

Being Mixed and Black: The Socialization of Mixed-Race Identity

BY

BRETT R. COLEMAN

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THESIS

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Defense Committee:

Sabine French, Chair and Advisor
Dina Birman
Constance Dallas, College of Nursing

For my mother, Phyllis.

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SUMMARY

This study examined the relationship between parental racial-ethnic socialization and racial-ethnic identity development from the perspective of biracial young adults. Despite the recent advances in theory regarding mixed-race identity development, few studies have examined how parents' attitudes about race and ethnicity influence the identities of mixed-race youth. Similarly, racial-ethnic socialization theory is largely based on the assumption that individuals identify with single racial-ethnic groups that are discrete and mutually exclusive. Participants were eight biracial young adults with one Black and one White parent. Through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, participants revealed that the socialization of their racial-ethnic identities involved balancing discrete and overlapping, mixed and Black identities. The relationship between socialization and identity development was subject to various ecological influences associated with living in a racialized society in which races are historically thought to be discrete groups with impermeable boundaries. Results are discussed in relation to ecological models of mixed-race identity development.

INTRODUCTION

Thirty years after the United States Supreme Court struck down laws against interracial marriage, the Office of Management and Budget (1997) issued Statistical Directive Number 15. This mandated that the 2000 U.S. census allow individuals to indicate more than one racial-ethnic category. According to the 2010 census, more than 9 million individuals indicated more than one race, representing 2.9% of the population. The majority of them, approximately 1.8 million, indicated Black and White (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Recently, there has been an upsurge in the social science literature regarding racial-ethnic identity among mixed-race individuals (Renn, 2000, 2003). Much of this work takes an ecological perspective that focuses on the context and process of identity development, and parental influence on that process has been proposed as an important area of study. Yet, there have been few empirical studies examining the parental racial socialization practices of parents with mixed race children (Root, 1999, 2000; Renn, 2000, 2003; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005; Rockquemore, Brunson, & Delgado, 2009; Sanchez & Bonam, 2009; Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009).

Research on racial-ethnic socialization shows that the strategies parents of color use to teach their children about the meaning of racial and ethnic group membership can influence how their children view themselves as members of their racial or ethnic group, as well as of the larger social world (see Hughes et al., 2006 for a review). Most of this research does not address the possibility that there may be more than one race or ethnicity represented in a single family. Therefore, it remains virtually unknown if there are racial socialization processes specific to mixed-race families. Given that research has shown that mixed-race identity development can differ from monoracial identity development in important ways, it is reasonable to expect that the socialization process for mixed-race families may also be different than that of monoracial

families (Root, 1992; Miville, Constantine, Baysden & So-Lloyd, 2005). This study examines the ways in which parental racial-ethnic socialization practices relate to the racial-ethnic identity development process and the expression of racial-ethnic identity for biracial young adults who have one Black/African American parent and one White/European American parent.

Mixed-Race Identity Theory

Racial-ethnic identity is one of the ways in which people understand themselves in social context. It is co-constructed by individuals and others in their environments who provide cues as to the meaning of being a member of one's group (Root, 1999). At the individual level, it includes a sense of belonging to a racial or ethnic group associated with various feelings and behaviors related to group membership. Particularly among people of color, a strong sense of racial or ethnic identification has been associated with psychological wellbeing and healthy social adjustment (Cross, 1971, 1991; Phinney, 1990; French, Seidman, Allen & Aber, 2006). The development of a racial-ethnic identity among mixed-race individuals can differ from that of mono-racial individuals in important ways. In addition to having to navigate between dominant and minority settings, mixed-race individuals have the added challenge of reconciling differing (and sometimes conflicting) racial, ethnic, or cultural realities that exist within their own families. Furthermore, the process of developing a racial-ethnic identity may be considerably more fluid among mixed-race individuals than among monoracial individuals (Hitlin, Brown, & Elder, 2006; Rockquemore, Brunσμα, & Delgado, 2009; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005; Root, 1997, 1998).

Theory regarding mixed-race identity is not new (for a review, see Rockquemore, Brunσμα, & Delgado, 2009). Early work in this area was characterized by so-called "marginal man" theories, which suggested that mixed-race individuals would necessarily experience and

internalize social marginality, resulting in psychological distress or dysfunction (Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937). More recent theorists reject the assertion that mixed-race individuals would necessarily experience this kind of dysfunction; though, they acknowledge that the mixed-race identity development process poses unique challenges and risks. For example, Kich (1992) suggests that as mixed-race children come to recognize that they are different than their mono-racial peers, “frustration and anger, longing, and fear of inferiority manifest in questions of loyalty toward one parent or the other” (p. 311).

Historically, the United States has been a society in which racial groups were thought to be discrete and mutually exclusive and there has been no acceptable social space in which mixed-race people could assert a racial identity that was not singular. Until recently, people who have one White and one non-White parent were subject to social pressure to identify with the non-White aspect of their heritage according to the rules of hypodescent. The aforementioned changes to the census may signify that a mixed, biracial, or multiracial identity category is becoming socially acceptable. However, this shift is new enough that it remains unclear what that category means and how it relates to the traditional racial hierarchy. The challenge for mixed-race people, then, is either to risk rejection and isolation from one racial or ethnic group, or to assert an identity that may not be socially validated. How individuals manage this challenge is at the heart of several theories regarding mixed-race identity development (Root, 1999; Rockquemore, Brunson, & Delgado, 2009).

Gibbs (1989) and Herring (1992) were among the first to describe a developmental framework of identity development specific to mixed-race people, primarily biracial Black/White individuals. The first challenge is to integrate dual racial-ethnic identities into a single, positive self-concept. Second, previous ways of identifying must be reconciled and

integrated into a stable personal identity. They assert that conflicts may arise during this process when biracial individuals experience developmental problems associated with asserting a dual identity or experiencing social marginality.

Poston (1990) developed the Biracial Identity Development Model (BIDM) to describe five stages through which one develops a biracial identity. This model resembles other stage models of identity development (e.g., Cross, 1971, 1991), yet differs in that it results in an integrated biracial identity. In the first stage, *personal identity*, the biracial child's identity does not reflect an awareness of race and ethnicity. It is based on interactions with family and peers. In the second stage, *choice of group categorization*, there is a crisis resulting from social pressure to choose a singular identity that fits into the socially accepted racial structure. This gives way to a third stage, *enmeshment/denial*, marked by confusion and guilt resulting from a perception of having denied an aspect of one's identity. A fourth stage, *appreciation*, is characterized by the realization that one need not choose a singular identity. A newfound appreciation for the possibility of multiple identities leads one to describe oneself according to a "broader reference group" (Rockquemore et al., 2009, p. 19). The fifth stage, *integration*, is thought to be a healthy outcome of the identity formation process wherein one arrives at a whole and integrated bi- or multiracial identity. An assumption of these developmental approaches is that a bi- or multiracial identity is a healthier outcome for mixed-race people than a singular (e.g., Black) identity (Gibbs, 1989; Gibbs & Hines, 1992; Herring, 1992; Poston, 1990).

The developmental framework describes a process that is largely internal to the individual. What is missing is a thorough consideration of contextual conditions under which such an outcome is or is not possible. For some, the choice to identify solely as Black may be more adaptive than a biracial identity. For example, if one's neighborhood and peers are

exclusively African American, a biracial identity may be rejected by others. Recognizing this fact, Maria Root (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) encouraged a rethinking of racial identity development from an ecological perspective that not only considers the implications of having more than one racial-ethnic heritage, but also accounts for contextual influences on the ways in which mixed-race individuals identify. Her model calls for examining mixed-race identity development through the “microlenses” of inherited influences (e.g., phenotype, parents’ attitudes), individual traits (e.g., temperament, coping skills), and social interactions with community (e.g., school, friends). These microlenses are in turn situated within broader “macrolenses” of gender, class and history. She draws upon a symbolic interactionist perspective in presuming that people derive, interpret, and modify meaning through social interaction. As such, the micro- and macrolenses in her model exist in dynamic relationship to one another, shifting their interrelationships as contextual conditions change (Blumer, 1969; Root, 1999).

Root suggests that examining how experiences are filtered through these lenses allows for a naturalistic understanding of how mixed-race individuals navigate socially constructed racial “borders” (1990, 1999). She outlines a typology of mixed-race identity by describing four types of “border crossings”. The first type involves having “both feet in both groups”. Here, a mixed-race individual is able to integrate multiple possible identities into one. For example, a Black/White biracial individual may think of him or herself as 100% Black *and* 100% White. The second type of border crossing involves “shifting the foreground and background”. In this case, one adjusts one’s identity depending on context as defined by race, ethnicity, or culture. In the third type, one chooses a border or hybrid identity. Finally, one may choose to situate oneself primarily in one racial or ethnic “camp” while maintaining the ability to comfortably make forays into other “camps”.

Inspired largely by Root's ecological approach, Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005) developed the Continuum of Biracial Identity model (COBI) based on their national interview study of biracial individuals, and therapy with biracial families and individuals. They opine that models that assert a bi- or multiracial identity outcome as the ideal pathologize the singular (Black) identity in much the same way that "marginal man" models pathologized multiraciality. Rather than focusing on a single, best outcome, the COBI is more concerned with the process by which one arrives at a particular type of identity. It is designed to acknowledge that "our identities are constructed through a *reflexive process* involving interaction between our self and others in our environment" (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 4). The COBI suggests a "blending continuum" anchored by poles indicating a singular identity option. At one end of the continuum is a singular (exclusively) Black identity. At the other end is a singular (exclusively) White identity. In between are a variety of blended identity options with varying degrees of emphasis. One may have a blended biracial identity with a Black emphasis, a blended identity with equal Black and White emphasis, or a blended identity with White emphasis. No particular location along the continuum ought to be considered ideal for all biracial individuals. Rather, it is a question of adaptation to one's social environment. Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005) assert that contextual influences present in the family, neighborhood, and school (and validation or rejection experienced in these environments) are all important determinants of which type of biracial identity one develops. Their emphasis is on pathways marked by acceptance or denial towards a particular place along the continuum. Through this model, they demonstrate how one may arrive at a singular Black identity, a singular White identity, or some manner of blended identity as a result of either accepting or denying some aspect of their heritage. Additionally,

they acknowledge that one's location along this continuum can change throughout the life course as their contextual influences change.

Empirical evidence. Empirical findings from both qualitative and quantitative studies have provided support for Root's and Rockquemore and Laszloffy's ecological models. First, ways of identifying indeed vary. Some mixed-race individuals identify exclusively with one race or ethnic group, others with two or more. Some create a "hybrid" identity and others shift from one identity to another. Still others refuse to identify with any race or ethnicity (Rockquemore & Arend, 2003; Harris & Sim, 2002; Renn, 2000).

The evidence suggests that all of these identity choices are influenced by contextual factors, including parental and familial socialization. While documentation of these phenomena comes mainly from studies with Black/White biracial participants, they occur among individuals of other racial-ethnic combinations as well (Kana'iaupuni & Liebler, 2005; Xie & Goyette, 1997). Some mixed-race individuals have been found to change their self-identifications throughout their lifetimes (Hitlin et al., 2006; Renn, 2000). This has been best documented among adolescent participants in the AddHealth study, a nationally representative longitudinal study of American adolescents (Hitlin et al., 2006). The ways in which the mixed-race adolescents in this study change their identities "varies between diversifying, consolidating, or maintaining multiracial self-identification" (Rockquemore et al., 2009, p. 9). Additionally, mixed-race college students have been found to shift their identities largely in response to the campus ecology (Miville et al., 2005; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2001; Renn, 2003). Renn (2003) describes the importance of literal and figurative space and the ways in which peer culture helps to shape "patterns of identity" for mixed-race college students. Acceptance in or rejection from race- and ethnicity-based student clubs, support or lack thereof for a multiracial

identity, and sometimes the creation of space uniquely for multiracial students were all found to be important to the ways in which her participants constructed meanings for their racial identities. These findings suggest that there are social conditions under which one type of mixed-race identity may be more adaptive than another. However, the conditions created in the home environment by parents and other family members, and their effects on mixed-race identity development, have not been thoroughly studied.

Mixed-Race Socialization

Racial-ethnic socialization refers to the ways in which parents and families teach children about being members of their racial and ethnic groups, in the context of a racially stratified and increasingly diverse American society (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Garcia Coll et al, 1996; Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009; French, Coleman & DiLorenzo, in press). Researchers who seek to understand the ways in which families of color socialize their children need ways to account for the presence of multiracial families, as they make up an increasing proportion of those families who can be categorized as “of color”. Many studies of racial-ethnic socialization include mixed-race participants in their ostensibly monoracial samples. The fact that researchers have not yet developed adequate strategies to account for their presence reflects persistent assumptions that racial groups are discrete and mutually exclusive, that mixed-race individuals necessarily accept socially imposed racial-ethnic identities, and that socialization processes that take place in mixed-race families can be evaluated according to standards thought to exist among mono-racial families. Just as Ogbu (1981) argued that the “conventional research approach which used white middle-class child-rearing practices and children's competencies as standards is not useful in understanding minority groups' child rearing and competencies” (p. 413), the use of mono-racial families of color as the standard is not necessarily useful for understanding the

socialization process among mixed-race families. To the extent that there is something unique about the ways in which mixed-race families socialize their children, it is important to examine this issue on its own terms.

