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Loyola Marymount University

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Claire Anne Touchstone
Loyola Marymount University, daancer@hotmail.com

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Tie-Dyed Realities in a Monochromatic World: Deconstructing the Effects of Racial Microaggressions on Black-White Multiracial University Students

by

Claire Anne Touchstone

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2013

Tie-Dyed Realities in a Monochromatic World:

Deconstructing the Effects of Racial Microaggressions

on Black-White Multiracial University Students

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by

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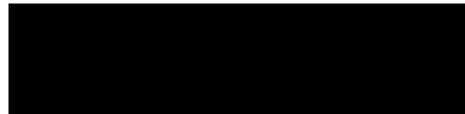
8-30-13
Date

Dissertation Committee



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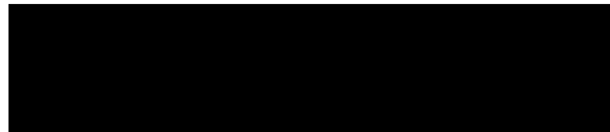

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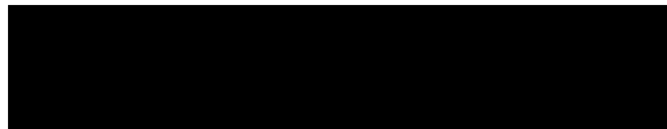

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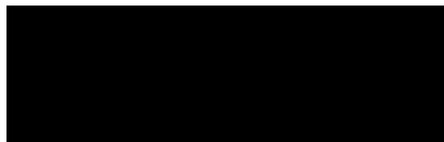

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the participants of this research.

Thank you for sharing your stories with me.
It is my hope that your voices will be heard, loud and proud.

I am grateful to have finally met "my people."

"My People" by Langston Hughes
The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.
The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.
Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

"The Beauty of Gray" by Live
This is not a black and white world
To be alive
I say that the colours must swirl
And I believe
That maybe today
We will all get to appreciate
The Beauty of Gray

I'm like in a gray area and although that sounds negative, I appreciate that in my life… There's different parts about me that I appreciate from either side, to where both my black side and my white side, they've combined and made me somebody who I appreciate being.

– *Amber*

Being multiracial is not easy, as you can see, but being able to embrace both cultures and still become a part of both ethnic backgrounds is the true beauty of it.

– *Ana*

There's a oneness between being Black and being White, and that oneness is represented within myself.

– *Elyse*

And so, it just seems to me that it's like a lesson in school or in society that needs to be retaught and starting at an early age, like, getting kids that are from different backgrounds together and working together.

– *John*

Because one thing I think is really… odd is, like, since you are Black, you must have all the answers to the Black universe. And then you somehow also have to answer for every crazy Black fool that runs around.

– *Luigi*

But when it comes to other people, they're making me choose one, and so I'm at ease with who I am and being a mixed person… it's just hard when it comes to explaining it to other people.

– *Peach*

I've liked (being multiracial) because when I go some places I feel different.

– *Pip*

I feel like I've lived in the gray area, and I feel like that's the way most of the universe really is. Very few things are actually black and white. So I feel like I've lived in the gray area and I've acknowledged it and embraced it, and that's given me a certain perspective and outlook towards the rest of the world, and I think I like being able to share that perspective with the rest of the world.

– *Sonic*

You are innately who you are based on your experiences and your choices and your environment essentially, and not because of your skin color, so that's what I would say. I would say it's a balance, absolutely, of self-identity.

– *Sonya*

I think also these experiences, just overall they've kind of pointed out that my being a multiracial person is kind of a unique situation… and so it just puts emphasis on the fact that even though I don't really worry about race and it's never been a huge topic in my family, that race is an ever-present issue. And it's always going to affect the way people are thinking and judging other people.

– *Toad*

The best thing I like (about being multiracial) is that I feel like I'm a little bit more open to other people.

