Multiracial social identities and self-esteem: How physical appearance and heritage affect the categorization self and others

Estrella Aurora Ramirez

University of Nebraska at Omaha

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MULTIRACIAL SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND SELF-ESTEEM: HOW PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND HERITAGE AFFECT THE CATEGORIZATION OF SELF AND OTHERS

A Thesis Presented to the Department of Psychology

And the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

By

Estrella Aurora Ramirez

July 1999
THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Social & Personality Psychology, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Raymond Millimet who has been a great mentor from the very beginning. Your continual encouragement and guidance made my hopes for this project a reality. I am also deeply indebted to the members of my thesis committee: Dr. Wayne Harrison, Dr. Jeanette Seaberry, and Dr. Lisa Kelly-Vance. Your assistance and cooperation were instrumental. In addition to my committee I would like to thank Dr. Julien Lafontant for allowing me access to his students to collect data. His generosity is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank my beloved husband, Mike. By example, you have shown me the value of personal drive and challenged me to achieve my goals.

Finally, I must thank my parents for instilling in me the confidence to investigate sensitive and personally meaningful topics. They continually inspire me to strive for a better self and taught me the value of hard work, integrity, and honesty.
# Table of Contents

Abstract 1

Introduction and literature review 3

Social identity theory 3

Racial and ethnic identity 6

Erikson identity theory and ethnic identity theory 7

Racial identity 9

Special concerns for investigating the multiracial population 10

The multiracial population 11

Demographic information 11

Multiracial identity models 12

Assessing racial identity: self labels 18

Literature on the multiracial population 19

Literature on multiracial identity 22

Multidimensional approach to racial/ethnic identity 25

The role of the group social structure 25

Role of physical appearance 29

The inevitable question 30

Statement of Purpose 32

Method 36

Participants 36

Recruitment of participants 36

Criteria for inclusion into the three samples 37
Table of Contents (continued)

Descriptive statistics. 38
  Full sample . 38
  Multiracial sample . 40
  Monoracial samples . 40

Measures 43
  Demographic questionnaire 43
  Physical resemblance scale 43
  Social decisions questionnaire 44
  Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory-Adult Form 45

Procedure 45
  Preliminary data 46
  Procedural notation . 46

Results 47
  Correlation coefficients 47
  Regression Analyses 47
    Hypothesis 1 . 47
    Hypothesis 2 . 50
  Chi-Squared Analysis 53
    Hypothesis 3 . 53
    Hypothesis 4 . 54
    Hypothesis 5 . 55
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 6</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlational Analysis</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 7</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of Findings</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Limitations</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Future Research</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Physical Resemblance Questionnaire</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Social Decisions Questionnaire</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory- Adult Form</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Informed Consent Form</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of multiracial identity models 13
Table 2: Descriptive statistics for all samples 39
Table 3: Racial/ethnic heritage of the multiracial sample 41
Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the multiracial sample 42
Table 5: Correlations for variables- full data set 48
Table 6: Correlations for variables- each sample 49
Table 7: SEI and physical resemblance scores for all samples 51
Table 8: Regression analysis for self-esteem predicted by multiracial 52 or monoracial-minority heritage
Table 9: Regression analysis for self-esteem predicted by interracial 52 or monoracial self-label
Table 10: Heritage of multiracial participants and racial self labels 54
Table 11: Physical appearance of multiracial participants and racial 54 self-labels
Table 12: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on heritage- 56 full sample
Table 13: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on heritage- 56 multiracial sample
Table 14: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on heritage- 57 monoracial-minority sample
List of Tables (continued)

Table 15: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on heritage-
monoracial-majority sample 57

Table 16: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on physical
appearance- full sample 59

Table 17: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on physical
appearance- multiracial sample 59

Table 18: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on physical
appearance- monoracial-minority sample 60

Table 19: Protagonist’s racial categorization based on physical
appearance- monoracial-majority sample 60
Abstract

One's self-concept is comprised of both personal and social identities. This study will focus on the racial/ethnic component of social identity for the multiracial population: individuals with heritage from two or more different racial/ethnic groups. The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the racial identity process for multiracial individuals and how this process is impacted by the relative status of racial/ethnic groups that comprise one's heritage and the perceived physical appearance of an individual. Of central concern is how multiracial individuals racially self-label as well as how multiracial and monoracial individuals racially categorize other multiracial individuals. Secondly, self-esteem is investigated to challenge previous research supporting a pathological perception of the multiracial population. It is hypothesized that the self-esteem of multiracial individuals is similar to the self-esteem of other persons of color. Further, although most racial identity theory for multiracial individuals argue that embracing all cultures of one's heritage is the only adaptive resolution, it is predicted that self-esteem scores for multiracial individuals that embrace many cultures is similar to those who embrace only one.

One hundred and twenty-six participants were assigned to one of three samples depending on the self-reported heritage of each biological parent. The three samples were the multiracial sample, the monoracial sample of color, and the monoracial European American sample. All participants were asked to complete three questionnaires: a self-esteem inventory, a physical resemblance
scale, and a demographic measure. Finally, participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical vignette about a multiracial protagonist.

Overall, this study had several major findings. The self-esteem scores for multiracial participants were indistinguishable from the self-esteem scores for other monoracial persons of color. The self-esteem scores for multiracial individuals who identify with both sides of their heritage were indistinguishable from the self-esteem scores for multiracial participants who identify with solely one racial/ethnic group.

How participants racially categorized the multiracial protagonist from the hypothetical vignette was influenced by the specific heritage of the protagonist. When the protagonist’s heritage was comprised of racial/ethnic groups with socially discrepant status (African American/European American), participants were more likely to indicate that the protagonist should identify with one racial group, typically African American. However, when the multiracial protagonist’s heritage was comprised of groups of socially equivalent status, participants were more likely to indicate that the protagonist should identify with both sides of his/her heritage. Finally, findings revealed a strong relationship between how multiracial participants racially categorize self as well as how they racially categorize another multiracial individual.
Multiracial Social Identities and Self-Esteem: How Physical Appearance and Heritage Affect the Racial Categorization of Self and Others

This study investigates the social identities of multiracial individuals as it is impacted by the relative statuses of groups that comprise one's heritage as well as one's perceived physical appearance. To gain a stronger understanding of these relationships, a general overview of social identity theory will be presented and racial identity will be discussed. Research studies dealing with the multiracial population will be highlighted, and specific racial identity models for this population will be reviewed. Finally, the role of the racial social structure and perceived physical appearance on racial identity will be elucidated, and the present study will be introduced.

Social Identity Theory

One's self concept is comprised of two separate components: social identity and personal identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Social identity is defined as knowledge of belonging to specific social groups and the evaluative affect associated with membership (Tajfel, 1972). Of course, one can belong to numerous social groups. For instance, one can belong to specific groups along the following dimensions: gender, occupation, and race. Personal identity denotes specific characteristics of an individual such as being the son of X or the fan of a musical group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). How we think about ourselves reflects not just our personal characteristics but our social categories as well.
The specific context defines whether one's personal or social identity is more salient (Turner et al., 1994). Social identities tend to become more salient in intergroup contexts, and personal identity is more salient in intragroup contexts. Social identity theory focuses on the social component of one's self-concept. In the present study, social identity is made salient by asking participants to racially/ethnically classify themselves and a protagonist from a vignette.

Social identities are construed via a process of categorization. Categorization is a cognitive process that assigns people, including self, to contextually relevant categories in an attempt to reduce uncertainty. The process accentuates similarities between stimuli belonging to the same category and accentuates differences between stimuli belonging to different categories. The accentuation of differences between categories only occurs on correlated characteristics which define the feature of the group (Tajfel, 1959).

An important concept of social identity theory is its model of the psychology of social structure. Social identity theory is based on the assumption that society is composed of “social categories that stand in power and status relations to one another and often compete for resources (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 14).” Individuals are connected to this social structure through their selfdefinitions as members of various categories (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Relevant social categories include nationality, political affiliation, race, socioeconomic class, gender, and occupation. Importantly, the meaning of a social category is
dependent upon its ability to separate those that do and do not fit. For instance, the importance of the social category "black" stems from distinguishing who is from who is not black (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

The nature of the social categories and their relations to one another create a distinctive social structure (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Our society's social structure exists within a definite historical context, having descended from previous group conflicts (Omi & Winant, 1994). The resulting social structure imposes a dominant value system that is constructed to benefit the majority and perpetuate the status quo. Simply by virtue of characteristics such as language, skin color, or parentage, people are classified in some groups and not in others (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Membership into subordinate groups may infer a negative social identity, especially if mainstream values are internalized. To the extent that individuals internalize the dominant ideology and identify with these externally designated categories, particular social identities which may mediate positive or negative self-perceptions will be acquired (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). In sum, people derive their identity in great part from the social categories to which they belong. "The group is thus in the individual" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 18).

As a means to perpetuate the status quo, our society has rules of inclusion for racial categories. Some rules are explicit such as census categories, and more are implicit. Also, these categories are constantly in a state of flux. The racial categories used for the census have varied widely from decade to decade. In considering the categories applicable to Japanese
Americans, the appropriate “box” has shifted from “non-white,” “Oriental,” and “other.” Recently the Japanese American group has been included as a specific ethnic group under the broader category of “Asian and Pacific Islanders” (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Social structure shapes our experiences. This social structure is reflected in racial stereotypes. Everyone learns some combination of the rules of racial classification, often without obvious teaching. Currently, the American racial social structure is composed of the five major racial/ethnic groups: European American, African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American. Importantly, this classification system does not afford the possibility of belonging to two or more groups. Unfortunately, we are inserted in an existing social structure: a social structure not explicitly inclusive of the multiracial population.

Attention will turn to one component of social identity, racial identity. Most of this research has been conducted in the field of counseling psychology. A discussion of the impact of social structure and physical appearance will follow in relation to the racial identity of multiracial individuals.

**Racial and Ethnic Identity**

Prior to the 1980’s there was a void in the psychological literature addressing the multiracial American population. Existing literature utilized traditional Eurocentric theory to investigate the multiracial experience. Eriksonian identity theory was applied, and this psychosocial theory was elaborated on to investigate ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990). Racial identity
models for monoracial² individuals exist (Parham, 1989; Parham & Helms, 1985), but none of these theoretical models has captured the unique experience of the multiracial population.

In deciphering the role of culture in identity, the research literature has focused on two different lines of inquiry: racial identity and ethnic identity. Not surprisingly, the distinction between these two concepts is blurred. Although the concept of race infers biological differences between groups, these differences stem from historical and social trends. According to Omi and Winant (1994) race is a socially constructed way of differentiating human beings. Ethnicity is another means to differentiate between groups based on language, religion, color, ancestry, and/or culture (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998). Throughout this work, race and ethnicity will be referred to in unison (e.g. race/ethnicity) to acknowledge the important implications of each construct as well as the indeterminate distinction between the two.