The literature on racial-ethnic socialization has focused almost exclusively on mono-racial families of color. That which is most relevant to this study pertains to the racial socialization practices of African American families. Stevenson's (1995) framework for understanding racial socialization in African American families distinguishes between protective and proactive socialization. Protective socialization is that which is intended to prepare Black children to cope with oppression and social marginalization, whereas proactive socialization is meant to promote knowledge of African American culture and its strengths, beyond an orientation to oppressed minority status. Hughes and colleagues (2006) identified four key dimensions of racial-ethnic socialization important for families of color. *Preparation for bias* refers to parental strategies meant to prepare youth of color to cope with racism. *Promotion of mistrust* strategies are also meant to prepare youth of color for discrimination, but without the emphasis on coping. *Cultural socialization* refers to the ways in which parents and families teach children about cultural and ethnic traditions and knowledge of racial and ethnic group history. Finally, *egalitarian socialization* emphasizes the equal status of racial-ethnic groups and orients children of color towards mainstream American values.

A final framework relevant to this study is that of ecological competence as described by DeBerry, Scarr, and Weinberg (1996). From this perspective, African American families must help children become resilient against oppression by developing competence across multiple domains. There are three criteria for ecological competence: 1) awareness of racial issues, 2) understanding racial issues and differences, and 3) use of appropriate behaviors and strategies

across different racial contexts. In their longitudinal study of African American transracial adoptees, DeBerry and colleagues assessed ecological competence by measuring both Eurocentric and Afrocentric Reference Group Orientations. They found that both reference group orientations predicted psychological adjustment. In childhood, family racial socialization did not predict either orientation, but by adolescence, it predicted only Afrocentric orientation. However, adjustment declined over a ten-year period, and this decline was associated with less ecological competence in both reference group orientations, and greater orientation to a Eurocentric reference group. They suggested that the decline in adjustment was not related to knowing how to incorporate both reference group orientations into the adoptees' personal identities, but when one orientation might be more salient than the other.

Theoretical models described in the racial socialization literature are useful starting points for study of mixed-race socialization. O'Donoghue (2006) drew upon the concept of ecological competence in her study examining how White mothers of biracial, Black/White children engaged in racial-ethnic socialization. She paid particular attention to the effect of the mothers' own sense of ethnic identity on the socialization process and found that those who had a strong sense of ethnic or cultural identification (e.g., Irish or Italian) encouraged a bi-ethnic identity in their children, whereas those who did not have a strong sense of their own ethnicity emphasized a Black identity in their children. Many of these mothers said that their children's identity development process was not linear, and that they compartmentalized their identities into a private biracial, and a public Black identity. This phenomenon of compartmentalization has also been found among mixed-race college students (Miville et al., 2005; Renn, 2000). Applying the concept of ecological competence as described by DeBerry et al. (1996), O'Donoghue identified five processes that were important to the ways in which her participants raised their

biracial children. These included raising the children in a multiracial community, the importance of discussing racial issues, reinforcing African American culture, preparing the children (especially boys) for racism and discrimination, and exposing the children to other mixed-race families through support groups.

It is also useful to conceptualize “mixed” or “biracial” as discrete categories of identity and experience when studying racial socialization in mixed-race families, rather than relying on the implicit assumption that they are variants of African American racial socialization. In developing the COBI model, Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005) drew from a variety of data sources (including interviews and therapy sessions with mixed-race individuals and families, and analyses of texts produced by mixed-race authors and celebrities) in which socialization and other contextual factors were prominent. They assert that three factors are most important in shaping the ways in which parents racially socialize their mixed-race children: 1) individual and parental factors, including parents’ own socialization experiences and attitudes around race, 2) the quality of the relationship between parents, and 3) how parents respond to their children’s physical appearance. Consistent with other models of socialization and identity processes (Garcia Coll et al, 1996; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Root, 1997, 1998, 2003), the COBI model situates the socialization process within the broader societal context that is stratified along racial lines. Different environments (e.g., schools and neighborhoods) and kinds of relationships (e.g., with peers and friends) offer mixed-race children differing “implicit and explicit messages about race and their racial identities” (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, p. 88). These community influences are, in turn, situated within a broader societal context that brings its own shifting definitions of race to the socialization process. The challenge for mixed-race families is to balance and

reconcile these differing messages, originating from different locations of the social environment, when it comes to the socialization of children's racial-ethnic identities.

The issues of appearance and gender are two important examples of the ways in which broader societal influences affect socialization and identity processes. The concept of race, historically, has been linked to physical features. As such, the way a person looks triggers a variety of assumptions in others about which racial category he or she belongs to (as well as the status attached to that categorization). Whether a mixed-race person appears to belong to one racial group or another, or appears racially ambiguous, can strongly influence how others treat them. Additionally, the so-called "one-drop rule" historically has assigned a Black identity to mixed-race individuals with some African ancestry, regardless of how they looked. Though this rule has waned somewhat in social influence, it is by no means absent. However, physical appearance alone does not determine how an individual identifies. In order for mixed-race individuals to assert an identity that is not consistent with the one-drop rule, it has to be accepted and validated in one's social environment (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005).

Several researchers have noted the influence of gender on mixed-race identity development (Herschel, 1997; Gibbs, 1998; Herring, 1992; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005). Both Gibbs (1998) and Herring (1992) have suggested that rejection related to appearance can impact identity formation in women in general, and doubly so for mixed-race women. Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2005) show that "skin color stratification", the process (rooted in slavery days) of privileging light-skinned Blacks over dark-skinned Blacks, was a gendered phenomenon that has unique implications for mixed-race girls and women. The resulting "color complex" whereby physical features perceived as closer to "White" features are favored in and out of the Black community, has been shown to contribute to conflict between mixed-race

women and monoracial Black women (Rockquemore, 2002; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). This conflict can be a socializing influence that leads to the choice of a “biracial” or “White” identity. This identity choice, which is not available to monoracial Black women, can be a source of further tension (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005). Gender and appearance, then, are tied together in such a way as to make the process of identity development different for mixed-race females than for males, even though outcomes may be similar. With so many intersecting influences, it is important to consider the context within which parental racial socialization relates to racial-ethnic identity development.

While much has been learned about mixed-race identity development, its relationship to parental racial-ethnic socialization has only recently received scholarly attention. Racial-ethnic socialization is important for understanding racial-ethnic identity development generally, and perhaps more so for understanding mixed-race identity development specifically. A better understanding of the racial-ethnic socialization practices in mixed-race families can contribute to a better understanding of racial-ethnic socialization in general.

Research questions

Guided by both Root’s (1999) and Rockquemore and Laszloffy’s (2005) ecological models for understanding mixed-race identity, the goal of this study was to examine not only how parental socialization strategies related to participants’ identities, but also to understand participants’ perceptions of contextual influences on that relationship. The questions driving this study were 1) How were mixed-race individuals socialized in terms of race and ethnicity? 2) How do mixed-race individuals develop and express their racial-ethnic identities? 3) What role did socialization play in their identity development?

Research Design and Methods

Study Design

For this study I used a collective case study approach. The goal of this study was to describe the ways in which parental racial-ethnic socialization influences the development and expression of racial-ethnic identity among mixed-race young adults. My use of the case study approach was instrumental in that, rather than understanding a particular case, I was interested in understanding a phenomenon by studying multiple cases. Studying multiple cases facilitated the discovery of common topics and cross-case analysis, and facilitates “thick description” of phenomena so that they can be realistically represented (Geertz, 1973; Stake, 1995). The unit of analysis for this study was the individual person, and data were gathered through in-depth qualitative interviews.

Sample and Setting

Table 1 shows participants’ characteristics (see Appendix A for participant profiles). The sample included 8 biracial young adults, between 18 and 25 years of age, each with one White/European American and one Black/African American parent. There were 5 women and 3 men. Three participants had White mothers and 5 had Black mothers. All participants grew up in the Chicago metropolitan area, city or suburbs, and described their families as middle class. Five participants were undergraduate college students, 2 were graduate students, and 1 had some college education and worked in information technology. Seven participants were raised with both parents present in the home, and one was raised by a single mother.

Recruitment and compensation. Participants were recruited through the Biracial Family Network (BFN), and from among the student body at the University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC). The BFN is a thirty-year-old organization dedicated to the issues faced by mixed-race families

and individuals. It is part advocacy group and part social networking group. See Appendix B for a fuller description of the BFN.

UIC is an urban university with a student population that is highly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. It was important to recruit participants from a source other than the BFN because those associated with the organization may be more likely to identify as “mixed-race”, “multiracial”, or “biracial”. Since not all mixed-race individuals identify in these ways, drawing a proportion of the sample from this setting increased the likelihood that a diversity of identity types were represented in the entire sample.

Initial contact with potential participants associated with the BFN was made via email through the organization’s listserv. A message was sent to all members asking individuals who have one Black/African American parent and one White/European American parent, and are between 18 and 25 years of age, to participate. The message explained that participation involved filling out a brief demographic questionnaire and participating in at least one 60 to 90 minute interview, and that additional follow up interviews may be requested.

Initial contact with participants at UIC was made via a classified ad placed on the university’s events web page. The recruitment ad text used at UIC was identical to that used to recruit through the BFN listserv. Additionally, I asked participants from both BFN and UIC to help with recruitment by asking them to pass on information about the study to individuals they knew who fit the inclusion criteria. All participants in this study received \$15 as compensation.

Data Collection

Demographic questionnaire. Participants filled out a demographic questionnaire prior to being interviewed. Here they were asked to choose a pseudonym, and to indicate their gender, age, highest level of education, occupation, their mother’s race-ethnicity and their father’s race-

ethnicity. They were also asked to indicate their own racial-ethnic self-label. Additional items asked them to indicate where they grew up and to describe the racial-ethnic makeup of their neighborhoods and friendship networks, both while growing up and currently.

Interviews. The semi-structured, qualitative interviews for this study consisted of open-ended questions and probes for specific information regarding parental racial-ethnic socialization and racial-ethnic identity. Each interview began with the same open-ended question: *While you were growing up, what did your parents tell you about race and ethnicity?* I encouraged participants to expand on their answer to this initial question by asking them to “tell me more” about particular issues they raised, or to give specific examples. After this initial question, I relied on more specific, issue-related probes. These probe questions, outlined in the interview guide (Appendix C), addressed specific dimensions of racial-ethnic socialization and identity, as described above. Probes were used in different orders for different participants, depending on how conversations developed. Given that it was impossible to predict what participants would say when, it was necessary to weave the probe questions throughout the interviews in different ways for different participants (Stake, 1995). Seven of the interviews took place in my office at UIC. One interview was conducted in a coffee shop in downtown Chicago.

Data Management and Analysis

Data management. Interviews were audio recorded using a digital recording device. I transcribed the first three audio recordings using audio transcription software, and undergraduate research assistants transcribed the remaining five interviews using the same software. A separate file was created for each transcription. All files were stored in a folder on my password-protected personal computer.

Data analysis. I used Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) multi-step approach to coding and analyzing qualitative data. This approach involves three levels of analysis: text-based categories, sensitizing concepts, and theoretical constructs. Identifying text-based categories began while data were being collected. This involved examining interview transcripts for segments of text that were relevant to the research questions, categorizing phenomena described in the text, and identifying repeating ideas. The repeating ideas were similar words or phrases that appeared within a single transcript as well as across multiple transcripts. The text-based categories "paraphrase or generalize the text itself" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 145) and represent categories of phenomena as described by participants. I continually developed and refined the text-based categories until all eight transcripts had been examined in this manner. This process included discussions with colleagues in which I explained the emerging categories, shared relevant text, and received feedback about the meanings of the categories. This resulted in a codebook in which each text-based category was explicitly defined and could be used to code the transcripts.

In order to determine reliability and validity of the codes, I enlisted two colleagues to code one transcript to compare with my coding of the same transcript. We discussed codes for which there was not at least 90% inter-rater reliability and these discussions resulted in refining the definitions of some codes and dropping others from the codebook. This resulted in a second draft of the codebook that was uploaded to QDA Miner qualitative data analysis software. I used this program to code all eight transcripts. As an additional check for reliability, I enlisted four undergraduate research assistants to code three transcripts using the same software. When inter-rater reliability was less than 90%, we discussed and resolved the discrepancies such that we arrived at 100% coding reliability.

The second level of analysis involved organizing the text-based categories into thematic groupings called sensitizing concepts. Similar to the process of developing the text-based categories, I examined the codes and their definitions for common themes that portrayed what was said in the text of the transcripts. Sensitizing concepts are implicit topics that are common to specific text-based categories. I began this process after the first draft of the codebook was completed, shared several iterations of the sensitizing concepts with my colleagues, and continually refined them in light of their feedback. The goal was to identify sensitizing concepts that would be identifiable to the participants themselves (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Finally, I organized the sensitizing concepts into higher-order theoretical constructs. Theoretical constructs organize the sensitizing concepts into abstract ideas that reflect the research concerns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This involved a procedure, similar to the first two levels, of grouping the sensitizing concepts together into clusters according to similarities in their meaning. The theoretical constructs reflect the way in which I have interpreted the data in light of racial socialization theory and mixed-race identity theory described in the introduction. Appendix D shows the final draft of the code-book and includes the organization of the text-based categories into sensitizing concepts and theoretical constructs, and definitions of each text-based category, sensitizing concept, and theoretical construct.

