

Who Should I Be?

The effects of parental racial socialization on biracial individual's identities

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ABSTRACT

How does the socialization of the family impact how biracial (Black-White) individuals self-identify? This study explored how biracial individuals construct their identity in diverse racial environments given their experiences of racism and discrimination. This study surveyed 60 Black-White biracially identified persons. A quantitative thematic analysis was used to identify racial socialization practices of biracial individual's parents. Mothers, specifically Black mothers of biracial individuals, were more likely to engage in racial socialization practices such as cultural socialization. Individuals who identified as White were less likely to be racially socialized by their White mothers. The results confirm racial socialization practices used by parents directly influence how biracial individuals construct their identity, and these practices help biracial individuals navigate diverse racial environments.

In the United States, the number of biracial and multiracial individuals, as well as the number of interracial marriages, has increased exponentially since the historic 1967 Supreme Court landmark case *Loving V. Virginia*, finding miscegenation laws to be unconstitutional. Beginning in the early 1990s, scholars began to explore the unique racial categories for biracial individuals in the United States (see Gillem et al., 2001; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002;). The growing number of individuals who identify as biracial led to a debate over the addition of a multiracial category for 2000 Census (Rockquemore and Brunnsma, 2002). A compromise was made that allowed respondents to select multiple racial categories, resulting in approximately two percent of the population self-identifying as multiracial (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Given the growing number of self-identified biracial and multiracial individuals in the United States, understanding how biracial individuals construct their identity is an important sociological research question. Racial socialization has a tremendous impact on biracial individuals in that it promotes cultural pride and prepares and protects biracial children for potential discrimination and challenges regarding their identity.

Social Identity Theory

Social theorists today are increasingly focused on understanding the development of race, class, gender, and sexual identities. Given the changing demographics of the United States' population in which more citizens are self-identifying as biracial, examining the relationship between identity and social behaviors among biracial individuals is timely. One theory to offer a framework for such an analysis is Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel & Turner (1979) to understand intergroup relations and group processes.

Social identity determines a person's sense of whom they have established an assembly to which they belong. Social Identity Theory proposes that the groups to which they belong (e.g.

social class, family, sports teams), are a significant source of pride for individuals. Thus to enhance social identity, individuals associate with groups that have a higher status. To understand how individuals construct an identity to be part of a high status “in-group,” Tajfel & Turner (1979) identify three mental processes individuals use to evaluate others: categorization, social identification, and social comparison.

The first mental process, categorization, occurs when individuals categorize objects, including people, to understand them. Through the process of categorizing others, the individual also determines what categories (social groups) she/he belongs. According to Turner (1982), “Individuals structure their perception of themselves and others using abstract social categories, that they internalize these categories as aspects of their self-concepts, and that social cognitive processes relating to these forms of self-conception produce group behavior” (p. 16). Tajfel & Turner (1979) explains this phenomenon as creating in-groups and out-groups. Individuals categorize others into these groups, us versus them, to conceptualize a sense of self. Burke & Stets (2000) claim this is particularly accurate for those who classify themselves as a group member and who are also fully accepted by others in the group as a member.

The second mental process individuals use to evaluate others Tajfel & Turner (1979) is identify social identification. Once individuals have categorized objects into groups they adopt the identity of the groups to which they now identify. The individual adopts the attitudes and norms of other members of that group. In doing so, they establish an emotional connotation to a group, and one’s identity then is bound to group membership. According to Tajfel & Turner (1979), a person has not one personal self but, rather, several selves that correspond to expanding circles of group membership. From a social identity theory perspective, the multiple identities a

person holds (e.g. race, class, gender, and sexual identity) represent the different social categories to which the self-belongs.