**Erikson's identity theory and ethnic identity.**

Erik Erikson was an influential identity theorist who emphasized the psychosocial aspects of development toward ego identity. Ego identity may be described as a tripartite entity comprised of biological, psychological, and social contexts which enmesh to form an optimal subjective sense of well being and meaning in life (Kroger, 1993). In postulating eight stages of development, Erikson included the identity versus role confusion stage that occurs from puberty to the end of adolescence. Of central importance in formulating a clear identity is
equivalency and stability in society's and personal perceptions of self (Erikson, 1950). Erikson (1950) argued that society is the most persuasive influence on the adolescent's search for peer affirmation. The unfavorable outcome, role confusion, is the inability to evolve a clear and consistent identity. This may result in over-identifying with others to the point of complete loss of personal identity (Erikson, 1950). Favorable outcomes in the eight stages increase the likelihood of attaining the highest stage of development: ego integrity.

Erikson addressed the role of race on identity by postulating that most individuals from oppressed minority groups are aware of white ideals from the majority culture but are prohibited from emulating them which results in the incorporation of oppressive images into identity. Phinney (1990) extended Erikson's model as the theoretical foundation for ethnic identity. Ethnic identity has been defined as "one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perception, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996, p. 142)." It is influenced by how a person is perceived by others and by the extent one feels and acts like a group member (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). The process of identity formation for minority group members is complicated by exposure to two sources of identification: their own ethnic group and the majority culture. The experience of growing up in a society where the majority culture has values and attitudes significantly different from or opposed to one's own culture places the adolescent in a difficult position.
Not internalizing views of the majority culture is integral toward developing a positive ethnic identity (Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

**Racial identity.**

Racial identity theory is distinct from other aspects of identity development in that it focuses on the sociocultural messages from the environment about groups rather than individuals (Helms, 1990). Racial identity, defined as pride in one’s racial or ethnic group, is considered a learned aspect of an individual’s overall personality and shapes how one views the world and interprets individual experiences (Smith, 1989). Racial identity is critical because it serves as the basis for understanding one’s relationship with others in society (Smith, 1989).

Racial theory is shaped by existing race relations in a given historical period (Omi & Winant, 1994). The study of racial identity theory has steadily grown in interest since the 1960’s as a result of the Civil Rights Movement (Helms, 1990). Most racial identity research has focused on the specific experience of African Americans (Cross, 1987; Parham & Helms, 1985) or the general ethnic minority experience in the United States (Atkinson, Morton & Sue, 1998). These developmental models highlight a process of balancing a healthy racial identity with identification to the dominant European American culture. Although much has been learned from these seminal racial identity models, further theoretical conceptualization is necessary to study the experience of individuals who belong to more than one racial/ethnic group (Root, 1990).
Special concerns for investigating the multiracial population.

An appropriate model for multiracial identity needs to address the possibility of integrating more than one group identity and afford more flexibility in the process and outcome of identity development (Brown, 1990). Existing Eriksonian and monoracial identity models fall short in this regard by assumptions of universality, linearity, and social-personal fit (Miller, 1992).

Eriksonian based identity models subscribe to universality by assuming the identity process is constant regardless of the unique social experiences of groups and individuals (Gibbs, 1987). This perspective ignores the reality of discrimination, prejudice, and acculturation within a diverse social system. These social forces impact the likelihood of a positive outcome for each of Erikson's developmental stages and achieving ego integrity.

Monoracial identity models suggest a linear process of identity development in which an individual moves to more advanced stages as cultural values and self-concepts are reinforced by society resulting in an idealized end state (Miller, 1992). However, because the multiracial individual challenges our society's mutually exclusive notions of race, clear and consistent social messages are rarely achieved resulting in a nonlinear identity process (Root, 1990). Several studies have supported fluid, contextual identities among multiracial individuals (Brown, 1990; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Standon, 1996; Twine, 1996).
Eriksonian and monoracial identity models fail to consider a common multiracial experience: the possibility of developing an identity inconsistent to that ascribed by society. The assumption of social-personal fit results in the belief that those who choose an identity outside of what society deems legitimate are considered maladjusted. Further, existing theories do not account for those who concurrently identify as a member of two or more groups (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). Multiracial individuals experience the impact of being non-white in a white society without being afforded full membership in any particular group (Brown, 1990).

The Multiracial Population

Demographic information.

Interracial marriages were legalized in the United States in 1968. Since 1970, the rate of intermarriage has increased 550%, and interracial marriages constitute 5% of all marriages (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). Consequently, there has been a rapid increase in multiracial children. Since most states do not record the racial category to both parents, the number of biracial births is underestimated. According to Kalish (1995), over 133,000 biracial children were born to interracial couples between 1978 and 1992. Other estimates suggest that multiracial individuals approximate 2 million (Chew et al., 1989) resulting in the “biracial baby boom” (Root, 1992). Most multiracial individuals descend from both majority and minority groups. The largest proportion of multiracial individuals are of Asian/European American descent,
followed by Latino/European American, and Native American/European American. The mixed-race population of African American/European American descent comprises the smallest proportion of multiracial individuals (Chew et al., 1989). In a diverse sample of multiracial students, 36.1% had one mixed-race parent, and both parents were mixed-race in 11.9% of the sample (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996).

**Multiracial identity models.**

Until 1990, only one racial identity model addressed the multiracial experience. However, because this population is growing at an expeditious rate, this area of research has recently attained attention from academia and the popular media resulting in four new models of multiracial identity (see Table 1).

Stonequist (1935) introduced a deficit biracial identity theory entitled the Marginal Person Model. This social psychological model focused on individuals of African American/European American descent and argued that a multiracial heritage complicates normal identity development and “mixed blood” individuals are destined to a life of conflict and inner turmoil. Stonequist (1935) argued that turmoil stems from the “marginal” experience of associating with two incompatible worlds without completely belonging to either. “Mixed bloods” were described as restless, aggressive, and indecisive about identity. According to Stonequist (1935), only two options were possible to resolve the identity crisis: identifying as white if phenotypically possible or identifying with the disadvantaged Black group.
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stonequist</td>
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<td>Deficit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacobs</td>
<td>1977, 1992</td>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>1. Pre-Color Constancy</td>
<td>1. play and experimentation with color</td>
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<td>2. Post-Color Constancy</td>
<td>2. biracial label and racial ambivalence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Biracial Identity</td>
<td>3. realize skin color not decisive factor</td>
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<td>Kich</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>1. Awareness of Differ­ence and Dissonance</td>
<td>1. may be positively valued or a source of rejection</td>
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<td>2. Struggle for Accept­ance</td>
<td>2. experimentation and exploration, utilization of interracial label</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Self-Acceptance and Assertion of Interracial Identity</td>
<td>3. creation of self-definition rather than relying on society's stereotypes</td>
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<td>Poston</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>1. Personal Identity</td>
<td>1. sense of self based on self-esteem and self-worth, independent from ethnic background</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. Choice of Group Categorization</td>
<td>2. society forces choice of an identity, usually of one ethnic group</td>
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<td>3. Enmeshment/Denial</td>
<td>3. confusion and guilt over choosing one identity</td>
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<td>4. Appreciation</td>
<td>4. appreciation for multiple heritage, but still identify with one group</td>
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<td>5. Integration</td>
<td>5. recognize and value all ethnic identities</td>
</tr>
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<td>Root</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Typology</td>
<td>1. Acceptance of Identity Society Assigns</td>
<td>1. internalization of social standards</td>
</tr>
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<td>2. Identification with Both Racial Groups</td>
<td>2. socially acceptable and available only in select geographic locations actively chosen</td>
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<td>4. Identification with New Racial Group</td>
<td>4. kinship with other multi-racial people due to shared marginality</td>
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Contemporary racial identity models are more comprehensive than Stonequist's in that specific stages are outlined. Ten pre-adolescent children of African American/European American descent were studied using a doll-choice paradigm in which children were shown dolls representing various racial/ethnic groups and asked which doll is more like themselves. Jacobs (1992) proposed three developmental stages for biracial identity. Each stage is linked to the concepts of color constancy (the understanding that skin color is invariant and the basis for formulating groups in society) and internalization of an interracial label (self-identification as interracial by using descriptive words such as mixed, biracial, part Black/White, etc.) In Stage I neither of these concepts is realized. In Stage II children acquire color constancy resulting in ambivalence about skin color. Jacobs argues (1992) that this ambivalence is necessary to recognize and integrate both aspects of a biracial individual's racial identity reflected in utilizing an interracial label. Lastly in Stage III the child realizes that although skin color is associated with group membership, it is not a decisive factor. This stage is critical because it challenges society's assumptions of race and recognizes that feelings of group membership stem from more than phenotype (Jacobs, 1992).

Kich (1992) studied a group of 15 biracial adults (ages ranged from 17 to 60 years old) of Japanese/European American heritage using extensive semi-structured interviews. Kich proposed three stages of development leading towards a healthy self-acceptance of a biracial identity. Stage I (3 through 10
years old) entails the realization of the biracial youth's "differentness" from other groups in society. Although one's different heritage may be celebrated within the home, being different may infer a pejorative status in society. The discrepancy between one's self-perception and society's perception results in "dissonance" (Kich, 1992). In Stage II (eight years old through adolescence), the biracial individual "searches for acceptance" and struggles to decide which parent's heritage to internalize. Through extensive experimentation and exploration, the individual recognizes the limitations of racial categories in society and begins to use an interracial self-identification (Kich, 1992). In Stage III (late adolescence through adulthood), the biracial individual achieves "self-acceptance and asserts an interracial identity." Information about the culture and traditions of one's heritage are investigated and coveted, and the individual becomes more assured and expressive about one's unique heritage (Kich, 1992). Kich argues a positive biracial identity is a life-long process in which an individual may cycle repeatedly through the stages at various rates to resolve specific identity issues.

Poston (1990) introduced a developmental model based on studying individuals from support groups that serve the multiracial community. The first stage, "personal identity," occurs during early childhood. The notion of group membership in society is only recently realized, so racial identity is primarily based on self-esteem and self-worth developed within the family. During the "choice of group categorization" stage, the biracial individual is forced by society to identify with one group. According to the socially accepted rule of
hypodescent, an individual’s choice is limited to identifying with the parent of color’s heritage. In the “enmeshment/denial” stage, the biracial individual experiences confusion and guilt due to not identifying with both aspects of his/her heritage. Identifying with solely one group denies the existence of one’s complete heritage. The “appreciation” stage marks the beginning of appreciating all parts of one’s heritage, although identification with one group has not changed. Finally, during the “integration” stage, individuals recognize and value all parts of their heritage and identify accordingly (Poston, 1990).

