identity.
> H_2: Asian-White individuals who perceive that others think they appear more Asian than non-Asian will be more likely to identify as Asian than those who feel that others think they appear non-Asian.
> H_3: As the exposure to Asian culture increases, so does the likelihood that Asian-White individuals will identify as Asian. (p. 118-119)

The research supported hypotheses 1 and 2 but, surprisingly, Khanna found that Asian-

White individuals who have "spent time living in the Asian parent's country were actually 74 percent less likely to identify as Asian than those who have never lived there" (p. 124). Khanna's work added to the literature by moving past the Black/White biracial and introduced the Asian-White into the multiracial identity literature and showed that phenotype and cultural exposure are key factors when negotiating racial identity.

Furthering the understanding the impact of reflected appraisals on multiracial adults, Khanna (2010) examined how it affected the racial identity of Black-White biracial adults in the South. Specifically, she was looking to see if the one-drop rule still affected reflected appraisals. She drew on interview data with 40 Black-White adults to study racial identity in two ways,

> 1) As a 'public' identity (the ways in which people label themselves to others)
> 2) As an 'internalized' identity (the race or races with which individuals most strongly identify. (p. 104)

Khanna's research highlights the fact that racial identity development does not occur in a vacuum and for many Black-White adults in the South the one drop rule still holds true as having any Black phenotype characteristics rules out a White identity but having a White phenotypes does not preclude a Black identity (p. 115).

Townsend, Markus, and Bergsieker (2009) conducted two studies focused on biracial and multiracial identity tensions. The researchers sought to understand the consequences of identity denial. In study one, they asked 59 mixed-race undergraduate student participants "to describe a situation in which their biracial identity had been a source of tension" (p. 190). They hypothesized that there would be a wide range of

situations in which multiracial individuals would experience some identity denial, and building upon this that demographic forms with "instructions to check only one box would be a frequently reported episode" (p. 190). Utilizing and open-ended Life Experiences questionnaire, they found 6 main areas in which there had been a source of tension: appearance; demographic forms; racial/ethnic activities; cultural, religious, language difference; racial, prejudice, racial stereotyping; and racially charged conversations or issues (p. 192). The two most commonly mentioned areas were appearance and demographic forms (p. 192).

In study two, Townsend, Markus, and Bergsieker (2009) sought to examine the impact of denying "mixed-race individuals the chance to express biracial/multiracial identities on their state self-esteem, affect, motivation, and racial identity" (p. 193). They predicted that preventing choices for expressing their full identity would (in the short term) negatively impact self-esteem and motivation. Based on the results from 52 participants in their online study to examine these different areas, the researchers found those forced to choose only one racial group showed lower performance self-esteem and motivation (p. 200). When this constrain was removed those who had been forced to choose only one race "were more likely to report a discrepancy between their chosen identity and their social experience" (p. 200). Their results highlight the issues with how a person chooses to identify and whether or not this identity is supported in a given context (p. 201). This is certainly an issue in demographic forms, but it also showcases that imposing and/or denying one access to all sides of their racial make-up in daily life may also have detrimental effects as well. Okizaki (2000; 2003) states, "those who

genuinely view themselves as biracial or multiracial are not permitted to "race" themselves as such. Social and legal constraints do not allow acceptance of multiraciality" (p. 127)[8]. While society touts the fact that the multiracial population is growing, that same society is either punishing multiracial individuals for checking all that apply or not allowing multiracial individuals to 'be' multiracial in their daily lives.

The literature reviewed suggests a few things about the growing multiracial population. For example, not every multiracial person has the same experiences in life (even if of the same multiracial background) and therefore, there is no one 'multiracial experience'. To believe otherwise would be the equivalent of imposing experience upon individuals and removing the uniqueness from their very own lives. In addition, race mixing is not a new phenomena, but the products of these mixings may still be treated as anomalies in society. Finally, the research and subsequent literature on multiracial individuals is still evolving as we have both a better understanding of multiracial experiences and a growing population from which to draw research participants.

Summary

Chapter II began with a definition for biracial and multiracial people, which specified the mixing of two or more races (Root & Kelley, 2003), and provided a discussion of the difficulties encountered when trying to obtain specific numbers of mixed race persons in America. Data from the 2000 and 2010 Census were provided in order to demonstrate the significance of this topic in today's society. These data were

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[8] It is important to note that there are some flaws involved in using survey check-off forms in data collection. Some respondents may not take this seriously. Those collecting the data may make up missing information or may miscode the information that are here. When looking at these types of data, it is always worth knowing that mistakes can be made and as such one must be mindful of these when reading and reporting the results.

followed by a discussion of race-mixing in the United States. From there, racial identity was defined as the connection one feels to a specific racial group and the feelings of pride that accompany that connection (Johnson, 2002; Poston, 1990). The final section of this chapter presents literature specific to racial identity formation for multiracial persons. It is from the literature presented that we learn multiracial identity formation is a different process than what is encountered for monoracial individuals.

Chapter III builds upon the literature presented in Chapters I and II, and presents a conceptual framework of multiracial identity development.

CHAPTER III

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MULTIRACIAL IDENTITY

DEVELOPMENT

For many individuals in society, one's skin color and other obvious physical characteristics are the main criteria as to how others identify them, and as such, how one is treated. Gans (2005) states laypersons see that "humans vary, notably in skin color, the shape of the head, nose, and lips, and quality of hair, and they choose to define the variations as individual races" (p. 17). This instant classification is usually done within the scope of a racial hierarchy that is so prevalent in the United States. Research has shown that African Americans tend to be on the bottom of this ladder and Whites tend to be on the top, regardless of one's class and/or social status. This racial hierarchy has stayed in place for generations in America due to the fact that the status quo has long worked for those who are in charge (i.e., elite and other Whites). As such, phenotype has been and still is one of the strongest determining factors as to how others see and treat you in a society where lighter skin is most often valued more highly than darker/Black skin.

While the literature on the mixed race population has grown significantly in recent years, there has only been one empirical study that focuses on whether one's physical appearance shapes how one self identifies (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; 2008). This study focused solely on Black-White biracial individuals, and found that one was more likely to categorize herself or himself as monoracial if they believed that they "appeared Black" to others. By showing that one's perception of what one thinks one is

viewed as helps to shape one's own self-identification process in Black-White biracial individuals. At the same time, Khanna (2004; 2010) put forth the only works that examine the role of reflected appraisals in both Black-White individuals in the South and Asian-White individuals as well.

Findings presented by Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001; 2008) and Khanna (2004; 2010) are seminal to understanding the social, political and economic contexts associated with race. This is especially important to consider when one finds that mixed race individuals may consciously or unconsciously, as a result of appearance, remove themselves from the power structure associated with success as a result of being influenced by how they are perceived racially by others. This is not a problem for those who are visually perceived to be part of the power structure (i.e. those who can pass as White). However, for the bi or multiracial person who is not, when the self-chosen identity (monoracial) overrides the true self as a result of perception based on skin color (imposed identity) the potential for emotional or mental tension is present, in addition to the losses suffered on social, economic, and political arenas.

While these authors focused their attention to mixed-race individuals, Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003), building on their research of African American women and the changes they undergo as a result of real or perceived discrimination, noted that these women often underwent a process they labeled as *shifting* when trying to fit in to the expected White norms of their environment. *Shifting* could be either physical (i.e. changes in physical cues) or mental but was ultimately the result of not 'looking' as

though one belonged. I suggest that multiracial individuals also undergo *shifting* as well in order to blend or adapt to the given environment at the time.

Overall, the contributions of those who have examined race from various perspectives are valued. However, there are several areas that remain unaddressed. For example, each of the individual studies contribute valuable insight, however, they appear to examine only limited aspects of multi-raciality. Further, there does not appear to have been an attempt to examine any singular aspect from a holistic approach that encompasses a) individuals' perceptions regarding how others treat them based on race alone, b) an examination of private choice versus public interactions, or c) an examination of similarities and/or differences between differing groups of biracial persons. The utilization of a more fully developed framework would provide a foundation from which researchers and others could begin to understand the lived experiences of this growing population.

Using this premise as a guide, I build upon research which has shown that phenotype is a major factor in others' assessment of one's race and, thus, in their treatment of you. This societal and group treatment in turn effects identity association. I suggest that the others perception of racial identity (imposed identity) can affect how others then chose to self-identify (reality).

For example, if one is treated well because (s)he is identified as being part of a desired group, (s)he will begin to self-identify with that group even if the initial assessment and group assignment were incorrect. If the same person is assigned a lesser desired group affiliation and is treated poorly as a result, (s)he will make attempts to disassociate even if the grouping is correct. This is a known process. I suggest that multiracial individuals' experience the same identify formation process and, as a result, find themselves vacillating between their personal identity and that which others impose upon them. The proposed conceptual framework is built on the following simple assumptions: a) multiracial persons are the recent products of two (or more) races; b) their combined family racial histories are what set them apart from their monoracial peers; c) each one of these recent family histories plays a part in their racial cues (phenotypes) as well as their lived experiences; and d) race as imposed by others influences the racial identity development of bi/multiracial individuals. Figure One, which utilizes identity development literature as the foundation for development, provides a visual of this conceptual framework.

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
Personal
(Bradley 1996; Alcoff 2006)

Family Racial
History

Family Racial
History

Treatment

**M
U
L
T
I
R
A
C
I
A
L**

Treatment

Race(s)

Race(s)

+/- Racial Cues
+/- *Shifting*

+/- Racial Cues
+/- *Shifting*

Societal & Group Treatment
(Alcoff 2006; Bradley 1996)

IDENTITY ASSOCIATION
(Looking Glass Self-Cooley)
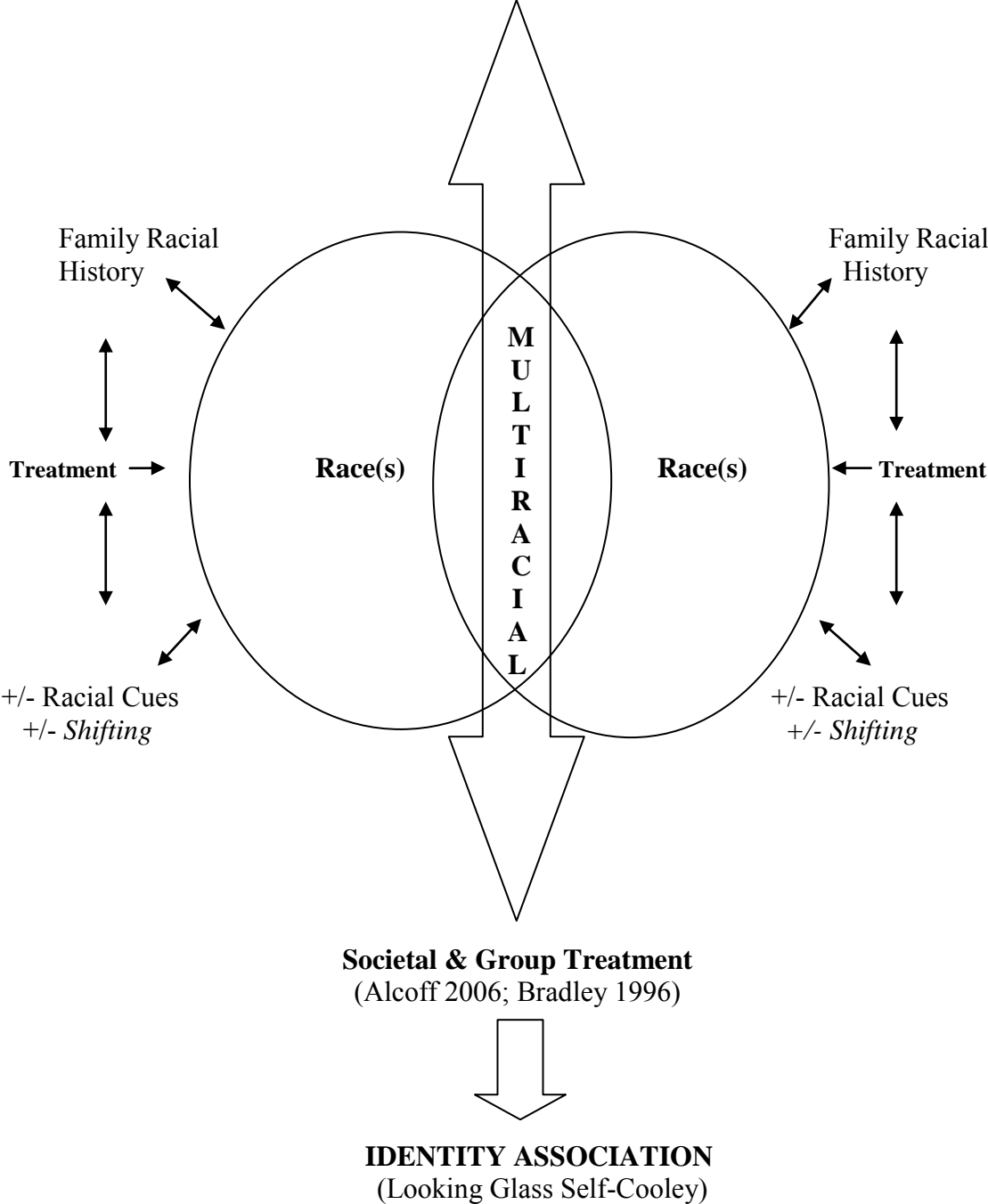
Figure One: Conceptual Framework for Multiracial Identity Development

The current study seeks to build upon the individual theories of behavior and the literature on race (as presented above) by combining aspects of all into a singular research effort. Based on this literature, I propose to utilize a multidimensional approach to further the understanding of what I conceptualize as *imposed identity* and how it affects multiracial individuals across their lifetime, most specifically when making decisions about their life choices.

For the purpose of this study, I borrow from Chou and Feagin (2008) and define imposed identity as the persona assigned to mixed race individuals based on a monoracial scale using appearance as its main cue. The research questions raised as a result of the literature presented are,

1) What influences the development of racial identity for multiracial individuals (i.e., family, media etc.)?

2) Do multiracial individuals experience the imposition of race from other members of society?

3) Do multiracial individuals consistently identify as mixed race people or does identification change as the result of environmental factors?

4) As members of blended racial backgrounds, do multiracial individuals believe they live in a color blind society?

5) Do multiracial individuals believe it is okay to deny part of their multiracial heritage/identity in certain situations?

6) Do multiracial individuals participate in shifting to fit more comfortably into one particular racial category or another?

As a result of the literature relevant to biracial individuals, I would expect to find multiracial individuals experience identity development as a changing process and as the result of varied familial interactions. Because many multiracial individuals do not present as white, I would also expect to find that they have been the victims of imposed identity and, as a result, would not agree that we live in a colorblind society. The basis behind this expectation is that imposed identity for visually defined White people is often labeled as White Privilege and results in benefits, while imposed identity on non-Whites most often results in negative consequences, major or minor. As a result of imposed identity, I would further expect that respondents had participated in the process of shifting through changes in physical characteristics and/or with regard to how they self-identify in certain situations. Because of this, I also believe that multiracial individuals would believe that it is okay to deny part(s) of their heritage/identity in certain situations.

Summary

Using the literature on skin color (Gans 2005; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001, 2008; and Khanna 2004, 2010), discussions about systemic racism in America (Feagin, 2006), the concept of imposed identity (Chou & Feagin, 2008; Feagin, 2004), literature about family racial treatment (Gatson, 2008), and the concept of shifting as presented by Shorter-Gooden (2003) a conceptual framework for identity development was presented. Research questions and expected findings were also identified. Chapter IV builds upon

the literature presented in the first two chapters, the conceptual framework, and the

research questions and introduces the methodology associated with the current study.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The literature is rich with information regarding bi-racial individuals and the effect of their bi-racial heritage on their lived experiences. However, the literature falls short with respect to getting information regarding multiracial individuals from the perspective of those who actually live said experiences. Further, there does not appear to be information on whether the perception of identity influences interactions. Therefore, building upon the work of Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) and others, the purposes of the current study are to explore racial identity development, the influence of the perception of race on social interactions (imposed identity), and racial identification from the perspective of multi-racial individuals.

The population for this study consists of all bi/multiracial individuals over 18 years of age in the United States. However, due to the time constraints and nature of this project, the goal for this study was 50 responses, 25 of which would be interviews and the remaining 25 consisting of completed survey instruments online. As this was an exploratory study and no instrument designed for these purposes exists in the current literature, I developed a survey for this purpose using questions derived from the current literature on race and racial identity as well as some that I believed were missing from previous studies. Before starting the formal interview and data collection process, I conducted a pilot study to test the instrument and to solicit feedback regarding face and

content validity. Five bi/multiracial individuals whose input contributed to the final version of the questionnaire piloted the survey.

This survey, titled Multi-racial Realities: Development, Identification, and Change, consisted of ninety-nine items broken into seven distinct parts. Part I of the survey instrument was comprised of three questions designed to allow respondents the opportunity to describe their own physical characteristics and that which they believe most associates them with one particular part of their racial background. Part II of the survey consisted of fifteen questions designed to solicit respondents' opinions regarding the person who most influenced their definitions of race, as well as information about their background and childhood experiences with race. The next portion of the survey, Part III, consisted of thirty questions designed to gather information about how respondents actually identify racially in different situations such as Census responses and social responses. Nine questions made up Part IV which was designed to elicit responses regarding association and race in America using a 4-point Likert scale where SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree and SD=Strongly Disagree. This was followed by Part V, which consisted of 10 questions utilizing the same Likert scale from Part IV, which sought to elicit responses regarding opinions on racial cues in America. Part V built on the previous section by asking whether respondents had made certain changes to themselves based on their perception of the racial cues utilized in society. The final 22-questions of the survey (Part VII) were designed to allow me to make comparisons across groups based on demographic data. Included in this section were questions on age, gender, and socio-economic status as well as about marital status, the

racial composition of the respondent's spouse, and whether or not respondents had children.

In order to capture both qualitative and quantitative richness afforded by a study of this nature, my original goal was set at 25 surveys and 25 interviews. An application for approval for this study was submitted to the Texas A&M University Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) in May of 2011. The committee approved the study in July 2011. Data collection began immediately following IRB approval and lasted for 8 weeks at the end of summer 2011.