As a final check on the validity of my interpretation of the data, I asked the participants for feedback on the text-based categories and sensitizing concepts, as suggested by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). I did so by emailing all eight participants a list of the text-based categories, organized by sensitizing concepts, with brief definitions of each and a brief explanation of the study findings. I asked them to tell me whether my interpretations accurately reflected their

experiences, and to provide any additional feedback they wished to share. Three participants responded that my interpretations accurately reflected their experiences.

Results and Discussion

The results showed that the socialization of participants' racial-ethnic identities was characterized by the central challenge of balancing discrete and overlapping, mixed and Black identities. The relationship between socialization and identity development was subject to various ecological influences associated with living in a racialized society in which races are historically thought to be discrete groups with impermeable boundaries. In this context, the social location of a mixed identity is uncertain. Thus, participants had to negotiate the meanings they attached to their own identities with the meanings attached to their identities by their parents and by other people.

Table 2 shows the ways in which the text-based categories are clustered into sensitizing concepts, as well as the organization of sensitizing concepts into higher order theoretical constructs. These are presented in a linear way in order to facilitate their exposition, though it should be noted that they are intermingled and interact with each other in participants' lives in a non-linear fashion. The theoretical constructs provide the overall organization for this section, and the bolded paragraph headings within each construct are the sensitizing concepts. Terms in italics represent the text-based categories, which sometimes appear in participants' quotations.

Being Mixed and Black

This construct expands the concept of blended or border identities as described in the literature on mixed-race identity (e.g., Root, 1999). For example, the COBI model (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005) portrays the ways in which biracial, Black/White individuals

are thought to blend discrete Black and White aspects of their heritage into a single identity. However, these data show that participants and their parents thought of “mixed” as a discrete identity category in its own right, with a distinct meaning that distinguished it from a Black identity. It was this discrete mixed identity that participants had to balance with a discrete Black identity. The Being Mixed and Black construct explains the aspects of simultaneously being mixed and being Black that participants and their families had to balance.

Being mixed. Identifying themselves as mixed or being identified as mixed by parents was central to participants’ socialization experiences as mixed-race people. All eight participants said that they *identified as mixed* or biracial (or some other variant, e.g., “Black and German”) at least some of the time. All but Sara and Alexandria said that one or both parents told them “*you’re mixed*”, referred to them as “mixed” or “biracial”, told them to identify themselves that way, or identified them to others in that way. However, this meant different things to different participants. For example, both Jackie and Marie had White mothers who were adamant that their daughters identify themselves as mixed:

She would just tell [me], you know ‘Tell people you’re Black and you’re White. You’re not, you know, just Black, you’re not just White. You’re mixed.’ (Marie)

Although both Jackie and Marie were told to identify themselves as mixed from an early age, and have developed unambiguous mixed identities, their experiences were very different. For Jackie, a mixed identity involved much exploration and shifting along the blending continuum described by the COBI model, whereas for Marie, being mixed was “no big deal”, requiring little exploration or reflection. This difference demonstrates the importance of contextualizing the process of socializing participants’ identities in order to understand different pathways to similar identity outcomes (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005).

One way to distinguish Jackie's developmental pathway from that of Marie is that Jackie recalled her mother telling her, "you're unique" as a mixed-race child. Three other participants reported being told the same thing, and all but one reported feeling *unique, special or different*, regardless of whether their parents told them this. As an adolescent, this had a positive effect on Jackie's self-image:

I thought I was special. To be a little bit vulgar, I thought I was the shit in second grade...it was what made me better than some other kid....At that point in my life it was, 'Yeah I don't look like you, and you don't look like me, and this is what makes me better than you.' (Jackie)

Stevenson (1995) has described one of the aims of racial socialization as proactive, going beyond an emphasis on racism and discrimination towards a greater emphasis on pride in being a member of one's racial or ethnic group. Parents who stressed a mixed identity as something special or unique may have been attempting to instill this kind of pride in their children. They may be said to have engaged in a form of proactive racial socialization that was tailored to the unique challenges their children would face in asserting a discrete mixed identity in the context of the Black/White racial dichotomy so prevalent in society. However, as Sara explains, there is a risk that feeling different as a mixed-race person can be marginalizing:

When you spend the first seven to ten years of your life being told you're the other, even though you don't want to be the other, you realize 'Wow! You know, my parents are teaching me this and I already experienced that. Yeah, you know what? I am different.'

Bradshaw describes the experience of uniqueness for biracial people as a "variant on the obscuring of individuality" (1992, p. 84). She suggests that when mixed-race people experience "ambiguous membership" or "tenuous belonging" to racial-ethnic groups, being unique, special or different can be more about the constant threat of rejection and marginalization than being a

member of a special group. For Sara, being different from White people was related to a primarily Black self-identification.

For four participants, being mixed meant being able to *understand both sides*, that is, to understand the world from both a Black and White perspective. Ted's mother told him that he would be able to "see things differently" because he was "in between the two sides." Sara, on the other hand, came to this conclusion on her own:

You see things through both lenses all the time...you see the mentality of what a White person is thinking and what a Black person is thinking...you're experiencing both cultures fully but not at the same time. So it's a very interesting perspective to be in and I wouldn't change it.

While they did not suggest that being mixed meant that they were White, having a White parent and White family members afforded these participants an insider's view to a "White person's mentality" that they may otherwise not be privy to. Previous research has shown that some mixed-race individuals report a cognitive flexibility that provides the ability to span racial and ethnic boundaries or bridge gaps between racial and ethnic groups (Miville et al., 2005; Renn, 2000). Understanding both sides is related to the concept of ecological competence, which requires not only awareness and understanding of race-related issues, but also the ability to adapt behaviorally to Black and White contexts (DeBerry et al., 1996; O'Donoghue, 2006).

For two participants, being able to adapt to different racial or ethnic contexts afforded a measure of self-determination when it came to racial-ethnic identification. Both Alexandria and Cameron perceived that their parents wanted them to "*figure it out myself*" in regards to claiming a racial-ethnic identity. This represents a dimension of racial-ethnic socialization that is unique to parents of mixed-race children. Given that monoracial parents cannot know what it is like to negotiate multiple racial-ethnic identities, encouraging their children to define and

develop their own identities may be a viable strategy. Cameron believed that his White father saw White as good and Black as bad, and that “because I’m in the middle it’s basically up to me to choose which one I want to be.” His mother, on the other hand, wanted to let him “be who he is, which is a mixture.” Alexandria perceived her mother as “more forceful with her opinions”:

She was like you have to decide what you want people to refer [to] you as. And so...she always, early on, started me thinking about what my identity was or what I wanted it to be...She was like ‘You have to tell people what you want them to call you, otherwise they’ll call you what they want, and you don’t want that.’ She always said stuff like that.

In their study of ecological competence among Black transracial adoptees, and DeBerry and colleagues (1996) discuss the importance of providing children with racial labels. While Alexandria’s mother did not provide any clear label, she nevertheless understood the importance of an identity label and the risk that others may label her daughter in ways that did not match her self-perception. The difference between a biracial child and a Black child being raised by White adoptive parents is that the biracial child has more choices in terms of identity labels. Therefore, another important task for parents of mixed-race children is to help them understand not only the importance of racial identity labels, but the range of choices available to them as well.

There were varying degrees to which participants had resolved their identity development processes. For three participants, Being Mixed included a process of *appreciating being mixed* that resembles the affirmation and belonging, and achievement dimensions of ethnic identity as described by Phinney (1989; 2007). Jackie and Ted, both 25 years of age, described a sense of security in a distinct mixed identity. For Ted, this security was associated with having a reference group of other mixed people, particularly advocacy groups such as the BFN:

I mean, part of it is being more secure just in myself in general. Um, there’s also, you know, as time goes on, there’s more and more of us being born...certainly more visible out there....And then there’s also the time I’ve spent, you know, with

the whole multiracial advocacy.... And there's always, there's been a whole lot of um, like positive reinforcement. And also, just, what I- I guess what I see as a moving forward towards, a um, a certain future where we um, you know, multiracial people are more accepted for being just multiracial instead of having to choose one or the other.

Jackie described resolving a period of struggle in which she felt “pushed and pulled in a lot of different directions” in response to her insistence on a mixed identity since childhood. She concluded:

I'm mixed regardless of how the girls try to talk to me about the one drop rule, or somebody's trying to tell me that, because I'm light skinned and light eyed, that I can't do this or can't do that. I just took more pride, even more pride. I was like ‘I'm mixed! That's just who I am!’ I think I finally came to that solid conclusion.

In contrast, Alexandria is 18 years old, and just beginning to appreciate what it means to be mixed. She describes being at a highly diverse university as instigating a new way of thinking about her identity, and that “it's starting to feel different”:

But, I don't know, I feel like I'm definitely questioning what it means to be biracial now, and uh, maybe trying to think about how that can be incorporated onto my college community. Uh, right now I joined the Multi Cultural Prospective Students Advisory Board...And so, I'm trying to explore my identity, um, through maybe use them as a tool to kind of help.

Being Black. Identifying as Black was also central to participants' socialization experiences. For Ron, Cameron and Sara, being advised, “*people will see you as Black*” was also related to their ecological competence. Their Black mothers appear to have understood the “one drop rule” as a powerful cultural artifact that influenced how people determined who is Black or White and they wanted their children to understand the same thing. Ron recalled his mother explaining a variation of the “one drop rule”:

My mom told me, I think it's the uh Mississippi Rule or something...the rule for being Black in America: if people see you as Black when you're walking down a street in Southern Mississippi, then you're Black.

For three of the Black mothers, the fact that their children would be seen as Black was related to telling their children, "*you're Black*":

It has always been very clear...myself and my sisters, anytime we were going through those phases of um 'Well, am I White, am I Black?'...any of those identity crisis type phases...It was always very clear that we were being raised to be Black and they did it for survival. (Sara)

Parents of monoracial Black children may also want to emphasize a Black identity in their children, but the emphasis is on the meaning of being Black (Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995). For parents of biracial children, there is the added task of establishing whether their children are Black, and to what extent being Black ought to be part of their personal identities. From an ecological perspective, the extent to which parents should stress a given identity type for their children relates to how adaptive that identity type may be for their children in their social environments (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005).

The participants whose Black mothers advised them that they would be seen as Black reported their own perceptions of *being seen as Black* by others. They appear to have been prepared to some degree to manage the task of reconciling discrepancies between how they are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves, a significant tension in the process of identity resolution for mixed-race individuals (Root, 1999). Sara resolved this tension by asserting a firm Black identity, one that her parents encouraged from an early age. Ron, on the other hand, remains ambivalent about his racial identity:

Yeah, I mean even though you know I guess I don't really perceive myself as being Black per se, it doesn't change the fact that to society I am Black, which

means I am Black, you know? So does that mean I perceive myself as Black? Maybe, I don't know, I'm confused now.

Both Ron and his sister Anna expressed discomfort with the perceived need for a racial identity. They both said that they identified themselves as “Black and German” for the sake of others, but that racial or ethnic identity held little meaning for them personally. For them, the incongruence between their self-perceptions (to which race was not important) and the perceptions of others (to which it was) resulted in conflicted thoughts and feelings about their racial identities. This may be related to their parents’ conflicting messages. On the one hand, they recalled that their parents said that race “wasn’t an issue” or that discussions of race did not relate directly to them as a mixed family; yet, they recalled that their parents were sensitive to racism and quick to point it out. The lack of a clear message from their parents may have left them ill prepared to resolve the tensions related to their personal identity development. Sara’s parents, on the other hand, clearly communicated to their children that they were Black and this contributed to Sara’s development of an unambiguous Black identity.

Racial socialization messages from parents, as well as input from other people, interacted with the cognitive and affective aspects of participants’ racial-ethnic identities in ways that are common to both biracial identity models and models of racial and ethnic identity that are used with ostensibly monoracial samples (Phinney 1989; Root, 1999; Sellers, 1997). For four participants, an internalized feeling or knowledge of Being Black ranged from relatively stable to conditional and dependent upon environmental cues for its activation. This demonstrates the transactional nature of racial identity as conceived of in both Root’s (1999) and Rockquemore and Laszloffy’s (2005) ecological models of mixed-race identity. For the early adolescent Sara, *feeling or knowing you’re Black* was related to wanting, but not being able to be White:

When you're surrounded by white people, that's what you want to be. So I remember having that desire, but I also remember having that desire because I knew I was black.

For Jackie, on the other hand, a primarily mixed identity meant feeling “a little bit closer to Black” than White, and feeling more Black in certain situations:

I always tell my mom, ‘Whenever I’m around your family, I feel extra-Black.’ Like, you know, I am definitely darker than everybody else. You know, I’m not that dark, but I feel Black whenever I’m around your family.’