Root (1990) developed a progressive typology detailing four resolutions of biracial identity. This model differed from traditional identity theory and previous multiracial identity models in that all resolutions are considered acceptable rather than a linear process with one idealized outcome (Root, 1990). “Acceptance of the identity society assigns” is a passive resolution and suggests the internalization of social standards typified by identifying with the parent of color and a subordinate status in society. This resolution is most precarious because an individual may be perceived and ascribed to a different racial group pending geographic and social location. “Identification with both racial groups” indicates pride in all parts of one’s heritage. Unfortunately, this resolution may be socially acceptable and available only in certain geographic areas given the variable growth of this population across the United States secondary to immigration trends. “Identification with a single racial group” may appear similar to the first resolution discussed, however it differs dramatically due to the active personal
choice to identify with a particular group. Lastly, “identification as a new racial group” suggests a strong kinship with other multiracial individuals stemming from the common marginal experience (Root, 1990). Root (1990) argues that although each resolution has positive and negative outcomes, there is more than one adaptive identity outcome for multiracial individuals that may change throughout a lifetime.

After reviewing the contemporary multiracial identity models, it is evident that each suggests a common trend. All four models argue that initially multiracial individuals internalize the racial/ethnic identity that is reinforced by the immediate and extended family. As one becomes more aware of social norms, pressure is experienced to identify according to hypodescent: the belief that multiracial individuals must identify with the parent of color since society will ultimately categorize them in that manner (Root, 1994; Wardle, 1987). The multiracial individual may then undergo a period of exploring one’s heritage until a confident identity is achieved. The complexity and uniqueness of the multiracial identity process occurs “when acceptance at home is not mirrored by the larger community (Root, 1990, p.194).”

Although all of the theorists suggest a developmental trend in racial identity formation, the models diverge regarding whether there is one adaptive positive identity resolution. Most theorists argue that a racial/ethnic identity which incorporates all aspects of one’s heritage indicated by using an interracial label is the most positive outcome of multiracial identity formation (Jacobs, 1992;
Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990). An interracial label is suggested by using terms such as “mixed,” “biracial,” or listing more than one race/ethnicity when asked. However, recent literature questions this assumption. After administering self-report questionnaires to high school and college students, Phinney and Alipuria (1996) found that self-esteem did not vary depending on whether multiracial students used interracial or monoracial self-labels. Only Root (1990) argues that both interracial and monoracial identities are adaptive and positive.

Although seminal theoretical models have focused attention to this traditionally ignored population, investigative attempts have been exploratory in nature. Most research utilized qualitative methodology, small sample sizes, and unrepresentative participants. Further, these explorative studies focused on individuals with specific multiracial heritages (African American/European American or Asian American/European American) to gain insight into their unique experiences. In comparing the models developed from these distinct samples, similar findings suggest a common trend in the multiracial racial identity process.

Assessing racial/ethnic identity: self-labels.

The best way to assess one’s racial or ethnic identity has been debated. Lampe (1992) asserts the selection of an ethnic label is an integral part of identity management and is based on an individual’s self-perception. A self-selected ethnic label is indicative of the type of ethnic identity an individual possesses (Lampe, 1992). Of course, the terms chosen are social constructions determined by a socio-historical context (Omi & Winant, 1994).
term multiracial was virtually unknown twenty years ago. A racial/ethnic self-label is viewed as an important indicator of multiracial youths' identity (Hall, 1992; Kerwin et al., 1993; Kich, 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 1989).

**Literature on the multiracial population.**

The earliest research on mixed-heritage individuals suffered from severe methodological flaws: namely using unrepresentative samples. The seminal research consisted of case studies of clinical patients and applied Eurocentric identity theory to interpret findings. These flaws resulted in a pathological view of multiracial individuals. Further, most early work focused on the experience of individuals of African-American and European American descent. Demographic figures suggest that biracial individuals of African American/European American descent comprise the smallest number of multiracial individuals.

Teicher (1968) studied a clinical sample of biracial children and noted identification problems with the minority parent, sexual identity conflicts, and adjustment problems in predominantly White environments. Faulkner and Kich (1983) supported these findings in a clinical sample of interracial families in California. Gibbs (1987) conducted extensive case studies on 20 biracial and bicultural adolescents and noted that all participants had ambivalent feelings about their racial/ethnic identity and none had achieved a stable, multiracial identity. Most struggled with conflicts of marginality and sexuality. Due to methodological flaws discussed above, it is unwise to generalize these findings to the multiracial population.
Contemporary researchers have attempted to refute pathological findings by correcting some methodological flaws. More recent studies have used non-clinical samples and applied non-Eurocentric theory (Root, 1992). The result is a more positive perspective of mixed-race individuals. Due to the novelty of this research area and small sample sizes, most investigators have used qualitative research techniques to identify and explore variables related to multiracial identity. Unfortunately, most of these studies still utilize unrepresentative samples. Samples are recruited through “snow-ball” methodology in which participants are identified by using word-of-mouth referrals and by recruiting participants from multiracial support groups and networks. The resulting sample is unrepresentative in that a disproportionately high number of participants self-identify as multiracial or physically appear multiracial.

Johnson and Nagoshi (1986) studied teenagers of inter-ethnic marriages in Hawaii and found few significant differences in personality scores from the Adjective Check-List between multiracial and monoracial peers. Multiracial males scored higher on social desirability and multiracial females scored higher on extroversion. These findings must be interpreted with caution because intermarriage is relatively prevalent in Hawaii, so fewer stigmas are associated with the multiracial population.

Gibbs and Hines (1992) interviewed nine African American/European American, non-clinical adolescents that participated in a local multiracial support group. 75% of the sample had positive feelings about themselves and were
comfortable with their biracial identity. Positive psychosocial adjustment was found to be associated with an intact family, higher socio-economical status, integrated schools/neighborhoods, a multicultural social life, and an open relationship with parents to discuss racial concerns. Those less adjusted were more likely to live in single parent households, had less contact with non-custodial family, and avoided talking about racial issues (Gibbs & Hines, 1992).

In an influential study utilizing a control group, a diverse sample of multiracial early adolescents and parents were administered various depression, anxiety, self-perception, and parenting measures. No significant differences between the multiracial and matched control groups were found. These biracial adolescents were indistinguishable from similar monoracial adolescents of color (Cauce et al., 1992).

Kerwin et al. (1993), interviewed nine African American/European American children (five to sixteen years old) and found that none felt “marginal” due to their mixed heritage. All parents referred to their children as being both Black and White, many mentioned the importance of living in a racially/ethnically diverse environment, and most spoke openly about race matters with their children. It is important to note that participants were recruited by “snowballing,” and a high proportion of potential participants refused to partake in the study.

Tizard and Phoenix (1995) conducted semi-structured interviews on adolescents with one European American and one African or Caribbean parent in London. Findings revealed that although the majority of participants admitted to
insecurity about their color in the past, 77% were proud of their unique multiracial heritage. Only 20% had "problematic" identities indicated by distressed or confused responses. Interestingly, a positive racial identity was associated with living in a racially diverse environment and having a diverse peer group. A positive racial identity was not associated with race of the in-home parent.

Another trend in the multiracial literature is the utilization of census data to extrapolate findings. Although large sample sizes are available using this approach, this methodology is flawed when investigating racial/ethnic identity because the household head typically completes these forms thus providing second-hand information. Further, data is based on the census' existing delineation of race (Chew et al. 1989) and ignore the "other" category many multiracial individuals utilize.

Phinney and Alipuria (1996) were the first to provide data on a large normative sample of multiracial students by soliciting parent’s heritage for each prospective participant as a means to establish multiracial status. Researchers revealed that self-esteem scores were indistinguishable between multiracial and monoracial samples.

**Literature on multiracial identity.**

The most effective means of resolving multiracial identity has been disputed. Early research argued that identification with the parent of color is most adaptive since this is compatible with society’s perception. Historically, this perspective originates from the “one drop rule” during the slavery era which
dictates that one drop of Black blood means one is identified socially as Black (Bowles, 1993). Adams (1973) argued that multiracial children should eventually adapt to society's restrictions and view themselves as African American. In society at large, it is generally accepted that African American/European American individuals who ignore their White heritage and identify as African American have successfully resolved their marginal identity. For instance, Gibbs (1987) maintains that an interracial identity for multiracial adolescents is a defensive act of denial.

Novel research explores the possibility that an interracial label is a more advantageous resolution. Researchers argue that denying any part of one's heritage is aversive for it is the rejection of one parent's heritage and a rejection of a part of themselves that is unchangeable (Root, 1992). When Brown (1995) compared monoracial and interracial self-labels for mixed-race individuals, the interracial label was associated with significantly diminished conflict and emotional turmoil. These findings are consistent with most existing multiracial identity models.

The actual proportion of multiracial individuals that identify interracially is relatively small and variable pending the population studied. Phinney and Alipuria (1996) revealed that in a diverse multiracial high school sample (n=194) identified by soliciting both parents' heritage, 34% identified interracially and 66% identified monoracially. However, in a study focusing on the ethnic identity of Asian/White children in California, findings reveals that 51.8% had an Anglo
identity, 38.5% had an Asian identity, and only 9.7% identified as “other” (Saenz et al., 1995). Therefore, according to existing developmental models, between 66% and 90% of multiracial individuals have unsuccessfully negotiated their multiracial identity.

Self esteem and ethnic identity scores amongst multiracial individuals were essentially the same regardless if one identified monoracially or interracially (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). This finding contradicts existing models, with the exception of Root (1990), thereby refuting the notion that there is one idealized resolution and other identity options indicate maladjustment.

In sum, the literature on multiracial identity is discrepant regarding whether there is one idealized, socially adaptive identity. Further, the literature reveals that the proportion of multiracial individuals that identify interracially or monoracially varies depending on the population studied. It appears that in diverse samples, approximately 33% identify interracially, compared to 10% in a specific Asian/European sample. Existing literature is unclear in terms of what accounts for the variability of self-labeling amongst multiracial individuals. Phinney and Alipuria (1996) speculate that the particular heritage combination involved and phenotypic appearance impact self-label. The present study will attempt to explain the variability in self-labeling within the multiracial population by examining heritage and physical appearance in an undergraduate sample using self-report measures.
Multidimensional approach to racial/ethnic identity.

A multidimensional approach suggests that racial identification is not a unitary construct. There are multiple aspects of racial group identification that are important for an adequate understanding of the phenomenon (Parham, 1989). According to Stephan and Stephan (1989) physical resemblance, biological heritage, social status, and identification of parents contribute to multiracial identity. Hall (1992) argues that important variables include knowledge of their culture, ethnicity of neighbors and friends, political involvement, lack of acceptance by a group, and physical appearance. The present study will evaluate two of these variables in relation to multiracial identity formation: physical appearance and the social statuses of groups that comprise one's heritage. The goal of this study is not to evaluate all variables, but to closely examine two which may account for some variability in self-labeling.

The role of racial social structure.

Studying the larger social ecology is critical for a complete understanding of individual development. An individual develops an identity within a sociostructural context. The nature of the relationships between groups in society describe the commonly held attitudes towards those groups; attitudes that multiracial/ethnic individuals have to negotiate in resolving racial identity (Wilson, 1984).