Third, Tajfel & Turner (1979) examine social comparison as a process individuals use to evaluate themselves compared to others. Stets & Burke (2000) describe social comparison as occurring when individuals have categorized themselves as part of a group then they compare their group with other groups. To increase and maintain their self-image, individuals boost the status of the group to which they belong. Individuals may also intensify their self-image by holding prejudicial views and/or discriminate against the out-group (the group in which they do not belong). Social identity theory holds that members of the in-group will discriminate against the out-group to enhance their self-image. Tajfel (2010) proposed stereotyping group objects create negative meanings to the out-group. In doing so, individuals tend to exaggerate the differences of the out-group while enhancing similarities of the in-group.

Social Identity Theory has been used to understand how membership in particular groups can affect one's behavior and influence the construction of their identity. Carter (2013) examined factors that impact decision-making and found that "Subjects were more likely to behave immorally when pressured by group members than they were in the other experimental conditions" (p. 216). In a study designed to investigate the effects of discrimination and group bias upon personal traits, Elliot (1970) found that blue-eyed children became authoritative, and showed discriminatory behavior towards brown-eyed children when in a privileged position. The same pattern occurred when the privilege was reversed.

Social Identity Theory explains how individuals develop self-identification through group membership. Which raises interesting questions when a person is born holding multiple, and potential conflicting, group identities such as biracial identified Americans. For example, does a

biracial child who identifies with his or her African American ethnicity find that individuals inside and outside the group treat him/her differently because of the absence of certain ethnic characteristics of the in-group or the out-group? By applying Social Identity Theory to the biracial individual, the construction of their identity may be better understood.

Literature Review

In recent literature, models of biracial identity development suggest that biracial individuals modify their identity when they face tension or conflict related to their racial make-up and identification (Khanna & Johnson, 2010). Biracial individuals construct their identity differently based on socialization and differing experiences. For example, Khanna (2011) suggested that the experiences of biracial individuals have throughout their childhood challenge, influence, and force them to identify with one racial group while rejecting or hiding others. In a study of two biracial college students, Gillem, Cohn, & Thorne (2001) found that differing situations in the course of the students' lives impacted how they identified; both students identified as being black. However, they both did not feel accepted by Blacks or Whites.

Research has shown that biracial individuals differ in their construction of identity and in the strategies used to present their racial identity to others. Khanna & Johnson (2010) conducted a study on forty Black-White biracial adults living in a large urban area in the South and found that respondents regularly do "racial identity work" and employ a variety of strategies to present their preferred racial identities to others. These five strategies included verbal identification, selective disclosure (selectively revealing and/or concealing particular racial identities to others), manipulation of phenotype, highlighting/downplaying cultural symbols, and selective association (p. 386). Such research suggests the major agency most biracial individuals have in asserting their racial identities.

Similarly, Khanna (2011) interviewed forty Black-White biracial adults and found that biracial individuals have some choice in constructing a racial identity and, at times, practice “symbolic ethnicity” to express their biracial identity. Participants used traditional symbols such as food, clothing, national symbols, sports, music, and language to express their biracial identities (p. 387). Khanna found that the participants drew on White ethnic and national symbols not to identify as White or with a particular White ethnic group, but to highlight their White ancestries in order to identify as biracial. Such research demonstrates that biracial identity has transcended a fixed racial identity based on physical characteristics as biracial individuals present their identity through various cultural symbols.

Although, biracial individuals now self-determine their racial identity, these individuals face challenges in their racial construction. The oral history of Marguerite Davis Stewart, a biracial woman living in mid-twentieth-century Louisville, Kentucky, highlights difficulties faced by light skinned African Americans who were neither White nor Black (Crothers & K’Meyer, 2007). Crothers and K’Meyer (2007) argue that Stewart’s struggle to assert an identity that transcended historical racial categories illuminates the depths of America’s racial divide and the difficulties individuals of multiracial backgrounds today still face. Stewart’s attempt to escape the sharply divided racial worlds and categories of the era, though it permitted her some advantages, ultimately left her outside both the White and Black communities.