Solicitation through online mixed race or bi-racial specific groups resulted in the recruitment of participants for both the online survey and personal interviews. In addition, as people learned of the survey, they put me in contact with family members, friends, coworkers, etc. who self-identified as multiracial (snowball sampling). Potential respondents were sent an email letter asking for participation and a statement of informed consent. They were then provided a link to the survey. Respondents were asked to complete the survey at their convenience or, if they felt more comfortable being interviewed, to contact me to set up a date/time for that interview to occur. Potential respondents were also informed that this survey was designed to ensure anonymity, as there were no identifying markers on the instrument. A follow up posting was posted on the sites 4 weeks after the first survey and interview were conducted.

The personal interviews conducted by phone or Skype were completed at the convenience of the interviewee. In some cases, this meant adjusting for geographic time differences in order to ensure the interviewee would be comfortable during the process.

Face-to-face interviews were completed at the time and location requested by the person being interviewed. In those instances where the interviewee lived out of town, but still wished to participate in this research study face-to-face, I traveled to complete the process. The longest distance traveled was approximately 120 miles.

In order to ensure there was no overlap between those who completed the survey online and those who were interviewed, each interviewee was asked if they had completed the online version. Only in those instances where the interviewee indicated they had not done so was the personal interview continued.

By the end of the data collection period 166 individuals had responded to the online survey and 45 completed verbal interviews. This represents 141 more online surveys and 20 more interviews than originally anticipated, for a total of 211 completed surveys, each of which was used in the data analysis process.

In order to have a complete picture of all data collected, I added contents from the personal interviews to the online data collected. Missing values were allowed as there was no forced completion of the surveys and/or interviews and this is discussed in the findings. This is noted as the n's for each question are not the same throughout the entire survey. Once the data were compiled, I utilized simple statistical methods during the data analysis period.

Summary

This chapter presented the purposes of the current study, which were to explore racial identity development, the influence of the perception of race on social interactions, and racial identification from the perspective of multi-racial individuals. It also

presented information on the development and presentation of the survey instrument and

the sampling techniques (snowball and convenience) utilized in the current study.

Information about survey respondents and the preliminary data analysis process was also

presented. Chapter V presents results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER V

MULTIRACIAL REALITIES: STUDY FINDINGS

Whereas the literature on multiracial identity formation has grown in recent years, the literature does not appear to address certain issues. The current study addresses that gap through the examination of three main areas; a) an exploration of multiracial identity development for different bi/multiracial backgrounds, b) the influence of the perception of race on social interactions (imposed identity), and c) racial identification from the perspective of multi-racial individuals. This chapter presents the results of that data collection and analysis processes associated with this exploratory study.

Demographic Data

Two hundred eleven (211) usable responses were obtained over the course of the data collection period. Of that number, 45 (21%) represented responses from those who had completed verbal interviews and 166 (79%) had completed the online survey.

As the stated purpose of the study was to gather firsthand information from multiracial

individuals, each respondent completed the survey based on having presented

themselves as such, despite variations in skin tone, eye color, and lived experiences. In

order to get as complete a picture as possible, I added the interview data to the online

data at the end of the data collection period.

When examining demographic data, the respondent group appears to be mixed in

terms of gender, age, region of residence, and socioeconomic status. The majority were

female (n = 132; 83%), between 26-30 years of age (n = 37; 23%), from the South (n =

57; 36%), and reported a yearly household income of over $95,001 (n = 36; 24%). With

regard to immediate family composition, most (n = 106; 67%) were unmarried and

childless (n = 97, 63%). A comprehensive view of demographic data is provided in

Table 1. The total of each group division equals 100%.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographics

	n	% of Respondents
Gender		
Female	132	83
Male	25	16
Transgender	3	1
Age		
Over 50	15	9
46-50	8	5
41-45	7	4
36-40	24	15
31-35	25	16
26-30	37	23
22-25	24	15
18-21	20	13
Region		
Southern	57	35
Eastern	31	20
Western	30	19
Mid-Western	25	16
Southeastern	8	5
Other	5	3
Northern	3	2
Income		
Over $95,001	36	24
$80,000-95,000	12	8
$65,001-80,000	15	10
$50,001-65,000	11	7
$35,001-50,000	29	19
$20,001-35,000	28	18
Less than $20,000	22	14
Marital Status		
Single	106	50
Married	53	25
Unanswered	52	25
Children		
Yes	57	27
No	97	46
Unanswered	57	27

Physical Self-Description

Part One of the survey was designed to elicit information from respondents regarding their physical characteristics. Two-hundred ten (n = 210) respondents provided an answer about their skin tone and, as shown in Table 2, most (n = 75; 36%) indicated a skin color of medium brown. Of the 211 respondents who answered, most (n = 160; 76%) indicated they had brown eyes.

Table 2. Respondents' Physical Self-Description

	n	% of Respondents
Skin Color		
Medium Brown	75	36
Yellow	38	18
Olive	61	29
White	31	15
Dark Brown	4	2
*Black	1	< 1
Eye Color		
Brown	160	76
Hazel	28	13
Blue	11	5
Green	10	5
Grey	2	1

*The group % does not equal 100% as a result of rounding

The least represented skin color was Black, which represented less than 1% of respondents, and the least represented eye color was grey, which rounded to 1%. For the purposes of representation throughout the remainder of the discussion, the Black respondent will be reflected as having Dark Brown skin color.

As the respondents were represented a variety of racial mixtures, they were asked to indicate the one physical characteristic they believed *most* associated them with one race or another. This list was generated using those characteristics most often found to be associated with various racial groups. Skin color was indicated most often (n = 78; 38%) indicated by respondents, followed by hair texture (n = 55; 26%), facial structure (n = 24; 12%), eye shape (n = 11; 5%), and nose size (n = 10; 5%). The least noted characteristics identified were derriere (n = 10; 5%), eye color (n = 9; 4%), and lips (n = 8; 4%).

While the identification of a singular characteristic may viewed as artificial, responses were limited in order to get an understanding of what respondents believed most connected them physically to one race or another. This is important because many times multiracial individuals have labels applied to them by others based on what is physically viewed as connecting them to one racial category. This then often influences interactions and exchanges when the racial category applied is a minority group.

Early Racial Development and Awareness

The literature on multiracial identity development shows that monoracial parents of biracial individuals work to create an open environment for their children to grow up in.[1] With this as a basis, the first research question asked "What influences the

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[1] Stone, D (2009) says "The analysis of participants' experiences of biracial identity development revealed four major themes: that family interactions and relationships contribute to the creation of identity for biracial individuals, that mothers intentionally worked to create an open family environment for their biracial children to grow up in, that parents and children affect and are affected by interactions with American culture and society throughout their development, and finally that growing up biracial is a unique experience within each of aforementioned contexts" (p. ii).

development of racial identity for multiracial individuals (i.e., family, media etc.)"? Part

Two of the survey sought to elicit responses to this question by asking who respondents

believed helped shape their ideas on race as well as about their childhood experiences

with race. Of the 197 people who responded to the statement "I believe that this person

had the most influence on how I define race", the majority of respondents (n = 91; 46%)

indicated their mother. Of the 196 who responded to the statement "I believe this person

had the most influence on the race with which I identify primarily", the majority (n = 87;

44%) once again indicated mother although the number of respondents to this choice

decreased slightly. The final question that addressed the shaping of racial identity asked

"What do you believe most shaped your racial identity?" Of the 190 respondents who

provided answers, most (n = 110; 58%) stated family, followed by treatment, childhood

race related events, and media depictions of race. Table 3 provides a more detailed view

of respondents' answers to the questions regarding the shaping of racial identity.

Table 3. Racial Shaping and Influence

	n	% of Respondents
Influence on Definition of Race		
Mother	91	46
Father	42	21
Grandmother	14	7
Grandfather	5	3
Someone Else	45	23
Influence on Racial Identification		
Mother	87	44
Father	49	25
Grandmother	11	6
Grandfather	4	2
Someone Else	45	23

Table 3. continued

	n	% of Respondents
What Shaped Racial Identity		
Family	110	58
How Others Treat Me According to		
Physical Characteristics	56	30
Childhood Race Related Events	17	9
Media Depictions of Race	7	3

The second research question asked whether multiracial individuals had ever experienced the imposition of race. Data relative to this question were collected through several questions. For example, in order to ascertain how early multiracial individuals were questioned about their racial composition and by whom, two questions were asked to explore whether this occurred when respondents were children. When asked if strangers had ever asked "What are you"?, the overwhelming majority of the 200 respondents to this question (n= 169; 85%) answered "Yes". When the question was raised whether they were asked "What are you by people you knew", the overwhelming majority of the 199 respondents (n = 155; 78%) indicated "Yes".

Though some believe what they see as the innocent questioning of children has no impact on the child, this may not be true when it comes to sensitive matters. For that reason, respondents were asked two questions that sought to determine whether there was indeed an effect and, if so, what effect having been asked "What are you" had on their responses. Of the 155 people who answered the question, most (n = 100; 65%) indicated that they got tired of being asked this question as a child. In addition, one half

(n = 74; 50%) of the 148 respondents answering said that they had changed their answer to the "What are you" question because they were tired of being asked.

To further understand the awareness of respondents as related to race during their childhood, the survey asked questions about they responded to questions about racial identification as a child. When asked if they identified with one race more than another as a child, 145 respondents (73%) of 200 respondents indicated "Yes" and 55 respondents (28%) stated they did not. Of the 145 respondents who stated they did identify with one race more than another during childhood, 133 provided responses to questions that sought to determine the factors that helped shaped their identification. Table 4 lists the reasons selected by respondents. Because respondents were asked to select as many as applied, many respondents may be represented across categories. Therefore, category percentages indicate the percent of the 133 who answered in each category, not the percent who answered the question.

Table 4. Childhood Racial Identification

	n	%
On What Did Identification Depend		
Who Asked	38	29
What I Felt Like	33	25
What was at Stake	20	15
Why They Asked/Needed to Know	19	14
All of the Above	48	36
None of the Above	36	27

Out of the 36 respondents who indicated that none of the reasons applied to them, 34 provided explanations about why this was so. The most commonly noted replies were that a) respondents always identified as one race because they did not feel they had an option to express the other part of their heritage, or b) their answer always stayed the same regardless of the situation.

In an attempt to learn more about the childhood experiences of these multiracial individuals, the survey asked respondents to identify the race/races of the majority of their friends. They were also asked why they believed this was the case. Of the 193 respondents who answered this question, 39% (n = 75) stated the majority of their friends were White, which was followed by Black (n = 40; 21%). When asked what they believed was the primary reason their friends were of this racial composition, of the 191 responses, 36.1% (n = 69) stated it was because their school was comprised of students of this race, which was followed by their neighborhood being comprised primarily of this race (n = 66; 35%). Table 5 lists the racial composition of respondents' childhood friends, as well as the reasons respondents identified for this having been so.

Table 5. Childhood Interactions

	n	%of Respondents*
Racial Composition of Friends		
White	75	39
Black	40	21
Multiracial	22	11
Hispanic	11	6
Asian	10	5
Biracial	7	4
Diverse Group	28	15

Table 5. Continued

	n	%of Respondents*
Reason for Racial Composition of Childhood Friends		
Racial Composition of School	69	37
Racial Composition of Neighborhood	66	35
Played with Children of all Races	27	14
Parents did not Allow Other Races	2	1
None of the Above	27	14

*Group % does not equal 100% as a result of rounding

The final question about childhood experiences with race and racial identification asked respondents to indicate whether they believed race was a major factor in America during their childhood/adolescence. The overwhelming majority (n = 143; 76.1%) of the 188 respondents, stated that it was, with only 23.9% (n = 45) saying that it was not.

This section of the survey was designed to elicit information about childhood experiences of respondents. Questions were asked about the impact that family members had on both their definition of race and the race to which they primarily identity. The respondents to these questions indicate that the mother was a primary influence on their definitions of race and on their racial identification. As other researchers have shown, the family is still the primary influence on shaping racial identity, but for many multiracial respondents (30%) stated that how others treated them according to their physical characteristics was also a major influence in their racial identity formation process. This section also highlighted the fact that even as children racial identification was malleable for many respondents as how they identified to others depended on both situational and personal criteria.

While this section addressed respondents' childhood identification of and experiences with race, the next section looks at how respondents identify in today's racial climate both privately, on the most recent Census, and in their day-to-day interactions.

Racial Association

Part Three of the survey elicited responses about respondents' current association with race in various situations and was designed to address aspects of the third research question, which asked whether multiracial individuals consistently identify as multiracial. Respondents were asked to use the choices from the 2010 US Census to identify what they consider to be their two primary races. These would be the race(s) they could possibly identify as in like or similar situations. As shown in column two on Table 6, two-hundred eleven (n = 211) respondents answered this question and the most commonly identified race contained a mixture of White/Black, which was identified by 37% of respondents (n = 78). From there, to better understand whether multiracial people consistently identify as multiracial, they were also asked to indicate how they actually responded to the question of race on the 2010 Census. These choices are shown in column 3 on Table 6. Again, all 211 respondents provided answers and the most common racial mixture indicated was still the Black/White combination (n = 41; 19%). Table 6 provides a comparison between what respondents indicated as possible race/racial combinations and what they actually selected on the 2010 US Census.

Table 6. Possible Versus Actual Selection of Race Using 2010 Census

Race/Race Combination	Possible	Actual Choice
Black	5	28
White	2	6
American Indian	0	2
Filipino	1	1
Japanese	1	1
Vietnamese	0	1
Black/American Indian	9	2
Black/Asian Indian	5	0
Black/Korean	4	2
Black/Filipino	2	1
Black/Japanese	1	0
Black/Other Asian	4	6
Black/Other	14	6
White/Black	78	41
White /Korean	4	4
White/American Indian	6	0
White/Vietnamese	5	4
White/ Japanese	5	5
White/Asian	6	8
White/Filipino	3	2
White/Asian Indian	2	0
White/Other Race	12	6
American Indian/Other	2	0
Asian/Other	0	1
White/Black/Other	1	4
White/Black/Am. Indian	1	9
White/Black/ Filipino	0	1
White/Am. Indian/Filipino	0	1
White/Black/Asian	0	1
White/AI/Japanese	0	1
Black/Asian Indian/Other	1	1
Black/Am. Indian/Korean	0	1

Table 6. Continued

Race/Race Combination	Possible	Actual Choice
White/Black/Am Indian/Asian	0	1
White/Black/ American Indian/Other Race	0	1
Other/Some Other Race	13	25
Under 18	0	9
Skipped Question	23	26
Total	211	211

It is interesting to note that while the White/Black combination could have possibly been identified by 78 respondents, only 41 actually responded in this manner when completing the Census instrument, reflecting a decrease of 37 respondents. Further, it appears that many of those 37 may have actually identified as Black on the Census as the number of respondents who could possibly do so was initially 5, but the actual Census selection number rose to 28, which represents an increase of 23. Likewise, 2 respondents indicated a possible identification as White, but 6 actually renounced any other aspect of their racial background and reported solely as White on the Census, an increase of 4 respondents.

Equally interesting are those gaps between possible and actual where the former category indicates no responses and the latter one or more responses. For example, the racial categories of American Indian and Korean both showed no possible responses, but then gained responses when it came to actual choices on the US Census. These may also reflect the desire to privately identify with the whole of what one is racially, but place public value on a singular racial category that has been diminished or devalued by others over time. With this in mind, the survey instrument also addressed the day to day social

interactions of respondents as related to their lived multiracial experiences. The next section provides information and responses relative to their racial identification in social interactions.

Day-to-Day Social Interactions

As previously noted in the literature review, Sanchez, Shih and Garcia (2009), self-identified multiracial adults have the ability to identity with different racial identities across different social contexts (p. 3). However, engaging in this process would appear to have a diminishing effect on the acknowledgement of their mixed race heritage. In order to determine whether respondents had consistently identified as a multiracial person as an adult, they were asked "As a multiracial adult, do you/have you identified with one primary race?". Out of 189 respondents, the majority (n = 102; 54%) indicated they had done so. Most (n = 56; 54%) of the 102 respondents who indicated they identified with one primary race indicated they identified primarily as African-American.

When asked "If you do or have identified with one race more than another, on what did/does it depend?", 177 respondents provided answers that varied from "it depends on who is asking" to "what they felt like at the time." Table 7 indicates the possible choices and respondents answers. Totals do not reflect 100% because respondents were able to select one or more of the options provided. Therefore, percentages noted indicate the percent of the 177 who answered in each category, not the percent who answered the question.

Table 7. Comparison Between Adult and Childhood Racial Identification

	Adult (n = 177)	Childhood (n = 133)
On What Did Identification Depend		
Who Asked	33	38
What was at Stake	20	20
What I Felt Like	41	33
Why They Asked/Needed to Know	28	19
All of the Above	53	48
None of the Above	51	36

Unlike monoracial individuals, many multiracial people find that they identify racially with one side of their family more than the other[2]. When asked "As an adult, do you identify racially with one side of their family more than the other?" 184 respondents provided answers. Though responses were nearly tied, a slight majority (n = 94; 51%) stated "Yes" and the remainder (n = 90; 49%) said they did not. Of the 93 respondents who answered the question, approximately 41% (n = 38) said the reason they identify more with one side is because this side is the primary family contact. Other reasons noted were feeling embraced, physical similarities, and who was present at the time, and what the respondent felt like at the time. Table 8 provides a visual of the responses selected.

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[2] According to Mary Waters (1990), ethnicity is optional because it is not seen and can, therefore, remain unknown. Therefore, while monoracial individuals may experience preferences for ethnicity between and among family members, the issue of ethnicity is unlike that of race because association is not based upon skin color.

Table 8. Variables Influencing Family Connections

	n	%
They are my primary family contacts	38	41
I feel most embraced by this part	18	19
I look more like them	16	17
It depends on who is present at the time	4	4
It just depends on what I feel like	3	3
All of the above	6	7
None of the reasons listed	9	9

As previously noted, because multiracial people do not fall into a singular racial category visually, it is not uncommon for them to be asked questions about their racial composition. For many of the respondents, this had occurred when they were children and, even as adults, the majority (n = 154; 89%) had been asked this question. Of the 113 examples listed by those who had been asked this question by strangers, responses ranged from "you look exotic" to "people often guess my race and want affirmation of their guess", to "where are you from?" or "where are your parents from?"

Interestingly, similar to what had occurred during childhood, people known to the adult respondent had also raised the question. In the current study, the majority of respondents (n = 125; 72%) had been asked "What are you" by people they know as adults. When asked to provide an example of the comments made, 82 respondents provided comments that ranged from "what are you" to "what are you mixed with?" to "I know you are mixed with something" to questioning the respondents' race once the friends/acquaintances met or saw a picture of their parents. These responses are similar to the questions asked of the respondents as children and the responses given by the respondents. As adults, respondents are still dealing with race in very juvenile ways.