Social identity theory is based on the assumption that society is comprised of social categories that have “power and status relations to one another (Hogg &
Abrams, 1988, p. 14). Social categories are defined as divisions of people on the basis of nationality, occupation, class, and sex. Some categories in society have greater power, prestige, and advantage compared to other categories.

Social dominance theory (SDT), an extension of social identity theory, is a general theory of social hierarchy and group conflict. SDT argues that complex social systems are inherently group based, caste-like hierarchies consisting of at least two social groups (Sidanius et al., 1992). The dominant group at the top enjoys a disproportionate degree of positive social value, and one or several subordinate groups are assigned a disproportionately high degree of negative social value (Sidanius et al., 1994). It is argued that in the United States the caste system is comprised of a White and non-White groups, which can be further delineated as majority versus minority groups. Of course, there is a hierarchy within the non-White minority groups. The experience of being socialized within contemporary American society is sufficient to internalize this hierarchy. Veruyten, Hagendoorn, and Masson (1996) revealed that there is a consensus amongst ethnic group members about the existence of a hierarchy and the relative positions of out-groups in society. This study will focus on the differences in identity choices between multiracial individuals with majority/minority heritage compared to minority/minority heritage.

Since we are all socialized in an environment where relations between groups already specified and recognized, racialized social structure impacts the identification process. According to Omi and Winant (1994) "everyone learns the
some version of the rules of racial classification, and about our own racial identity, often without obvious teaching... we are inserted in a comprehensively racialized social structure” (p. 60).

In a study by Stephan and Stephan (1989), two samples of multiracial undergraduate students were compared. The first sample consisted of Hawaiian participants who were part-Japanese: the high-status group in Hawaii. The second sample consisted of undergraduates from New Mexico who were part-Hispanic: an economically and socially disadvantaged group. Findings reveal that social stratification played an integral role in racial/ethnic identity. A group’s social status was a significant predictor of identity for the part-Japanese sample but not for the part-Hispanic sample (Stephan & Stephan, 1989). Therefore, researchers found a differential impact of social structure on social identity pending the group’s status in this structure.

According to Saenz et al. (1995), significant socioeconomic differences between groups widens social distance. Children of inter-married parents who belong to groups of unequal social status may encounter negative treatment: each group may see the children as members of the outgroup. In contrast, when boundaries between the groups are reduced, for instance when groups are socio-economically similar, the acceptance of offspring is more likely (Saenz et al., 1995).

Boundaries separating different racial/ethnic groups are likely to influence the ease that different racial identities are utilized (Miller, 1992). Phinney and
Alipuria (1996) revealed significant differences in multiracial identity pending the diversity of the social environment. In two samples of multiracial college students with one White parent, 5.9% of participants from racially/ethnically diverse college campus identified as White compared to 45.5% of participants from a predominantly White college campus. In an extreme case, Stephan and Stephan (1989) argue that the identity selection process may be limited if social relations in the society are rigidly organized around the concept of race, as in South Africa. Indeed, racial identity of multiracial individuals is impacted in environments where social stratification is more salient.

The present study argues that society has deemed certain racial identities legitimate and acceptable for multiracial individuals based on maintaining the social hierarchy. This resonates in the historical “one drop rule” implying that anyone with one drop of Black blood is considered Black which stemmed from slavery as a means of inflating the number of slaves by plantation owners (Davis, 1993). Currently, this tradition is reflected in hypodescent: the assumption that the multiracial individual is assigned to the racial/ethnic group of lower status by the higher status group (Root, 1994; Wardle, 1987). Not surprisingly, these notions refer groups with discrepant social status. The present study argues that differences in the relative social status of groups that comprise one’s heritage impact the racial identity process for multiracial individuals.
The role of physical appearance.

In furthering our analysis of multiracial identity as a multidimensional construct, one cannot deny the impact of physical appearance. It is primarily through comparing one’s physical appearance to our racial/ethnic stereotypes that society deems one’s racial self-label legitimate. For instance, in the United States it is unlikely that an African American with dark skin can successfully adopt a White identity because this unreasonably challenges the stereotype for African Americans. According to Weber (1961) physical appearance is an integral component of ethnic identity. Any perceptible racial cue places an individual into a specific category (Vaughn, 1987). Physical appearance may limit the extent to which people are accepted as members of a given ethnic group (Stephan & Stephan, 1989; Stephan, 1992).

Kerwin (1991) found biracial children are more likely to accurately describe their physical appearance compared to their monoracial parents. This finding may stem from a heightened emphasis on appearance for biracial individuals. Literature on physical appearance for older samples focuses on the stereotypes associated with the multiracial population. Mixed race women are commonly called exotic and beautiful reflecting an increased attention on physical appearance (Bradshaw, 1992).

According to Poissaint (1984), children of African American/European American heritage are likely to identify as Black due to personal experiences or expectations that a White identity will be denied. Bradshaw (1992) argues that
multiracial individuals of Asian/White descent have more access to White communities because physical appearance is more ambiguous. According to Chung, when distinct racial features are evident, individuals have less freedom when choosing a self-label (as cited in Phinney 1996).

Tizard and Pheonix (1995) studied a Black/White biracial sample and found evidence suggesting a relationship to physical appearance and self-identification. Interestingly, a Black self-label was not associated to living with a Black parent, attending a diverse school, or adhering to Black youth culture. Hall (1980) found little correlation between physical appearance and self-identification, however, the author states this finding may be due to insufficient variation within the data.

The present study argues that phenotype plays an integral role in identity formation. More specifically, physically resembling a specific racial/ethnic group deems certain identities acceptable by society due to the prominence of group stereotypes.

The inevitable question.

Numerous authors (Hall, 1992; Root, 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 1989) have documented a unique yet common experience among the multiracial population: constantly being asked, “Where are you from?” or “What are you?” This question has pervasive implications. First, it suggests that the multiracial person is somehow different from society's expectations about a racial/ethnic group member. Typically, something about an individual's physical appearance
challenges the racial/ethnic stereotypes our society perpetuates. Therefore, from a very early age, multiracial individuals experience an over exaggeration on their physical appearance (Bradshaw, 1992). Second, the postulation of this question provides a setting in which questions of racial/ethnic identity are explored (Stephan & Stephan, 1989). The question furnishes information about society's perception of an individual that is integral for the process of identity formation.

In order to capture participants' responses to this inevitable question, vignettes were developed that describe a multiracial protagonist. Of central importance is how participants think the protagonist should respond to the question, "Where are you from?" when variables of heritage and physical appearance vary.

Since various authors have documented the fluid and contextual nature of racial/ethnic identification (Hall, 1992; Root, 1990; Stephan & Stephan, 1989; Williams, 1992) each protagonist faces the same predicament, namely deciding which cultural group to join on a college campus. In an attempt to control for other variables that contribute to the multidimensional construct of racial/ethnic identity, vignettes were identical in terms of protagonist's sex, cultural exposure, and year in school. No information is provided about other variables associated with racial/ethnic identity such as racial/ethnic make-up of neighborhood or diversity of close friends. The only distinct differences between vignettes were the specific heritage and perceived physical appearance of the protagonist.
Statement of Purpose

From reviewing numerous articles that investigate specific multiracial populations (e.g. Asian American/European American or African American/European American), a common racial identification process is revealed. Perhaps a better way to explain the variability in self-labeling is to examine the relative status of groups in society that make up one’s heritage. The experience of being biracial and a member of two or more oppressed groups may be different than the experience of being biracial and a member of the majority and oppressed groups (Reynolds & Pope, 1991; Root, 1990).

The present study investigates the racial categorization process of multiracial individuals using three undergraduate samples of varying social status: a diverse multiracial sample, a monoracial-majority sample, and a monoracial-minority sample. Multiracial participants were identified by eliciting the heritage of each biological parent, and second generation multiracial participants were not excluded from the study. Of central importance is examining the variability of racial self-labeling within this population as well as identifying the variables that account for the variance. Although racial identity is a multidimensional phenomenon, the two variables that will be investigated are heritage and physical appearance. The second aspect of the study clarifies whether there is solely one adaptive resolution in multiracial identity or if there is more than one adaptive resolution.
As suggested in the literature, the unique experience of negotiating a multiracial identity stems from society’s mutually exclusive notion of race. Therefore, investigating the social stratification between groups is imperative. The present study argues that the specific heritage of the multiracial individual is an important factor when choosing an identity. Heritages that stem from two groups of differential status (majority/minority groups) limit the number of identity options considered legitimate by society. However, individuals with ancestry from groups of similar status in society are given more freedom in identity choice. It is therefore argued that majority/minority multiracial individuals are more likely to identify monoracially. In contrast, minority/minority multiracial individuals are more likely to identify interracially.

Society propagates rules of inclusion and exclusion for racial categorization. Simple perceptible differences such as skin color are loaded with stereotypical inferences that determine whether one fits into a specific category. Therefore, physical appearance is another important factor that may limit socially legitimate identity choices, especially if one phenotypically resembles the physical stereotype for a specific racial/ethnic group. The present study argues that multiracial individuals who physically resemble a specific racial/ethnic group are more likely to identify monoracially, and phenotypically ambiguous appearing multiracial individuals are more likely to identify interracially.

The literature is unclear about whether there is more than one adaptive resolution to multiracial identity. Some studies suggest that a monoracial identity
is maladaptive for the multiracial individual, and others suggest that both monoracial and interracial resolutions are positive. The present study will provide further information by administering a self-esteem instrument to compare results between the different self-label groups.

In order to assess the influence of physical appearance and heritage in racially categorizing a multiracial individual, participants were given vignettes in which the multiracial protagonist is asked to respond to a question commonly faced by this population: “What is your racial background?” Vignettes were identical except for the protagonist’s heritage and physical appearance. Responses were coded into two categories: one specific heritage or an interracial response. The present study argues that participants will categorize a protagonist monoracially when a majority/minority heritage is employed and intervesselly when a minority/minority heritage is employed. Further, participants will identify the protagonist differentially depending on physical appearance. A monoracial response (indicating that the protagonist should identify with one racial/ethnic group) will occur more frequently with a specific appearance, and an interracial response (indicating that the protagonist should identify with two or more racial/ethnic groups) will occur more frequently with an ambiguous physical appearance. The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:
Hypothesis 1: Scores on a self-report self-esteem measure will be equal for the multiracial and monoracial-minority participants.

Hypothesis 2: Scores on a self-esteem measure will be equal for multiracial participants who self-label interracially and monoracially.

Hypothesis 3: Multiracial participants grouped by heritage (majority/minority and minority/minority) will differ in self-labeling. Majority/minority multiracial participants will self-label monoracially more frequently than minority/minority multiracial participants.

Hypothesis 4: Multiracial participants grouped by physical appearance (specific and ambiguous) will differ in self-labeling. Multiracial individuals who are physically ambiguous will self-label interracially more frequently than multiracial participants that resemble a specific group.