For Ted, Sara, and Cameron, the feeling or knowledge of Being Black was associated with an *appreciation for being Black* similar to the process of *appreciating being mixed* described above. Note that Ted described this kind of appreciation for both the mixed and Black aspects of his identity. Although Cameron does not identify exclusively as Black, he expressed an appreciation for things he associates with Black culture, and a preference for spending time with Black friends:

I much rather go play basketball, or go to the music studio, you know? And when my Black friends [say], ‘Hey what do you wanna do?’ ‘I don’t know, let’s go play ball, let’s go play basketball, football, or go to the studio.’ It’s like ‘Yes, thank you!’, things that I like to do!

Sara described a process of accepting that she is Black, resulting from a period of struggle and exploration after realizing that she could not be White. She identified a specific turning point when she was twelve years old and traveled on her own to spend time with family friends who introduced her to other Black people and aspects of Black culture that she did not have access to in the mostly White suburbs where she grew up. This began a process of affirming her Black identity:

Being exposed to Black people I think really helped in solidifying that change of no, it’s okay to identify and be Black. You know? I can be talented, I can be

beautiful, I can be all these things. I can be amazing and do all these things and be Black. I don't have to be White to be successful. Umm, so then that kind of made me feel a lot more comfortable in myself.

These results demonstrate that the socialization of participants' racial-ethnic identities involved blending and balancing conceptually distinct Black and mixed identity categories. The next section describes the contexts in which participants received messages about those categories and developed an understanding of their blended identities.

Ecological Influences

Ecological models of mixed-race identity development place greater emphasis on the context in which individuals develop their racial-ethnic identities than on the outcomes of the identity development process (Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003; Root, 1990; 1999). This implies the importance of not only parental racial socialization for mixed-race identity development, but also the context in which the socialization occurs. The Ecological Influences construct takes its cue from Root's ecological model of racial identity in which "environments are discerned as learning places for corroboration and challenges to one's identity" (Root, 1999, p.77) and explains the contextual influences on the process of balancing mixed and Black identities. It is informed by the sensitizing concepts Parents' and Families' Attitudes, Family Relationships, and Social Environment, Social Structure and Culture, which contextualize the ways in which participants learned about being mixed and being Black, and blended these influences into their personal identities.

Parents' and family members' attitudes. Racial-ethnic socialization is a process of passing on perceptions and interpretations of the meaning of race and ethnicity inter-generationally, and is reinterpreted by its recipients in light of their own experiences, traits, and aptitudes (Stevenson, 1995, Hughes et al. 2006; Root, 2003). Participants described their

perceptions of Parents' and Family Members' Attitudes about race as important influences on their identity development.

Four participants said that one or both parents *defied stereotypes and/or crossed racial boundaries*, meaning that they behaved in ways that contradicted stereotypes of their own race or ethnicity, had experiences not typical for someone of their race or ethnicity, or were adept at relating to people not of their own race or ethnicity. For example, Ted recalled his mother describing herself as a “cultural mulatto” because she was a professional artist and perceived that this gave her greater access to White people than other Black people had. Marie described her White mother as having “a little soul to her”, which she attributed to the fact that she was “raised by a Black man” and is particularly comfortable around Black people. Similarly, Alexandria described her mother as “very close to the Black culture” and describes both of her parents as “very different from any stereotypes about their own race.” Jackie’s mother was eager to leave the mostly Finnish town where she grew up and was happy to not have “blonde-haired, blue-eyed children.” Jackie recalled her mother joking about her father as being “raised in a Black family, but raised to be White” because he came from a “family of educators...raised with the importance of education...with manners and kind of non-stereotypical Black.”

Three of the four participants who perceived their parents in this way had developed primarily mixed personal identities in which they were very secure. The fourth, Alexandria, also identified primarily as mixed but was just beginning to explore the implications of asserting that identity. It appears that this perception of their parents served a developmentally instigative function that helped to dispel the myth of impermeable racial boundaries, and created space within the family microsystem for participants to become comfortable with identities situated at the borders of socially defined racial locations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Root, 1996).

However, participants' families were not models of racial harmony. All of them described stories about *parents' and family members' experiences with racism*, including racism and prejudice within their own families. The most extreme examples were cases in which one or both parents had been disowned for marrying outside of their race. Overall, these experiences served as the basis for discussions about racism and discrimination in general, and helped to prepare participants for the realities of a racially stratified world. As Alexandria explains:

They didn't want to disillusion me at all, they were very upfront about what kinds of things were out there, what people thought, that my own family could be racist, and I think that was to emphasize, our family they're still good people, they've just been educated poorly. This is how they grew up and this is what they think. They're not evil people necessarily, and you know, it's just an ignorance issue. And so I think they tried to emphasize that aspect of it, that it's ignorance and it's kind of, not our job, but kind of, to kind of educate people, at least educate people about their own ignorance, or try to.

Preparing children to cope with racism is important for families of color in general. Parents of mixed-race children may be uniquely positioned to prepare their children in this way, particularly if they draw upon their own experiences of coping with racism and rejection from their families. Parents of mixed-race children who do not seize upon this opportunity may do their children a disservice in that they may less well prepare them to cope with not only anti-Black discrimination, but discrimination directed at them for their mixed-race status as well, including from family members (Hughes et al., 2006; Dalmage, 2003; Root, 1999; Winn & Priest, 1993).

In some cases, parents expressed attitudes about race that conflicted with participants' own attitudes and created at least minor tensions. Two participants reported that their mothers encouraged them to befriend, interact with, or socialize with either Black or White people specifically. Marie's White mother wondered *why she didn't have any White friends*, "maybe because she's White", Marie speculated, "I don't know. It's kinda funny because in my opinion

my mom has a lot of Black friends, so that's kinda funny that she says that to me." Ron's mother, on the other hand, wanted him to socialize more with Black people. He said that she "was always trying to get me to bond with the Black community." He explained his mother's position in terms of her belief that people would see him as Black:

Yeah she wanted that because, you know, like she said she knew that people would consider me Black for the rest of my life; I wouldn't have much choice in that matter. So, her train of thought was, you know, like I didn't really completely understand [that] the Black community could like help me out of sticky situations regarding race or something. I don't know. I still don't completely get it.

For Ron's mother, a stronger connection to the Black community would have provided him with some protection from the racism he would inevitably experience as a Black male. However, children's own attitudes can affect the ways in which socialization messages are interpreted (Stevenson, 1995; Root, 1999). Although Ron understood that he was perceived as Black by others and could be discriminated against because of it, he ultimately "tuned out" his mother because he did not strongly identify as Black and was not comfortable around Black people:

Obviously saying nothing about the individuals, but just like the community, Black as a whole, I didn't really want to have anything to do with them.

Anna and Cameron described conflicts with their White fathers, both of whom expressed displeasure with what they perceived as stereotypical Black behaviors. Anna recalled that her father "really hates it if you talk with um like, ebonics, if you don't speak properly or whatever." She said he thought it made her sound "stupid" and "uneducated." Cameron's father became concerned with how Cameron was presenting himself after a run-in with the law. He perceived that his father associated popular Black culture and fashion with thuggishness. Cameron felt that his father equated Whiteness with acceptable behavior and self-presentation and summed up his father's message as, "*You're being too Black. Can you be a little bit more White for me, please?*"

Although Cameron referred to his father's attitudes as "racist", their conflict is more appropriately contextualized through a class "macrolens" (Root, 1999). Race and class are confounded in his argument that Cameron should be "more White", as exemplified by his equating his wife's Black family with a lower class status that Cameron should avoid:

And so he's like 'You want to live like them? Or do you want to be able to step into a home and not have to worry about stepping on bugs?' I'm like, 'Wow, ok, that's, that's, that's a little racist right there, simply for the fact that you're tying mom's side of the family, which are all Black to living like crap'... if I'm not living like that, Black, what's the opposite of Black? White, you know. Like if I'm not living like this, then you, I guess you're implying I don't want to live this way?

Anna and Cameron's White fathers may have had the special privilege of freely equating Black cultural modes of expression with lower class status while maintaining cover from accusations of racism because they had Black wives and biracial children. This stands in stark contrast to the Black fathers of Jackie, Marie, and Alexandria. All three women claimed that their *fathers didn't talk much about race*. Marie and Alexandria both claimed that this was due to the fact that their fathers didn't talk much about anything. But Jackie's father refused to discuss race outright. Jackie thought, "If anything, I think my dad attempted to hide me from race...he never really answered questions about it or anything." There is very little in the racial socialization literature about the effect of silence about race other than the fact that some parents report no racial socialization strategies. However this finding may be related to the gender dynamics between fathers and daughters. Some studies with African American youth have found that girls are more likely to report no racial socialization compared to boys (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006). A limitation of this study is that there were no male participants with Black fathers. This raises the question for future research on mixed-race socialization as to whether Black fathers are more likely to discuss race issues with biracial sons than daughters.

Family relationships. This sensitizing concept also demonstrates the intersection of race, class, and culture as it relates to the socialization of participants' racial-ethnic identities. Families are the first reference group that the developing child takes his or her identity cues from (Poston, 1990). For biracial children to grow up with relatively equal exposure to both sides of the family and relatively good relations between them, the concept of a blended family and a blended personal identity may be established strongly enough to withstand challenges in other environments as the children become more independent. Marie's family provides the best example of this, given that her maternal grandmother married a Black man and her mother grew up with biracial siblings. By the time Marie was born, the family was already "very mixed."

Conversely, *feeling different from extended family members and/or feeling closer to one side of the family* may be associated with difficulties in the identity formation process. Siblings Ron and Anna both discussed feeling different from Black family members who lived in the South. They talked differently, dressed differently, "I just don't feel close with them. I don't dislike them. I don't have a good time when I'm down there", said Ron. They both clearly felt closer to their White family members, so much so that Ron carried a picture of himself with some of his father's family, which he proudly displayed during our interview. He produced no such picture with Black family members. This kind of psychological distance from Black family members may be related to the possibility of a discrete mixed identity. A socially imposed Black identity may not make sense to someone who feels distant from his or her Black family members. As Alexandria said:

It was hard when people were always saying 'Oh, you're Black, you're Black.' I didn't even identify with the Black side of my family at all, how could I be Black?

Ted felt much closer to his Black family because they raised him. Yet, he understood that being mixed made him different from Black family members, partially due to differences in class. He felt that he and his biracial cousins were targets of resentment because they had greater access to class mobility, by virtue of their White heritage, than their Black relatives. He described the situation this way: “We’re this big brown family, we’re the, the you know, the tan line.” The risk of alienating Black family members by asserting a mixed identity (and taking advantage of its relative privileges) is an important challenge for mixed race individuals, one that is rooted in a macro-level, sociocultural confounding of race and class (Root, 2000).

Social environment, social structure and culture. Socializing influences exist beyond the home and family as well. Some have argued that dyadic parental socialization is less influential than that of other sources like the inter- and intra group processes among children’s peer groups (Harris, 1995). Indeed, participants in this study placed a great deal of importance on interactions with friends, peers, and even strangers for the ways in which they developed and negotiated overlapping Black and mixed identities. The sensitizing concept Social Environment, Social Structure and Culture demonstrates how extra-familial influences related to the socialization of participants’ identities.

Having other mixed people around, in their own families and their social environments, was important for six participants. Marie’s White mother was raised by a Black stepfather and had biracial siblings. She perceived that “my mom’s side of the family is very mixed, very integrated.” She also noted that “there are so many interracial couples, there’s a lot of mixes.” For her, the presence of other mixed people and families, in her life and in the world at large, meant that “there was no like, great issue about” being mixed. Two of Ted’s uncles had biracial children and “there was always at least one of my cousins around to remind [me], I’m just like

you.” Jackie described a close relationship with a biracial neighbor whom she looked up to and who “always had fun playing with my hair.” This relationship contributed to her feeling “a little ethnocentric” as a mixed child. It is noteworthy that although these three participants had other mixed people and families in their lives from an early age, only Jackie and Ted felt compelled to participate in mixed-race advocacy groups like the BFN. Marie was only vaguely aware of the organization and showed no interest in participating in it. This shows how similar contexts alone, such as having other mixed people around, don’t entirely explain individuals’ identity trajectories. As Root (1999) suggests, it is also important to consider individuals’ traits and aptitudes, and how they interact with context.

Regional racial dynamics are also important to Root’s (1999, 2000) model of racial identity development. Jackie and Marie, who grew up in the highly integrated South suburbs of Chicago were aware of the presence of other mixed people and families from an early age. Not only did this provide a small reference group of mixed-race peers with whom they could relate, it also reduced the sense of otherness associated with an identity status situated at the borders of race. Their communities had at least some frame of reference for the meaning of a mixed identity such that they appeared less alien than other participants who grew up in environments without a frame of reference for the meaning of “mixed” or “biracial” as an identity status (Dalmage, 2003). For Sara growing up in the predominantly White Western Suburbs of Chicago, and Alexandria who went to an all White elementary school, the lack of understanding of the meaning of a mixed identity meant that peers perceived them as Black. In Alexandria’s words, “At the all white school, I was kind of just Black. Because I was different, I was Black.”