Being asked "what are you" or "what are you mixed with? or "where are your parents

from" are very schoolyard type questions that they cannot escape well into adulthood.

These findings tie directly back to the second research question of do multiracial

individuals experience the imposition of race from other members of society? By

continually being questioned or assumed to be one race or another, multiracial

individuals are constantly the target of imposed identity in society.

Discrimination

The fourth research question sought to examine whether respondents believed we

live in a colorblind society. This was measured using questions that addressed the

application of race by others, whether correction was initiated when incorrect

applications were made, whether or not things had been made accessible or denied based

only on race, and a directed question that asked whether respondents believe they live in

a colorblind society.

The application of one racial category or another onto multiracial individuals by

people of other races is a form of labeling and often follows the question of "What are

you" or precludes discussion altogether. With this in mind, respondents were asked to

indicate whether they had "ever been told that they look like one race or another". Of the

176 people who responded to this question, the overwhelming majority (n = 164; 93%)

stated "Yes." From there, respondents were asked to indicate the races they had been

told "they looked like". One hundred sixty-three (n = 163) respondents provided a total

of 446 answers to this question and responses were fairly evenly split between Latino (n

= 78; 48%) and Hispanic (n = 76; 47%). Table 9 provides a view into the 446

applications of racial categories applied to multiracial respondents by others. The final

percentage does not reflect 100% because respondents were asked to "select all that

apply" and many indicated one than more response. Therefore, percentages provided

indicate the percent of the 163 respondents who selected the particular race.

Table 9. Racial Categories Applied to Multiracial Respondents

	n	% per category
Latino	78	48
Hispanic	76	47
Puerto Rican	60	37
African American	49	30
Caucasian	45	28
Native American	33	20
Asian	32	20
Other	73	45

As the imposition of a racial category onto a multiracial individual by another

person can be offensive and/or misunderstood, respondents were asked to indicate

whether it offended them that people label them based on what they look like. To this

question, 172 respondents indicated a "Yes, it offends me all of the time" (n = 49; 29%);

"It used to, but does not anymore" (n = 44; 26%); "It offends me only when it costs me

something (i.e., access, information, opportunity etc.)" (n = 43; 25%); and "It does not

offend me at all" (n = 36; 21%).

Further, because the application of a racial category to grant or deny access,

goods, and/or services has been a part of this country's history (a.k.a. discrimination),

respondents were asked to indicate whether they had ever been denied something/been

mistreated because someone thought they were of a particular race. Of the 176

respondents who answered this question, the majority (n = 115; 65%) indicated "Yes".

Of the 110 answers provided to the question of what race the other person thought the

respondent was, 46% (n = 50) indicated Black and 17% (n = 19) Hispanic. These

responses were followed by White (n = 16; 15%), Other (n = 15; 14%) and biracial (n =

10; 9%). Percentage totals do not reflect 100% as a result of rounding.

Historically, the correction of others by people of color could result in severe

punishment or even death. Given that the written rules and laws of the Jim Crow era are

artifacts of the past, one might believe that the ability to correct a misapplied racial

application would be readily done. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate if they

corrected the person at the time. Out of the 113 people who responded to the question,

only 42.5% (n = 48) said they did and 57.5% (n = 65) said they did not. Of the 48 that

did correct the person, 47.9% (n = 23) said it was because they simply wanted the person

to know they were wrong. Table 10 shows all of the reasons and the number of

respondents who selected each. Of special note is the category of "Other", where one of

the respondents said "because I did not want to go to jail", and the other respondent

stated they wanted "to educate the other person to stop the ignorance".

Table 10. Corrections of Misapplied Race

	n (48)	% per category
Reasons for Correction		
I wanted them to know they were wrong	23	48
Important they knew of their actions	22	46
Other	2	4
I wanted what they had bad enough	1	2

*Total % = 100%

Of the 48 respondents who corrected the person, 46 provided a response to the question of whether they got what they wanted. Out of the 46, only 33% (n = 15) indicated "Yes" and 67% (n = 31) indicated "No", leaving the impression that the correction was not effective or that race was not the reason behind denial of goods or services.

Equally important as whether or not things had been denied to respondents based on the racial labeling applied by others was the question of whether things had been obtained by respondents because of the race others labeled them as. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they believe people provided or made things accessible based on what they saw as the respondents' race. Out of 163 responses, 64% (n = 104) said they do believe that people provide things or make them accessible based on what they perceive as the respondents' race. Of the 104, approximately 65% (n = 68) provided examples of when or how this had occurred in their lives. Their responses appeared to highlight the continued racial division in the United States. For example, those who are perceived to be White stated that White privilege was at work, and those who are perceived as being fair-skinned or good-haired Blacks noted they were seen as non-threatening and, as such, are able to fill quotas at jobs or in groups (i.e., tokenism). At least one mixed race Asian respondent indicated (s)he was perceived as being Asian, therefore smart, so (s)he was allowed to take more difficult classes in school when others were not.

 "Do you believe that people either don't provide things or make things accessible to you based on what they see as your race?" was yet another question that

sought to determine whether multiracial people exist in a colorblind society or whether they believe they experience racial discrimination. Out of 161 responses, 53% (n = 85) indicated they believe people *do not* provide things, or make things accessible based on perceptions of race. In the 51 examples provided of such circumstances, respondents noted included not being accepted by either group to which they belong, or daily issues such as lack of customer service, friendships, job opportunities, or access to certain cultural communities because they are mixed race. One respondent very clearly tied economic ramifications to such treatment when stating "I think employers tend to see color and assume you're uneducated, ghetto, or just dumb. It prevents job promotions, growth opportunities... and skews the general perception others have of you at your job," and another indicated mundane everyday interactions could be difficult when stating, "Sales attendants in high-end stores sometimes tend to discount me as potential customer depending whom I'm with. Treatment is most times different when I'm with my White mother or my Black grandmother".

In order to examine current views about race, respondents were asked "Have your views of race changed since you were a child?" Of the 165 responses, the majority (n = 121; 73%) responded "Yes", with many of the 73 explanations for having done so indicating that situations and events relating to their own race have made them more aware of racism and stereotypes around and about them. When questioned about whether or not they had changed their public identification with one race or another based on a situation or event, out of 167 responses, 55% (n = 92) stated that they had not, but 45% (n = 75) stated that they had done so. Included in the 50 reasons listed for changing

public identification were learning to be a chameleon in order to survive, adapting to the situation at hand, and using whatever race will work to the respondent's advantage when it came to schools, finances, jobs, friendships, and/or getting things.

The final question used to whether respondents believed we live in a colorblind society (because they are the result of two or more races mixing) simply asked the question outright. When asked directly whether or not they believe that we live in a colorblind society where race does not matter, the overwhelming majority of 167 respondents (n = 133; 80%) responded "No" and only 2% (n = 3) responded "Yes". Interestingly, 7% (n = 11) said it depends on what race you are and 12% (n = 20) stated that it depends on what race other people perceive you to be. Of the respondents, 75 provided examples that focused on issues such as daily racism, current day racial stereotyping, and White privilege as reasons they believe they do not live in such a place.

The multiracial population is that portion of the population about whom people say "Look! We have a growing number of mixed race individuals in society, our problems with race and racism must be a thing of the past". The reality of the situation is that even this population is very cognizant of race and racism in society and these respondents were quick to point out that not only do we not live in a colorblind society, but there is still a racial hierarchy deeply entrenched in American society. In contrast to what many believe, because some make choices about having multiracial children, America's entrenchment in racism has not ended. Indeed, the chasm only appears to

have morphed to include the very ones who should be representing freshness and

acceptance.

Denial of Self: Private and Public Identification

The fifth research question sought to examine whether multiracial individuals

believed it is okay to deny part of their multiracial heritage/identity in certain situations.

With this in mind, Part Four of the survey sought to elicit responses regarding

association and race in America. Using a 4-point Likert scale (SA=Strongly Agree,

A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree) nine questions were asked about whether

or not, as a multiracial person, it is okay to identify as one primary race in certain

situations such as on the US Census, when completing scholarship applications, when

dating, and when completing loan applications. Table 11 provides detailed data on each

of the nine areas addressed and responses to each. Percentages shown were calculated

based on the number of responses to each question.

Table 11. Circumstantial Racial Identification

Circumstance	SA	A	D	SD	n
Completing Census Forms	25 (16%)	35 (22%)	52 (33%)	47 (30%)	159
Completing Scholarship Applications	31 (19%)	54 (34%)	39 (24%)	36 (23%)	160
Completing Job Applications	23 (15%)	57 (36%)	42 (27%)	36 (23%)	158
When Dating	16 (10%)	33 (21%)	55 (35%)	55 (35%)	159
Making New Friends as a Child	18 (11%)	47 (29%)	57 (36%)	38 (24%)	160
Making New Friends as an Adult	15 (10%)	42 (27%)	53 (34%)	48 (31%)	158
When Completing Loan Applications	27 (17%)	56 (35%)	38 (24%)	38 (24%)	159

Table 11. Continued

Circumstance	SA	A	D	SD	n
When Completing College Applications	27 (17%)	61 (38%)	37 (23%)	34 (21%)	159
When There is a Benefit that they Might not get Otherwise	35 (22%)	59 (37%)	39 (25%)	26 (16%)	159

Upon closer examination, the data indicate that respondents disagreed that it was okay to identify as one primary race when completing Census forms (n = 99; 62%), dating (n = 110; 70%), making new friends as a child (n = 95; 59%), or as an adult (n = 101; 64%). What stands out most is the fact that 62% of respondents are speaking against the use of one race to identify oneself when completing a form where the use of racial data determines goods and services in communities, especially those of color. This speaks strongly to the idea of a holistic racial pride that encompasses the entire being, not just parts.

Another notable difference can be seen between the number of respondents in the making friends as a child and the making friends as an adult categories. Albeit slight, this may be the result of respondents believing that different emotions/relationships are present as an adult that would require full disclosure. Also interesting is the fact that most respondents (n = 94; 59%) believed that is okay to identify as one primary race when there is a benefit that they may not get otherwise. This finding is supported in the areas of completing scholarship applications (n = 85; 53%), completing job applications (n = 80; 51%), and when completing loan (n = 83; 52%) and college applications (n = 88; 55%).

Perhaps most telling finding is that, with the exception of Census forms, the primary connection between the other three areas where respondents did not believe it was okay to identify as one primary race is that all three (dating, making friends as a child and making friends as an adult) involve human emotions and relationships. It appears respondents believe that, where inanimate benefits can be obtained through the use of one primary race as an indicator, the same is not true where human emotions are involved. These data support theories associated with private (possible) and public (actual) racial identification, where public racial identification may depend on different criteria such as situation, mood, and/or person asking. While the private and public identification of multiracial individuals may have many possible contexts that are unknown to monoracial persons, these respondents have provided a glimpse into some of the complexities that may actually exist.

Racial Cues

Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) state, "the most salient symbol representing group membership is bodily appearance" (p. 226). Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) noted that the practice of shifting, the changing of physical cues to fit the norms of White society, is still something that African American women often undergo in order to combat real and/or perceived discrimination in society. Building upon the premises of these two works, research question six sought to examine whether respondents had ever changed their physical characteristics to look more or less like a certain race. Parts Five and Six of the survey instrument were designed to elicit respondents' answers about racial cues using the same 4-point Likert scale used in Part Four. In Part Five,

respondents were asked to identify the degree to which they believed whether certain characteristics were used as racial cues in America today. Part Six then asked respondents to indicate whether they had ever physically changed any of the same cues in an attempt to look more or less like a certain race. The 10 cues listed in both parts were skin color, nose size, eye color, eye shape, hair texture, hair length, lip fullness, cheek structure, size of their behind, and clothing styles. Table 12 presents a comparison of responses to these questions. For the purposes of reporting, the Strongly Agree and Agree categories have been collapsed into a single category titled Agree, and the Disagree and Strongly Disagree categories have been collapsed into a single category titled Disagree.

Table 12: Racial Cues in America Today and Personal Changes

Racial Cue	Agree Total (%)	Disagree Total (%)	n	Personal Change Total (%)	n
Skin color	154 (97%)	5 (3%)	159	28 (18%)	155
Nose size	136 (86%)	23 (14%)	159	3 (2%)	158
Eye color	56 (35%)	102 (65%)	158	15 (10%)	158
Eye shape	128 (81%)	31 (19%)	159	1 (1%)	158
Hair texture	153 (97%)	5 (3%)	158	66 (42%)	157
Hair length	67 (42%)	91 (58%)	158	40 (26%)	156
Lip fullness	118 (75%)	39 (25%)	158	2 (1%)	159
Cheek structure	95 (61%)	62 (39%)	157	0 (0%)	159
Size of behind	118 (75%)	40 (25%)	158	6 (4%)	158
Clothing styles	112 (70%)	48 (30%)	159	44 (28%)	157

Respondents clearly believed that racial cues utilized in America today consisted of skin color, hair texture, nose size, and eye shape. Size of behind, lip fullness, and clothing styles were also indicated by most respondents as racial cues utilized in society.

Respondents appeared to be less convinced that eye color, hair length, and cheek structure are used as such in today's society as each of these cues received fewer than 100 responses each.

Interestingly, personal changes were most noted in the areas of hair texture, clothing styles, hair length, and skin color, although no one racial cue had been changed by the majority of respondents. Areas least likely to have been cited as having been changed by respondents were cheek structure, eye shape, nose size, and size of behind, as those areas that would most likely require surgery for long lasting change. What is not clear here is whether respondents considered short-term and often used instruments such as makeup, undergarments, and body shapers as changes in order to look more or less like a certain race.

Summary

Chapter V reported on the data from respondents to the survey instrument. Information about demographics, physical self-description, and early racial development and awareness were presented as well as data about the current lived experiences and beliefs about racial identification of the multiracial respondents. With regard to racial association, the findings of this study lend support to the work completed by Sanchez, Shih and Garcia (2009) which state self-identified multiracial adults have the ability to identify with different racial identities across different social contexts (p. 3). This malleable racial identity allows a person to feel closer to one racial identity or the other depending on social context (p. 3).

Respondents in the current study were not in complete agreement with when to change their racial identification, there were still times when the majority felt that it was okay to identify as one primary race. Respondents also identified certain physical characteristics as being racial cues in American society, but there were not many who admitted to changing their own physical characteristics to look more or less like a certain race. However, at least one person admitted to making person change in every category (except cheek structure). People are willing to shift in order to enhance or downplay certain physical characteristics that tie them to one racial category or another. These findings also support the research of Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003). While this chapter reported on the raw data provided by respondents, the following chapter will look more closely at the findings based on differences in skin tone.

CHAPTER VI

EXAMINING BELIEFS BY SKIN COLOR

When looking at the findings of this research, it is easy to infer that race is still a major factor in the United States today, and as opposed to being a bridge that connects the races, responses from this exploratory study show that mixed race individuals are dealing with racial issues (sometimes) even more so than non-mixed race individuals. This section will look closer into how the basic phenotype of skin color, affected respondents answers to certain questions asked in the survey to see if skin tone variations among multiracial individuals matters when answering questions about racial awareness and identification, racial association and racial cue changes.

As noted previously, 210 respondents answered the question, how do you describe the color of your skin. Of the responses,

-1 Black (skinned) respondent (0.5%);

-4 Dark Brown respondents (1.9%);

-75 Medium Brown respondents (35.7%);

-38 Yellow (skinned) respondents (18.1%);

-61 Olive respondents (29.0%); and

-31 White respondents (14.8%)

The responses to this question were crosstabulated with responses to other questions using PASW® (formerly known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS®), a statistical software package widely used in the social sciences) to examine

whether skin tone within the mixed race population affects their daily lives and the imposition of identity of others who are dealing with them. For the simplification of calculation purposes, the black and dark brown skin tone categories have been collapsed to reflect a single black/dark brown category. The following section provides a more in depth look at these data.

Do Multiracial People Live in a Colorblind Society?

Because media, politicians, and others often tout that race is not a factor in American society today, especially when it comes to Affirmative Action etc., respondents were asked if they believe they live in a colorblind society. The overwhelming majority of respondents (n = 132; 79%) do not believe that we live in such an environment. Of the three who responded "Yes", the skin colors reflected were medium brown, olive, and White. The complete set of responses crosstabulated with respondents' skin color is provided in Table 13.

Table 13. Respondents' Beliefs About a Colorblind Society by Skin Color (n = 167)

Skin Color	Yes	No	It Depends on What Race you are	It Depends on What Race Others Perceive you to be	
Black/ Dark Brown	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Medium Brown	1 (.05%)	46 (28%)	2 (1%)	5 (3%)	
Yellow	0 (0%)	23 (14%)	3 (2%)	6 (4%)	
Olive	1 (.05%)	41 (25%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	
White	1 (.05%)	19 (11%)	2 (1%)	5 (3%)	
Total	3 (2%)	132 (79%)	11 (7%)	20 (12%)	167 (100%)

Interestingly, 12% of respondents (n = 20) indicated that what others perceive

your race to be determined whether or not you/they lived in a colorblind society. A

closer examination indicates that, with the exception of the respondents in the black/dark

brown category, the responses were fairly evenly distributed across skin color. Though

the numbers are not large, this appears to speak directly to the presence and influence of

imposed identity by others onto the lived experiences of people of color.

Changes in Racial Views

As we are exposed to various things across our lifetimes, our perspectives or

beliefs about certain things may change to reflect greater or different exposure. The

same changes are possible with regard to racial understanding and personal beliefs. With

this in mind, respondents were asked "Have your views of race changed since you were

a child?" Of the 164 responses, the majority (n = 120; 73%) indicated "Yes" they had.

When crosstabulated with skin color one sees that, of the 164, the greatest responses in

the affirmative came from those respondents who indicated their skin color to be

medium brown (n = 39; 33%). Table 14 provides a view of how respondents answered

this question. *These totals do not equal 100% as a result of rounding within the Yes/No

columns.

Table 14: Respondents' Changes in Racial Views by Skin Color (n = 164)

Skin Color	Yes	No
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
Medium Brown	39 (33%)	15 (34%)
Yellow	25 (21%)	6 (14%)
Olive	34 (28%)	16 (36%)

Table 14. Continued		
Skin Color	Yes	No
White	20 (17%)	6 (14%)
Total	120 (101%*)	44 (99%*)

The greatest number of "No" responses was found in the olive colored skin group, where 36% of respondents (n = 16) said their views had not changed since they were a child. These responses are interesting in that they come from within the two groups that are least likely to be associated with any one racial group and may reflect the ambivalence that often accompanies being adrift in the middle.