Parents Racial Socialization on Biracial Individuals

Since a biracial identity has many challenges, previous scholars have researched the importance of racial socialization in interracial families. Butler-Sweets (2011) analyze how racial socialization in families’ impact identity development. Conducting 32 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with middle-class young Black adults between the ages of 18 and 30 years old to

understand the impact of varying racialized family structures on Black identity development. The research compares the experiences of Black young adults raised in families with two Black parents (monoracial), one White and one Black parent (biracial), and two White parents (transracial). Butler-Sweets argues that it is imperative to examine racial socialization in families of Black-White biracial children because racial socialization can decrease children's developmental vulnerability to social challenges they may face as a result of their mixed race background. Other research has also found that racial socialization protects adolescence from the damaging effects of discrimination reaffirm this statement (see Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodrigues, Johnson, & Spicer, 2006; Neblett, Terzian, & Harriott, 2010; Neblett, White, Ford, Philip, Nguyen, & Stellers, 2008). Parents, especially mothers, use racial socialization to prepare their Black-White biracial children for social challenges associated with their culture. In the past, a partial-Black ancestry "demoted" biracial individuals to being Black (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

Racial socialization in interracial families provides a child with an understanding of one's heritage, which then influences how a biracial individual will self-identify. However, the meaning of racial categories, however, has begun to shift although racial inequalities remain (Brunsma, 2005). In the last decade, public recognition of the multiracial population has grown considerably (Csizmadia, Rollins, & Kaneakua, 2014). For the first time in Census history, diverse people were allowed to identify with more than one race in 2000, and in 2008 the country elected a Black-White biracial President for the first time in the nation's history. Black and White American parents have different social positions in the U.S. social hierarchy thus, their experiences with and attitudes towards race differ. Black parents' racial socialization experiences and practices differ from those of White parents (Hamm, 2001). Also, differing practices arise

from group-specific historical experiences and family traditions or in reaction to current social forces (Hughes et al., 2006). Identifying predictors of racial socialization among families of Black-White children is an essential step in understanding within-groups variation in biracial children's socialization.

Maternal Racial Socialization on Biracial Individuals

The literature on biracial identity shows that mothers have a significant influence on how their biracial children are racially socialized. Csizmadia, Rolling, and Kaneakua (2014) examined the child, family, and contextual correlates of ethnic-racial socialization in families of a nationally representative sample of first-generation Black-White biracial children. Using a sample of 293 first-generation Black-White biracial children, and interviews with six parents, their findings show the majority of mothers were White (80%). About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the parents reported discussing racial heritage frequently with their children (from several times a year to several times a week or more), while 20% of participants never had such discussions. The proportion of parents who identified their children as biracial was about five times greater than parents who identified their children as White, and almost three times more than parents who identified their children as Black (Csizmadia, Rolling, & Kaneakua, 2014).

Rollins and Hunter (2013) used a qualitative thematic analysis to identify racial socialization messages and approaches mothers used to prepare their children to navigate diverse racial experiences or racism and discrimination. They found that the majority of mothers (64%) engaged in racial socialization with their biracial youth. Among these mothers, the full range of racial socialization messages was evident including: cultural, minority, self-development, and egalitarian racial socialization messages. However, cultural socialization was used the least.

Findings suggest that ethnic-racial socialization is a prevalent parenting practice among interracial families.

The present study will address the gaps in the previous literature by examining how biracial individual self-identify based on the racial socialization of their parents, not how their parents identify them. Additionally, studies on how fathers' racially socialize their biracial children is lacking. The present study aims to fill these gaps in the literature by analyzing if and how fathers racially socialize their biracial children.

Methodology

Locating an individual who self-identify as biracial within the general population is often difficult, thus, this study relied on convenience sampling. Data on biracial individuals' construction of identity was drawn from individuals who participate in biracial forums available online. Biracial forums are public sites of open discussion specific to this topic. Based on a Google search using the term "Biracial/Mixed forums", the top three most frequently visited biracial forums are Experience Project, Lipstickalley, and Mothering. For one month, a link to a post on SurveyMonkey.com was available on these three biracial online mediums. From Oct 3, 2015, to Oct 19, 2015, the survey link was reposted weekly and at various times of the day. The survey was closed on October 30, 2015.