– *Yoshi*

DEDICATION

To Mum and Dad…

Thank you for supporting me in ways beyond my belief. This academic journey is one that – in what feels like another lifetime ago – seemed impossible and non-existent for me. I am grateful that you both always knew that I could do this work… and more.

Thank you for listening to me through all of my numerous and persistent discussions about this project – for you never showed boredom or frustration, and always cared for the passion I have for my multiracial experience.

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"God of our weary years
God of our silent tears
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way
Thou who hast by thy might, led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

"Lest our feet stray from the places
Our God where we met Thee
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world
We forget Thee

"Shadowed beneath Thy hand
May we forever stand
True to our God
True to our native land."

– James Weldon Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

To my Wilson…

My special feline companion, who left this life on March 7, 2012, to begin his spiritual journey. I am grateful for the many ways you contributed to this dissertation – how you would curl up next to my laptop and lay your head across when I was in some phase of creation, how you would "meow" right at the moment I thought I was being my most "brilliant," how you would tap dance across the keyboard to share your academic ideas, and how in spirit form, I heard your voice saying, "Mama, you can do it!" I thank you for being my beautiful kitty for almost 10 years. I love you, Boo-boo. We did it!

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ABSTRACT

Tie-Dyed Realities in a Monochromatic World:

Deconstructing the Effects of Racial Microaggressions

on Black-White Multiracial University Students

by

Claire Anne Touchstone

Traditional policies dictate that Black-White multiracial people conform to monoracial minority status arising from Hypodescent (the “One-Drop Rule”) and White privilege. Despite some social recognition of Black-White persons as multiracial, racial microaggressions persist in daily life. Subtle racist acts (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007b) negatively impact multiracial identity development. Since 2007, studies have increasingly focused on the impact of racial microaggressions on particular monoracial ethnic groups. Johnston and Nadal (2010) delineated general racial microaggressions for multiracial people. This project examines the effects of racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of 11 part-Black multiracial university students, including the concerns and challenges they face in familial, academic, and social racial identity formation. Data were analyzed through a typological analysis and Racial and Multiracial Microaggressions typologies (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Sue et al., 2007b). Three themes arose: (a) the external societal

pressure for the multiracial person to identify monoracially; (b) the internalized struggle within the mixed-race person to create a cohesive self-identity; and (c) the assertion of a multiracial identity. Participants experienced Racial Microaggressions (Sue, 2010a; Sue et al., 2007b), Multiracial Microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), and Monoracial Stereotypes (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Sriken, Vargas, Wideman, & Kolawole, 2011). Implications included encouraging a multiracial identity, educating the school community, and eliminating racial microaggressions and stereotypes.

Keywords: multiracial, biracial, Hypodescent, White privilege, Critical Race Theory, racial microaggressions

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Prologue

> At its essential core, racism is most keenly felt in its smallest manifestations: the white merchant who drops change on the sales counter, rather than touch the hand of a black person; the white salesperson who follows you into the dressing room when you carry several items of clothing to try on, because he or she suspects that you are trying to steal; the white teacher who deliberately avoids the upraised hand of a Latino student in class, giving white pupils an unspoken yet understood advantage; the white woman who wraps the strap of her purse several times tightly around her arm, just before walking past a black man; the white taxicab drivers who speed rapidly past African-Americans or Latinos, picking up whites on the next block. Each of these incidents, no matter how small, constructs the logic for the prism of race for the oppressed. We witness clear, unambiguous changes of behavior or language by whites toward us in public and private situations, and we code or interpret such changes as "racial." These minor actions reflect a structure of power, privilege and violence which most blacks can never forget. (Marable, 1995, p. 7)

Introduction

Human racial categories are a social construction (Haney-Lopez, 1996; Omi & Wynant, 1994) through which people tend to differentiate between individuals based on physical characteristics such as skin color, facial features, hair texture, and body shape. Scientifically, only one true racial classification exists for the human species, known as "Homo Sapiens Sapiens" or "anatomically modern humans" (Kottak, 2002, p. 166); yet, individuals use negative cultural stereotypes based on differences in physical appearance to invoke a social undercurrent of privilege versus disadvantage that results in racial discrimination. From a monoracial perspective, therefore, people are placed into separate racial categories based on presumed physical differences. Having distinct racial groups is convenient when census data, job applications, and education forms require statistical information. But in the case of a person who is more than one socially constructed (Haney-Lopez, 1996; Omi & Wynant, 1994) racial

category—a multiracial person—it is not as simple. Where does that multiracial person fit in a monoracial world?