Changing racial dynamics in five participants’ environments highlighted the ways in which identity development is a process of negotiation between individuals and relevant

reference groups (Wallace, 2003; Root, 1999). For Sara, exposure to other Black people as a result of travel provided an immersion experience that resembles Cross's (1971, 1991) Black identity model. Conversely, Alexandria's transfer from an "all White" private school to a "majority Black" public school was:

...a big jump because I was never used to Black kids in general, that much. And they were a lot rougher, more aggressive than the White kids I had gone to school with, and so I had to adjust a lot.

This experience helped her realize how different she was from other Black children and helped her begin to distinguish being mixed from being Black in relation to her own personal identity. Similarly, when Cameron was in second grade, a move from a predominantly Black neighborhood to a predominantly White neighborhood led to his first experience with overt racism when a White classmate called him "Blacky". The experience took him by surprise because he had "never dealt with that kind of thing before, because where I was from...we were all Black." He explained that this experience prompted his mother to discuss racial prejudice for the first time. Her explanation, in turn, helped him to realize that "I actually am different" because of race.

Much of this identity negotiation occurs as a result of being asked the "*what are you*" question. All eight participants reported having their identity questioned or challenged by others. In some cases participants were asked to identify themselves racially or ethnically because of their racially ambiguous appearances. Alexandria recalled that her first memory of talking about race was with her mother about the fact that kids at school were always "asking me what I was." Ted, Jackie, Alexandria and Cameron all reported having to explain that they were not Latino/a or Egyptian or Greek. In other cases, participants reported being pressured to choose a Black or White identity, or to defend the authenticity of their Blackness:

It's weird sometimes to hear people say 'You can't, you can't say certain things', or 'when you curse you sound too proper', or um 'you're White.' I hear that a lot from like my Black friends. (Marie)

The “what are you” question is inherent to the process of “othering” mixed-race people. On the one hand, it reveals an assumption about the organization of society in which racial groups are presumed to be mutually exclusive (an organization into which mixed-race people cannot neatly fit). On the other hand, it challenges the mixed-race individual to continually rethink and refine the answer, for his or herself and for others (Bradshaw, 1992; Williams, 1996). Despite the marginalizing effects of continually having to explain or defend their identities, the “what are you” question helped to instigate not only identity development, but the development of the racial socialization process as well (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As Marie explained, the question prompted conversations with her mother about racial identity. It enabled her to develop a frame for challenging the popular script of racial purity, and to stake out a social location for a mixed identity (Root, 1999; Garcia Coll et al., 1996):

I was always asked, ‘Well what are you?’ Or my mom was always asked ‘What is she?’ So it was kinda, ‘Just tell people you’re mixed. Your father’s Black and your mom’s white.’

Explaining one’s identity to strangers or new acquaintances contrasts with the ways in which participants informed the blending of mixed and Black identities through interactions with friends and peers. The people that participants socialized with, from close friends to schoolmates, were important influences on all eight participants’ identity development. Some focused on whom they felt comfortable with. Marie, for example, distinguished between White “associates” and “friends” who are African American, explaining that they are “*just who I click with.*” When asked what it means to “click” with someone, she explained:

Umm, like a connection I guess you can say.... it's who I'm like attract- like who I get along with, I guess you can say, who I see myself actually going out and having a good time with, I guess you can say.

For Jackie, however, the issue was largely rejection from Black girls who objected to her dating Black boys during high school. She explained how this related to shifts in her identity development:

I really did, at one time... identify strongly as Black, and I...I tried to keep a lot of Black friends and I hung around with Black guys, and White girls who dated Black guys, and um, and I wore like really dark lip liner on my lips and slicked my hair back with ...Luster Pink Oil, and um wore baggy khakis and baggie jeans with K-Swiss white shoes and stuff and...[laughs] Um, I really, really was identifying more as Black then. And then, uh, I was kind of shunned when Black girls didn't like me so much, and that wasn't really working for me. And then um... my khakis got a little bit tighter, and I was just going to Abercrombie & Fitch, and Gap, and my friends became White and I started listening to Dave Matthews Band and John Mayer, and, um, I definitely identified- I was still, I always identified as mixed during these points, but I think um, culturally, per se, I was identifying with one over the other.

Root (1996) describes one possible identity process for mixed-race people as “shifting the foreground and background.” While Jackie always maintained a mixed identity internally, at a more superficial level, she was able to shift who she “identified with”. This kind of identity compartmentalization appears to be common among mixed-race individuals for whom a public Black (or other minority) identity is socially adaptive, while they maintain a private mixed identity (O'Donoghue, 2006; Renn, 2000). After much exploration and personal reflection, Jackie claimed that her comfort in asserting a mixed identity publicly is reflected in the fact that her friends are now racially and ethnically diverse.

Compare Jackie to Ron who remains conflicted about feeling more comfortable with White people and ambivalent about his racial identity. Although he has a few Black friends, Ron's discomfort with Black people stems from conflicts with “ghetto” Black kids during

adolescence. For him, the relative class privilege over Black peers while growing up contributed to a sense of shame for rejecting them. He described an incident in which a White friend referred to “ghetto Black people in du-rags and low pants” as “niggers”. He confided to Ron, “I don’t really like Black people” and said that he didn’t think of Ron as Black because he wasn’t “ghetto”. Ron concluded:

What really bothered me, like really, really, this really did bother me, was that in some ways I actually sympathized with him. I realized, in some ways, I would never ever say this to him, but in some ways I kind of felt the same way, and that really bothered me, that realization...Because I felt like I was a racist.

Stage models of biracial identity development point to shame or guilt for rejecting one aspect of one’s identity as significant developmental challenge that must be resolved in order to develop an integrated biracial identity. From the ecological perspective, the sense of shame that Ron expressed is explained as much by class differences as it is by his individual racial identity development process. To some extent, he agreed with his friend that not being “ghetto” meant not being Black. For him, the confounding of class and race appears to be related to his ambivalence about his own racial identity (Root, 2000; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005; Poston, 1990).

In addition to negotiating dual racial identities, participants also had to grapple with the problem of ethnic or cultural identification. Children can learn about their ethnic and cultural heritage through the process of *cultural socialization*, wherein parents or other family members pass on traditions, history, and knowledge about one’s ethnic group (Hughes et al., 2006; Phinney, 1989; Stevenson, 1995). Ecological models of mixed-race identity suggest that parents’ own ethnic identities are important influences on that of their children. O’Donoughue (2006) found that White mothers of biracial (Black/White) children who had a clear sense of their own

ethnic identities encouraged a bi-ethnic orientation in their children. However, most of the mothers in her study did not have a strong sense of ethnicity and focused primarily on socializing their children in terms of Black culture, which they thought would be more socially adaptive. O'Donoghue related this to the fact that these women considered themselves essentially raceless and having no particular ethnicity other than a generic, middle class White identity (Carter & Helms, 1990).

Three participants mentioned an appreciation for Black cultural modes of expression that were present while they were growing up (such as music and food) that informed the Black aspects of their identities. For example, Ted, having been raised primarily by his Black family, was taught to “remember what happened in the past”, such as slavery and the Underground Railroad, and that at Thanksgiving “it’s not pumpkin pie. It’s sweet potato pie!” However, all but Alexandria reported that they were not raised with any significant cultural traditions in the home, and five participants lamented that they lacked a sense of ethnic or cultural identification. Jackie, for example, felt only superficial connections to her mother’s German heritage and her father’s African American heritage, and recalled that her own lack of ethnic identity became apparent when she considered joining a predominantly Latina sorority. The “crossing over” ceremony required initiates to place flags on their backs to signify their ethnic and national heritage:

And I was like, ‘Uh, so if I do this, what are my flags gonna be? Like, I think that was for the first time I’m going, ‘*I don’t have a flag.*’ I don’t have any kind of cultural identity that I think the Latino community has, and I was kind of jealous of it, actually.

In terms of the socialization of participants’ identities, there was a greater emphasis on race than on ethnic or cultural identity. Some models of multiracial/multiethnic identity suggest that racial and ethnic identity have an orthogonal relationship, existing independent of one

another in the same individual (Ramirez, 1998; Root, 1998). Alexandria represented a variant of this phenomenon. On one hand, she felt there was “no central culture” in her father’s Black family and that her biracial status lacked “it’s own culture... because biracial people don’t necessarily share cultural experiences or cultural history.” On the other hand, she described the strong influence of her Polish grandmother who maintained many ethnic traditions that served to strengthen the maternal family fabric. She explained, “That’s what I consider my culture to be...or at least a big part of my culture, not my whole culture.”

No other participant expressly identified with a cultural or ethnic group in this manner, although Jackie and Ted expressed an interest in exploring their ethnic heritages in the future. All participants spoke more clearly and thoroughly about their racial identities than their ethnic identities. Overall, ethnic identity appears to have been subsumed under racial identity in participants’ minds. It may be that for them, the task of negotiating the “borderlands” of a racially stratified society diverts attention from the importance of ethnicity (Root, 1996; Dalmage, 2003).

Living in a Racialized Society

Critical race theory explains how the concept of race is socially constructed in order to organize society into an unequal hierarchy that privileges Whiteness. From this perspective, the categorization of people into racial groups based on arbitrary physical characteristics is dehumanizing (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Nevertheless, the concept of race is so engrained in American society that the development of a positive racial identity is important to the overall wellbeing of people of color. The Living in a Racialized Society construct describes how “racialization” pressures mixed-race individuals and families to develop racial identities and stake out a position in the racial hierarchy.

Root's model calls for taking generation into account when assessing mixed-race identity development. The generation that participants of this study belong to exists at a time when there is greater acceptance for mixed-race identity as a discrete category than ever before. Yet, the notion of a distinct mixed race identity is new enough that its social location remains undetermined. The increased presence and acknowledgement of mixed-race people who assert "border" identities may signal a macro level shift away from essentialist notions of races as impermeable categories, as reflected in the changes to the way race is recorded in the national census. However, the social construction of races as separate categories that inform the hierarchical organization of society remains dominant (Omi & Winant, 1994). Participants and their families have had to cope with that reality even as they stand in opposition to it, intentionally or unintentionally, by virtue of their very existence.

Negotiating racial borders. This sensitizing concept describes the ways in which participants and their families coped with the uncertainty of the social location associated with being a mixed-race family. Coping with race and racism is an important domain of racial socialization generally (Lesane-Brown, 2006; Stevenson, 1995). Coping takes on a special significance for mixed-race families because of the ambiguity of their location in the racial hierarchy (Root, 1999; O'Donoghue, 2006). Having parents and families from different racial-ethnic backgrounds can put mixed-race individuals at risk when confusion around identities and loyalties go unresolved (Root, 1999; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005; Poston, 1990). Four participants said that their *parents helped them deal with race*, simply by virtue of the fact that they were available to discuss the issues. As Alexandria explains, parents can also model how to negotiate the racial borderlands:

And so, I mean just the way they are has prepared me...I feel like...they've lived their morals, their ideas. It's easy to say you know, everyone should love each

other, and there should be no racism, it's another thing to completely defy the entire world in order to pursue what they think their ideology is....I don't remember a lot of specific conversations, even though I'm sure there have been hundreds. But, my parents have showed me a lot through action more, I feel, like than words...So I feel like my parents, the way they've lived their life, not conforming, has been a bigger influence on me in that way.

One of the challenges particularly salient to mixed-race individuals and families is resolving questions about the *importance of race* both for one's personal identity and as a socially organizing force. Research on mixed-race identity development has shown that some individuals develop a transcendent identity marked by the rejection of the racial classification system (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005; Renn, 2000). Rockquemore and Laszloffy, for example, describe two variants of the transcendent identity. According to them, one who asserts a transcendent identity as a result of a "pathway of acceptance" acknowledges the importance of race socially but challenges it intellectually and rejects it as meaningful to his or her personal identity. On the other hand, one who asserts a transcendent identity as a result of a "pathway of denial" denies the existence of racial discrimination in the post Civil Rights era, or believes that discussions of racism only perpetuate the false belief in discrete racial categories.

None of the participants in this study refused outright to identify racially. However, there were varying degrees to which they believed race was important to their personal identities, and to which they agreed with their parents about the importance of race. Four participants believed that race was more important to others than to themselves. As Cameron explains, participants developed ways of identifying that helped them manage the discrepancy between the importance other people placed on race and the importance participants themselves placed on race:

Umm, for me I feel like it doesn't matter at all, you know? But for other people I feel it matters, you know, and in that regard I feel like it should matter to me, because I don't like to make other people feel uncomfortable....because like I said, I don't feel like I'm either Black or White, I identify more with the Black

community, but that doesn't necessarily mean that I think I'm Black. I don't know if that makes sense, but I just get along better. But I say it like this all the time, you know, people ask me, you know, well what are you... You know, it's like I'm Black and White, you know, Haitian, Romanian, African-American. I'm me, that's what I always tell them, I'm just me, doesn't matter you know?