The survey consisted of 32 questions (see Appendix A), which ranged on a variety of topics including general demographic questions (age, sex, race, geographic location, income, educational level), their racial identities, how others (particularly parents) have influenced their identities, how their identities have changed over time and situation, and if and how they assert their identities to others. Participants were also asked to reflect upon their social identity, political identity, cultural identity, and physical identity. To participate in the study, respondents

must have one black parent and one white parent (as identified by the respondents). To take part in the survey, the respondents are 18 years or older. The mean age of respondents were between 18-20 years ($SD = 0.84$). Respondents primarily resided in the United States (85%), and the average years of education was some college, but no degree ($SD = 1.9$). The majority of respondents were single or never married (85%), and on average their household income was between \$35,000 and \$49,999. For the purpose of this study, social identity is operationalized as participants having a sense of who they are. In social identity theory, a social identity is a person's knowledge that she or she belongs to a social category or group (Hogg and Abrams, 1998). Political identity is how they identify themselves in politics. Cultural identity meanwhile was defined as participants constructing their identity based on group membership. Lastly, physical identity was defined as how participants identify based on their physical appearance.

Findings

This study sought to investigate the factors that affect an individual's racial identify when he/she is biracial. The majority of participants (67%) report having a White mother, 23% a Black mother, while 23% reported having a White father and 68% a Black father. Overall, this study finds that biracial individuals generally do not believe their parents' racial identity directly shapes their racial identity. Among those who believed that parents did directly shape their racial identity, 80% report that a biracial identity was highly encouraged. Participants report that racial socialization messages indirectly influenced how they constructed a racial identity.

Table 1 shows that out of 60 participants; the majority identifies as biracial (29%) or biracial Black, meaning they consider themselves to be biracial but experience the world as a Black person. Another 27% of participants alter their identity among, Black White, and Biracial, depending on the circumstances. Interestingly, the 1% of participants who identify as White has

a White mother while 8% of participants who identify as Black responded to having a Black mother. The participants most frequently respond as having a biracial Black identity if the race of the father is Black, followed by Black and contingent.

Parental Race	Racial Identity						TOTAL
	Biracial	Biracial Black	Contingent	Black	Other	White	
Mother is Race							
White	12	11	10	0	0	3	36 (31%)
Black	3	2	4	7	0	0	13 (12%)
Other	1	3	1	0	1	0	6 (5%)
Total	16	16	15	7	1	3	*58
Father is Race							
Black	11	14	10	1	2	0	39 (35%)
White	3	1	5	0	1	0	13 (12%)
Other	2	1	0	1	1	0	5 (4%)
Total	16	16	15	2	4	0	*53
TOTAL	32 (29%)	32 (29%)	30 (27%)	9 (8%)	5 (4%)	3 (2%)	111

*Totals do not equal the total amount (n=60) of participants due to omitted answers.

In addition to racial identity, the data shows that when cross-tabulated with parents' race, the participants broader identity; including the social, cultural, and physical identity he/she has; may or may not be the same as their overall racial identity. Table 2 shows that majority of participants (78%) express a biracial identity across social, cultural, and physical identity. Social identity is defined as a sense of who one is in a group context, cultural identity is based on belonging to a particular culture, and physical identity is how he/she identifies based on their

physical characteristics. Participants who responded to having a Black physical identity had either a Black mother (20%) or a Black father (22%). The small number of participants who identify as White (2%) across the social identity categories, all (100%) had a White mother. The data suggests there may be a discourse between biracial individuals social, cultural, and physical identity and the race of the parents.