Personal Selection of Characteristic That Defines Race

The quantitative data indicated that multiracial people are often told they look one race or another. In order to assess what respondents' believed would lead to this imposition of race by others, the survey asked the question "What physical characteristic do you believe most associates you with one race or another?" Two-hundred and six respondents (n = 206) respondents provided answers. Findings indicated skin color, hair texture, and facial structure were the three characteristics most often selected by respondents. When crosstabulated with skin color, one is able to see that, in each instance, respondents in each of the skin color categories noted the same characteristics most often. Table 15 provides a more detailed view of how respondents answered this question by skin color.

Table 15. Identification of Racially Defining Characteristic by Skin Color (n = 206)

	n	Skin Color	Hair Texture	Facial Structure	% of n
Black/ Dark Brown	4	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	100%
Medium Brown	74	36 (60%)	17 (28%)	7 (12%)	81%
Yellow	38	13 (48%)	10 (37%)	4 (15%)	71%
Olive	60	17 (38%)	22 (49%)	6 (13%)	75%
White	30	9 (43%)	5 (24%)	7 (33%)	70%

These findings show that regardless of color, respondents in each skin color group were more likely to identify the same three characteristics that they believe associates them with one race or another. Even in the absence of facial structure, which received fewer responses than did skin color or hair texture, response rates would have remained at greater than 50% for each skin color category, with the exception of White, which would be decreased to 47% of all respondents of that skin color.

Denial of Goods and/or Mistreatment a Result of Imposed Identity

As noted earlier in this study, the use of race has long-been the basis for the denial of goods, services, or liberties in the United States. In order to determine whether this had been the case for multiracial individuals, many of whom do not fit clearly into one racial category or another at first glimpse, respondents were asked if they had ever been denied something/been mistreated because someone thought they were of a particular race. Of the 175 responses to this question, the majority (n = 114; 65%) indicated "Yes" this had occurred.

Table 16. Denied Goods/Mistreated as a Result of Race by Skin Color

Skin Color	Yes (n = 114)	No (n = 61)	Total (n = 175)
Black/ Dark Brown	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)
Medium Brown	34 (61%)	22 (39%)	56 (100%)
Yellow	27 (79%)	7 (21%)	34 (100%)
Olive	42 (78%)	12 (22%)	54 (100%)
White	8 (30%)	19 (70%)	27 (100%)

The skin tone crosstabulation shown on Table 16 reveals that this happened across the board, despite skin color. However, the majority of White respondents (n = 19; 70%) indicated this had not happened to them while the majority of respondents in all other skin color categories indicated it had happened to them. These data support the belief that people of color who do not present as White may face difficulty with regard to getting mistreated or to getting what they want as a result of the race they are believed to be. It also speaks to the overwhelming belief of respondents that, despite what some forms of popular media and politicians tell us, we do not live in a colorblind society.

The Loss of Goods/Mistreatment and the Imposition of Race-Based Identity

As a follow-up question to whether respondents had ever been denied something/been mistreated because someone thought they were of a particular race, respondents were asked "What race did they think you were?". One-hundred-nine (n = 109) out of the 114 respondents who indicated they had been denied something provided answers to this question. A crosstabulation by race is shown in Table 17. The total percentage in the "Other" category does not equal 100 as a result of rounding.

Table 17. Loss of Goods/Mistreatment and Imposed Race by Skin Color (n = 109)

	Black	White	Hispanic	Bi	Other
Skin Color					
Black/					
Dark Brown	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)
Medium Brown	19 (38%)	0 (0%)	7 (39%)	2 (20%)	5 (33%)
Yellow	14 (28%)	3 (19%)	4 (22%)	3 (30%)	2 (13%)
Olive	14 (28%)	9 (56%)	6 (33%)	5 (50%)	5 (33%)
White	1 (2%)	4 (25%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)
Totals	50 (100%)	16 (100%)	18 (100%)	10 (100%)	15 (100%)*

As a result of examining the data in Table 17, one can see that, most often, respondents were denied goods or services because someone thought they were black, despite their true racial categorization. The data also show that denial of goods and/or services occurred even when respondents were believed to be White (n = 16; 15% of total respondents), which may speak to reverse forms of discrimination. In addition, even when other people could not clearly identify a racial category, the denial still occurred. Overall, these findings speak against the idea that we live in a colorblind society and further support the idea of imposed identity and the fact that people are often denied things because of how they are seen by others. Phenotype is proving to be an important part of respondents' daily lives even if one's race is not known.

Benefits Gained as a Result of Imposed Identity

Just as race has been used to deny goods, services, and liberties to those not in the majority, it can also be used to grant benefits to those perceived to belong to that same group. Therefore, in order to ascertain whether or not respondents ever saw their skin color as gaining them benefits, the survey asked, "Do you believe that people either

provide things or make things accessible to you based on what they see as your race?"

Of the 162 respondents who answered this question, the majority (n = 104; 64%)

answered "Yes." Table 18 presents the results of the crosstabulation by skin color. Only

those respondents who answered this question are reflected in the totals as no

assumptions could be made about those who did not respond. In order to examine

responses within each grouping, the table should be read from left to right. Percentages

shown at the end of each row are based on the total number of respondents within each

skin color category.

Table 18. Benefits Gained from Racial Imposition by Skin Color

Skin Color	Yes (n = 104)	No (n = 58)	Total (n = 162)
Black/			
Dark Brown	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	29 (55%)	24 (45%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	17 (55%)	14 (45%)	31 (100%)
Olive	37 (76%)	12 (24%)	49 (100%)
White	18 (69%)	8 (31%)	26 (100%)

Across skin colors, there existed the awareness that benefits had occurred as a

result of someone imposing a racial affiliation upon respondents. Of interest here is that

the overwhelming majority of those with an olive skin color (n = 37; 76%) noted having

experienced something of this nature. This was followed by those reporting a White skin

color (n = 18; 69%). As the benefits had occurred across the board, one wonders if the

benefits had been experienced within racial groupings as an attempt to make up for

losses suffered outside of that protection.

Table 18 also shows responses that indicate no benefit had been gained, which also happened across all skin colors, with the exception of the black/dark brown category. Especially notable are those responses from White skin respondents (n = 8; 31%) who said they had not benefited as a result of skin color, a well-known and ongoing practice in this country. These responses raise the question of whether people are aware of the benefits gained or whether they actually do not receive benefits based on what others perceive their race to be.

Imposition of Race and the Denial of Access

As a result of the denial of goods and services to people based on race, this country implemented affirmative action laws that made such actions illegal in certain settings. However, there are those that believe these actions still occur in this country. In order to determine whether respondents had ever been denied access to something as a result of racial assumptions, respondents were asked "Do you believe that people either don't provide things or make things accessible to you based on what they see as your race?". Table 19 allows for an examination of the data by skin color and response option. In order to examine responses within each grouping, the table should be read from left to right. Percentages shown at the end of each row are based on the total number of respondents within each skin color category.

Table 19. Denial of Access Based on Imposing Race by Skin Color

Skin Color	Yes (n = 85)	No (n = 75)	Total (n = 160)
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Medium Brown	27 (50%)	27 (50%)	54 (100%)
Yellow	17 (59%)	12 (41%)	29 (100%)

Table 19. Continued

Skin Color	Yes (n = 85)	No (n = 75)	Total (n = 160)
Olive	29 (59%)	20 (41%)	49 (100%)
White	10 (39%)	16 (61%)	26 (100%)

One hundred sixty (n = 160) respondents chose to answer this question and, of those, more than one-half (n = 85; 53%) said "Yes." Similar to the question of having been denied something or mistreated as a result of racial imposition, responses here indicated that, regardless of skin color, some form of access had been denied. The same results were indicated when respondents were asked had they ever been denied goods and/or been mistreated as a result of their perceived race. Interestingly, medium brown respondents were evenly split and the greatest difference occurred in the White color category where the majority of respondents (n = 16; 61%) indicated they had not been denied access as a result of someone making racial impositions. While the former cannot be explained using the current data, the latter implies that a greater number of White respondents are aware that they have not been denied access as a result of skin color.

Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification

Sanchez and Bonam (2009) suggest that biracial people, in the case of disclosing multiracial identity on college applications, are actually penalized for being (and stating) they are biracial in the eyes of the application evaluators. While many in society contend that to be biracial is to have the best of both worlds, the literature suggests that this is not the case. In light of this, the survey asked nine questions about whether or not respondents thought it is okay to ever identify as one primary race. This part of the

survey ties directly back to research question five, do multiracial individuals believe it is okay to deny part of their multiracial heritage/identity in certain situations? This section takes a more nuanced look at the responses according to reported skin tone. For ease in data reporting, categories have been collapsed to reflect Agree and Disagree as opposed to the four response options made available to respondents. When assessing the data according to skin color, one sees that, in each crosstabulation, the number of responses declines by one in comparison to the number of people who originally answered the question. This is because one respondent who originally answered questions about primary racial identification and racial cues elected to skip identifying their skin color, a necessary variable for the crosstabulations. Through the process of elimination for each of the selection and race choices, I was able to verify this respondent's answers to each of the crosstabulated questions. Therefore, the response is included in each of the tables below as No Race Indicated.

Primary Racial Identification When Completing Census Forms

The first question asked respondents the degree to which they believed it was okay to identify as one primary race when completing the US Census. One hundred fifty-nine respondents (n = 159) answered this question and, of that number, 62% did not agree with identifying as one primary race when completing the Census form. Table 20 provides additional information regarding responses across skin color. In order to examine responses within each grouping, the table should be read from left to right. Percentages shown at the end of each row are based on the total number of respondents within each skin color category.

Table 20. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

Completing Census Forms	A (n = 61)	D (n = 98)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	18 (34%)	35 (66%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	12 (39%)	19 (61%)	31 (100%)
Olive	16 (35%)	30 (65%)	46 (100%)
White	13 (52%)	12 (48%)	25 (100%)

When collapsing the Disagree and Strongly Disagree options, the data reveal that the strongest disagreement came from respondents who identified their skin color as black/dark brown (n = 2; 66%) and medium brown (n = 35; 66%). These data are interesting in that they come from a skin color often discriminated against on the basis of race and from a group that is less likely to be identified as multiracial as a result of a darker skin tone. These groups are followed by olive colored (n = 30; 65%) and yellow skin respondents (n = 19; 61%), two groups that are least likely to be identified with one race or another as a result of skin coloring. With the exception of White skinned respondents, most of whom (n = 13; 52%) indicated it was okay to identify as one primary race when completing Census forms, these respondents appear to believe that full disclosure in this instance is more preferred than responding in a manner that limits racial disclosure.

Primary Racial Identification When Completing Scholarship Applications

Depending on the circumstance and type of scholarship application, racial identification may be one criteria used to make award decisions. Therefore, when completing scholarship applications, the opportunity to self-identify may present itself.

Given the financial challenges many people face when it comes to attending college, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to they believed it was okay to identify as one primary race when completing scholarship applications. A detailed examination is provided in Table 21. In order to examine responses within each grouping, the table should be read from left to right. Percentages shown at the end of each row are based on the total number of respondents within each skin color category.

Table 21. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

Completing Scholarship Applications	A (n = 85)	D (n = 75)	Total (n = 160)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	29 (55%)	24 (45%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	17 (55%)	14 (45%)	31 (100%)
Olive	21 (45%)	26 (55%)	47 (100%)
White	17 (68%)	8 (32%)	25 (100%)

Interestingly, the black/dark brown skin respondents tended to disagree (n = 2; 66%) with the statement that is okay to identify as one primary race when completing scholarship applications, as did the olive skin respondents (n = 26; 55%). Given that scholarships help reduce educational debt, which is on the rise, this is in contrast to what one might expect, especially as scholarships are specifically designed with minority applicants in mind.

Unexpected was the indication of White skin (n = 17; 68%) and medium brown (n = 8; 32%) respondents, the majority of whom agreed that the use of one primary race when completing scholarship applications is okay. As medium brown respondents tend

to fall along the continuum of skin color visually, the use of one race could help gain financial support for long term goals. As White skin people tend to benefit as a result of White privilege, one can look at these results and see where their responses can serve as support of affirmative action or were listed as such simply because respondents know White skin people potentially benefit either way. What is not known here is whether White responses would change if the question was worded such that it reflected the use of race by a person of color in the same situation.

Primary Racial Identification When Completing Job Applications

Given the history of racial discrimination present in the United States and the contesting of Affirmative Action laws enacted to help ensure level playing fields for applicants, the use of race as a basis for employment decisions is constantly under scrutiny. Therefore, respondents to this survey were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed that identifying as one primary race was okay when completing job applications. Responses are shown on Table 22, which should be read from left to right in order to examine within group differences. Percentages shown were obtained using the number of responses within each skin color for each Agree/Disagree response option and the total number of responses for that skin color.

The findings show that, again, the black/dark brown respondents tended to disagree with this statement. While the number of respondents in this category is low, the number of disagreements is somewhat surprising given that, on the surface, one might say that racial identification would benefit this group. However, that also assumes that because one has dark colored skin, one is black.

Table 22. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

Completing Job Applications	A (n = 80)	D (n = 78)	Total (n = 158)
No Race Indicated	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	26 (50%)	26 (50%)	52 (100%)
Yellow	16 (52%)	15 (48%)	31 (100%)
Olive	20 (43%)	26 (57%)	46 (100%)
White	17 (68%)	8 (32%)	25 (100%)

Medium brown responses indicate a perfect split with between the Agree and Disagree categories (n = 26; 50%). This can be viewed as respondents wanting to present a holistic presentation of self or, in contrast, simply doing what is needed in order to get what one wants. The same can be said for the yellow skinned respondents who were nearly perfectly split. These are in contrast to White skin respondents where the majority (n = 17; 68%) indicated they agreed it was okay to do so and to the olive skinned respondents, the majority of whom (n = 26; 57%) disagreed with the indication of one primary race when completing job applications.

Social situations are often very different from impersonal interactions that simply require the completion of forms etc. and, as a result, responses provided on a form may differ from how one would respond when personal interactions and/or feelings are at stake. With this in mind, the next three questions sought to examine how respondents answered questions about whether it was okay to identify as one primary race in certain social situations, specifically when dating, and when making friends as a child and when making friends as an adult.

Primary Racial Identification When Dating

Throughout the history of the United States, there have been laws and practices that complicated this event even further, specifically those that prohibited or inhibited dating, marriage, and/or procreation between races. Given that we have evolved to a time where such restrictions are no longer in place, at least on paper, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed it is okay to identify as one primary race when dating. As Table 23 shows, the overwhelming majority of respondents disagreed that this practice was okay, and this finding is consistent across skin colors. This table should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Table 23. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

When Dating	A (n = 49)	D (n = 110)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	12 (23%)	41 (77%)	52 (100%)
Yellow	9 (29%)	22 (71%)	31 (100%)
Olive	15 (33%)	31 (67%)	46 (100%)
White	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	25 (100%)

Medium brown (n = 41; 77%) and yellow skin (n = 22; 71%) respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement that it was okay to identify as one primary race when dating. As these skin colors are often associated with belonging to more than

one racial category, these findings are not surprising. Of particular interest, however, is the finding that White skin people were nearly evenly split between Agree (n = 12; 48%) and Disagree (n = 13; 52%). Overall, as dating is one of the most intimate relationships upon which two people can embark with regard to emotions, is not surprising to see such strong opposition to limiting racial identification to one primary race during the dating process.

Primary Racial Identification When Making Friends as a Child

As identified in the literature, the formation of identity occurs initially during childhood and includes references to the self in terms of age, gender, family, and even race. As a result, when identifying with others, children will often look for similarities and differences upon which to build friendships. With this in mind, respondents were asked the degree to which they believe it is okay to identify as one primary race when making new friends as a child/adolescent. Table 24 provides a comprehensive visual of the findings when crosstabulated by race. This table should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Among the findings is the overwhelming disagreement with this practice by medium brown (n = 37; 77%) and yellow skin respondents (n = 19; 71%). While respondents across other skin colors disagreed with this opportunity to identify primarily as one race, the level of disagreement was not as high.

Table 24. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

When Making Friends as a Child	A (n = 65)	D (n = 95)	Total (n = 160)
No Race Indicated	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	16 (23%)	37 (77%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	12 (29%)	19 (71%)	31 (100%)
Olive	21 (33%)	26 (67%)	47 (100%)
White	15 (48%)	10 (52%)	25 (100%)

It is possible that respondents across all skin colors value the opportunity for children to know and express their racial heritage during the friendship making phase of their lives. However, our history also suggests that personal preferences would lead respondents to want to know the complete racial composition of playmates prior to embarking upon friendships in order to keep like races together, even as children.

Primary Racial Identification When Making Friends as an Adult

As a follow-up to the question about racial exposure as a child, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they believed it was okay to identify as one primary race when making new friends as an adult. Findings indicated that most respondents did not agree with identifying as one primary race when making new friends as an adult. Table 25 provides a visual of these data. This table should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Table 25. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

When Making Friends as an Adult	A (n = 57)	D (n = 101)	Total (n = 158)
No Race Indicated		1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	14 (27%)	38 (73%)	52 (100%)
Yellow	10 (32%)	21 (68%)	31 (100%)
Olive	18 (39%)	28 (61%)	46 (100%)
White	14 (56%)	11 (44%)	25 (100%)

While a true comparison cannot be made because the number of respondents is different and there is no way of knowing if the same respondents answered both questions, one item of interest here is the shift between Agree and Disagree categories when compared to the same question being asked about making friends as a child. In the case of children, the Agree category consisted of 65 respondents indicating that identifying primarily as one race was okay and 101 respondents indicating they disagreed with this practice. When it comes to making friends as an adult, the number of respondents who agreed decreased by 8, and the number of respondents who disagreed increased by 6. In addition, the overall number of responses dropped by two.

The highest number of respondents who disagreed with this statement were in the medium brown skin color (n = 38; 73%), which indicates an increase of one respondent over the previous question. In the case of olive and yellow skin respondents, two respondents in each category moved from Agree in the case of identifying primarily as one race as children to Disagreeing with the statement when making friends as adults. In

the case of medium brown and White skin respondents, one person in each skin color category made the same shift.