For some, the discrepancy was between participants and their parents. Marie felt that race was “not that big of an issue” but that her mother was “big on race.” This difference in opinion may be partially explained by the generation gap (Root, 1999). Marie grew up in a mixed family in an integrated community in which “you see mixed children all the time.” She felt that “we had come so far” as a society and that race “still shouldn't be something that's talked about or an issue.” Although her mother grew up with a Black stepfather and biracial siblings, it is likely that it was harder for her mother's family to gain acceptance as a mixed family even a generation earlier. Conversely, for Jackie, the fact that her father denied the importance of race and refused to discuss it only made it more salient for her, particularly when she reached high school and began to struggle with identity issues associated with rejection from Black peers. Jackie's interactions with her father over the issue of race demonstrate the ways in which the developmentally instigative characteristics of different settings influence the developmental trajectories of individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Renn, 2004). At the microsystem level, her father refused to discuss race, and she says, “I think the older I got, and the more interested I became in it, the more he even shut down.” New settings, such as high school and college, provided environments in which race became increasingly important to her and others. Combined, these influences help to delineate Jackie's pathway of exploring the meaning of her mixed-race identity.

One of the ways in which participants understood the importance of race socially was through the effect of their *appearance* on the negotiation of racial identity with their parents and

others. In the parlance of the transaction metaphor for racial identity, appearance is the most basic “currency” one has that signals to others where they belong in the racial hierarchy. Additionally, parents’ perceptions of their biracial children’s appearances are an important influence on their children’s identity development (Bradshaw, 1992; Root, 1999; Rockquemore and Laszloffy, 2005; Williams, 1996). The results show that appearance was the impetus for many conversations between participants and their parents or other family members. While both men and women described these interactions, their content and meaning were gendered. Ana and Sara both described struggling with the issue of straightened versus natural hair. Anna interpreted her Black cousins’ rejection of her natural hair as an authenticity test of her Blackness, a common experience for biracial individuals (Root, 1999):

Yeah, they’ll be like, ‘Oh, yeah you could just straighten your hair and you’d be so pretty.’ And like so I guess it’s kind of like, you know, it’s like a failure on my part and things like that.

Sara, on the other hand, expressed disappointment that her mother allowed her to relax her hair when she was young and wanted to be White. She came to feel that it hindered the development of a strong Black identity that her parents were encouraging:

I was upset at my mom because they were spending all this effort trying to encourage us to be proud of the Black side of us. And so when I was going through those struggles of wanting to be White, I was really upset at my mom for breaking down and letting me get my hair relaxed.

For men, parents’ reactions to their physical appearance centered on the risks involved with being perceived as Black and being susceptible to stereotypes about Black men. Cameron’s father worried that his appearance would make people “think...that you fit a stereotype... they [are] automatically going to assume a certain thing.” Cameron imagined what his father was thinking as he struggled with his own prejudices:

I think it's the fact that you know, you look at me and you don't see white skin, you know? And so it's like, 'Oh well I know he's my son 'cause he has features like me. He looks like me, he talks like me, but at the same time I also know he's Black because he's twenty shades darker than me.'

Such interactions around appearance were among many other ways in which participants were *prepared for bias*, racism, and discrimination. Ron perceived his White father as “ultrasensitive” to the existence of anti-Black discrimination and “whenever I was treated badly at school [he was] quick to suggest that it was due to my race, due to racism.” Cameron believed that his Black mother wanted him to know that as a “Black man who’s going to be able to do things” that he would be “automatically in the crosshairs...you’re being targeted...you need to hold yourself higher.”

Being warned about and prepared to cope with racial bias is one of the key dimensions of racial socialization for children of color in general and African Americans in particular (Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995). Biracial individuals are not only at risk for experiencing anti-Black bias, but bias against mixed-race individuals and families as well. While most of the preparation for bias messages that participants described related to anti-Black bias, Marie, Ron and Ted said that their parents prepared them specifically for bias against mixed-race individuals and families. Ron’s mother explained the trouble he was having with “ghetto” Black kids partially in terms of class distinctions. She told him, “some people don't have it as good as you have it” and that, “they felt threatened by me or something.” Marie describes discussing with her mother an incident in which a police officer did not believe that she was related to her father. Her mother explained:

Stuff like that, it's gonna happen. There's still people who don't believe in, you know, in interracial marriages or interracial children; or maybe you don't look like, you know because your skin color isn't the same as your father's, you don't

look like you're, you know, that's not, that can't be your father. So you know, she just kinda basically said to don't let that get to you. And I didn't.

Given that there are few environments in which biracial individuals are not the “other” and that they are often perceived as Black, it is important for them to be able to cope with both forms of discrimination. These findings suggest that parents can help biracial children anticipate these forms of discrimination as part of a process of “patrolling racial borders” (Dalmage, 2003).

One of the ways in which mixed-race individuals can be discriminated against is a perception that they are not worthy of benefitting from programs designed to ameliorate race-based social disparities (Sanchez & Bonam, 2009; Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009). While they were aware of their relative class privilege compared to other Black people, participants and their parents also understood *Black identity as a resource* for educational attainment. Five participants said that they identified as Black when they or their parents perceived that it would be to their advantage when applying to college and for scholarships. Cameron's father told him to “put down Black” when he took the ACT because “a 25 from a Black kid looks a lot better than a 25 from a White kid or... an Asian.” Alexandria described deciding with her parents to identify as Black on several college and scholarship applications, in part because there was often “no way to claim being biracial.” Her parents encouraged her to “fill in Black” because they were “very on the get the scholarships mode.” She ultimately was admitted to a prestigious university and received several scholarships as a “Black” student. She wondered, “was it fair for me to do that then? I don't know. It's kind of morally ambiguous.”

The economic concerns these middle class parents faced in sending their children to college influenced the ways in which they officially identified their children, regardless of whether they encouraged them to accept a Black personal identity. The fact that choosing a

Black identity can provide this kind of economic advantage for mixed-race families points to taking class into account as an important contextual influence on the socialization of mixed-race children. It also supports the assertion that racial socialization in mixed-race families includes addressing unique challenges compared to those of monoracial families.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between parental racial-ethnic socialization and racial-ethnic identity development from the perspective of biracial young adults. With regard to the first research question (How were participants socialized in terms of race and ethnicity?), participants described receiving explicit and implicit messages about the meanings of both mixed and Black identities. While the focus of this research was parental socialization, friends, peers, and other family members were also important sources of these socialization messages. The second research question was: How do participants develop and express their racial-ethnic identities? Consistent with previous research on mixed-race identity, participants described developing blended identities that included conceptually distinct and overlapping identity categories. However, rather than blending White and Black, participants described a mixed-race identity category that existed alongside, above, and below a Black identity. The third research question was: What role did socialization play in participants' identity development? Participants' understandings of mixed and Black identity categories were informed by the ways in which their meaning was communicated to them by parents. Those parental messages were filtered through social interactions in multiple contexts, and participants' own perspectives.

For their generation, the concept of a mixed-race identity category has begun to gain broad social acceptance, as evidenced by the change to the census. This may reflect a macro-level shift in the way we think about race such that a frame of reference for "mixed" as a distinct

identity category has begun to emerge. However, culture change is slow and that shift may be more apparent in some contexts than others. There were varying degrees to which the rules of hypodescent still applied in participants' lives such that a Black identity was salient some or most of the time. One of the questions some theorists are asking is what a mixed-race category means in terms of how we think about race and identity. Uncritically accepting a separate "mixed" category, without considering what it means for whom and in what contexts, may only serve to reify the racial classification system by adding a new intermediate category. On the other hand, its emergence as a way of understanding complex social identities may be what Root calls an "opening of the racial borders" that deconstructs an oppressive system (Cose, 1997; Root, 2000; Spencer, 2004). In their descriptions of being both mixed and Black, participants and their parents engaged in both reifying and deconstructing the racial classification system.

It is important to note that racial identity labels serve not only as self-identifiers for individuals, but also as ways for others to identify individuals. To the extent that parents can influence healthy identity development in mixed-race children, it is important to consider whether there is congruence between what parents say and the racial messages their children receive in other environments. The implications for parents are to know what messages are "out there", to find ways to help children understand those messages, and to reconcile discrepancies between those messages and their own beliefs with respect to race and identity. There are also implications for those outside the family who share responsibility for shaping the lives of mixed-race children, particularly those in positions of power such as educators and policy-makers. As this study shows, the socialization of racial identity in mixed-race families is a process of negotiation occurring in a social context of shifting meanings regarding race and identity. A

better understanding of this process can inform the ways in which those in such privileged positions facilitate that negotiation.

Limitations

The findings of this study represent the experiences of the eight participants I interviewed and may or may not be generalizable to the broader population of mixed-race people. However, the theoretical constructs described in this study are transferable in that they may be applicable to other samples with similar characteristics and developed further through their use in future research. Additionally, this research was not designed to test a particular theory. Rather, the results illuminate and extend existing theory on racial-ethnic socialization and mixed-race identity development.

The results are also limited to participants' perspectives, and my interpretation of those perspectives in light of relevant research. It is possible that participants remembered what their parents said differently than would the parents themselves, and may have misinterpreted what their parents actually meant. Thus future research on this topic should include multiple sources of data, including from parents and other family members.

Finally, I must acknowledge my own experience as a mixed-race person. As such, I brought to the research process certain assumptions, biases, and expectations that a monoracial person might not. This fact may be seen as a hindrance in that my biases may have caused me to seek out certain phenomena while ignoring others. However, I argue that it is just as likely to be helpful to the research process. To the extent that I am an "insider" to the mixed-race experience, that status can sensitize me to certain processes that outsiders might miss. Furthermore, adherence to established research methods and the grounding of my conclusions in the data are checks against my subjective biases (Chavez, 2008; Zinn, 1978). My approach to

this issue, then, was to acknowledge my own assumptions and biases throughout the research process and to use them as tools for greater discovery of the richness of the phenomena of interest. In this way, my own voice has complemented the voices of the participants so that a co-constructed picture of mixed-race socialization and identity emerged (Charmaz, 2006, Stake, 1995).

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Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Name	Gender	Age	Self ID**	Interpreted ID***	Mother's Race/Ethnicity	Father's Race/Ethnicity
Anna*	F	19	"Black and German"	Mixed/Ambivalent	Black/African American	White/German American
Jackie	F	25	"Mixed"	Mixed/Secure	White/German American	Black/African American
Ted	M	25	"Multiracial"	Mixed/Secure	Black/African American	White/Swedish American
Ron*	M	21	"Half African American/Half German"	Mixed/Ambivalent	Black/African American	White/German American
Alexandria	F	19	"Biracial"	Mixed/Exploring	White/Polish American	Black/African American
Marie	F	21	"Mixed"	Mixed/Secure	White/European American	Black/African American
Sara	F	25	"Black"	Black-Mixed/Secure	Black/African American	White/European American
Cameron	M	21	"Mixed"	Mixed-Black/Secure	Black/African American	White/Romanian

* Anna and Ron are siblings

** As indicated by participants on the demographic questionnaire

*** Indicates my subjective interpretation of participants' identities

Table 2

Theoretical Constructs, Sensitizing Concepts, and Text-Based Categories

I. Being mixed, being black, being both

A. Being mixed

1. I'm mixed
2. You're mixed
3. Being unique, special or different
4. Understanding both sides
5. Figuring it out myself
6. Appreciating being mixed

B. Being black

7. People will see you as black
8. You're black
9. Being seen as black
10. Feeling/knowing you're black
11. Appreciating being black

II. Ecological influences

A. Parents' and family's attitudes

12. Parents defy stereotypes/cross boundaries
13. Parents' and family members' experiences with racism
14. Why don't you have any white/black friends?
15. You're being too black
16. Dad didn't talk much about race

B. Family relationships

17. Feeling different from extended family
18. Feeling closer to one side of the family

C. Social environment, culture, and social structure

19. Having other mixed people around
20. Changing racial dynamics
21. What are you?
22. It's just who I click with
23. Cultural socialization
24. I don't have a flag

III. Living in a racialized society

A. Negotiating racial borders

25. My parents helped me deal with race
 26. Importance of race
 27. Appearance
 28. Preparation for bias
 29. Black identity as a resource
-

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participant Profiles

Although participants for this study shared common characteristics, each was a unique individual with his or her own story. What follows is a brief profile of each participant that will help to better contextualize the results. All names are pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

Jackie

Jackie is 25 years old and grew up in the integrated South suburbs of Chicago. She described her neighborhood as “racially diverse”. Her mother is White, with German ancestry, and grew up in Northern Minnesota with little exposure to racial or cultural diversity. Her father is Black and grew up partly in the South, towards the end of the Jim Crow era. Jackie identified as “mixed” from a young age, partly because her parents explained to her that she was “part of your dad and part of your mom”, and that there was “no other choice”. She recalls few direct conversations with her parents about race and identity and that her father virtually refused to discuss these issues. Although she always maintained a mixed personal identity, the meaning of that identity has shifted. During her high school years, she perceived that racial divisions were developing among her peers, in part because of an influx of Black students from the city as a result of public housing reform. This coincided with conflicts with Black girls, whom she felt were rejecting her because of her mixed-race status. She went from “identifying” more with Black peers to identifying more with White peers. This began a period of identity exploration that continued through her college experience where she perceived even more racial and

ethnic division. She read a lot of scholarly and popular literature on the subject of mixed-race identity and has continued to explore this subject in graduate school where she is pursuing a degree in individual and family counseling. She credited this work for helping her to resolve her struggles around identity development and to identify strongly as mixed. “It’s a lot of pride for me that’s kind of wrapped up into it,” she says. “It means that I am a racial chameleon. It means that I can bridge gaps. It means that I am more understanding than I think somebody who is monoracial... I feel as though it makes me a more well rounded person. I think I relate to people better on a social level or on a professional level. I take a lot of pride in it.”