Table 2 Social Identity Among Biracial Individuals by Parents Race											
Parental Race	Respondent's Social Identity										
	Social				Cultural			Physical			TOTAL
	BR	B	W	O	BR	B	W	BR	B	W	
Mother's Race											
White	32	3	1	1	37	2	1	27	3	3	108 (30%)
Black	10	6	1	0	9	5	0	10	12	1	54 (15%)
Other	6	0	0	0	5	1	0	4	2	0	18 (5%)
Father's Race											
Black	33	7	0	1	37	3	1	27	13	0	122 (34%)
White	11	2	2	0	10	3	1	10	3	0	44 (12%)
Other	4	1	0	0	4	1	0	4	1	0	15 (4%)
TOTAL	96 (27%)	19 (50%)	4 (1%)	2 (.5%)	102 (28%)	15 (4%)	3 (.08%)	82 (23%)	34 (9%)	4 (1%)	361

Table 3 shows there is an influence between parental family contact and social identity; 33% report maternal family contact at least once a month and 27% at least once a week (see appendix). Conversely, when examining the paternal family contact, 42% report having contact several times a year and 23% at least once a month. Comparing the lack of contact between maternal and paternal families, 3% participants report having no contact with their maternal family as opposed to 22% with their paternal family. With regards to parental family contact and parents' race, the data indicates participants have contact with their White maternal family members more frequently than with their Black maternal family members. Though findings

show participants had less frequent interaction with their paternal family, the interaction was similar regardless of the race of the father. The data suggests that parental family contact, contact with the ethnic minority, has an immense impact on the development of biracial identity.

Parental Contact	Social Identity						TOTAL
	Biracial	Biracial Black	Contingent	Black	Other	White	
Mother							
Daily	2	2	2	1	6	0	13 (12%)
Weekly	5	6	3	2	0	0	16 (14%)
Monthly	2	6	6	2	0	0	16 (14%)
Yearly	7	1	3	0	1	1	13 (12%)
None	0	1	1	0	0	0	2 (2%)
Total	16	16	15	5	7	1	60
Father							
Daily	1	0	0	1	0	0	2 (2%)
Weekly	2	2	0	0	0	0	4 (4%)
Monthly	4	3	4	1	1	0	13 (12%)
Yearly	7	7	5	1	0	1	20 (18%)
None	2	4	5	2	0	0	13 (12%)
Total	16	16	14	5	1	1	*52
TOTAL	32 (29%)	32 (29%)	29 (26%)	10 (9%)	8 (7%)	2 (2%)	112
*Totals do not equal the total amount (n=60) of participants due to omitted answers.							

In the open-ended questions, participants report that supportive experiences or even the lack of supportive experiences affect their racial identity development. These experiences affect identity choice as did experiences such as racial discrimination that result in identity conflict. A

participant whose African American mother emphasized the importance of learning about multiculturalism highlighted the importance of a strong and supportive Black mother:

My parents were very proactive in surrounding me with images of multiculturalism. Their racial identity and culture have been one of multiculturalism, and this is what they tried to instill in me. Music was from all over the world, along with TV, films, and books. There was a de-emphasis, however, on White culture. Looking back, I was exposed to much less White music, White characters, and White culture than any other ethnic or racial group.

This participant also reported that her mother encouraged participation in multicultural events, especially in elementary school. Such as “craft fairs” or “MLK Day celebrations.

The result was an increased understanding and pride in her racial heritage as Black.

Another participant notes that both her White mother and Black father, “Always stressed going to events/gatherings on both sides of the family. When I was young, they made sure I tried both ‘black’ activities (dancing, singing, basketball), and ‘white’ activities (piano lessons, ballet, volleyball).” Other participants’ responses were similar in that their childhood was centered on attending events about their parent’s racial heritage, including cited church, family cookouts, and sporting events that stressed participant’s national culture. Notably, respondents report that the Black parent emphasized participant’s racial culture more frequently for both mothers and fathers. Few participants cite the absence of a parent also affected their biracial identity development. One participant cited, “My father was absent from my life, so I spent most of my time with my mother’s side of the family. I feel like if I was able to see my cousins from my dad’s side, I would be a totally different person.”