Hypothesis 5: In evaluating the data from the vignettes, a strong relationship is expected to occur between how participants racially/ethnically categorize the protagonist and heritage of the protagonist. If the protagonist’s heritage is majority/minority a monoracial categorization is predicted, and if the protagonist’s heritage is minority/minority an interracial categorization is predicted.

Hypothesis 6: In evaluating data from the vignettes, a strong relationship is expected to occur between how participants racially/ethnically categorize the protagonist and physical appearance of the protagonist. If the protagonist is described as physically ambiguous an interracial categorization is predicted, and
if the protagonist is described as resembling a specific group a monoracial categorization is predicted.

**Hypothesis 7:** A significant correlation is expected between how multiracial participants self-label and how they racially categorize a multiracial protagonist in a vignette.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 126 undergraduate college students residing in a large Midwestern city. Participants were divided into three groups based on the self-reported race/ethnicity of each biological parent (42 multiracial, 42 monoracial-majority, 42 monoracial-minority). A college-age population was selected because racial/ethnic identity is particularly salient during this developmental period (Phinney, 1990), and this age group contains a much larger population of multiracial individuals due to recent demographic changes.

**Recruitment of participants.**

As suggested by Phinney and Alupuria (1996), multiracial status was determined by gathering information on each parent’s race/ethnicity. This method of recruiting participants is different from the “snowball” method utilized by most multiracial studies. In snowballing participants are identified by posting flyers, advertising in newspapers, or browsing Internet web-sites for multiracial interests. From these initial participants, further referrals are elicited. This methodology is flawed in that the majority of mixed-race individuals do not
identity as multiracial, and typically those approached appear more phenotypically mixed-race.

**Criteria for inclusion into the three samples.**

Using information on each parent’s racial/ethnic heritage, criterion for inclusion into the multiracial sample was based on biological parentage from two or more distinct racial/ethnic groups. The goal of the inclusion criteria was to limit the sample to the “immediate” multiracial population (Root, 1996). In fulfilling this criterion, both first and second generation multiracial individuals were selected. Although excluding second generation multiracial individuals would result in a cleaner sample, the result would be an inaccurate portrayal of the multiracial population (Root, 1992). According to one study, approximately 60% of the multiracial population have one or more parents that are multiracial (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996).

Each multiracial participant’s heritage was categorized into two groups: majority/minority or minority/minority. For the sake of simplifying the analysis, inclusion into the majority/minority heritage was determined if an individual had one parent reported as only European American. Inclusion into the minority/minority heritage group was determined if both parents had ancestry from different non-White racial/ethnic groups. Adopted participants were also excluded from the study to avoid introducing further variance from trans-racial adoptions.
The second sample was comprised of monoracial minority group members. This group is useful to control for the additional stresses related to minority status in our society (Cauce et al., 1992; Root, 1992b). Criterion for inclusion required both parents to be from the same racial/ethnic group of color. The final group was comprised of monoracial majority group members. Criterion for inclusion required both parents to be of only European American heritage.

Although a larger sample would be beneficial for purposes of generalization and statistical power, prominent multiracial researchers have commented that the utilization of large samples is virtually impossible (Root, 1992; Stephan, 1992). First, this segment of the general population is still a numerical minority. Secondly, the multiracial population is disproportionately distributed geographically across the United States due to variations in social tolerance (Grosz & Mills, 1997).

Demographic Characteristics.

The full sample (See Table 2) contained 126 participants who were divided into three sub-samples based on the self-reported race/ethnicity of each parent. 37.3% were male and 62.7% were female. In this sample, 8.7% of the participants were below the age of 18, and 46.8% were between the ages of 18 and 20 years. 15.9% of the sample were between the ages of 21 and 23 years, and another 15.9% were between the ages of 24 and 26 years. 12.7% of the full sample was 27 years old and older. The median personal income was between $20,001 and $30,000.
### Table 2

**Descriptive Statistics for all Samples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Full Sample (n=126)</th>
<th>Multiracial Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>Monoracial-Minority (n=42)</th>
<th>Monoracial-Majority(n=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td><strong>Age (years)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The multiracial sample consisted of 42 participants. Of these multiracial participants 66% (n = 28) had heritages comprised of both majority and minority groups, and 33% (n = 14) had heritages comprised of two or more minority groups (Table 3). 60% (n = 25) of the multiracial participants self-labeled interrally by marking more than one racial/ethnic group or by marking the "mixed, biracial, multiracial" category. 40% (n = 17) self-labeled monoracially by marking just one racial/ethnic category. 26.1% of these participants were male and 73.1% were female. The median age was between 18 and 20 years, and the median personal income was between $20,001 and $30,000.

The majority/minority sub-sample (Table 4) of multiracial participants (n = 28) was comprised of 25% females and 75% males. The median age was between 18 and 20 years, and the median income was between $20,001 and $30,000. The minority/minority sub-sample of multiracial participants was comprised of 28.6% females and 71.4% males. The median age was between 21 and 23 years, and the median income was between $10,000 and $20,000.

The monoracial-minority sample consisted of 42 participants, and 45.2% were male and 54.8% were female. The race/ethnicity of these participants were 57% African American, 23.8% Asian American, and 19% Latino. The median age was between 18 and 20 years, and the median income was between $20,001 and $30,000.

The monoracial-majority sample consisted of 42 participants. 40.5% were male and 59.5% were female. The race/ethnicity of both biological parents was
Table 3
Racial/Ethnic Heritage of the Multiracial Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent's Heritage</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Majority/Minority (n = 28)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino European American</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian European American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American European American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American European American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American-European American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American-European American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minority/Minority (n = 14)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Latino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Latino-European American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American-African American-European American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American-Native American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American-Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American-Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American-Native American-Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American-European American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American-Native American-European American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American-European American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for the Multiracial Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Full Sample (n=42)</th>
<th>Majority/Minority (n = 28)</th>
<th>Minority/Minority (n=14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (dollars)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 10,001 and 20,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 20,001 and 30,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 30,001 and 40,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 40,001 and 50,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50,0001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
European American. The median age was between 18 and 20 years, and the median personal income was between $20,001 and $30,000.

**Measures**

**Demographic Questionnaire.** A ten-item, multiple-choice questionnaire (Appendix A) was utilized to obtain demographic information, each parent’s racial/ethnic heritage, and the participant’s racial/ethnic self-label. Racial/ethnic self-label was operationalized as how the participants answered the following question: “I racially/ethnically identify myself as _________.” Seven options followed exemplifying the common racial/ethnic groups in American society, a multiracial category, and finally an “other” category to be filled in. This item was coded into two different categories: interracial or monoracial self-label. Coding was based on whether more than one racial/ethnic group was indicated by checking more than two or more racial/ethnic categories or by checking the multiracial category.

**Physical Resemblance Scale.** Physical appearance was operationalized as the degree that participants believe they physically resembled people with ancestry from a particular group(s). The scale (Appendix B) consisted of six items representing the six different racial/ethnic groups prevalent on society delineated in commonly used terms. Each item requested the participant to rate how much he/she physically resembled a member from a group using a four point scale ranging from 1 (do not resemble) to 4 (resemble a lot). A composite score was obtained by summing the points for each item. Scores ranged from 7
to 17 points. A mean split was performed based on the mean score for the entire sample (M = 10). With few exceptions, a score less than ten was obtained by indicating a strong resemblance to one group (3 to 4 points) and a minimal resemblance to all other groups (1 point each). Participants’ perceived physical appearance was categorized as either specific or ambiguous depending if one’s score was below or above the entire sample’s mean score. Participants with scores above the mean suggested the perception that they physically resembled many different racial/ethnic groups: an ambiguous physical appearance. Participants with scores below the mean suggested the perception that they physically resembled only a few different groups: a specific physical appearance.

Social Decisions Questionnaire. Vignettes (Appendix C) described a multiracial college student responding to the common question: “What is your racial/ethnic background?” Vignettes were identical in terms of the protagonist’s year in school and exposure to heritage. Sex of the protagonist was indicated by an androgynous name used to promote personal relevance for the participant. Protagonist’s heritage (minority/minority or majority/minority) and physical appearance (specific or ambiguous) varied. The dependent variable was the participant’s racial/ethnic categorization of the protagonist in response to the question. Responses were coded into two categories: monoracial or interracial. Coding was explicit since the only judgment was whether the participant indicated one or more racial/ethnic groups. Coding was performed by the investigator.
Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory- Adult Form. This was a 25 item self-report instrument (Appendix D) designed to measure a person’s attitude toward him or herself. Items presented participants with generally favorable or unfavorable statements about the self that they indicated as “like me” or “unlike me.” The Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory is one of the most widely used self-esteem measures and possesses sufficient reliability and validity to recommend its use in research (Peterson & Austin, 1985). Reliabilities have ranged from .78 to .85 respectively. The SEI has also been used with diverse populations and normative data is available (Coopersmith, 1989). Scores are determined by summing the number of responses that correspond with the answer key and then multiplying the sum by four.

Procedure

Arrangements were made with instructors and professors to spend 30 minutes of class time to collect data. Specific classes were targeted that had relatively high proportions of students of color. Sixteen undergraduate classes were sampled from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and University of Nebraska at Lincoln campuses. Various student cultural organizations were also sampled from Creighton University.

Students were informed that the experiment concerned race relations and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. They were then given a packet that contained the measures. Packets were gender specific to increase the personal relevance of the vignettes. Participants were told to first read the
informed consent form (See Appendix E) and to turn to the next page if they agreed to participate. Participants were instructed to complete the packet from front to back without changing the order of questionnaires. Uniformly, the vignette was the first measure presented to participants. The remaining measures were counterbalanced to avoid order effects. Upon completion, participants were debriefed and questions were answered.

**Preliminary Data**

A preliminary questionnaire was used to quantify the prospective sample size for the multiracial sample. Short self-report questionnaires were distributed to first and second year students enrolled in courses for Goodrich Scholarship recipients at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Three multiple-choice items asked for each parent’s race/ethnicity and the prospective participants’ racial/ethnic self-label. A total of twenty-eight multiracial individuals were identified from this process.

**Procedural Notation**

After collecting data in two different classes, the investigators noted no effect for the vignettes. With few exceptions, participants indicated an interracial label for the protagonist. Upon re-evaluating the vignette, it was surmised that the following sentence was confounding the manipulation. The sentence read as follows: “Throughout Pat’s life her parents have tried to teach her about all aspects of her culture, and she spends time with relatives from both sides of the family.” A focus group was called with the first class. The investigator passed
out a copy of a vignette and asked if participants would have responded differently with the sentence in question removed. 68% of the 23 participants responded that they would not have responded differently with the sentence removed. With these findings, the investigators decided to continue the study without making any changes.

Results

All analyses were conducted using SPSS Base 8.0 for Windows. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Correlation Coefficients

Correlation coefficients were completed for all variables in the full data set as reported in Table 5 and for each sample as reported in Table 6. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between self-label and physical appearance $r = .253, p<.01$. Based on the dummy coding system utilized, as perceived physical appearance became more ambiguous an interracial label was more likely. A significant negative correlation was revealed between self-label and heritage $r = -.610, p<.001$, indicating that an interracial self-label was associated with a multiracial heritage.