Anna

Nineteen-year-old Anna grew up in an integrated suburb just West of Chicago. Her mother is Black with roots in the South. Her paternal grandparents emigrated to the U.S. from Germany, and her father was born a month later. She recalled that there were no “sit-down” conversations with parents about race and that their main message was that “it wasn’t an issue”. Although she identifies herself as “Black and German, she claimed that race and ethnicity are not central to her personal identity and that the perceived need for a racial-ethnic identity is “a thing that is annoying”. She is, however, aware of race and racism as social issues that cannot be avoided. Although she does not think of race as a “real thing”, she understands it to be “a social construct to kind of help elitism and stuff like that, and like, put people into categories so no one has to think that hard.” Anna expressed some discomfort with discussing race issues and appears to be somewhat conflicted about her own perceptions about race and those that are prevalent in society. “It does matter to me” she says, “but I guess I just don’t identify with it, which has kind

of, I guess, has been kind of like an issue for me, I guess, because that's a really culturally prevalent thing."

Ron

Anna's older brother Ron is 21 years old. He shares his sister's ambivalence over racial-ethnic identity and appears to remain uncertain about how he identifies racially. While he claimed to always identify as "half African American and half German", he feels that he is usually perceived as Black and that this means that he is Black. Ron recalled more direct conversations about race than his sister. He felt that his father was quick to blame racism when Ron was treated unfairly, so much so that his parents pursued a lawsuit for discrimination when he was denied a place on the high school tennis team despite his hard work and obvious ability. His mother frequently encouraged him to be more connected to the Black community while he was growing up, in part because she felt that he would be perceived as Black. However, Ron was less comfortable with Black people than White people. This appeared to stem in part from the fact that he was bullied by Black kids as an adolescent, and in part from the fact that he felt closer to the White side of his family. Ron expressed a sense of guilt for his rejection of the Black community whom he "didn't want anything to do with". He seemed to be in the process of working through this guilt and was pleased to reveal that he had recently made a new friend who was Black.

Ted

Ted is 25 years old and grew up in a highly diverse neighborhood on the North side of Chicago. He was raised by his single Black mother and had a lot of contact with his mother's extended family while growing up. His parents were never married and he had

little contact with his father and his father's family for most of his childhood. Although she did not tell him how to identify racially, Ted's mother explained that he was "in between" Black and White and that this made him "something different". He felt that the fact that she was so "logical" about his racial status was related to his insistence on identifying as "multiracial". He also attributed his identity to growing up with biracial cousins and later, his involvement with the BFN. Having been raised "99% by the Black side of my family", Ted expressed an appreciation for Black cultural modes of expression and the knowledge of Black history communicated to him by family. Yet, he also enjoyed the ambiguity of his racial position and the fact that he was often mistaken for Latino or Egyptian. While he has invested a significant amount of time exploring the meaning of a multiracial identity, he appears to have done so with little difficulty. His comfort with being racially different was related to his perceived social status as a "nerd". He says, "I was already, you know ostracized to some degree because of that. So... I became comfortable with that; so why is this any different?"

Alexandria

Alexandria is 18 years old and just beginning to explore the meaning of a "biracial" identity. She grew up in integrated communities in the South suburbs of Chicago that "steadily became predominantly Black". Her White mother is "half Polish" and her Black father was an "Army brat" who grew up in military communities in Japan, Germany and the Southern United States. Although there were few direct conversations about race, ethnicity, and identity, she recalled that her mother was more vocal on these issues than her father. She thought that her mother wanted her to figure out for herself how to identify in order to avoid being labeled by others. The increasing Black population of her

neighborhood and school challenged Alexandria to “adjust” socially and culturally. Her mother, who was “very close to the Black culture”, helped her with this adjustment. She recalled a time when she was about 9 years old and “a lot of identity questions were coming up”:

I remember that I couldn’t like speak slang... or I couldn’t understand slang or anything like that. My mom thought it was hilarious because she would sit down and practice with me kind of. I remember just the ‘ya’ll.’ That’s all she wanted. She spoke a lot more slang than my dad ever did, and so she would sit down and practice how to say it.

Alexandria felt closer to her mother’s family than her father’s, and particularly identified with her Polish grandmother who kept many Polish traditions alive. While somewhat unresolved, her identity is “starting to feel different” now that she is in college and exposed to greater racial and ethnic diversity. She feels that her thinking is becoming more complex:

When you get into the labeling part is when things go wrong... you have to start explaining who you are, who you think you are, where you’ve come from, really. That’s the only way someone’s going to really start to understand.

Marie

Marie is 21 years old and identifies as “mixed”. She grew up in a suburb South of Chicago that she described as “mainly African American” with “a few Caucasian people”. Her White mother was raised with a Black stepfather and biracial siblings in Chicago. Her father is Black and grew up in Chicago as well. Marie thought of her

mother's family as "very mixed", and she thought of being mixed as "no big deal", requiring no exploration and involving no struggle to resolve identity issues. When asked what it means to be mixed, she said, "When I say 'mixed' I think, you have two parents of different ethnicities, different colors, like my parents are two different colors." Her perception of her mother's mixed family appears to be related to her unambiguous mixed-race identity: "I guess because my mom's family isn't *white*, white, and there's so many mixes in her family too, it was just like that's my race. I'm mixed." She further attributed this matter-of-fact stance to her mother telling her to "just tell people you're mixed. Your father's Black and your mom's White." She recalled very few direct conversations about race with her parents unless it "just came up", such as when someone asked the "what are you question". Most of Marie's friends are Black. She has White "associates", but prefers the company of Black people because they are "just who I click with". She did not perceive that she had ever experienced significant discrimination, either for being Black or for being mixed. Although she did report sometimes being teased by Black friends for being "White" or speaking "proper". She found this teasing to be "annoying" and felt that she was sometimes "targeted" by friends or her boyfriend for not being Black enough to understand how they felt about race. She felt that their perception of being oppressed "didn't register in my brain because I've always went to integrated schools so it's like I never had to see or, deal with that." This sometimes led to "heated arguments" about race. From her perspective, race was not something that needed to be discussed because "we had come so far" as a society.

Sara

Sara is 25 years old and was “raised to be Black” by her Black mother and White father. She grew up in the far Western suburbs of Chicago where “everyone was White except for us.” Being different from White people was a recurring theme in our conversation. She recalled wanting to be White when she was a young child, and this was related to the knowledge that she was Black. She felt that her parents raised her and her sisters to think of themselves as Black largely because they would be perceived as Black due to “the ancient one drop rule”, and that a Black identity would be necessary for “survival” in a racially hostile world. Sara’s identity development process included what Cross described as an immersion/emersion phase. This phase included exposure to Black people and immersion in Black culture as a result of travel, and an emergence with a strong Black identity associated with a desire to help Blacks and other minorities to overcome oppression. Although she sees herself as Black, she understands that being mixed distinguishes her from other Black people. On the one hand, she felt that her mixed-race status made her more interested in knowing about Black history and culture than many of her monoracial Black peers. On the other hand, she felt that it gave her the advantage of being able to “understand both sides”. She attributed this, in part, to the fact that her father “explained the White mentality” to her, that it was “very, very individualistic, not community oriented”. She felt that this helped to “solidify” her own views about race and identity. Although she feels strongly about her Black identity, Sara appears to still be resolving the tensions around being a Black-mixed person who faces discrimination. “Racism has always been a constant awareness” she said,

It is definitely something that I never really had a choice to think about in, both directions....when you grow up mixed you constantly think about it whether with White people, Black people, or by yourself. You wake up and you're like 'man, I gotta go through the day again. I gotta deal with stereotypes from both sides.'

Cameron

Twenty-one year old Cameron grew up in the Western suburbs of Chicago. His Black mother was born in Haiti but moved to the Southern United States as an infant (her own mother was African American and had lived in Haiti for a short time). His father was born in Romania and moved to the United States as a young child. Cameron identifies as "mixed" and he recalled that as a young child, his parents told him, "your mom's Black. Your dad's White. You're mixed, but you're still a person." But he also felt that as far as his mother is concerned "I'm Black, you know? Just quote, Black." This was related to her belief that he would be perceived as Black and subject to anti-Black discrimination. This became particularly salient for Cameron and his parents when he was a sophomore in high school and had been arrested and charged with assault. There were few conversations with his parents about race and identity prior to this incident. Subsequently, their concern led to an ongoing argument about his self-presentation. His mother warned him that he was "targeted" as a Black man and would need to "hold himself higher". However she did not share his father's insistence that he change his appearance in terms of hair and clothing style. Cameron felt that his father held stereotypical and "racist" views about Black people that contributed to his desire to see his son "be a little bit more White". This has caused some strain on Cameron's relationship with his father that they

are still working through. Although Cameron identifies more with Black people and culture, he is aware of a class-related privilege over his Black friends that he associates being mixed. His family enjoys an upper middle-class status that Cameron is careful not to flaunt. Despite his efforts, this has occasionally caused some conflict with Black peers who have called him “Whitey” and disparaged his privileged position. Cameron was very thoughtful about how these issues have informed the way he thinks about his own identity. He appeared to be particularly adept at negotiating not only others’ disparate views of his race, but also the discrepancies between others’ views and his own self-perception. While he does not feel that race is important to his own personal identity, he is keenly aware of how others view him and claims to be able to adapt his behavior multiple contexts marked by race, class, and culture.

Appendix B

Description of the Biracial Family Network (BFN)

My involvement with the Biracial Family Network began in the Fall of 2009. Since the summer of 2010, I have volunteered with the organization as an assistant organizer. The BFN was founded in 1980 by Irene Carr and five other mothers of biracial and transracially adopted children. In 1985, BFN developed bylaws, incorporated, and became a federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization. In 1988, BFN participated in the founding of the Association of Multi Ethnic Americans (AMEA) and has helped to organize workshops and conferences. According to their mission statement:

The BFN's mission is to establish spaces of comfort and connection among members of multiracial families, to take action against racist and discriminatory practices, and to educate people and communities about multiracial experiences.

In 2006, BFN merged with The Chicago Multiracial Meetup Group and has continued to function as part social advocacy group and part social networking group. The organization holds monthly member meetings, conducts educational seminars, and organizes frequent social outings for its members and affiliated non-members. Social events include informal outings to cultural events, "family friendly" events for those with young children, and events geared primarily towards single adults.

The BFN is loosely structured and run by a small core of volunteers. There are approximately 300 members, ranging in levels of participation. Social events are the most highly attended. Participation in regular meetings and informational/educational events varies. Membership and participation was at its peak around the time leading up

to and shortly after the 2000 U.S. Census when the BFN was one of many advocacy groups pushing for policy changes with regards to the way race and ethnicity information is collected from multiracial individuals. Recently, attendance has been sparse at the monthly meetings, but the five or six individuals who do most of the work of keeping the organization going are a close-knit and dedicated group. Despite the recent wane in participation in the regular meetings, the organization maintains an active presence on the internet and as such is still strongly connected to the mixed-race community in Chicago. In addition, they have renewed recruitment and retention activities in conjunction with the celebration of the organization's 30th anniversary in October of 2010.

Most members and affiliated non-members are mixed-race adults, ranging in age from their mid 20's to mid 40's, who live in or around the Chicago metropolitan area. The majority of them have one Black parent and one White parent. A smaller but substantial number have one parent that is Black and one parent that is neither White nor Black; and fewer still have parents of differing racial-ethnic backgrounds that are neither Black nor White. In addition, there are several members and affiliates who are mono-racial individuals who are either involved in an interracial relationship, are the parent of a mixed-race child, or both. A few members are parents of transracially adopted children. Most of the parents have young, early adolescent children, though a few have older children, some young adults.

The organization has no central offices or other location. Regular meetings are held in a church basement in downtown Chicago, and events organized under the auspices of the BFN take place throughout Chicago and surrounding suburbs. Many of the informal "get-togethers" take place in members' homes.

Appendix C

Interview guide

Interview Guide

*Note: Terms in [brackets] refer to theoretical concepts to be examined.

While you were growing up, what did your parents say to you about race and ethnicity?

(If parents didn't mention race/ethnicity) How did you find out about race and ethnicity? [Silence about race]

What did they tell you about how to identify yourself?

What did they tell you about your appearance? [Parents' response to appearance]

What was your parents' relationship like while you were growing up? [Quality of relationship between parents]

Were they married/divorced?

Were you closer to one than the other?

What was the relationship like between your mother's family and your father's family?

Which side of the family do you feel closer to?

What did they teach you about your racial or ethnic history and traditions? [Cultural Socialization]

Which parent taught you about that?

How did they teach you about that? What did they do?

How do you feel about your background? [Affirmation/Belonging]

Which group do you feel more a part of?