In addition to supportive experiences, identity was impacted by the respondent’s involvement with cultural/ethnic/racial groups that were similar to his/her identity. The majority of participants (27%) indicated that adopting a biracial identity was impacted by the racial composition in their education experiences and their neighborhood experiences. While “mostly

Whites” (52%) made up their elementary social circle and 42% of the racial makeup of their neighborhood, participants report that their high school (37%) and college environment (31%) were predominately “half Black.” The data suggests that the participants’ identity is influenced by their education experiences, through having a variety of friends that consisted of Blacks. Overall, this study found that parental socialization as well as racial composition of peers impacts how biracial individuals’ construct their identity, and that conversations about cultural heritage and past instances of discrimination has a profound impact on how biracial individuals view themselves as well as people around them.

Discussion

This study examines parental and contextual ethnic socialization of a nationally representative sample of Black-White biracial individuals (i.e., individuals with one White identified and one Black-identified biological parent). Consistent with Butler-Sweets (2011) research on families of color, the findings here suggest that ethnic socialization is a prevalent parenting practice among interracial families. In the present study, participants describe being immersed in their parent’s heritage several times a year. Ethnic socialization is prompted by challenging experiences that biracial individuals have, especially during childhood. Furthermore, the findings suggest that when White mothers raise biracial children, ethnic socialization differs from the practices used by Black parents.

Within the diverse environment of the biracial population, this analysis revealed significant variation in ethnic socialization due to one’s racial identification, parental characteristics, and geographic context. The study found that individuals who identified themselves as White were less likely to report having a frequent discussion or exposed to their cultural heritage about individuals who identified as biracial or Black. The exposure to one’s

cultural heritage impacts how biracial individuals construct their identity, and there are critical implications for how frequently parents choose to have discussions or expose about the child's heritage. Biracial individuals, especially youth, must navigate diverse racial environments and possible experiences of racism, discrimination, and prejudice. If biracial youth lack education or socialization about the history of racial oppression, biracial youth may lack an understanding of the complexities of racial identification and group membership. Some parents may directly or indirectly choose not to immerse their biracial children in cultural heritage to protect them from pressures of being a minority. Failure to acknowledge cultural heritage may hinder biracial individuals self-identification within group contexts. The data shows that many participants had little to no contact with their Black paternal relatives, which has a tremendous impact on how or if White mother raise and racially socialize their biracial children. Conversely, individuals who identified as biracial or Black were more likely to engage in frequent discussions about ethnic culture and attend more events. Individuals who immersed themselves in their culture could relate more to the cultural heritage, which influenced their racial identity.

Findings from this study show that Black mothers, although few in numbers, were more likely to engage in ethnic socialization practices than White mothers. Black mothers frequently recollected past experiences of racism and discrimination based on their Blackness. One participant with a Black mother explained:

My mother immigrated to Canada and grew up in a small town where her family suffered racism at institutional and very personal levels. Which included her parent's careers, her peer relationships in school, and in general how she decided to shape her life. Their parenting has been very intentional and thoughtful; I am aware of the experiences that shaped them into who they are as people, but especially who they are as parents.

Even though White mothers did share past experiences with racism, their racism was due to their relationship with a Black man and not based on the color of their own skin. Hence, Black

parents' racial socialization experiences and practices differ from those of White parents (Hamm, 2001). Due to past discrimination and racism, Black mothers influence biracial individuals identity differently.

The racial identification of biracial individuals varies as a function of the geographic location and racial composition of one's schooling and neighborhood. Participants report the racial composition during education years shifted significantly from elementary to higher education. During high school and college, participants report having more friends who were Black or multiracial. Contact and experiences throughout childhood with peers of similar ethnic background influence how biracial individuals identify with a particular racial group. The participants almost all identify as biracial, but some describe viewing the world as a Black person. Many biracial individuals struggle with the same experiences of discrimination and oppression that Blacks have encountered for decades. This shared experience of oppression connects biracial individuals with their Black peers. The stigma of biracial individuals' skin tone also affects how the world sees them. Many people view themselves as Black due to the physical attributes associated with blackness by the larger American culture.