Regression Analyses

Hypothesis 1. The goal of this analysis was to determine whether membership in multiracial or monoracial-minority groups helps explains some of the variability in self-esteem. In this first analysis, scores on the self-esteem inventory were regressed on multiracial or monoracial-minority groups. Dummy
Table 5

Correlations for Variables- Full Data Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self-Label</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Heritage</td>
<td>-.610***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical Appearance</td>
<td>.253**</td>
<td>-.207*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-Esteem Inventory</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>-.089</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001
Table 6
Correlations for Variables - Each Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiracial (n=42)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Self-Label</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical Appearance</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Monoracial-Minority (n=42)** |     |     |     |
| 1. Self-Label   | -   |     |     |
| 2. Self-Esteem  | -.038 | -   |     |
| 3. Physical Appearance | -.110 | -.413** | -   |

| **Monoracial-Majority (n=42)** |     |     |     |
| 1. Self-Label   | -   |     |     |
| 2. Self-Esteem  | a   | -   |     |
| 3. Physical Appearance | a   | 0.074 | -   |

Note. *p<.05. **p<.01.
a. Cannot be computed because the self-label is constant (monoracial)
As predicted, the self-esteem scores (See Table 7) for multiracial and monoracial-minority participants were the same. No significant differences between groups were revealed (See Table 8). The regression equation was $Y = 75.62 + -4.00X$. The $F$ value for this regression equation was $F = 1.51$, $p > .05$, indicating no significant differences between multiracial and monoracial-minority participants when predicting self-esteem. The $R$-squared value was .018, indicating that only 1.8% of the variance in predicting self-esteem scores was accounted for the independent variable.

**Hypothesis 2.** The goal of this analysis was to determine whether the racial self-label for multiracial individuals helps explain some variability in self-esteem. Scores on the self-esteem inventory were regressed on interracial and monoracial self-labels for the multiracial sample. Dummy coding was utilized since self-labeling was a categorical, mutually exclusive variable.

As predicted, the self-esteem scores for multiracial participants that self-label interracially and monoracially were the same. No significant differences between groups were revealed (Table 9). The regression equation was $Y = 71.200 + 1.035X$, and the $F$ value was $F = .049$, $p > .05$, indicating no significant differences between multiracial participants that self-label interracially or monoracially when predicting self-esteem. The $R$-squared value was .001
Table 7
SEI and Physical Resemblance Scores for all Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Physical Resemblance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Sample (N = 126)</td>
<td>74.54</td>
<td>16.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial Sample (n = 42)</td>
<td>71.62</td>
<td>14.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority/Minority (n = 28)</td>
<td>75.14</td>
<td>13.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority/Minority (n = 14)</td>
<td>64.57</td>
<td>15.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial-Minority (n = 42)</td>
<td>75.62</td>
<td>75.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial-Majority (n = 42)</td>
<td>76.38</td>
<td>76.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

**Regression Analysis for Self-Esteem Predicted by Multiracial or Monoracial-Minority Heritage (n = 84)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>75.619</td>
<td>2.301</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
<td>3.253</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>-1.229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. In the dummy coding system utilized g - 1 vectors were created. Membership into the multiracial category was assigned 1, while membership into the monoracial-minority category was assigned 0.

Table 9

**Regression Analysis for Self-Esteem Predicted by Interracial or Monoracial Self-Label (n = 42)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>71.200</td>
<td>2.964</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Label</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>4.658</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>.222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. In the dummy coding system utilized g - 1 vectors were created. Membership into the monoracial self-label category was assigned a 1, while membership into the interracial self-label category was assigned a 0.
indicating that only 0.1% of the variance was accounted for when predicting self-esteem scores from self-labeling.

Chi-Squared Analyses

Hypothesis 3. The goal of this analysis was to determine whether two groups of multiracial participants (majority/minority and minority/minority) differ in self-labels. Majority/minority multiracial participants were expected to self-label monoracially more frequently than minority/minority multiracial participants. A chi-square test for independent groups was appropriate since the self-labels reported were categorical variables (monoracial or interracial), there were two groups of multiracial participants (majority/minority and minority/minority), and because the categories were mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Table 10 presents the prevalence of interracial and monoracial self-labels for each group of multiracial participants. A chi-square test indicated no significant differences across groups, $\chi^2 (1, n = 42) = 0.198, p > .05$. There were no significant differences in interracial and monoracial self-labels between majority/minority and minority/minority multiracial participants.

Hypothesis 4. The goal of this analysis was to determine whether multiracial participants grouped by physical appearance (specific and ambiguous) differ in self-labeling. Multiracial individuals who were physically ambiguous were expected to self-label interracially more frequently than multiracial participants that resembled a specific group. A chi-square test for independent groups was appropriate since the self-labels reported were
Table 10

Heritage of Multiracial Participants and Racial Self-Labels (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Self-Label</th>
<th>Heritage Combined</th>
<th>Majority/Minority</th>
<th>Minority/Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11.3)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> observed frequencies, <sup>b</sup> expected frequencies

Table 11

Physical Appearance of Multiracial Participants and Racial Self-Labels (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Specific Appearance</th>
<th>Racial Self-Label Combined</th>
<th>Monoracial</th>
<th>Interracial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10.0)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>(14.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> observed frequencies, <sup>b</sup> expected frequencies
categorical variables (monoracial and interracial), there were two groups for physical appearance (specific and ambiguous), and because the categories were mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Table 11 presents the prevalence of interracial and monoracial self labels for specific and ambiguous physical appearances. A chi-square analysis revealed no significant differences in self-labels between groups, $\chi^2 (1, n = 42) = 3.404, p > .05$. There were no significant differences in the frequency of monoracial and interracial self-labels between physically ambiguous and specific multiracial participants.

**Hypothesis 5.** In the vignettes, the multiracial protagonist's heritage (majority/minority or minority/minority) was expected to influence how participants racially categorized him/her. A chi-squared analysis was appropriate since both the specified heritage (majority/minority or minority/minority) and racial categorization (monoracial or interracial) variables were categorical and mutually exclusive.

Tables 12 through 15 present the prevalence of monoracial and interracial labels when participants racially categorized a multiracial protagonist of majority/minority or minority/minority heritage. A chi-squared analysis for the full sample revealed significant differences in how participants racially categorized a protagonist based on heritage, $\chi^2 (1, N = 125) = 4.727, p < .05$. Of the fourteen participants who categorized the protagonist monoracially, 79% did so when a protagonist's heritage was comprised of majority/minority groups. Chi-squared
Table 12

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Heritage-Full Sample (N = 125)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Heritage of Protagonist</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority/Minority</td>
<td>Minority/Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.2)</td>
<td>(6.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56.8)</td>
<td>(54.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> observed frequencies, <sup>b</sup> expected frequencies

Table 13

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Heritage-Multiracial Sample (n = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Heritage of Protagonist</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority/Minority</td>
<td>Minority/Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.3)</td>
<td>(2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20.7)</td>
<td>(13.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> observed frequencies, <sup>b</sup> expected frequencies
Table 14

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Heritage-Monoracial-Minority Sample (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Heritage of Protagonist</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority/Minority</td>
<td>Minority/Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.5)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18.5)</td>
<td>(18.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  
<sup>a</sup> observed frequencies,  
<sup>b</sup> expected frequencies

Table 15

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Heritage-Monoracial-Majority Sample (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Heritage of Protagonist</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority/Minority</td>
<td>Minority/Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.9)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(17.1)</td>
<td>(22.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  
<sup>a</sup> observed frequencies,  
<sup>b</sup> expected frequencies
analyses for the multiracial, monoracial-majority, and monoracial-minority samples revealed no significant differences in how participants racially categorized the protagonist based on heritage.

**Hypothesis 6.** In the vignettes, the multiracial protagonist’s physical appearance (specific or ambiguous) varied. The physical appearance of the protagonist in the vignette was expected to influence how participants racially categorized the protagonist. A chi-squared analysis was appropriate since both the protagonist’s physical appearance (specific or ambiguous) and racial/ethnic categorization (monoracial or interracial) variables were categorical and mutually exclusive.

Tables 16 through 19 present the prevalence of monoracial and interracial labels when participants racially categorized a physically ambiguous or physically specific multiracial protagonist. A chi-squared analysis for the full sample revealed no significant differences in how participants racially categorize the protagonist based on physical appearance, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 125) = .001, p > .05 \). The pattern of interracial and monoracial label frequencies for the remaining samples were similar to Table 16 and are not remarkable.

**Correlational Analysis**

**Hypothesis 7.** A biserial correlation was performed between how multiracial participants racially self-labeled and how they racially categorized a multiracial protagonist from a vignette. As predicted, a significant correlation was
Table 16

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Physical Appearance- Full Sample (N = 125)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Physical Appearance</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.1)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>(6.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(55.9)</td>
<td>(55.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> observed frequencies, <sup>b</sup> expected frequencies

Table 17

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Physical Appearance- Multiracial Sample (n = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Physical Appearance</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.2)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(15.8)</td>
<td>(18.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup> observed frequencies, <sup>b</sup> expected frequencies
Table 18

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Physical Appearance- Monoracial-Minority Sample (n = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Ambiguous</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>3(^a)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.3)(^b)</td>
<td>(2.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.7)</td>
<td>(20.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 19, 23, 42

Note. \(^a\) observed frequencies, \(^b\) expected frequencies

Table 19

Protagonist's Racial Categorization Based on Physical Appearance- Monoracial-Minority Sample (n = 42)

(d = 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial-Label</th>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Ambiguous</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monoracial</td>
<td>1(^a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.2)(^b)</td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.8)</td>
<td>(16.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 25, 17, 41

Note. \(^a\) observed frequencies, \(^b\) expected frequencies
revealed between how multiracial participants self-label and how they racially
categorize a multiracial protagonist from a vignette ($r = .408$, $p < .01$).

Discussion

At this point it is important to focus on how these findings contribute to the
literature about multiracial individuals. Results will be summarized and linked to
past research to gain a better understanding of the variability in the social
identities of multiracial individuals. A discussion of the study in general will
precede the discussion of each hypothesis.

This study is an important contribution to the literature on multiracial
individuals for several reasons. First, this study is one of the few experimental
investigations for this population. Most previous research has been exploratory
and qualitative in nature. Secondly, a diverse sample is utilized rather than
focusing on multiracial participants of a specific heritage. This change is
warranted because studies of the racial identity process of several specific
multiracial groups suggest a similar process. Third, the identification of
multiracial individuals is achieved by eliciting each parent’s heritage. Most other
studies have used a racial self-label to identify multiracial participants resulting in
a select sample since the majority of multiracial individuals do not self-label
interracially. Fourth, a sample of 42 multiracial participants is relatively large
compared to previous studies investigating this population. Further, the two
monoracial samples are useful in making comparisons and investigating how the racial categorization process differs between groups.