The last three questions in this section of the survey instrument moved away from personal relationships and addressed the degree to which respondents believed it was okay to identify as one primary race when there were significant benefits attached to doing so. Questions relative to the completion of loan applications, college applications and overall benefit comprised the final three questions in this area. Findings of responses crosstabulated by skin color are detailed below.

Primary Racial Identification When Completing Loan Applications

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they believed it was okay to identify as one primary race when completing loan applications. Crosstabulations indicated that the one Black skinned respondent and one dark brown skinned respondent agreed that it was okay to do identify as one primary race while the other dark brown respondent disagreed with this statement. Of the 53 medium brown respondents, 8 strongly agreed, 14 agreed, 20 disagreed, and 11 strongly disagreed. Out of the 47 olive skinned respondents to this question, 7 strongly agreed, 18 agreed, 7 disagreed, and 15 strongly disagreed. Of the 30 yellow skinned respondents, 6 strongly agreed and 10 agreed with this statement while 6 disagreed and 8 strongly disagreed with this statement. Finally, of the 25 White skinned respondents, 6 strongly agreed, 12 agreed, 3 disagreed and 4 strongly disagreed that it is okay to identify as one primary race when completing loan applications. These data can be examined in Table 26. This table should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. The percentages

shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options

and the total for each skin color grouping.

Table 26: Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

Completing Loan Applications	A (n = 83)	D (n = 76)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	22 (42%)	31 (58%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	16 (53%)	14 (47%)	30 (100%)
Olive	25 (53%)	22 (47%)	47 (100%)
White	18 (72%)	7 (28%)	25 (100%)

Primary Racial Identification When Completing College Applications

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they believed it was

okay to identify as one primary race when completing loan applications.

Crosstabulations indicated that one of the dark brown/black respondents agreed that it

was okay to identify as one primary race when completing college applications but the

other two dark brown/black respondents disagreed with this statement. These data can be

examined in Table 27, which should be read from left to right for interpretation

purposes. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the

Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Of the 52 medium brown respondents, 29 agreed while 23 disagreed. Of the 47

olive skinned respondents, 23 agreed while 24 disagreed. Of the 31 yellow skinned

respondents, 17 agreed while 14 disagreed. Finally of the 25 white skinned respondents,

17 agreed and 8 disagreed that it was okay to identify as one primary race when completing loan applications.

Table 27. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

Completing College Applications	A (n = 88)	D (n = 71)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	29 (55%)	23 (45%)	52 (100%)
Yellow	17 (55%)	14 (45%)	31 (100%)
Olive	23 (49%)	24 (51%)	47 (100%)
White	17 (68%)	8 (32%)	25 (100%)

Primary Racial Identification When There is a Benefit Otherwise Not Available

Each of the aforementioned questions in this section addressed a specific circumstance in which the respondent might believe it is okay to identify as one primary race. In other to get a better sense of what respondents might believe is an appropriate situation to identify as such, the final question asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they believed it was okay to identify as one primary race when there is a benefit that would not otherwise be available. Table 28, which should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes, provides a visual of responses. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Overall, the majority of respondents (n = 94; 59%) were okay with identifying as one primary race in this circumstance. The medium brown (n = 30; 57%) and olive skin

respondents (n = 27; 57%) had the largest number of respondents who agreed, followed

by yellow skin respondents (n = 18; 58%).

Table 28. Circumstantial Primary Racial Identification by Skin Color

Benefit Otherwise Not Available	A (n = 94)	D (n = 65)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (66%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	30 (57%)	23 (43%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	18 (58%)	13 (42%)	31 (100%)
Olive	27 (57%)	20 (43%)	47 (100%)
White	16 (67%)	8 (33%)	24 (100%)

Interestingly, the two groups where respondents disagreed that it would be okay

to identify as one primary race were also the medium brown (n = 23; 43%) and olive

groups, two groups that fall in the middle of the color schema provided. It may be that

these respondents believe that such identification would lead to additional

discrimination, or it could be that they are simply supportive of embracing their entire

racial heritage at all times, despite benefits or limitations.

Overall, findings in this section indicate that, while we live in a society that now

allows one to check all that apply, there are certain situations where one may choose not

to disclose all parts of their racial identity, just as there are those where one may choose

to embrace all. What is further highlighted is that multiracial people make complicated

choices about disclosure that are not necessarily available to those from monoracial

backgrounds. Said choices can lead to acceptance or rejection, benefit or loss.

Building upon the literature presented on racial cues, the next section examines respondents' beliefs about racial cues as crosstabulated by skin color.

Racial Cues and Skin Color

Drawings of minority people often exaggerate the physical racial cue most often associated with the particular race being portrayed. These cues can include features such as lip fullness, eye and facial shape, nose size, and even eye color. According to the quantitative findings, the majority of respondents believe that certain phenotype attributes are utilized as racial cues in America today. In order to see how respondents' answers varied according to skin color, the 10 racial cues previously discussed were cross tabulated with this variable. In this section, each racial cue is presented, followed by a discussion of the cross tabulated results and a table is provided for viewing of overall responses.

Skin Color as a Racial Cue

The first question asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they agree that skin color is used as a racial cue. The quantitative findings indicated that, of the 159 respondents who answered this question, the majority (n =154; 97%) agreed that it was. There were only five respondents (n = 5; 3.0%) that did not agree that skin color is used in this manner. Crosstabulations by respondents' skin color indicate that, not surprisingly, all of the black/dark brown respondents (n = 3; 100%) agreed. In each of the skin color categories, more than 95% of respondents believed that skin color is used as a racial cue. These data are reflected in whole in Table 29, which should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. The percentages shown reflect both within skin

color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color

grouping.

Table 29. Skin Color as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 154)	D (n = 5)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	51 (96%)	2 (4%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	30 (97%)	1 (3%)	31 (100%)
Olive	46 (98%)	1 (2%)	47 (100%)
White	23 (96%)	1 (4%)	24 (100%)

Nose Size as a Racial Cue

The next seven racial cues listed asked respondents to address those found only

in the head/shoulders area of the physical body as this is the area most often first seen by

others. Thus, respondents were first asked to identify the degree to which they agreed

that nose size is used as a racial cue. As with the question of skin color, 159 respondents

answered, but the number of respondents who agreed with this statement decreased to

136 (85%) compared to 154 (97%) for skin color as a racial cue respondents. However,

the crosstabulated data reflected in Table 30, which should be read from left to right for

interpretation purposes. These data indicate that an overwhelming majority of

respondents in all skin color groups agreed that it is.

Table 30. Nose Size as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 136)	D (n = 23)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (66%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	45 (85%)	8 (15%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	27 (87%)	4 (13%)	31 (100%)
Olive	41 (87%)	6 (13%)	47 (100%)
White	20 (83%)	4 (17%)	24 (100%)

The largest numerical shift occurred in the medium brown skin color grouping where six respondents moved from agreeing with skin color to disagreeing that nose size is a racial cue.

Eye Color as a Racial Cue

Many still associate blue-eyed children with being White, green/grey eyes with olive skin persons, and brown eyes across a number of races. Most respondents (n = 102; 65%) to this survey, however, did not agree that eye color is used as a racial cue in America. Of the 158 who responded, the largest group that believed it was used as such were medium brown respondents (n = 17; 32%), followed by olive skin respondents (n = 16; 35%), neither of which represents a majority. These data are reflected on Table 31, which should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Table 31. Eye Color as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 56)	D (n = 102)	Total (n = 158)
No Race Indicated	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	17 (32%)	36 (68%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	11 (35%)	20 (65%)	31 (100%)
Olive	16 (35%)	30 (65%)	46 (100%)
White	11 (46%)	13 (54%)	24 (100%)

Eye Shape as a Racial Cue

Though the majority of respondents did not agree that eye color was used as a racial cue in America today, the majority (n = 128; 81%) did agree that eye shape is used in such a manner. The largest number of respondents who indicated agreement with this statement was found in the medium brown category (n = 43; 81%), followed by olive color respondents (n = 34; 72%). Table 32, which should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes, shows responses across all skin colors. The percentages shown reflect both within skin color responses for the Agree/Disagree response options and the total for each skin color grouping.

Table 32. Eye Shape as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 128)	D (n = 31)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	43 (81%)	10 (19%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	25 (81%)	6 (19%)	31 (100%)
Olive	34 (72%)	13 (28%)	47 (100%)
White	22 (92%)	2 (8%)	24 (100%)

As noted in Table 32, the most frequent indication of disagreement came from within the olive category (n = 13; 28%). The lowest number of respondents disagreeing with this statement were found in the White skin color grouping (n = 2; 8%) which is not surprising as many White people are not racially stereotyped according to their eye shape.

Hair Texture as a Racial Cue

Since slaves were brought to this country certain features have separated them from their White captors, the primary of which was skin color. When females were compared to White women of the time, differences were often found in the areas of lip fullness, facial shape, and hair texture, which was often described as coarse and brittle. Over the years, pressing combs, weaves, blow-outs and a number of other things have been utilized by millions of Black women to change the feel of their hair to where it more closely reflects the loose-flowing locks of Whites and others. With this in mind, respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed that hair texture is used as a racial cue in America today. As noted in the quantitative responses, the overwhelming majority (n = 153; 97%) of the 159 respondents indicated agreement with the statement that hair texture is indeed used as a racial cue.

Table 33. Hair Texture as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 153)	D (n = 5)	Total (n = 158)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	51 (96%)	2 (4%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	30 (100%)	0 (0%)	30 (100%)

Table 33. Continued

Skin Color	A (n = 153)	D (n = 5)	Total (n = 158)
Olive	46 (98%)	1 (2%)	47 (100%)
White	22 (92%)	2 (8%)	24 (100%)

As Table 33, which should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes, shows, in each skin color represented, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement. Respondents in the black/brown (n = 3; 100%) skin color indicated total agreement, and the next largest group of respondents were found in the medium brown group (n = 51; 96%). These findings are not surprising as these two groups are the darker skin tones which are often the carriers of what many consider to be undesirable hair texture. It is interesting to note, however, that White skin color respondents (n = 22; 92) overwhelmingly agreed with this statement, when this is something that rarely affects White people. It raises the question of whether they, themselves, use hair texture as a means by which to racially categorize others.

Hair Length as a Racial Cue

Just as hair texture has been used as a racial cue, hair length has often been used in the same manner. Table 34 reflects the crosstabulation data between skin color and hair length, and should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes. As previously noted, out of 158 respondents, only 42% (n = 67) agreed that hair length is currently used as a racial cue in America. The largest number of respondents that disagreed with this statement were the medium brown skin color respondents (n = 30; 57), and they were also the largest group that agreed (n = 23; 43%).

Table 34. Hair Length as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 67)	D (n = 91)	Total (n = 158)
No Race Indicated	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	23 (43%)	30 (57%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	14 (47%)	17 (57%)	30 (100%)
Olive	21 (45%)	25 (53%)	47 (100%)
White	8 (33%)	16 (67%)	24 (100%)

Given recent fashion trends toward shorter hair styles for women, many of which are above the shoulder and/or collar line, the overall finding is not surprising. However, it should be noted that if this question was asked at another (earlier) point in time, the responses may have been different and varied according to skin tone as well.

Lip Fullness as a Racial Cue

The seventh racial cue listed asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they agreed that lip fullness is used as a racial cue in America. Of the 158 responses, the majority (n = 118; 75%) indicated agreement. When crosstabulated by skin color, one is able to see that indicate that most often olive (n = 38; 81%) and medium brown (n = 39; 75%) respondents agreed that lip fullness is being used as a racial cue in America. Among those who disagreed with this statement, medium brown respondents (n = 13; 25%) provided the largest number of responses. These responses are provided in Table 35, which should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes.

Table 35. Lip Fullness as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 118)	D (n = 39)	Total (n = 157)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	39 (75%)	13 (25%)	52 (100%)
Yellow	21 (70%)	9 (30%)	30 (100%)
Olive	38 (81%)	9 (19%)	47 (100%)
White	16 (67%)	8 (33%)	24 (100%)

As current fashion trends encourage the filling of lips through noninvasive (makeup), moderately invasive (shots), and even invasive (cosmetic surgery) measures, the overall findings are somewhat surprising. One would expect that this cue would not be identified as a racial cue by respondents because many women are on the bandwagon to experience fullness of lips in order to achieve/attain some sense of outward beauty. However, it seems that lip fullness is still seen as being a relevant racial cue in society today.

Cheek Structure as a Racial Cue

Cheek structure is another facial feature that might distinguish a person from one racial category or another. While not as easily discernible as skin tone or hair texture, one might glance at a person's cheek structure to see if there are clues as to what race a person belongs. Of the 157 respondents, most (n = 95; 61%) agreed that cheek structure is used as a racial cue in America. Table 36 provides an examination of these data and should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes.

Crosstabulations indicate the largest group of respondents who agreed were medium brown where 31 people or 33% of the 95 respondents showed agreement.

However, the same group was also the largest to disagree as they represented 34% (n = 21) of the 62 respondents who indicated disagreement.

Table 36. Cheek Structure as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 95)	D (n = 62)	Total (n = 157)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	31 (60%)	21 (40%)	52 (100%)
Yellow	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	30 (100%)
Olive	29 (62%)	18 (38%)	47 (100%)
White	18 (75%)	6 (25%)	24 (100%)

Of interest here is the split in the yellow skin category, where the 30 respondents were evenly divided, as this facial structure and skin color are most usually associated with Asian races. It is quite possible that the division is the reflection of other races being represented in this skin color, or the reflection of a change in society where this racial cue is no longer used in this manner, or a combination of both.

Size of a Person's Behind as a Racial Cue

The size of a person's behind has often been used as a racial cue in the popular media and other settings. Of the 158 respondents who answered this question, most (n = 118; 75%) indicated they agreed it was. Of the 40 respondents who disagreed, the largest group to do so was the medium brown respondents (n = 12; 23%).Table 37 shows how respondents across all races answered this racial cue question and should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes.

Table 37. Size of a Person's Behind as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 118)	D (n = 40)	Total (n = 158)
No Race Indicated	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	41 (77%)	12 (23%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	22 (71%)	9 (29%)	31 (100%)
Olive	37 (80%)	9 (20%)	46 (100%)
White	15 (63%)	9 (38%)	24 (101%)*

*Total does not equal 100% due to rounding

The largest group to indicate agreement with this statement is the medium brown skin color respondents (n = 41; 77%) followed by the olive respondents (n = 37; 80%). It is clear from these findings that respondents across each racial group overwhelmingly believe that the size of a person's behind is used as a racial cue in America today.

Clothing Styles as a Racial Cue

The final racial cue to be crosstabulated by skin color is that of clothing styles. One hundred fifty nine respondents (n = 159) answered this question and, of that number, 70% (n = 112) agreed that clothing styles were used in this manner. Interestingly, respondents in the medium brown (n = 18; 34%) and yellow (n = 13; 42%) skin color categories comprised the largest groups to disagree with whether clothing styles are used as a racial cue in America. In addition, though not evenly divided, those in the yellow skin color category showed a more narrow division between Agree (n = 18; 58%) and Disagree (n = 13; 42%). Table 38 represents the findings across all skin colors and should be read from left to right for interpretation purposes.

Table 38. Clothing Styles as a Racial Cue by Skin Color

Skin Color	A (n = 112)	D (n = 47)	Total (n = 159)
No Race Indicated	(0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Black/ Dark Brown	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Medium Brown	35 (66%)	18 (34%)	53 (100%)
Yellow	18 (58%)	13 (42%)	31 (100%)
Olive	40 (85%)	7 (15%)	47 (100%)
White	17 (71%)	7 (29%)	24 (100%)

Thus, while clothing styles are a personal choice, respondents to this survey seem to believe that there are those who use this outward manifestation of self to assign racial identity to others.

Respondents to this survey indicated that physical attributes such as skin tone, nose size, eye shape, hair texture and size of one's derriere as well as clothing styles are characteristics by which Americans assign people to one racial category or another, rather correctly or incorrectly. As such, even in a time when political and other outlets attempt to convince the populace that we are all the same, that color does not matter, the imposition of identity upon others enables treatment according to what one believes to be true about racial groups.

In order to examine whether respondents had ever participated in the process of shifting with regard to any of the 10 racial cues provided, the next set of questions asked if they had ever changed any of the cues previously discussed. Again these answers were cross tabulated against reported skin color to look at the similarities and/or differences

between the groupings in whether or not they have changed one cue or another to look more or less like a certain race.

Shifting to Belong

As the intention of this study was to examine multiracial identity from the perspective of multiracial respondents themselves, this was an opportune time to explore whether persons from multiracial backgrounds feel as though they are reflective of today's society with regard to skin color. The process of shifting has been defined as changing physical characteristics or making mental changes in an attempt to fit into the norms of white society. The sixth and final research question asked whether respondents had ever shifted their identity to fit within an environment or situation. As one part of determining whether this had occurred, respondents were asked to identify if they had ever changed any of the physical racial cues in an attempt to fit in. Crosstabulated results indicated that some forms of shifting had occurred but, overall, these respondents had not done so overwhelmingly. For example, when asked, have you ever changed your skin color (through tanning/toning/bleaching) so that you look more or less like a certain race, of the 154 (who reported skin tone) who answered, 28 said they had changed their skin color (18.0%) and 126 (82.0%) said they had not. Of those who said they had changed their skin tone, 2 were medium brown, 12 were olive, 11 were yellow and 3 were white skinned.

Only three (n = 3; 2%) of the 158 respondents had ever changed their nose size (through surgery, tape etc.) and only 15 (9%) their eye color (through contact lenses).

When asked if eye shape (though surgery, tape, makeup etc.) had ever been changed so that you look more or less like a certain race, out of the 158 responses, only 1 respondent answered that they had done so. The respondent who answered they had changed their eye shape self-identified as having yellow skin color.

The fourth question in this section asked, have you ever changed your hair texture (through perms, relaxers, blowouts etc.) so that you look more or less like a certain race. Of the 156 responses to this question, 66 answered they had changed their hair texture (42.0%) and 90 answered they had not (58.0%). Of the 66 who answered that they had changed their hair texture, 1 was Black skinned, 25 were medium brown, 19 were olive, 14 were yellow, and 7 were white skinned. While not the majority of respondents, there was at least one person in every group (except for the dark brown skinned group) who admitted to changing their hair texture so that they look more or less like a certain race. Along the same line as hair texture was the question have you ever changed your hair length (through perms, relaxers, blowouts and/or extensions) so that you look more or less like a certain race? Of the 155 responses to this question, 40 stated they had changed their hair length (26.0%), while 115 stated they had not altered their hair length (74.0%). Again, at least one person in every group (except for the dark brown skinned group) admitted to altering their hair length so to look more or less like a certain race. Of all of the physical characteristics listed, hair texture and hair length are two of the easiest physical attributes to change and/or manipulate at will. One can go from natural to relaxed hair or from a shoulder length bob to mid back length hair with one

stop at a barbershop. It is easy to see why so many respondents admit to changing these two attributes.