The influence of neighborhood composition also impacts biracial individuals' identities. Overwhelmingly, the participants were raised in predominately all White neighborhoods. It is plausible that because higher socioeconomic status (SES) families often reside in predominantly White neighborhoods, wealthier parents of biracial individuals may feel less need to educate or prepare biracial individuals for blatant racism and discrimination, which could impact the construction of identity for biracial children. Conversely, lower SES families in more racially mixed neighborhoods may be more consumed with daily challenges, which then encourages these families to engage in ethnic socialization.

If, when, and how biracial individuals modify their identity depends on differentiating circumstances that challenge their identity. Although many respondents claim a biracial identity, they are also conflicted in when they choose to reveal that identity. Many respond that they altered their identity due to recently escalated encounters between Black men and White police officers featured in news stories such as the cases of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, or Laquan McDonald. Ethnic socialization, especially when practiced by Black mothers, influences how biracial individuals view themselves during these significant national events. Holding conversations about past discrimination faced by their family or peers helps biracial individuals understand that similar encounters could potentially happen to them because of their racial heritage.

In addition to influencing racial identification, racial socialization can prepare and protect biracial children for racism and discrimination. The findings highlight the importance of racial socialization as an important aspect of parenting in interracial families. Messages and practices that promote cultural pride, prepare biracial children for potential discrimination, and may foster spiritual healing from challenges that arise from discrimination. This study provides the possibility that there may be negative consequences of not engaging in racial socialization. Parents who never or rarely engage in racial socialization may be hindering and neglecting an important set of practices that could contribute to protecting their biracial children from developing identity problems and challenges associated with those problems.

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Appendix

Table 4 Parental Racial Origin	
Paternal Race	TOTAL
Black	41 (68.3%)
White	14 (23.3)
Other	5 (8.3%)
Maternal Race	
White	40 (66.7%)
Black	14 (23.3%)
Other	6 (10%)
TOTAL	100

Table 5 Parental Family Contact	
Maternal Family Contact	TOTAL
Daily	9 (15%)
Once a week	16 (26.7%)
Once a month	20 (33.3%)
Several times a year	13 (21.7%)
No contact	2 (3.3%)
Parental Family Contact	
Daily	2 (3.3%)
Once a week	4 (6.7%)
Once a month	14 (23.3%)
Several times a year	25 (41.7%)
No contact	13 (21.7%)
TOTAL	100

Survey Questions

(to be posted on the on-line survey site Survey Monkey)

1. Do you currently live in the United States?

- Yes
- No

If yes, in which state within the United States do you currently reside?

If no, in which country do you currently live?

2. Which of the following best describes your current residence? **Please check one.**

- Rural (outside a city or suburb)

- Suburban (suburb of a large city)
 - Urban (city)
3. What is your sex? **Please check one.**
- Female
 - Transgender
 - Male
 - Other
4. What is your age? **Please check one.**
- 18-20
 - 21-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-59
 - 60-69
 - 70 or older
 -
5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received.* **Please check one.**
- Less than a high school degree
 - High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)
 - Trade/technical/vocational training
 - Some college, but no degree
 - Associate degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Doctorate degree
 - Other professional degree
6. What is your marital status? **Please check one.**
- Single, never married
 - Married or domestic partnership
 - Widowed
 - Divorced
 - Separated
 - Other
7. What is your current employment status? **Please check one.**
- Student
 - Full time employed working 35 or more hours/week
 - Part time employed working 1-34 hours/week
 - Unemployed and looking for work
 - Unemployed but not currently looking for work
 - Retired
 - Disabled, unable to work
 - Other: Please explain _____
8. What is your family's household income? **Please check one.**
- Less than \$20,000

- \$20,000 to \$34,999
- \$35,000 to \$49,000
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,000
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

9. Which of the following best describes your religious participation? **Please check one.**

- Attends a religious service more than once a week
- Attends a religious service weekly
- Attends a religious service once a month
- Attends a religious service a few times a year
- Never attends a religious service

10. What is your mother's racial or ethnic origin?

- White
- Black
- Other

If other, please specify

11. What is your father's racial or ethnic origin?

- White
- Black
- Other

If other, please specify

12. Did you parents try to directly shape your racial identity?

- Yes
- No

If you answered, "yes" to the previous questions, which racial identity did your parent(s) encourage you to adopt?