Hypothesis 1: Self-Esteem for the Multiracial and Monoracial-Minority Sample

By eliciting the heritage of each parent, a multiracial sample and a monoracial sample of color are identified. The monoracial-minority sample is a useful comparison to control for the experience of being a person of color in a predominantly White society. The self-esteem scores for multiracial and monoracial-minority participants are compared. As predicted, the self-esteem scores for multiracial and monoracial-minority participants are equivalent. This finding challenges the “tragic mulatto” stereotype of the multiracial population perpetuated by studies that used unrepresentative samples such as clinical patients. This study supports findings by Cauce and colleagues (1992) that biracial adolescents were indistinguishable from matched adolescents of color on measures of self-esteem.

Hypothesis 2: Self-Esteem for the Multiracial Sample and Racial Self-Label

Multiracial participants are divided into two groups based on their racial self-label: interracial and monoracial. As predicted, the self-esteem scores for multiracial participants that racially self-label interracially and monoracially are the same. Although this finding converges with a study by Phinney and Alipuria (1996) which utilized a similar participant selection technique, this study challenges most existing multiracial identity models that suggest there is only one adaptive racial identity resolution: an interracial self-label. This finding is
invaluable in that a large proportion of multiracial individuals self-label monoracially.

The existing racial identity models for multiracial individuals suggest a developmental sequence (Jacobs, 1992; Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990). Typically a multiracial individuals initially adapts a monoracial self-label consistent with the notion of hypodescent. During adolescence and young adulthood, active exploration of each side of his/her culture tends to occur. In order to embrace all the cultures that make up one's heritage, an interracial self-label is utilized. Most researchers consider the interracial self-label the most adaptive resolution. Only Root (1990) argues that a monoracial self-label can be adaptive as well.

The discrepancy between the current findings and most racial identity models may be related to previous methodological limitations. As discussed earlier, much of the current theory regarding the multiracial population was conceived by studying clinical patients through extensive case studies. The relatively large sample size and more objective manner of recruiting multiracial participants in the present study may explain a portion of this discrepancy.

Hypothesis 3 & 4: The Impact of Heritage and Physical Appearance on Racial Self-Labels for Multiracial Participants

Racial self-labels are compared for the multiracial participants of majority/minority and minority/minority heritage. No differences in racial self-labels are found between the two groups. This may occur due to several methodological reasons. Although the multiracial sample size is relatively large
compared to other studies on this population, the number may be insufficient to
detect differences between groups. Therefore, it is unclear whether the lack of
significant findings is due to insufficient effect for heritage or simply because of
limited statistical power due to sample size.

The major limitation of the study is the operationalization of racial identity.
Participants’ racial self-label is used to indicate racial identity. Although several
authors support the utilization of one’s self-label to indicate racial identity (Hall,
1992; Kerwin et al., 1993; Kich, 1992), a primary concern of this study should
have been the stability of racial self-labels across contexts. Several authors
have noted the fluid, contextual identities of multiracial identities (Brown, 1990;
Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Standon, 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 1989; Twine,
1996; Williams, 1992).

In a study by Stephan and Stephan (1989), the ethnic identity of part-
Japanese undergraduates was measured by five questions in which the identity
of the participant was elicited in different settings. No participants listed the
same ethnic identity on all five measures. Paden’s term “situational ethnicity”
(as cited in Okamura, 1981) exemplifies the subjective and dynamic boundaries
of an ethnic group determined by a particular context that results in variations of
group categorization. In retrospect, given the fluid nature of racial self-labels,
qualifying a participant’s racial identity based on one item on a demographic
questionnaire may be inappropriate.
As discussed above, one’s self-concept is comprised of personal and social identities. The present study attempts to investigate the social identity component of self-concept by asking participants how they racially/ethnically identify and by providing the common racial group names utilized by most applications and legal documents. However, the possibility remains that the racial self-labels provided are indicative of participants’ personal identity rather than social identity.

**Majority/Minority and Minority/Minority Groups**

Demographic statistics reveal that most multiracial individuals have heritages comprised of both majority/minority groups. Similarly, in this study there are twice as many multiracial participants of majority/minority descent compared to minority/minority descent. When the relatively small number of minority/minority multiracial participants is divided into the two racial self-label groups the resulting cell sizes vary greatly.

Due to demographic limitations in recruiting multiracial participants of minority/minority heritage, selecting participants matched on demographic variables is difficult. The final minority/minority sample is significantly older than the other multiracial and monoracial samples. Age may confound the self-labeling variable. According to Brown (1995) older biracial young adults are more likely to self-label interracially compared to younger adolescent adolescents. This confounding variable may increase the number of interracial self-labels utilized by this sample.
From investigating the specific samples, differences in categorizing the protagonist based on heritage approaches significance for multiracial participants of minority/minority heritage. When the protagonist was composed of Chinese/Mexican heritage, this sub-sample uniformly indicated that the protagonist should identify with both cultures. Given their own multiracial status, these participants are aware of the implicit rules of inclusion for racial classification in our society. Further, it is likely that this group feels they are afforded flexibility in matters of racial categorization since the rule of hypodescent does not apply.

Interestingly, the European American sample indicated that the protagonist should identify with both sides of his/her heritage more frequently than any other sample. Research on White racial identity reveals that this sample least likely to have a conscious racial identity since the dominant culture is typically perceived as the normative experience in our society (Thompson & Carter, 1997). Therefore, this sample may be less aware of the social implications from breaking the implicit rules of racial classification.

Physical appearance of the protagonist does not effect on how participants categorize the multiracial protagonist. This lack of effect may be due to a confounding variable. The vignette states that the protagonist was equally exposed to both sides of his heritage. This statement may affect participants’ racial categorization. Hall (1992) argues that exposure and knowledge of their culture impacts the racial identity of multiracial individuals.
Hypothesis 7: Relationship between racial self-labels and racial categorization of a protagonist

The racial self-labels of multiracial participants are compared to how they racially categorized a multiracial protagonist from a vignette. Analyses reveal a strong association between how multiracial individuals racially categorize themselves as well as a multiracial protagonist. Undoubtedly, most multiracial individuals experience firsthand the consequences of crossing our society’s rigid racial boundaries. These eye-opening experiences promote active exploration of group boundaries and the role of multiracial individuals within this schema. Interestingly, it appears that the rules applied to one’s personal racial identity are not perceived as an exception to the larger social order, but rather a rule that is applied to instances in society as well. The result is consistency in the racial categorization of self and others.

Implications of Findings

Overall, this study has several major findings that challenge the pathological view of the multiracial population. The self-esteem scores for multiracial participants are indistinguishable from the self-esteem scores of monoracial participants of color. The self-esteem scores for multiracial individuals who embrace all sides of their heritage are also equivalent to the self-esteem scores of multiracial individuals that embrace only one side of their heritage. Finally, this study is novel in that both the racial categorization of self and others is investigated revealing a strong relationship between how multiracial
individuals racially categorize themselves as well as other multiracial individuals.

The findings of this study do provide important information about the changing attitudes in the racial classification of multiracial individuals. Several participants indicate that the multiracial protagonist from the vignette should identify with both racial groups since that is “who he is.” This unexpected response may be due to a recent shift in social attitudes about the multiracial population.

Recently there is a surge in popular media attention about the multiracial population. Stories surrounding the controversial racial self-label, “Cablinasian,” of golfer Tiger Woods and the contentious debate over a multiracial category for the next government census has brought notoriety to a previously invisible population. Perhaps the existing racial social structure is undergoing a change more inclusive of the multiracial population.

In a ground-breaking study by Korgen (1998), African American/European American individuals born before and after the Civil Rights Movement were interviewed to document the transformation of racial identity. She found that biracial persons born after the Civil Rights Movement were more likely to identify interracially than those born before the movement. Korgen (1998) argues that a gradual social change has occurred in how biracial individuals are labeled. Undoubtedly biracial individuals born before the Civil Rights Movement were Black in the eyes of U.S. society. However, attention to multiculturalism since the 1970’s has spawned a new context in which uniqueness is celebrated
resulting in a racial atmosphere today that is much different. These changes have inspired more acceptance of interracial relationships and the multiracial offspring revealed by a surge in local and national support groups. Although contemporary American society is more inclusive of the multiracial population, social change is a laborious and gradual process.

One may attain an interracial label only when society formally recognizes the interracial group involved (Vaughn, 1987). In theory, most agree that multiracial individuals can embrace all aspects of their heritage. Perhaps, what prevents us from racially categorizing people accordingly stems from our stereotypes about what a prototypical group member looks like. Superficially, most make a judgement using the “one-drop rule.” Interestingly, when one is aware of a person’s heritage, racial classification coincides with heritage. However, in the real world when one makes a judgment about another person’s racial classification, information about the person’s heritage is rarely available. Without that critical information we make a judgment based solely on one’s physical appearance. For the most part these superficial judgements have been effective, but due to increasing demographic changes this is changing.

This study has numerous implications for counseling multiracial individuals. Mental health practitioners should allow multiracial clients to freely explore and express different racial identity resolutions. Deficient self-esteem should not be assumed because a multiracial client racially identifies with solely one culture. Further, findings highlight the unexpected notion that physical
appearance does not determine one's racial identity. On the contrary, physically resembling a specific group or resembling several groups may have no decisive impact on the racial identity process. Finally, when working with multiracial clients it is important to explore the client's perception of the different groups that comprise his/her heritage. Specifically, education should address acknowledging without internalizing each group's position within the social structure and how this impacts the racial identity process.

Study Limitations

Limitations of this study include reliance on self-report measures. Since issues surrounding race are sensitive topics, a social desirability scale incorporated into a measure would have been beneficial. Further limitations involve the inclusion of two confounding variables. Unfortunately, the multiracial minority/minority sample is significantly older than the other samples. Based on previous research, increasing age is related to increased utilization of an interracial self-label amongst multiracial individuals. This confounding variable may account for the lack of effect in self-labels based on heritage. Further, the vignettes indicate that the multiracial protagonist was equally exposed to both sides of his/her heritage. Although previous research has determined that exposure is one component of racial identity, further studies are necessary to decipher the nature of this relationship.

Areas of Future Research
This study revealed a limitation in racial identity theory for multiracial individuals. Currently, no reliable instrument exists to measure the racial identity of a multiracial individual at a given point in time. Numerous authors have investigated various dimensions of the construct, yet none have developed an appropriate instrument. Perhaps racial identity for this population is too fluid in nature to measure. However, there is some evidence that the variability in self-labels may be related to the relative saliency of social and personal identities. Future research should focus on developing an instrument to measure the racial identity of multiracial individuals that considers the multidimensional and contextual nature of the construct.