Lip fullness was only altered by two of the 158 respondents (both yellow skinned) and the racial cue, cheek structure was not altered by any respondents. Six out of 157 respondents said that they had altered the size of their behind (through surgery, choice of undergarments, padding etc.). Of these six, one was medium brown skinned, one was olive skinned, three were yellow skinned, and one was white skinned. While not statistically significant, it is interesting that more people admitted to changing their butt size more than their lip size or even cheek structure (both of which could be altered though the application of makeup).

Finally, when asked, have you ever changed your clothing style so that you look more or less like a certain race, of the 156 who responded, 44 answered "Yes" (28.0%) and 112 answered "No" (72.0%). Of the 44 who responded "Yes", 14 were medium brown, 13 were olive, 7 were yellow and 10 were white skinned. While it may not be as big a racial cue in America today, it is still interesting that people would change their clothing styles to look more or less like a certain race.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of cross tabulations between skin color and the variables associated with racial cues, and the degree to which respondents believed it was okay to identify with one primary race in certain public situations. The data indicate a couple of major findings in term of the research questions of this project. One, respondents feel that race is still a major issue in America today and that we do not in

fact live in a colorblind society. Multiracial people are also still mistreated and/or denied goods based on their perceived (imposed) race. Multiracial individuals are still either willing or forced to identify with one primary race depending on the social situation and/or who is asking the question. Again, the population that was supposed to bridge the gap between the races is still subject to the same racial hierarchy that is prevalent in society (those that are lighter skinned are often treated better than their darker skinned counterparts even of the same racial mixtures). The next chapter discusses the data collected from the interview portion of the data collection period.

CHAPTER VII

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES: TELLING MY STORY, MY WAY

The majority of respondents (n = 132; 79%), disagreed with the statement that we live in a colorblind society where race does not matter. For many of the multiracial individuals interviewed, they did not see being mixed race as being an escape from race, but rather now they had to learn to navigate between being two (or more) races, and not only face racism from the outside world but also within their own groups. It is in this interplay of inter and intra racial issues, that these individuals learn to navigate both their racial identity development and identification.

During the course of the 45 interviews eight main themes emerged (most of which are also supported by the quantitative data).

- *Learning Begins at Home*
  - o Multiracial identity development begins at home. Parents of the respondents taught the respondents about all aspects of their racial identity but did tell them that society would not always accept them as being bi/multiracial.
- *Early Life Lessons*
  - o Respondents deal with racial identity questions from an early age. Respondents get tired of discussing their racial identity with others.
- *Private Identity and Public Survival*

- o Public racial identification depends on the situation the
  respondents are in at the time. Many learn to be chameleons and
  blend in when they can.

- *Outward Appearances Matter: Imposed Identity*

  - o People assume to know respondents racial background. They are
    then treated according to this imposed identity. Often this
    treatment is not positive, but rather results in the denial of
    something, based on their perceived/imposed identity.

- *Dual Identity: Dueling Realities*

  - o Respondents are often thought to have the best of both worlds.

- *Understanding Leads to Giving: It Takes a Village*

  - o Respondents often reach out to other mixed or minorities when
    possible because they know what they go through.

- *Exclusion/Exclusion*

  - o Respondents' skin tone often precludes group membership in
    certain situations. For example, respondents who are part Black
    were often told they were not Black enough (or too much of
    another racial mixture) and thus were mistreated or excluded
    from certain groups/activities.

- *Go Back Inside Your Box*

  - o People often want to force a choice on multiracial individuals.
    Those outside of the multiracial person's particular inner circle

often attempt to get them to pick a side of their racial

background, rather than accepting them as a whole consisting of

two or more races.

This section is an examination of the responses provided that led to the identification of

these specific themes. Each theme has its own section with discussion and connections

to previous answers to address them one by one.

Early Identity Development

In the survey/interview respondents were asked to identify the person they

believed had the most influence on the race with which they identify primarily. Most

respondents indicated mother, followed by their father. Indeed, 44% of respondents

answered their mother, with father coming in second with 25%. However, in the

interviews, many respondents did not chose just one answer, but instead said that both

their parents instilled in them that they were biracial and taught them about both sides of

their heritage. Nancy, a 38 year old Black/White female, stated "even from my youngest

years I knew my mother was White and my father was Black, and that I was a mix of

them both. My parents taught me that I was biracial and thus this is how I always

identify myself. People often argue with me or mistake me for one thing or another, but

in my heart I know who and what I am."

Terry, a 25 year old Black/White male, said "it was not until I went to school and

others started questioning me that I then asked my parents, 'what am I?', My parents

were honest with me and they started teaching me that while the outside world would

view me as 'just Black' that I was both Black and White and I should be proud of both

sides of my heritage and never forget ALL of who I am. While those in school and other places continued to box me in, I knew who and what I was and I am proud to be both. My parents never made me feel as if I had to choose."

Sue, a 33 year old Puerto Rican/ (Jewish) White female, stated "I grew up in an all White neighborhood and when I was about 8 I realized that I did not look just like everyone else so I asked my father (who was a light skinned Puerto Rican) why am I different from all the rest? He said you and your sisters are not just one race but rather a mix of both your mom and I…That makes you special. Don't ever forget who you are…So now, I always say I am a PortaJew whenever asked about my race as I don't want to deny either my mother or my father."

Ella, a 37 year old Black/White female, said that although her parents taught her that she was both Black and White, from the time she started interacting with others in school, she "always identified as Black because I did not think anyone else would accept the other options." Wyn, a 22 year old Korean/White male, said his parents taught him about both sides of his heritage growing up. "I was raised speaking Korean at home but was taught to speak English in public so that others would accept me. I was often looked at funny because I could pass as White, but could speak fluent Korean. People ask me what I am, and then they don't believe me when I tell them I am half Korean and half White. I will not deny my mother or father just to please somebody else." All of the respondents quoted here state that their racial socialization began at home (which matches up with the literature on racial identification) but at different points in life have all been questioned about their racial identity/makeup.

Respondents were quick to point out that racial identity formation began at home, but they also influenced by how others treated them based on their physical characteristics (some 30% of respondents cited this as the main factor in what shaped their racial identification). As we know, identification development does not happen in a bubble and what these respondents learned at home, helped them navigate the racial identity questions that they faced from the outside world. By learning about their heritage(s) at home, they were able to deal (one way or another) with the questions thrown at them when they walked out the door. While this theme does not directly support the work of Bratter and Heard (2009) and Hitlin, Brown and Elder (2005), or Rollins (2009) in regards to who (which parent) directly influences racial identification and classification, it does support the notion that race is a fluid construct even at an early age. This connects with the second main theme of dealing with racial identity questions from an early age.

Race/Identity

On the survey/interview instrument, two questions were asked to see if questions about racial identity were ever asked when respondents were children. When asked if they were ever asked by strangers "What are you?", the quantitative data showed a majority (84.5%) answered that "Yes" this did occur. When asked, if they were questioned by people they knew, the quantitative data again showed the majority (77.9%) stated that this was a question they were asked. When talking to interviewees, many respondents stated that they had often been asked both in their childhood and

adulthood questions such as what are you, or where are you from, or the ever classic, what are you mixed with?.

Carla, a 29-year old Korean/White female, stated "there is not a day that goes by that someone does not question 'what are you?' or 'where are you from?'. While this used to not bother me, as I get older it gets really annoying to have to explain to strangers 'what I am'. There are days when I am flippant with my answers and other days when just say I am biracial and I walk on."

Jeri, a 27-year old Black/Hispanic female, had similar feelings on the subject. Jeri states, "Oh my God it is OLD to be asked about my racial makeup, I mean why should it matter? Why should I have to explain myself to anyone else? My race is my business."

Ari, a 32-year old Japanese/White female, stated, "I get so tired of this question. I actually now loathe being asked 'what are you?' or being told 'you look exotic, where are you from?' I mean we live in the 21st century, why should this even be an issue…."

Barbara, a 26-year old Filipino/Black female, also felt put out by the question. "As a child we moved a lot and so each time we moved I knew I would be bombarded with questions about my race…What are you? You look different. These are things I dealt with as a child." Barbara went on to say, "I thought as an adult that my race would no longer be an issue, you know I thought it was a question that children asked. I was wrong. When I go on dates, when I grocery shop, when I go on job interviews, people always find some polite way to question me about my race."

Respondents cannot escape the questions about their race/racial makeup. People, while often just being inquisitive, often bring up racial questions that are either inappropriate or just unnecessary. The respondents quoted here often thought that their racial identity would not matter as they got older, but in some ways they became more intrusive as people try to work it into polite conversation so they can decide whether or not the multiracial person is worthy of a date, job, friendship to name a few. Because of the continued questions about racial identity, many respondents noted that they have become adept at blending in or becoming chameleon like in their day to day lives and interactions with others. These answers also support the fact that race is indeed still an issue, and no, we do not in fact live in a colorblind society. This ties directly into the third theme that emerged from the interview portion of the data collection period, that of blending in/being chameleon like.

Private Identity and Public Survival

Another theme that came forth from the interviews was the fact that respondents' racial identification depends upon the situation they are in at the time. In the survey/interview, the question was asked, over the course of your life, have you changed your public identification with one race or another based on a situation or event? While the qualitative data indicate that racial identification did not change (n = 92), the comments provided online and via interviews shows that for some, racial identification is fluid and changes to fit the situation at hand. This directly supports the work of Sanchez, Shih and Garcia (2009) who suggest that self-identified multiracial adults have the ability to identify with different racial identities across different social contests (p.3).

Lynn, a 31- year old Black/White/Cherokee female, says, "I often do my makeup and/or hair to match the group that I will be around. When I am going to be around my Black friends, I change my mannerisms and dress. When I am going to be around my White friends I do the same thing." Lynn went on to say, "I know I can pass while I do not deny either of my parents, sometimes it is just easier to be 'one thing or another'." Martha, a 24- year old Asian Indian/(Jewish) White female, said that she had learned to be a chameleon and fit into situations. "I blend into the crowd and depending on who asks the question determines how I answer. Sometimes I say I am multiracial, or sometimes just Asian but I never say I am just White. I mean who would believe that?"

Nancy stated that she is often questioned and depending on the reasoning for the question determines how she answers. She never feels the need to be consistent as she does not see the reason people have the right to question her about her race.

All of these respondents have learned to shift (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) or become very adept at fitting into the group or environment in which they live/socialize/work. For these respondents, racial identification seems to be a fluid construct as they navigate the world around them, but does that does not mean that it is such a fluid construct for those who interact with them. As Will noted, "people ask me what I am and I respond Asian Indian. I mean no one really cares if I say Asian Indian and White. This just makes my life simpler in some ways". Ari also commented on this saying, "I know that being able to fit into multiple groups is seen as a advantage (to some), but do you know how tiring it is to always be aware of who you are with and how you are 'supposed' to act around certain people. I mean I know better that to be too

white when around my Asian friends, and when around my (work) friends, I am constantly aware that while I blend, I can never completely fit in". Becoming chameleon like or learning to adapt is a mechanism multiracial people use in a society that is still so focused on race and putting people into racial boxes. This imposition of race by society ties directly into the next theme.

Outward Appearances Matter: Imposed Identity

The fourth theme that emerged in the qualitative data was the fact that people assume to know the race of the multiracial respondents. The survey asked the question, as an adult, have people ever told you that you look like one particular race or another? Of the 176 who responded to this question, 93.2% (n = 164) stated yes they had been told they look like one particular race or another. Respondents to the interviews expounded on this answer. Naomi, a 49- year old Black/White female, says, "I am often mistaken for Hispanic and people often speak Spanish to me. They then get upset when I don't speak Spanish back to them." Naomi mentioned the situation in which she was asked by an East Indian gas station attendant where her 'dot' was and being surprised when she told him that she was not of that heritage. She noticed he was not as nice to her as when he thought they were of like backgrounds.

Alvin, a 48- year old Black/White male, is often mistaken for someone of Middle Eastern descent. "People often assume that I am Iraqi or Pakistani and I get a lot of go back to your country or you don't belong here. I don't even bother to correct them because my saying I am Black/White is not going to change their prejudices against others." Theo, a 23- year old Asian/African American male, says that he is often told he

is Arab or Indian. "When I tell them I am Pakistani and African American people actually get upset that I don't fit what they wanted me to be. I mean how stupid is that? People like to box you into categories and treat you in stereotypical ways." Lynn says that when people assume to know her race she actually is more annoyed than when people just ask her what am I, or where are you from? People often try to impose race on bi/multiracial individuals and get upset when they challenge their imposed identity.

In a society that is bent on using the rhetoric that race and racism are no longer major factors, the imposition of identity upon this growing multiracial population certainly shows that race may no longer be the sole dividing issue, but now skin tone and phenotype are divisive factors in America today. The fact that two persons can both check White/Black on the Census form, but then are treated differently in society (based on skin tone and their perceived (imposed) identity highlights the inability of Americans to escape the systemically racist system that is still in place today. Racism by another name is still racism. The imposition of identity that multiracial Americans experience highlights this very important fact. Chou and Feagin (2008) and DuBois were right when they talked about the twoness that Asian Americans and African Americans feel in society.

I posit that multiracial Americans also navigate their lives based on experiences of where they are singularly both one race and another while simultaneously dealing with being mixed race. This imposition of race (or imposed identity) means that America is not moving past race and/or skin tone issues, but rather is imposing upon another group the racial dynamics of a flawed racist society. This imposed identity (again the

persona that is assigned by outsiders to mixed raced individuals based on a monoracial

scale using appearance as its main cue) is a new twist on racism in America today.

Dual Identity: Dueling Realities

The data indicate that, contrary to popular belief, multiracial respondents do not

always 'have the best of both worlds'. Though a multiracial person is someone fortunate

enough to have two or more races indicated in their biological composition, which leads

to a dual identity, the fact is that many are still denied things or mistreated because of

their skin tone or imposed race (dueling realities). The question, have you ever been

denied something/been mistreated because someone thought you were of a particular

race was asked on the survey/interview instrument. Of those the 176 who responded,

65.3% (n = 115) said that they had been denied something/been mistreated because

someone thought they were of a particular race. For the majority of the interviewees who

were any mixture with Black, this was a common comment that came up in

conversation. "People often assume I am Black and what am I going to say? No. I'm

not? I mean I am half Black so they are not entirely wrong" said Barbara. "I know this

has cost me at least one job (because they assumed I was white via phone interview), and

even boyfriends because once they find out I have any Black in me, suddenly they stop

calling."

Cindy, a 53-year old Black/American Indian female, said "I mean I cannot

change my skin tone to fit what others want me to be. I know I have been mistreated

and/or passed over by sales persons. I also know I sound White on the phone, and I have

a White name, and people are often surprised to see a 'Black' female when they meet

me. They often cannot recover their expression fast enough. I can tell that their treatment of me on the phone and once they see me in person is a definite change."

Ella, a 36-year old Black/White female pointed out that, "A group of girls in college thought I was Hispanic and tried striking up a conversation with me in Spanish. When they realized I wasn't Spanish, they walked away and I know it's not because they did not speak English because I heard them when they walked away."

Will, a 24-year old Asian Indian/White male, stated, "At the department of Motor Vehicles, my brother and I were harassed by the attendant and he kept asking us to prove that we were born in the US. He kept saying that our birth certificates were not valid. I had never had this problem before but then I realized I had always been accompanied by my (White) mother before this visit."

Again the imposition of race (even if half correct) often means that bi/multiracial individuals are denied things or mistreated by others around them. This theme not only highlights the notion of imposed identity, but it also ties directly back to the reality that race is still very relevant in the daily lives of not just monoracial individuals but their multiracial counterparts as well. Imposed identity is a lived reality and, while many multiracial individuals are forced to deal with this imposition, it often opens their eyes to the plight of other people of color and/or other multiracial individuals in society. This open mindset often leads to multiracial individuals being more giving in ways they may not have been otherwise.

Understanding Leads to Giving: It Takes a Village

Have you ever given someone something (or make it accessible to them) based on what you thought their race was? While only 59 (out of 164) responded that they had done this in the quantitative data, the responses to the interviews highlight that when opportunity arises even little things are often given to others based on their perception of race. Many respondents said that, because of their mistreatment in society (because of their imposed identity, they do try to give to other minorities and/or mixed raced individuals when opportunities arise.

Charlotte, a 42-year old Black/White female who works in the publishing industry says, "I try to provide more services to HBCUs because I know they are underserved and often overlooked." Naomi, an educator, went to work at an HBCU because "I feel that society discriminates against them and does not allow them certain opportunities. I want them to be well prepared so that they will be able to compete on the same playing field." Sherry, a 33-year old Black/Hispanic female, said "Yes, if I think they are of either one of my races. As a Black and Mexican, I know that both of my races can be looked down upon. We need more people to uplift and try to make things accessible whenever possible. If I can contribute to that in any way, then I try to. Other respondents said they were more likely to date others of mixed heritage or even that they tend to be friendly to other mixed people and try to include them in activities geared toward mixed people.

Jeri pointed out that, "I often see others who are mixed-race, not of any particular background, just 'like me'. I think I extend invitations to conversations with complete

strangers just based on that. Terry, a 52-year old Black/Chickasaw female, said, "I send invitations to women who I perceive to be multiracial to join my online-based sisterhood for biracial/multiracial women of African descent all the time. I do this sometimes solely based on their profile pictures that I come across."

Even if in a non-threatening way, multiracial individuals utilize race as well. This also highlights the fact that the growing multiracial population is well aware of the racial dynamics that are at play in society, even when they are being helpful/reaching out, they are aware of the power structure that is at play. This again highlights the fact that the multiracial individuals surveyed in this project are well aware that we do not live in a colorblind society and that race is still a major issue in America today.

Exclusion/Exclusion

Many of the 200 respondents who answered indicated that strangers had asked them "what are you" (n=169; 85%) when they were children. When the question was raised whether they were asked "What are you by people you knew" the overwhelming majority of the 199 respondents (n=155; 78%) indicated yes. When analyzing the interview responses, this theme consistently arose from the interviews was that people with any mixture of Black were often told they were not Black enough and were often ostracized from true Blacks in schools and other social situations. Respondents who were a mixture of Black and some other race were often told they were not Black enough. This theme came up regardless of what that racial mixture was.