- Black
- Biracial
- White
- Neither
- Other

Other (please specify)

13. What social/public events do you most remember one/both/neither of your parents take you to during your childhood that emphasized their racial identity and culture?

14. What types of media (music, television shows, books, films, etc.) do you most remember were shown to you by one/both/none of your parents that emphasized their racial identity and culture?

15. The contact you had with your mother's extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) can best be described as:

- Daily
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Several times a year
- No contact

16. The contact you had with your father's extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) can best be described as:

- Daily
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Several times a year
- No contact

17. What was the racial composition of your closest friends in grammar or elementary school?

- All Blacks
- Mostly Blacks
- About half blacks
- Mostly whites
- All whites
- Other

18. What was the racial composition of your closest friends in high school?

- All blacks
- Mostly blacks
- About half blacks
- Mostly whites
- All whites
- Other

19. If you attended a college or university, what was/is the racial composition of your closest friends? (If you are currently in college, please use your current situation)

- All blacks
- Mostly blacks
- About half blacks
- Mostly whites
- All whites
- Other

20. What was the racial composition of your neighborhood while growing up?

- All blacks
- Mostly blacks
- About half blacks
- Mostly whites
- All whites
- Other

21. Did your mother ever discuss personal experiences of discrimination based upon their race/ethnicity?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, please explain.

22. Did you father ever discuss personal experiences of discriminate based upon their race/ethnicity?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, please explain.

23. Have you ever-experienced personal discrimination or hostility from whites because of your race?

- Yes, I have frequently experienced racial discrimination.
- Yes, I have occasionally experienced racial discrimination.
- No, I have never experienced racial discrimination.

24. Have you ever experienced negative treatment from blacks because of your skin color or physical features?

- Yes, I have frequently experienced negative treatment because of my physical appearance.
- Yes, I have occasionally experienced negative treatment because of my physical appearance.
- No, I have never experienced negative treatment because of my physical appearance.

25. The next several questions address individuals' different types of identities. How would you describe your identity in each of the contexts in the next five questions?

I consider my social identity (sense of who you are) as:

- Black
- Biracial
- White
- Other

Other (please specify)

26. I consider my political identity (how you identify yourself in politics) as:

- Black
- Biracial
- White
- Other

Other (please specify)

27. I consider my cultural identity (your identity of a group influenced by your belonging to a group or culture) as:

- Black
- Biracial
- White
- Other

Other (please specify)

28. I consider my physical identity (how you identify based on your physical appearance) as:

- Black
- Biracial
- White
- Other

Other (please specify)

29. When asked to identify my racial identity on a form, I usually check:

- Black
- Biracial
- White
- Other

Other (please specify)

30. What group of people would you say you feel most comfortable being around?

- I am most comfortable with blacks.
- I am most comfortable with whites.
- I am equally comfortable with black and whites.
- I am most comfortable with biracial or multiethnic people.
- I am most comfortable in diverse groups with people of varying races and ethnicities.
- Race is not the most important factor that determines my comfort level.

31. Which of the following statements BEST describes how you feel about your racial identity?

- I consider myself exclusively black (or African American).
- I sometimes consider myself black, sometimes my other race, and sometimes biracial depending on the circumstances.
- I consider myself biracial, but I experience the world as a black person.
- I consider myself exclusively biracial (neither black nor white)/
- I consider myself exclusively my other race (not black or biracial).
- Race is meaningless, I do not believe in racial identities.
- Other

Other (please specify)

32. Do you feel that you modify or change how you think of your racial identity based on significant racial events and circumstances? (e.g. the beatings or shooting of Rodney King, Mike Brown, Trayvon Martin). **Please explain.**