This study also highlights the importance of investigating the relationship between how multiracial individuals racially categorize self and how they racially categorize others. Since findings reveal strong relationship, it is imperative to investigate variables which impact the decision process in how others are racially categorized, how these variables relate to those associated with racially categorizing self, and how these variables differ for multiracial and monoracial individuals. Finally, given the dramatic demographic changes, an interesting avenue of research is to investigate the different and shared experiences of first and second generation multiracial individuals.
References


Footnotes

1 The term multiracial is inclusive of all racially mixed (biracial, mixed-heritage, mixed-race, multi-ethnic) persons. These are persons with two or more socially and phenotypically distinct racial heritage resulting from multigenerational or immediate racial/ethnic blending (Root, 1992).

2 The term monoracial refers to persons with heritage from one distinct racial or ethnic group.

3 The term minority refers to groups which have an unequal advantage due to numerical size or because some groups within society are subjected to greater prejudice and discrimination (Atkinson et al., 1998).

4 The term majority refers to the dominant European American culture.
Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire
Demographic Questionnaire

Please circle the number corresponding to your response.

1. Gender:
   1) male
   2) female

2. Year in school:
   1) freshman
   2) sophomore
   3) junior
   4) senior

3. My age:
   1) under 18 years old
   2) 18-20 years old
   3) 21-23 years old
   4) 24-26 years old
   5) 27 or older

4. The combined yearly income in my family:
   1) less than $10,000
   2) between $10,001 and $20,000
   3) between $20,001 and $30,000
   4) between $30,001 and $40,000
   5) between $40,001 and $50,000
   6) more than $50,001

5. I racially/ethnically identify myself as:
   Please circle all that apply.
   1) White, Caucasian, European American
   2) Black, African American
   3) Asian, Asian American
   4) Hispanic, Latino/a, Chicano/a
   5) Native American, Indian
   6) Mixed, Biracial, Multiracial
   7) Other (fill in)______________________________
6. My biological father’s race/ethnicity:
   If parent is from two or more different groups, please circle all that apply.
   1) White, Caucasian, European American
   2) Black, African American
   3) Asian, Asian American
   4) Hispanic, Latino/a, Chicano/a
   5) Native American, Indian
   6) Other (fill in) ____________________________

7. My biological mother’s race/ethnicity:
   If parent is from two or more different groups, please circle all that apply.
   1) White, Caucasian, European American
   2) Black, African American
   3) Asian, Asian American
   4) Hispanic, Latino/a, Chicano/a
   5) Native American, Indian
   6) Other (fill in) ____________________________

8. For the most part I grew up in a...
   1) two parent home with both biological mother and father present
   2) single parent home with my biological mother
   3) single parent home with my biological father
   4) two parent home with one biological parent and non-biological parent
   5) two parent home with no biological ties (adoption, foster care, etc.)
   6) other (Please fill in) ____________________________

9. The dominant racial/ethnic make-up in the neighborhood or area in which I grew up:
   1) White, Caucasian, European American
   2) Black, African American
   3) Asian, Asian American
   4) Hispanic, Latino/a, Chicano/a
   5) Native American, Indian
   6) Diverse, multicultural population

10. One or both of my parents immigrated to the United States
    1) Yes
    2) No
Appendix B

Physical Resemblance Scale
Physical Resemblance

Regardless of your heritage, please rate yourself on how much you think you physically resemble a person with ancestry from each of the following groups using the 4 point scale: 1 (do not resemble); 2 (resemble a little); 3 (resemble more); 4 (resemble a lot).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resemblance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. White, Caucasian or European American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Black, African American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Asian, Asian American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hispanic, Latino/a Chicano/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Native American Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Social Decisions Questionnaire
Social Decisions 1.1a

Read the following paragraphs and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat grew up in a large Midwestern city and attends a local state college. Her father is African American and her mother is White. Pat believes she looks African American. While growing up, both parents tried to expose Pat to each side of her culture by spending time with both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn’t know if she should join the predominantly Black student organization or perhaps join a predominantly white student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the book store someone said, “I’m curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know her racial/ethnic heritage because she is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify herself?

__________________________________________________________________________

List at least two reasons why.
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Social Decisions 2.3a

Read the following paragraphs and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat has spent most of her life in a large Midwestern city. Her Mexican mother and Chinese father raised her. Pat believes that she doesn’t look really look like her father or her mother. Throughout Pat’s life her parents have tried to teach her about all aspects of her culture, and she spends time with relatives from both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn’t know if she should join the predominantly Latino student organization or the predominantly Asian student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, “I'm curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know her racial/ethnic heritage because she is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify herself?

List at least two reasons why.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Social Decisions 2.2a

Read the following paragraphs and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat has spent most of her life in a large Midwestern city. Her Mexican mother and Chinese father raised her. Pat believes she looks Mexican. Throughout Pat's life her parents have tried to teach her about all aspects of her culture, and she spends time with relatives from both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn't know if she should join the predominantly Latino student organization or the predominantly Asian student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, "I'm curious, what is your background?" Pat knew the person wanted to know her racial/ethnic heritage because she is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify herself?

List at least two reasons why.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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Read the following paragraph and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat has spent most of her life in a large Midwestern city. Her Mexican mother and Chinese father raised her. Pat believes she looks Chinese. Throughout Pat's life her parents have tried to teach her about all aspects of her culture, and she spends time with relatives from both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn't know if she should join the predominantly Latino student organization or the predominantly Asian student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, "I'm curious, what is your background?" Pat knew the person wanted to know her racial/ethnic heritage because she is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify herself?

List at least two reasons why.
Social Decisions 2.1b

Read the following paragraph and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat has spent most of his life in a large Midwestern city. His Mexican mother and Chinese father raised him. Pat believes he looks Chinese. Throughout Pat's life his parents have tried to teach him about all aspects of his culture, and he spends time with relatives from both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn't know if he should join the predominantly Latino student organization or the predominantly Asian student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, “I'm curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know his racial/ethnic heritage because he is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify himself?

List at least two reasons why.

...
Pat has spent most of his life in a large Midwestern city. His Mexican mother and Chinese father raised him. Pat believes he looks Mexican. Throughout Pat’s life his parents have tried to teach him about all aspects of his culture, and he spends time with relatives from both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn’t know if he should join the predominantly Latino student organization or the predominantly Asian student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, “I’m curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know his racial/ethnic heritage because he is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify himself?

List at least two reasons why.

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Social Decisions 2.3b

Read the following paragraph and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat has spent most of his life in a large Midwestern city. His Mexican mother and Chinese father raised him. Pat believes that he doesn't look really look like his father or his mother. Throughout Pat's life his parents have tried to teach him about all aspects of his culture, and he spends time with relatives from both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn't know if he should join the predominantly Latino student organization or the predominantly Asian student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, "I'm curious, what is your background?" Pat knew the person wanted to know his racial/ethnic heritage because he is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify himself?

List at least two reasons why.

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Social Decisions 1.2a

Read the following paragraph and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat grew up in a large Midwestern city and attends a local state college. Her father is African American and her mother is White. Pat believes she looks white. While growing up, both parents tried to expose Pat to each side of her culture by spending time with both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn't know if she should join the predominantly Black student organization or perhaps join a predominantly white student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, "I'm curious, what is your background?" Pat knew the person wanted to know her racial/ethnic heritage because she is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify herself?

List at least two reasons why.

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Pat grew up in a large Midwestern city and attends a local state college. Her father is African American and her mother is White. Pat believes that she doesn’t look really look like her father or her mother. While growing up, both parents tried to expose Pat to each side of her culture by spending time with both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn’t know if she should join the predominantly Black student organization or perhaps join a predominantly white student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, “I’m curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know her racial/ethnic heritage because she is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify herself?

List at least two reasons why.
Social Decisions 1.3b

Read the following paragraph and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat grew up in a large Midwestern city and attends a local state college. His father is African American and his mother is White. Pat believes that he doesn’t look really look like his father or his mother. While growing up, both parents tried to expose Pat to each side of his culture by spending time with both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn’t know if he should join the predominantly Black student organization or perhaps join a predominantly white student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, “I’m curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know his racial/ethnic heritage because he is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify himself?

List at least two reasons why.
Read the following paragraph and respond to the different questions. Please be specific in your response.

Pat grew up in a large Midwestern city and attends a local state college. His father is African American and his mother is White. Pat believes he looks African American. While growing up, both parents tried to expose Pat to each side of his culture by spending time with both sides of the family. As a freshman in college, Pat doesn’t know if he should join the predominantly Black student organization or perhaps join a predominantly white student organization. Just yesterday while waiting in line at the bookstore someone said, “I'm curious, what is your background?” Pat knew the person wanted to know his racial/ethnic heritage because he is asked this all the time.

How would Pat racially/ethnically identify himself?

List at least two reasons why.

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How would Pat racially/ethnically identify himself?

List at least two reasons why.
Appendix D

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory- Adult Form
Coopersmith Inventory
Stanley Coopersmith, Ph.D.
University of California at Davis

Please Print
Name
Institution
Occupation

Directions
On the other side of this form, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column “Like Me.” If a statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column “Unlike Me.” There are no right or wrong answers. Begin at the top of the page and mark all 25 statements.

□ 1. Things usually don’t bother me.
□ 2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.
□ 3. There are lots of things about myself I’d change if I could.
□ 4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.
□ 5. I’m a lot of fun to be with.
□ 6. I get upset easily at home.
□ 7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.
□ 8. I’m popular with persons my own age.
□ 9. My family usually considers my feelings.
□ 10. I give in very easily.
□ 11. My family expects too much of me.
□ 12. It’s pretty tough to be me.
□ 13. Things are all mixed up in my life.
□ 14. People usually follow my ideas.
□ 15. I have a low opinion of myself.
□ 16. There are many times when I would like to leave home.
□ 17. I often feel upset with my work.
□ 18. I’m not as nice looking as most people.
□ 19. If I have something to say, I usually say it.
□ 20. My family understands me.
□ 21. Most people are better liked than I am.
□ 22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.
□ 23. I often get discouraged with what I am doing.
□ 24. I often wish I were someone else.
□ 25. I can’t be depended on.

Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
3803 E. Bayshore Road • Palo Alto, CA 94303

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Appendix E

Informed Consent Form
ADULT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY FOR MULTIRACIAL INDIVIDUALS

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

You are eligible to participate based on your responses to the preliminary questionnaire that was distributed either in class or at a student organization meeting.

The purpose of this study is to examine factors which impact racial identity among people who are multiracial or mixed race. Although you may not be multiracial, the study includes other students of color and European-American students as well. Your input is vital.

Participation in this study will require approximately 30 minutes of your time. You will be given a packet with four short questionnaires to fill out about your physical appearance, your attitudes about yourself, and demographic information. You will also be asked to read a short story and respond to related questions.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this research.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented in scientific meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affected your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT: BY COMPLETING THESE QUESTIONNAIRES YOU ARE VOLUNTARILY CONSENTING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

Principal Investigator
Estrella Ramirez

Office: 554-3466

Secondary Investigator
Raymond Millimet, Ph.D.

Office: 554-2587