Sally, a 36-year old female whose mother is African American, and whose father was white, spoke of how on a daily basis, she and her siblings were often questioned

about their racial heritage. Growing up in Houston, TX during the 70's and 80's was not easy for her she said. She would often be told, "you ain't Black" or asked "what are you". She stated that she was mixed with Black and white she said that "many Blacks at school would say I was trying to be more than I was (because I would not give up my White heritage)." She also stated that many Blacks during her school years would not accept her and at the same time, many whites did not as well because she was not enough of either race. She often said that she pointed out to people that "skin color is not a choice, and if you cannot accept me because I refuse to give up a part of me, then you don't need to be around me at all".

"People often say that you have it made, you are both Black and Filipino. This means you had your choice of guys to date and groups to hang around." The reality says Barbara, "was that I was often left without a date because I was not Black enough and no Mexican or Puerto Rican would date me because I was mixed. I do not see this as having it made".

Alvin was often called white boy and told to go hang with them, though he lived in a primarily Black neighborhood. His sister, Naomi, was often told she was high yella and, as a result, many of the darker skinned Black girls did not want her around. His bright skin and her long, dark hair made it difficult for them during a time when fun and freedom were supposed to be at their fingertips. Being mixed was not a boon for either of these respondents, but rather another obstacle to deal with in an already complex life. As a result, they often stayed home and supported each other through something they did

not yet understand. Interestingly, both married people who were not dark-skinned and had children with lighter skin tones and better hair texture than themselves.

These responses support the research of Khanna (2010) which highlighted the fact that racial identity development does not occur in a vacuum and for many Black/White adults in the South, the one drop rule still holds true, as having any Black phenotype characteristics rules out a White identity, but having White phenotype characteristics does not preclude a Black identity (p. 115). They also suggest that constantly being told you ain't enough of one thing or being asked "what are you" can affect your daily mental health. Sanchez, Shih and Garcia (2009) stated that while having a malleable racial identity does allow a person to feel closer to one racial identity or another depending on the social context (p.3), it can also have a detrimental affect on psychological health. From their study, they found "compelling preliminary evidence that greater malleable identification is associated with poorer psychological health, and that this relationship is stronger among those who have low dialectial self-views" (p.23). Since multiracial individuals face the unique challenge of both having and navigating multiple racial identities, it is important that we understand what these identities (both self-chosen and imposed) means to the well-being of those individuals.

Go Back Inside Your Box

The final theme that arose from the interviews was that people often want to force bi/multiracial respondents to choose a race. While we have a growing multiracial population, many in society still want them to check only one box in their day-to-day lives. Respondents clearly indicated that others in society were not accepting of their

bi/multiracial identities and more times than not tried to restrict their racial identification to one primary race. Janice, a 38-year old Black/Jewish White female supported this theme when stating, "ambiguity is not always accepted in society and as such people try to force me to pick one or the other to identify as and they get mad if I don't. My racial composition not really anybody's business, but the fact that they want me to just forget a part of me is throwing us back to the Jim Crow era." Terry stated, "My skin tone tells people that I should be Black and when I say I am half Black and half White, they tend to say, yeah but you look Black so just be Black man, as if that erases my Whiteness." Barbara followed with, "I know who I am, but I feel I constantly have to reiterate that to others who want me to be just Black or just Filipino. They want to force me to be less of a person so I can fit in their box. I have a problem with this." This theme suggests that Okizaki (2003) was correct when he states "those who genuinely view themselves as biracial or multiracial are not permitted to 'race' themselves as such. Social and legal constraints do not allow acceptance of multiraciality" (p. 127).

Again, others seek to force (impose) an identity upon respondents whether they accept that identity or not. If not racial, then phenotypically imposed identity appears to be a reality in the lives of respondents to this survey/interview instrument.

Summary

This chapter discussed the eight main themes that arose from the interview aspect of the data collection process. First, multiracial identity development begins at home, but is also influenced by how others treat them based on their phenotype characteristics. Second, race is not an issue that only multiracial adults deal with, but rather racial

identity questions started at an early age and, for many respondents, questions regarding race can get very old very quick. Third, responds note the ability to blend in/be chameleon like in certain situations. Fourth, imposed identity is a lived reality for multiracial individuals in America. Fifth, being multiracial is not always the 'best of both worlds' as society would like us to believe, but rather can often lead to discrimination. Sixth, multiracial respondents in the interview section noted that they often reach out to other mixed race or minorities as they can relate to their plight in society. Finally, skin tone is a major issue in America, despite claims of a post-race society. The themes that emerged from the qualitative and interview data highlight the fact that imposed identity is not just a concept but is a reality in the lives of many people. The next chapter provides an overview of the study, the findings and points out implications for researchers and others seeking to understand this fascinating topic at this pivotal point in America's history.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this study were to pilot an exploratory survey and to utilize the resulting data to analyze the influences on bi/multiracial racial identity development, the influence of the perception of race on social interactions (imposed identity), and racial identification from the perspective of multi-racial individuals. As such, it contributes to the literature about multiracial individuals and sets the framework from which future studies of this population may be undertaken.

Data were gathered using a newly developed instrument that was literature based and piloted with five multiracial individuals with different backgrounds and experiences. Changes were made to the instrument to help ensure clarity and validity. Following word of mouth and online solicitation, a total of 211 individuals responded to the survey and/or interview. Forty-five people agreed to sit for interviews that lasted as short as 30 minutes and as long as two hours. In addition, one hundred fifty-four people (n = 154) completed the entire survey for a completion rate of 73.0%. However, this completion rate may be higher because the design of the survey allowed respondents to skip questions that did not apply to them. Demographic data indicated that the majority of respondents were female (82.5%), between the ages of 26-30 (23.1%), and the majority were at least college educated. Data also indicated that most of the respondents currently reside in the southern portion of the United States.

Racial demographic data indicated that majority of respondents were Black/White (n=78; 37.0%) followed by Black/Some other race (n=14; 7.5%), Other/Other (n=13; 7.0%) and White/Other (n=12; 6.4%). A more complete look at the total breakdown of the racial combinations of respondents can be seen on Table 6 which shows the possible versus actual selection of race using the 2010 Census (possible) answers. Results of the 2010 Census show that there were 57 racial combinations allowed, "but of the population that chose more than one race, most chose one of the four most common combinations: 20.4 percent marked Black and white; 19.3 percent chose white and "some other race." The third most common pairing was Asian and white, followed by American Indian and white. These four combinations account for three-fourths of the total mixed race population" (Saulny, 2011). Although there was at least one respondent from each of these groups, the rank order was slightly different. For an exploratory study with only an 8-week window of data collection, these numbers greatly exceeded my expectations for all racial groupings involved.

The current study built upon current individual theories of behavior and the literature on race by combining aspects of all into a singular research effort. I proposed to utilize a multidimensional approach to further the understanding of what I conceptualized as *imposed identity* and how it affects multiracial individuals across their lifetime, most specifically when making decisions about their life choices. This study further sought to identify whether or not the perception of identity influences interactions with bi/multiracial persons. The findings support the theoretical framework used in this study and indicate imposed identity is a real phenomenon in American

society today in regards to bi/multiracial persons. It also contributes the existing

literature on multiracial identity development as it presents findings relative to the lived

experiences of bi/multiracial respondents.

This dissertation started with six overarching research questions

1) What influences the development of racial identity for multiracial individuals

   (i.e., family, media etc.)?

2) Do multiracial individuals experience the imposition of race from other members

   of society?

3) Do multiracial individuals consistently identify as mixed race people or does

   identification change as the result of environmental factors?

4) As members of blended racial backgrounds, do multiracial individuals believe

   they live in a color-blind society?

5) Do multiracial individuals believe it is okay to deny part of their multiracial

   heritage/identity in certain situations?

6) Do multiracial individuals participate in shifting to fit more comfortably into one

   particular racial category or another?

As a result of the literature relevant to biracial individuals, I expected I would

find that multiracial individuals experience identity development as a result of familial

interactions, primarily through socialization with the mother's family of origin. Because

many multiracial individuals do not present as white, I would also expect to find that

they have been the victims of imposed identity and, as a result, would not agree that we live in a colorblind society. As a result of imposed identity, I also expected that respondents had participated in the process of shifting through changes in physical characteristics and/or with regard to how they self-identify in certain situations. Because we do not live in a colorblind society, I also expected to find that many respondents would admit that it would be okay to either deny or downplay their multiracial heritage in certain situations.

The findings of this dissertation support the expected findings, especially when concerned with the reality of imposed identity being alive and well in society today. Multiracial Americans may be the population which is bridging the gap between the races (in theory), but this comes with its own set of problems, mainly—where do said individuals fit in the racial hierarchy that is in place today.

Imposed Identity

Imposed identity, earlier defined as the persona that is assigned to mixed race individuals based on a monoracial scale using appearance as its main cue, is not just an abstract concept but rather appears to be a lived reality for bi/multiracial individuals regardless of their racial makeup. While bi/multiracial individuals are now allowed to check more than one racial category on the US Census and other federal forms, this does not translate to the lived reality as experienced by respondents to this exploratory study. Respondents noted that people treated them according to what they perceived their race to be. Depending on their perceived race, they were either denied things/opportunities, or given things and/or opportunities such as jobs, preferential treatment etc. Respondents

were often told they look like a certain race based on certain physical characteristics (mainly skin tone and/or hair texture) and treated accordingly.

When looking back at the question, "Do you believe that people either provide things or make things accessible to you based on what they see as your race?", 104 (64.2%) of 162 who responded indicated "Yes", while 58 (35.8%) responded "No". At the same time, when asked, "Do you believe that people either don't provide things or make things accessible to you based on what they see as your race?", 85 (53.1%) of the 160 respondents answered this question by stating "Yes", they believe they have been denied something/been mistreated, and 75 (46.9%) respondents stated they "No", they did not believe that people either did not provide things or make things accessible based on what their race was perceived to be. It seems that these phenotypes do play into treatment in society and multiracial people are assigned a racial category and treated accordingly. These data support the conceptual idea of imposed identity at work in America.

From the qualitative data, eight main themes emerged that tie into the lived reality of imposed identity. First, as expected, learning about race and their multiracial backgrounds started at home, with most respondents indicating their mothers were responsible for imparting information. Second, life lessons about being different racially began when respondents were children and others pointed out that they were not of one race or another, they were different. Even as children, these respondents would modify their answers as a result of being tired of being asked, depending on the situation, and/or why they believed others needed to know. These patterns would be repeated as adults.

The third theme was identified as Private Identity and Public Survival and addressed the need to blend in, in order to be accepted or survive in certain settings. Repeatedly, respondents would indicate that they would move between racial classifications depending on the need at the time. Many used the word chameleon to describe their efforts to belong, but referred back to feelings associated with having done so because it meant denying their entire being to satisfy others based on one racial classification. Closely tied to this need for survival was the fourth theme, which indicated that, at least for these respondents, people often assume to know respondents' race. This was complicated by the fact that people would often approach them out of nowhere, state a race/background, and whether they were right or wrong didn't hesitate to impose their beliefs about identity on the respondents. Interestingly, the stories shared by respondents indicated this happened frequently.

The phrase "having the best of both worlds" was used by some respondents to describe what others thought of their multiracial backgrounds and experiences. However, despite what some may believe about multiracial people, their dual identity does not ensure a singular, accepted reality. In fact, the opposite was true for most of the respondents. Thus, the fifth theme identified as titled Dual Identity: Dueling Realities. Interestingly, respondents often used their understanding of the difficulty of being multiracial as a springboard to helping others who were faced with similar challenges. Thus, the sixth theme that emerged was that of Understanding Leads to Giving: It Takes a Village. What surfaced more during the interviews was that respondents not only helped multiracial people by reaching back, supporting, and giving, they also helped

other minorities, indicating a true desire to help remove barriers to success imposed by real or perceived racial discrimination.

Absence of a place to be was brought up by many respondents during interviews, and resulted in the identification of Exclusion/Exclusion as the seventh theme. Respondents' stories indicated that people who shared Black ancestors/parents in terms of their racial identity were often told they were not Black enough and thus they were ostracized from that group. This did not matter if the respondent was Black/White, Black/Asian, or Black/any other race. Further, though they were not Black enough for the Black side of their heritage, they were also not reflective enough of their other side to safely and permanently fit as a member. This created something of a void in terms of belonging to one group or another. Interestingly, some respondents indicated that they experienced these barriers to belonging in their childhood and were still experiencing them as adults. Their stories of intra-racial prejudices support the concept of imposed identity, but point out that White people are not the only ones guilty of this practice. While there is information available on the effects of discrimination/rejection by Whites, to further complicate the situation, there is no indication of what, if any, emotional damage has been done as a result of being rejected by members of one's own races.

The eighth and final theme that emerged is that of limited choice and is titled Go Back Inside Your Box. According to respondents, even in the 21st Century where we have a growing multiracial population, people still want to force bi/multiracial individuals to figuratively check one box in their day-to-day lives. Though the US Census may indicate otherwise, other government forms and individuals are often not as

open to the bi/multiracial identity of others. As such, respondents indicated they were often forced into one racial category or another. Many of the survey respondents have often been denied something or mistreated because someone thought they were of a particular race. Further, this occurred whether the racial assumption was correct or not. For example, in Naomi's case, White banking customers who loved her on the phone would often refuse to interact with her once they saw her face to face. Several were as bold as to verbalize those feelings when stating "Oh, by the way you sounded on the phone, I thought you were White. Is there someone else who can help me?" a statement that haunts her even 20 years later. Yet another didn't want her helping with their finances, but offered her a job as a housekeeper when she was already an Assistant Manager at their financial institution.

Naomi's example supports statements of other respondents who reported that others tend to utilize a monoracial scale that does not recognize multiracial existences when making determinations about interactions. Regardless of the racial composition, if respondents presented as brown or Black (non-White colored skin), they were then treated accordingly. Findings from this story indicate we have not moved past race but, rather, are now using skin tone and phenotypes to place people on the racial ladder that still exists in America today. As noted in the literature, Whites are at the top of this ladder and people of color are at the bottom. The only difference between the historical America of yesteryear and now is that we are more visually aware of the increases in and shades of added ladder rungs. Sadly, is appears we have not done much to eliminate the ladder itself.

Strengths of the Current Study

       While the topic of multiracial development is not a recent area of interest, this study addresses an untapped area of the bi/multiracial reality, the imposition of identity by others. This study is the first to address this conceptual idea in regards to bi/multiracial individuals and, as such, provides the foundation from which other studies of this kind could be attempted. In addition, qualitative responses provided by respondents of this study contribute new information to the multiracial identity development literature, specifically in regards to the area of imposed identity.

       Additional strengths of the current study include the reliance upon literature from a variety of disciplines for the purposes of designing the survey and the use of a diverse group of bi/multiracial individuals whose participation serves to heighten the content validity[3] of the final instrument. Based on feedback from this initial group, the survey instrument also appears to contain a high level of face validity[4]. The presence of face validity serves as a strength because respondents were more likely to answer questions that reflected what they thought the instrument was trying to measure. The use of the literature and feedback from a pilot group of bi/multiracial individuals to develop the Multiracial Realities: Development, Identification, and Change Survey Instrument contributed heavily to the face validity of this tool.

       The use of convenience and snowball sampling to obtain the study sample serve as strengths of this study because it allowed data to be collected from respondents in

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[3] Content Validity "is when a measure covers the range of meanings of a concept." Ritzer, G. and Ryan, J. 2011. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Pg. 674. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. Edition 1.

[4] Face validity "is when "at face" a measure appears logical. Ibid. p. 674.

different parts of the country, and of various socio-economic statuses, ages and genders. Further, the use of a reminder email and web posting helped to ensure a higher response rate than might have occurred without the use of such a reminder. The administration of this survey ensured anonymity and, as such, respondents were free from the threat of harm at all phases of this study. Finally, respondents were free to complete the survey at their convenience, thereby minimizing any possible distractions that might have occurred under other circumstances. Respondents were not forced to complete the survey in one sitting.

During this process, steps were taken to ensure the development of a literature based instrument, face and content validity, and a high response rate. Measures were also taken to protect the data from errors. For example, the primary researcher was in control of all the data from the time the survey opened on surveymonkey.com all the way through the data analysis process. Control of this nature helped to ensure anonymity of survey and interview respondents as well as reduce errors that can occur with multiple people entering and analyzing data. Finally once all data was entered, interview data was rechecked to help ensure the accuracy of the data entry process.

Though the research and survey instrument has several known strengths associated with its design and implementation process, there are also several weaknesses, which serve as limitations to the study.

Limitations of the Study

While efforts were made to control for data entry and analyses once surveys were completed and interview data was analyzed, the exploratory nature of this study did

contribute to limitations both procedurally and structurally. For example, a procedural limitation involved the use of limiting answer options on certain questions in the survey instrument. For example, as noted in the qualitative data, respondents said that both their parents taught them about their racial makeup. On the survey, when not completed in interview format, respondents were forced to pick their mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, or other. They were not allowed to check more than one. Another limitation was the fact (which again was highlighted by interviewees) that there was no light brown skin tone option in the physical self-description section of the survey.

External validity "is the degree to which the conclusions in your study would hold for other persons in other places and at other times" (Trochim, 2010). Though the convenience and snowball sampling served as strengths, they also have limitations as the data are not generalizable (externally valid) across the entire of bi/multiracial persons. While there were respondents from more than thirty different racial combinations who answered the survey instrument/interview, this is a limitation, which again leads to the chance that the answers are not generalizable on a large scale. In addition, because there is no way to know how many potential respondents did not receive or answer the survey, there is no way to know whether or not the response rate is acceptable for a study of this nature.

Another limitation worth noting is that, while respondents are sharing their history, their responses may be skewed because they are looking at earlier experiences through more mature eyes.

Conclusion

These findings have implications for current day race relations that for many people discriminatory practices are a part of every day life in American society. First, these findings highlight the important fact that there is not one set multiracial experience for all multiracial individuals. These findings also show that even as the multiracial population is growing in the United States, there are still some who are working on a monoracial scale and treating people accordingly. Race (and as such racism) is still firmly entrenched in American society. The growing multiracial population does not appear to be a bridge between the races, but rather appears to be just becoming part of the racial ladder. The lighter the skin tone, the more likely one is to gain privileges (i.e. White, bi or multiracial persons) and the darker the skin tone, the more likely one is to experience discriminatory acts and questions about racial identity.