Who do you spend time with? What cultural or ethnic traditions do you participate in? [Ethnic Behaviors]

Did you learn about your racial or ethnic background in any other way? [Exploration]

What else did you do to learn about it?

Who did you talk to (friends/other family)?

Did you learn more about one side than the other?

How strong or important is your racial-ethnic identity to you?

[Achievement]

What did your parents tell you about racism and discrimination? [Bias]

Which parent told you about that?

Did they tell you different things?

- What did they tell you about their own experiences with racism?
- [Parents' experiences around race]
 - Did they talk to you about having problems as a mixed couple?
 - Did they tell you that their families didn't approve of their relationship?
 - Did they tell you people would discriminate against you?
 - Who did they say would discriminate against you?
 - What did they tell you to do if you were discriminated against?
- [Coping with Racism]
 - (If parents didn't mention racism) How did you learn about racism and discrimination?
 - What kinds of experiences have you had with racism or discrimination?
 - Did your parents tell you to stay away from certain races or ethnicities? [Mistrust]
 - Which parent said that?
 - Who did they tell to stay away from?
 - What did they say would happen if you didn't stay away from them?
- Did your parents tell you that all races are equal? [Egalitarian]
 - Did they tell you to work hard to overcome racism?
 - Did they tell you to act (or not act) in certain ways?
 - What did they say would happen?

Appendix D

Codebook

<i>I. Being mixed and black</i>	This construct expands the concept of blended or border identities as described in the literature on mixed-race identity (e.g., Root, 1999). It explains the aspects of simultaneously being mixed and being Black that participants and their families had to balance.
A. Being mixed	This sensitizing concept describes aspects of parental socialization and personal identity associated with a mixed-race identity category.
1. I'm mixed	Participants report identifying themselves as "mixed" or "biracial" (as opposed to Black or White) most or all of the time and/or provide an explanation of what the label means. This includes refusing to indicate a race on official forms that do not offer a biracial option (but it excludes refusing to fill out a race at all because of a rejection of the concept of race, which is coded as RINI).
2. You're mixed	Participants report that their parents (or other significant people like close friends or relatives) referred to them as "mixed" or "biracial", told them to identify themselves that way, or identified them to others in that way. This can range from only applying the label without further explanation to including an explanation of what the label means (e.g., "Your father's black, your mom is white").
3. Being unique, special or different	Participants report that their parents told them that they were unique, special or different because they were mixed and/or that as a mixed race person, they felt different, unique, or special, or that they experienced things differently than other people. This can include class-related differences (e.g., being called "privileged"). The connotation can be positive or negative (this excludes feeling/being different than family

	members which is coded as FDED).
4. Understanding both sides	Participants report being able to (or having to) see things from both a Black perspective and a White perspective and/or that they can bridge the gap between Black and White. This can include being told by their parents that they would be able to understand both sides, bridge gaps, or “have the best of both worlds”, etc.
5. Figuring it out myself	Participants report figuring out racial/identity issues on their own, or that their parents did not want to push preconceived ideas about race, or parents wanted participants to come to their own conclusions about race and their own identities, either because their parents said so explicitly or because participants interpreted this.
6. Appreciating being mixed	Participants describe a process of developing a mixed or biracial identity and coming to affirm or appreciate what it means for them, sometimes resulting from a period of struggle or exploration. This can also include expressing an appreciation or liking for things they associate with being mixed.
B. Being black	This sensitizing concept describes aspects of parental socialization and personal identity associated with a Black identity category.
7. People will see you as black	Participants report that their parents told them that people or society would see or treat them as Black, with or without warnings of anti-Black discrimination.
8. You’re black	Participants report that one or both parents explicitly told them that they were Black or African American (as opposed to biracial or mixed), referred to them as Black or African American, or raised them to be Black or African American.
9. Being seen as black	Participants report either a general feeling that people saw or treated them as Black (e.g. society), or that specific people saw them or treated them as Black, or discriminated against them because they

	are Black. This includes being officially categorized as Black (e.g., in school or college).
10. Feeling/knowing you're black	Participants report feeling like a Black person, ranging from feeling more Black than White, to feeling Black in certain situations, to knowing that they are Black from an early age. This can also include knowing that they are not White (e.g., "I knew that I wasn't white because if I was white then I wouldn't have this kinky hair.").
11. Appreciating being black	Participants describe a process of accepting and affirming that they are Black and/or feeling comfortable with being Black, sometimes resulting from a period of struggle or exploration. This can also include expressing an appreciation or liking for things they associate with the meaning of being Black.
<i>II. Ecological influences</i>	This construct takes its cue from Root's ecological model of racial identity in which "environments are discerned as learning places for corroboration and challenges to one's identity" (Root, 1999, p.77). It explains the contextual influences on the process of balancing mixed and Black identities.
A. Parents' and family's attitudes	This concept describes how parents' and family members' attitudes about race influenced participants' identity development.
12. Parents defy stereotypes/cross boundaries	Participants report that their parents (or other family members) behaved in ways that contradict stereotypes of their own race/ethnicity, had experiences not typical for someone of their race/ethnicity, or tended to cross racial boundaries (e.g., "my mom always was very close to the black culture."). This can include rejection of their own race/ethnicity (e.g. "My mom didn't want blonde-haired, blue-eyed children.").
13. Parents' and family members' experiences with racism	Participants discuss racism and discrimination their parents or other family members experienced; this can include

	<p>parents experiencing overt racism and prejudice, anticipating racism and prejudice (e.g., “He was a little afraid of what his friends would think”), or parents’ general perceptions about race and racism (e.g., “how my mom saw the world”). Participants may or may not link being told about these experiences to their own racial socialization or identity development. (This excludes racism or discrimination from family members which is coded as RPWF)</p>
14. Why don’t you have any white/black friends?	<p>Participants report that one or both parents encouraged them to befriend, interact with, or socialize with <i>either</i> Black <i>or</i> White people specifically (includes dating).</p>
15. You’re being too black	<p>Participants report that one or both parents (or other family members) told them to be “less Black” or “less White”, or otherwise encouraged them to avoid racially stereotypical behavior (e.g. “My dad was like you know, basically, you’re being too Black, can you be a little bit more White for me please?”).</p>
16. Dad didn’t talk much about race	<p>Participants report that their fathers did not or would not discuss race much or at all, and/or discussed racial issues less than their mothers, either because their fathers were around less, talked less in general, or were less interested in discussing race than their mothers and/or participants themselves.</p>
B. Family relationships	
17. Feeling different from extended family	<p>This concept describes how participants’ relationships with extended family influenced their identity development.</p> <p>Participants report being or feeling uncomfortable around, disconnected from, misunderstood by, rejected by, or otherwise different from extended family members (e.g. cousins).</p>
18. Feeling closer to one side of the family	<p>Participants report feeling emotionally closer to, more connected to, or having more positive feelings towards one side of the family than the other. This can also include not feeling close to one side of the family, and spending more time with one</p>

	side of the family (e.g., “I was raised 99% by the Black side of my family”).
C. Social environment, culture, and social structure	This concept describes how extra-familial influences related to the socialization of participants’ identities.
19. Having other mixed people around	Participants discuss the importance of having friends and/or family members who are mixed, or knowing other mixed families and individuals, for a sense of belonging.
20. Changing racial dynamics	Participants indicate a change in the racial makeup of one or more environments, or entering a new environment in which the racial makeup was different than what they were used to (e.g. going to a different school). This may or may not include a discussion of how the change affected how they thought about their own identities.
21. What are you?	Participants report having their racial or ethnic identity questioned or misunderstood, their relationship to their parents questioned, being pressured to choose an identity or loyalty, or having the authenticity of their Blackness questioned. This can also include participant’s reaction to the question (e.g. “I feel insulted by some of the questioning that I get.”).
22. It’s just who I click with	Participants discuss the racial makeup of the people they socialize with, including who they do and <i>do not</i> feel comfortable with, including dating. This can also include discussing the people who accept or reject them (e.g. “I just knew the Black girls didn’t like me.”). This may or may not include a discussion of how it relates to their own identities.
23. Cultural socialization	Participants report that parents or other family members practiced cultural traditions or customs (including language), provided participants with information about ethnic or cultural history (e.g., books), or otherwise expressed a connection to ethnic or cultural heritage, or that their family exhibited characteristics attributable to culture (e.g., “my dad’s side of the family is that traditional Black family.”).

24. I don't have a flag	Participants report a lack of cultural socialization (i.e., receiving information about or exposure to cultural traditions or customs) and/or lack of cultural or ethnic identity, and/or lack of interest in culture or ethnicity for themselves individually or for one or both sides of the family. This can also include a desire to learn more about one's ethnicity or culture.
<i>III. Living in a racialized society</i>	This construct describes how "racialization" (Omi & Winant, 1994) pressures mixed-race individuals and families to develop racial identities and stake out a position in the racial hierarchy.
A. Negotiating racial borders	This concept describes the ways in which participants and their families coped with the uncertainty of the social location associated with being a mixed-race family.
25. My parents helped me deal with race	Participants discuss how their parents were helpful for them in understanding or coping with race and racism, including being open to questions participants raised themselves. Examples can range from specific conversations to "they were very supportive."
26. Importance of race	Participants report that race was not important to their parents and/or not important to their own identities, that race "didn't matter", or that it is more important to others (e.g., society). This can include parents telling participants to "Tell them you're human" when questioned about identity. This can also include denial that race is real even though it is important to others, or denial that race was related to particular experiences.
27. Appearance	Participants discuss their appearance generally, or specific physical characteristics (e.g., hair or skin color), may or may not be in relation to parental socialization and/or identity development.
28. Preparation for bias	Participants report that their parents (or other family members) warned them about the existence of discrimination or racism and/or explained participants' experiences in terms of discrimination or racism against. This includes discrimination against Black people and/or discrimination

29. Black identity as a resource

against mixed people and families. Participants report identifying as Black (and/or being told to do so by their parents) when applying for college or scholarships or on standardized tests, either because there was no biracial option or because a Black identity made them more competitive.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (MC 672)
203 Administrative Office Building
1737 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7227

**Approval Notice
Initial Review (Response To Modifications)**

May 2, 2011

Brett Coleman, BA
Psychology
1007 W Harrison St
Psychology, M/C 285
Chicago, IL 60612
Phone: (773) 213-0777

RE: **Protocol # 2011-0118**
“Mixed Messages: Racial -Ethnic Socialization and the Expression of Mixed-Race Identity”

Dear Mr. Coleman:

Your Initial Review application (Response To Modifications) was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on March 17, 2011. You may now begin your research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: March 17, 2011 - March 15, 2012
Approved Subject Enrollment #: 20
Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: These determinations have not been made for this study since it has not been approved for enrollment of minors.
Performance Sites: UIC, Biracial Family Network - Chicago
Sponsor: None
Research Protocol:

- a) Research Protocol (no footer)

Recruitment Materials:

- a) Recruitment Email Text for Mixed Messages Study; Version 2; 03/06/2011
- b) Recruitment Presentation Script for Mixed Messages Study; Version 1; 03/06/2011
- c) Screening/Eligibility Script for Mixed Messages Study; Version 1; 03/06/2011

d) Recruitment Flyer for Mixed Messages Study; Version 2; 03/06/2011

Informed Consent:

- a) Informed Consent Form for Mixed Messages Study; Version 2; 03/06/2011
- b) A waiver of documentation of consent has been granted under 45 CFR 46.117 and an alteration of consent has been granted under 45 CFR 46.116(d) for recruitment purposes only (minimal risk; verbal consent for screening will be requested; written consent will be obtained at enrollment using a consent document containing all of the elements of informed consent)

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific categories:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes., (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
02/07/2011	Initial Review	Expedited	02/15/2011	Modifications Required
03/07/2011	Response To Modifications	Expedited	03/17/2011	Approved

Please remember to:

→ Use your **research protocol number** (2011-0118) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure,
"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 996-2014. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Sandra Costello
Assistant Director, IRB # 2
Office for the Protection of Research

Subjects

Enclosures:

- 1. UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**
- 2. Informed Consent Document:**
 - a) Informed Consent Form for Mixed Messages Study; Version 2; 03/06/2011
- 3. Recruiting Materials:**
 - a) Recruitment Email Text for Mixed Messages Study; Version 2; 03/06/2011
 - b) Recruitment Presentation Script for Mixed Messages Study; Version 1; 03/06/2011
 - c) Screening/Eligibility Script for Mixed Messages Study; Version 1; 03/06/2011
 - d) Recruitment Flyer for Mixed Messages Study; Version 2; 03/06/2011

cc: Gary E. Raney, Psychology, M/C 285
Sabine French, Psychology, M/C 285

VITA

NAME: Brett R. Coleman

EDUCATION: B.A., Psychology, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois, 2009
M.A. Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2012

HONORS: Summa Cum Laude, Northeastern Illinois University, 2009
Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Scholar, Northeastern Illinois University, 2007-2009

PROFESSIONAL

MEMBERSHIP: Society for Community Research and Action
Psychologists for Social Responsibility

PUBLICATIONS: French, S. E., Coleman, B. R., & DiLorenzo, M. (in press).
Linking racial identity, ethnic identity and racial-ethnic socialization: A tale of three race-ethnicities. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*