Though this was an exploratory study, it serves as a foundation from which other studies of this kind could be completed. Future studies should seek to achieve a higher response rate, both overall and in individual racial mixtures. This would allow for more generalizability across the multiracial population of the United States. Imposed identity appears to be a reality that, much like race, is not going anywhere anytime soon.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Multi-racial Realities: Development, Identification, and Change

Greetings,

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Nichole Boutté-Heiniluoma, a doctoral candidate in the sociology department at Texas A&M University. This research is titled Multiracial Realities: Development, Identification, and Change. The purpose of this project is to examine multiracial individuals' racial identity development in the United States. You were selected to be a possible participant because you identify as a biracial or multiracial individual.

Data are being collected anonymously through Survey Monkey and the following link provides direct access: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JSBML7C

Should you choose to participate, your participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate, answer any question, or withdraw at any time. There are no penalties for withdrawal and no direct benefits for participation in this study. It is anticipated that survey completion will take approximately 25-30 minutes of your time. The data collection period is expected to take six weeks. Potential respondents will be sent a reminder approximately 3-weeks after the initial email and another one week prior to the end of the survey.

The risks associated with this study are minimal and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. Though you will not directly benefit from

participation, your participation may help investigators better understand the reality of what it means to be a multiracial individual in the United States. It is expected that the results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at professional conferences. Because the responses are anonymous, no individual subject will be identified at any point in the future.

Information about you will be help confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. Your completion of the survey instrument is considered indication of your informed consent.

If you know of other multiracial individuals who might be interested in completing this survey, please feel free to forward the link to them directly.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JSBML7C

If you have any questions regarding the study, you may contact Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma at nikky04@neo.tamu.edu.

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask one of the researcher(s) listed above.

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 these offices at (979)458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma
Primary Investigator

Texas A&M University
Department of Sociology
Nikky04@neo.tamu.edu

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Multi-racial Realities: Development, Identification, and Change

Thank you for choosing to participate in this study of multi-racial individuals that focuses on various aspects of identity development and association of persons with more than one racial heritage. I hope to learn more about how multi-racial individuals identify with race and experience their racial heritage in American society.

Your willingness to participate in this study is highly appreciated. Participation is completely voluntary; you may choose not to respond to this survey, skip any question, or discontinue the survey at any time. It is anticipated that the results of this survey will be used to inform sociologists and other researchers about this topic *from the perspective of those who are not from one racial background*. Results will be disseminated though presentations at professional conferences and publication in professional journals.

In order to ensure anonymity of all survey respondents, please do not write your name or any identifying marks on the survey instrument. If you would like to take part in this survey using SKYPE or another face-to-face method, please contact the researcher directly at nikky04@neo.tamu.edu. *Thank you again for your participation!*

PART I: PHYSICAL SELF-DESCRIPTION
Part I of this survey is designed to allow respondents the opportunity to describe their own physical characteristics and that which they believe most associates them with one particular race.

1. How do you describe the color of your skin?
   - ☐ Black
   - ☐ Dark Brown
   - ☐ Medium Brown
   - ☐ Olive
   - ☐ Yellow
   - ☐ White

2. What is natural color of your eyes?
   - ☐ Blue
   - ☐ Green
   - ☐ Brown
   - ☐ Hazel
   - ☐ Grey

3. What physical characteristic do you believe ***most associates*** you with one race or another?
   - ☐ Skin color
   - ☐ Eye color
   - ☐ Facial structure (i.e., cheekbones)
   - ☐ Shape of eyes
   - ☐ Lips
   - ☐ Hair texture
   - ☐ Nose size
   - ☐ Derriere (behind)

PART II: EARLY RACIAL DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS

Part II of this survey is designed to *solicit your opinion regarding the person who most influenced your definitions of race and information about your childhood experiences with race.* For questions 1-4, please provide your responses using the scale provided.

Scale: M = Mother; F = Father; GM = Grandmother; GF = Grandfather; O = Other

Statement	Opinion: Level of Agreement

I believe that this person had the *most influence* on

4. How I define race.......……………………………..... M F GM GF O

5. The race with which I identify primarily………………… M F GM GF O

6. The neighborhoods where I lived between birth-18 yrs..... M F GM GF O

7. The schools I attended between birth – 18 years of age…. M F GM GF O

8. What race does your birth certificate indicate?

   - ☐ Black
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Hispanic
   - ☐ Asian
   - ☐ Other (please identify): _____

9. As a child/adolescent, were you been ***asked by strangers*** "what are you?" ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. As a child, have you been asked by *people you know*, "What are you?" ☐ Yes   ☐ No

11. As a child, did you ever get tired of people asking "what are you?" ☐Yes   ☐ No

12. Did your answer ever change because you were tired of people asking "what are you?"
☐Yes   ☐ No

13. To the best of your recollection, as a child did you identify with one race more than another? ☐ Yes   ☐ No (please skip to question #_____)

14. As a child, if you identified with one race more than another, on what did it depend? (please select all that apply)
☐ Who was asking (i.e., friends, teachers, family members)
☐ What was at stake (i.e., potential benefit or possible punishment or negative reaction)
☐ What you felt like at the time
☐ Why you thought the other person/people needed to know
☐ All of the above
☐ None of the above

15. When you think of your childhood friends, were the majority of your friends

☐ Black   ☐ Bi-racial   ☐ Other (please
☐White   identify): _____
☐ Hispanic
☐ Multi-racial   ☐ Asian   _____

16. What do you believe is the *primary reason* your friends were of this racial composition?
☐ my school was comprised primarily of students of this race
☐ my neighborhood was comprised primarily of this race
☐ my parents (family) would not allow me to play with children of other races
☐ I was allowed to play with children of all other races
☐ None of the above

17. To the best of your recall, do you believe race was a major factor in America during your childhood/adolescence? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

18. What do you believe *most shaped* your racial identity?
☐ Family
☐ Race related events occurring at the time of your childhood/adolescence

□ How others treated you based on certain parts of your physical characteristics
□ Media depictions of race

Part III: RESPONDENTS' CURRENT RACIAL IDENTIFICATION

Part III of this survey is designed to identify how multi-racial respondents identify racially.

19. Using the choices from the 2010 US Census, what do you consider to be your two *primary races*? (please check <u>only two</u>)

□ White   □ Japanese   □ Samoan
□ Black, African   □ Korean   □ Other Asian
Am. Or Negro   □ Guamanian or   □ Some Other
□ American Indian   Chamorro   Race
or Alaska Native   □ Filipino
□ Asian Indian   □ Vietnamese

20. As a multi-racial adult, do you/have you identify(ied) with one primary race?
□ Yes   □ No (If No, please skip to question #____)

21. If yes, with what *primary race* do you identify?

□ African-American   □ Native American
□ Asian   □ Puerto Rican
□ Caucasian   □ Other (please indicate:
□ Hispanic   _____)
□ Latino

22. *When completing the 2010 US Census*, how did you identify?
□ White   □ Filipino
□ Black, African Am. Or Negro   □ Vietnamese
□ American Indian or Alaska Native   □ Samoan
□ Asian Indian   □ Other Asian
□ Japanese   □ Some Other Race
□ Korean   □ I was not 18 at the time of the 2010
□ Guamanian or Chamorro   Census

23. As an adult, if you do or have identified with one race more than another, on what did/does it depend? (please select all that apply)

□ Who was asking (i.e., friends, teachers, family members)
□ What was at stake (i.e., potential benefit or possible punishment or negative reaction)
□ What you felt like at the time

☐ Why you thought the other person/people needed to know
☐ All of the above
☐ None of the above

24. As an adult, do you identify racially with one side of your family more than the other?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No (if no, please skip to question 26)

25. If yes, on what did/does it most depend?
    ☐ Who was present (i.e., parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins)
    ☐ Because I look more like them
    ☐ What you felt like at the time
    ☐ They are my primary family contacts
    ☐ I feel most embraced by this part of my family
    ☐All of the above
    ☐ None of the above

26. As an adult, have you been asked *by strangers* "What are you?" ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    Please give one example: _____

    _____

27. As an adult, have you been asked by *people you know*, "What are you?" ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    Please give one example: _____

    _____

28. As an adult, do you ever get tired of people asking "What are you?" ☐Yes ☐ No

    Please give one example: _____

    _____

29. As an adult, do you believe people have a *right* to ask you "What are you?"
    ☐Yes   ☐ No – my racial composition is my business   ☐ It depends on the situation

30. As an adult, have people ever told you that you look like one particular race or another?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No (if no, please skip to question #_____)

31. If someone ever told you that you looked like one race or another, did you agree with
    them? ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

32. If someone ever told you that you looked like one race or another, what race(s) were you told you look like?

☐African-American   ☐Asian   ☐Caucasian ☐Hispanic
☐Latino   ☐ Native American ☐ Puerto Rican   ☐ Other (please indicate: _____)

33. Is/Are these races even part of your racial composition?
☐Yes   ☐ No   ☐ At least one was correct but others were not

34. Does it offend you that people label you based on what you look like to them?
☐ Only when it costs me something (i.e., access, information, opportunity etc.)
☐Yes - all of the time
☐It used to, but it does not offend me anymore.
☐ No – not at all

35. When you think of your 'inner circle' as an adult, are the majority of your close friends

☐ Black   ☐Bi-racial
☐White
☐ Hispanic   ☐ Asian
☐ Multi-racial   ☐ Other (_____)

36. Have you ever been denied something/been mistreated because someone 'thought' you were of a particular race? ☐ Yes   ☐ No (If No, please skip to question # _____)

37. If you have ever been denied something/been mistreated because someone 'thought' you were of a particular race, ***what race did they think you were?***
☐ Black   ☐ Multi-racial   ☐ Asian
☐White   ☐ Bi-racial   ☐ Other
☐ Hispanic   (_____)
Please give one example: _____
_____

38. If you have ever been denied something/been mistreated because someone 'thought' you were of a particular race, ***did you correct the person at that time***? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If No, please skip to question # _____)

39. If you *did* correct the person, what do you believe is the ***primary reason*** you did so?
    - ☐ It was important that they were aware of their actions and how they impacted someone
    - ☐ I wanted what they had to offer bad enough to let them know they were wrong
    - ☐ I simply wanted them to know they were wrong
    - ☐ Other: _____

40. If you corrected the person, did you get what you wanted if the person had not mistaken you for the other race?　　　☐ Yes (Please skip to question # _____)　　☐ No

41. If you did not correct the person, what do you believe is the ***primary reason*** you did not do so?
    - ☐ Did not want to cause a scene
    - ☐ Did not think it was important
    - ☐ Did not think the benefit was worth the hassle
    - ☐ Did not care what they thought

42. Do you believe that people either ***provide things or make things accessible to you based on what they see*** as your race?　☐ Yes　　　　☐ No

    If yes, please give one example: _____
    _____
    _____

43. Do you believe that people either ***don't provide things or make them accessible to you based on what they see*** as your race?　☐ Yes　　　☐ No

    If yes, please give one example: _____
    _____
    _____

44. In your honest opinion, do you believe that we live in a 'colorblind' society where race does not matter?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No
    - ☐ It depends on what race you are
    - ☐ It depends on what race other people perceive you to be

Please provide an example to support your answer:

_____
_____
_____

45. Have you ever denied someone something based on what you thought their race was?

☐ Yes   ☐ No
If yes, please give one example: _____

_____
_____

46. Have you ever given someone something (or made it accessible to them) based on what *you thought* their race was? ☐Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please give one example: _____

_____
_____

47. Have your views of race changed since you were a child? ☐ Yes   ☐ No
If yes, why? _____

_____
_____

48. Over the course of your life, have you ever changed your public identification with one race or another based on a situation or event?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
If yes, please give one example: _____

_____
_____

PART IV:

This part of the survey is designed to elicit responses regarding association and race in America. Please identify ***how strongly you agree*** with the following statements based on the scale provided. *(For example: I strongly agree that it is okay to identify as one primary race when selecting neighborhoods where I want to live)*

Scale:
SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

Statement   Opinion: Level of Agreement

As a multi-racial person, I _____ it is okay to identify as one primary race when:

49. Completing US Census forms…………………………. SA   A   D   SD

50. Completing scholarship applications…………………….......SA   A   D   SD

51. Completing job applications…………………………… SA   A   D   SD

52. Dating…………………………..……………….SA   A   D   SD

53. Making new friends as a child/adolescent……………….….. SA   A   D   SD

54. Making new friends as an adult……..………………..……..…..SA   A   D   SD

55. Completing loan applications………………………… SA   A   D   SD

56. Completing college applications………………………….......SA   A   D   SD

57. There is a benefit that I might not get otherwise……….….. ..SA   A   D   SD

PART V: RACIAL CUES

This part of the survey is designed to elicit responses regarding racial cues in America. Please identify *how strongly you agree* the following racial cues are used in America based on the scale provided. *(For example: I strongly agree that foot size is used as a racial cue by people in America today)*

      Scale:
      SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

Racial Cue   Opinion: Level of Agreement

I _____ that _____ is used as a racial cue by people in America today:

58. Skin color……………………..………………….......SA   A   D   SD

59. Nose size……………………………………………. SA   A   D   SD

60. Eye color…………………………………………… SA   A   D   SD

61. Eye shape…………………………………………... SA   A   D   SD

62. Hair texture…………………………………………. SA   A   D   SD

63. Hair length…………………………………………. SA   A   D   SD

64. Lip fullness…………………………………………. SA   A   D   SD

65. Cheek structure……………………………………….. SA A D SD

66. Size of a person's behind……………………………... SA A D SD

67. Clothing styles…………………………………………SA A D SD

PART VI: RESPONDENT RACIAL CUE CHANGES
This part of the survey is designed to identify the racial cues respondents have changed or tried to change. Have you ever changed any of the following so that you look more or less like a certain race?

Racial Cue   Response

68. Skin color (through tanning/toning/bleaching)…………………..........Yes No

69. Nose size (though surgery, tape etc.)…………………………………..Yes No

70. Eye color (through contact lenses) …..…………………………..Yes No

71. Eye shape (through tape)……………………………………....Yes No

72. Hair texture (through perms, relaxers, blowouts)…………………... Yes No

73. Hair length (through perms, relaxers, blowouts, extensions)………. Yes No

74. Lip fullness (through shots, applications, choice of lipstick etc.)..… Yes No

75. Cheek structure (through surgery)………………………………….. Yes No

76. Size of behind (though surgery, choice of undergarments etc.)……..Yes No

77. Clothing styles……………………………………………………….Yes No

Thank you for completing the survey to this point. Please take a few more moments and complete the demographic question section that follows:

PART VII: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS
The final part of this survey is designed to allow the researcher to make comparisons across groups based on demographic data. Please provide your responses to the following:

78. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender

79. Were you adopted? ☐Yes   ☐ No (If No, please skip to question # _____)

80. If you were adopted, did you resemble at least one parent in terms of race? ☐Yes   ☐ No

81. Did this parent influence your racial identity during your childhood/adolescence?
    ☐Yes   ☐ No

82. Please indicate the age range within which you fall:

   ☐ 18-21   ☐ 31-35   ☐ 46-50
   ☐ 22-25   ☐ 36-40   ☐ Over 50 years of
   ☐ 26-30   ☐ 41-45   age

83. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

   ☐ High School Diploma   ☐ Some graduate level hours
   ☐ Some College   ☐ Graduate Degree
   ☐ College Degree   ☐ Post Graduate Education

84. In what part of the country do you live?

   ☐ Southern   ☐ Eastern   ☐ Northern
   ☐ Mid-Western   ☐ Western   ☐ South-Eastern
   ☐ Other

85. Please indicate the primary race of your *biological mother*:
   ☐ African-American   ☐ Native American
   ☐ Asian   ☐ Puerto Rican
   ☐ Caucasian   ☐ Unknown
   ☐ Hispanic   Other (please indicate:
   ☐ Latino   _____)

86. Please indicate the primary race of your *biological father*:
   ☐ African-American   ☐ Native American
   ☐ Asian   ☐ Puerto Rican
   ☐ Caucasian   ☐ Unknown
   ☐ Hispanic   Other (please indicate:
   ☐ Latino   _____)

87. Did your parents live together during any of the following periods of your life?

☐ Birth – 5 years   ☐ 15 - 18 years   ☐ No, they did not
☐ 6-10 years   ☐ All of the years
☐ 11 – 14 years   listed

88. Looking back on when you were growing up, how would you define your family's socio - economic status?
☐ We were poor   ☐ We were not poor, but were not wealthy
☐ We were wealthy

89. Compared to when you were growing up, do you define your current socio-economic status as: ☐ Better   ☐ Worse   ☐ The same

90. What is your yearly household income?
☐ Less than $20,000   ☐ $20,001 - $35,000
☐ $35,001 – $50,000   ☐ $50,001 - $65,000
☐ $65,001 - $80,000   ☐ $80,001 – $95,000
☐ Over $95,001

91. Are you currently married? ☐ Yes   ☐ No (please skip to question # ___)

92. Is your spouse multi-racial? ☐ Yes (please skip to question #____)   ☐ No

93. Please indicate your *spouse's race*:
☐   African-American   ☐ Asian   ☐ Caucasian
☐   Hispanic   ☐ Latino   ☐ Native American
☐   Puerto Rican   ☐ Unknown ☐ Other (please indicate: _____)

94. If your spouse is multi-racial, is their racial composition the same as yours?
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Not applicable, my spouse is not multi-racial

95. Do you have children? ☐ Yes   ☐ No (If no, thank you. You have completed the survey)

96. Would you like for your children to identify as being multi-racial? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

97. Do you believe it would be important for your children to identify as being multi-racial?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

98. Do you believe that your child(ren) identify with one part of their racial heritage more than another?   ☐ Yes ☐ No (please skip to question # ___)

99. If you believe that your child(ren) identify with one part of their racial heritage more than another, what do you believe is the *primary reason they do so?*
   ☐ Their school is comprised primarily of students of this race
   ☐ Our neighborhood is comprised primarily of this race
   ☐ They look like this particular part of their racial heritage
   ☐ Most of their immediate family members look like this part of their racial heritage
   ☐ None of the above

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this important survey. I appreciate your honesty and value your input.

If you know of any other multi-racial individuals who may be interested in completing this survey, please feel free to forward them the link directly.

VITA

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