Research has shown that the "races are not biologically differentiated groupings but rather social constructions. Race exists alongside a multitude of social identities that shape and are themselves shaped by the way in which race is given meaning" (Haney-Lopez, 1996, p. xiii). If a person is multiracial, that is, consisting of two or more distinct racial categories, how is that person's identity shaped along a monoracial continuum? Which entities contribute to the shaping of the multiracial individual's identity development? Societal perspectives perpetuate the expectation that multiracial people conform to a monoracial designation, to easily match a cultural identity based on phenotypical characteristics. This expectation contributes to an internalized struggle the multiracial person may have based on the "assignment of individuals to such 'identities' [which] leaves… [people] caught between a hard identity that does not quite fit and a soft rhetoric of hybridity, multiplicity, and fluidity that offers neither understanding nor solace" (Brubaker, 2004, p. 57).

Multiracial individuals have been racially and ethnically categorized into monoracial designations for centuries. It is common societal expectation that mixed-race people conform to monoracial labels of minority status. These labels of racial and social categorization (the labeling of a person according to which race he/she socially identifies with) continue to serve as a designation and a stigma society imposes, and thereby effacing the identity of the multiracial individual; identity choices are often not respected by people in society (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). Additionally, frequent racial slights (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b) toward the multiracial person—which seem insignificant to the perpetrator—can cause emotional

and psychological harm to the multiracial individual (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). This treatment can provoke a range of feelings for the multiracial person, such as confusion ("Which side do I chose? And why do I have to even *choose*?"), guilt ("How can I deny my mother's side… or my father's side?"), and resentment ("Let me define who I am, not you!").

Background of the Problem

Since the beginning of United States history, there has been a physical, social, cultural, and psychological division between the White race and the Black race (Daniel, 1992; Korgen, 1999; Zack, 1993). There have been numerous ways of keeping people of these two races in separate categories based on White dominance, manipulation, and superiority over Black forced submission and presumed inferiority (Daniel, 1992).

Throughout the African slave trade and during the Colonial Era, Black ("Negro") people were easier to target because of their darker skin, and it was commonly accepted for White slave owners to label their slaves inferior as a way of keeping the slaves psychologically oppressed. Negroes were treated in dehumanizing ways; viewed as a form of chattel or property (Franklin, 1980; Korgen, 1999). When White slave owners had sexual relations with Negro slaves, racially mixed offspring were produced, raising the issue of what the racial status of these children should be. English law dictated that White people could not be slaves; so classifying these partially Negro children as White would mean that mixed-race offspring would not be slaves. However, if they were racially labeled as Negro or Black, the mixed-race children would have slave status. Therefore, legal policy mandated that the mixed-race offspring of Negro slave women and White slave owners take the mother's status of Negro. Over time, this designation became known as the "One-Drop Rule," also known as "Hypodescent" (Brunsma, 2006; Davis,

1991). This policy dictates that, despite any Anglicized features a person of mixed sub-Saharan African heritage may have, or what percentage of Black African ancestry, "one-drop" of Black blood means that person is legally Black. This classification is a unique political label for part-Black multiracial people because no other racially mixed combination has a governmental and societal label that staunchly and vehemently enforces this rule. Other multiracial mixtures of White and non-White persons can traverse and cross the color lines of their heritages with more fluidity (Brunsma, 2006; Davis, 1991).

A conflicting ideology is that of "White privilege," which McIntosh (1988) has described as "as an invisible package of unearned assets that (one) can count on cashing in each day" (p. 1) based on the privilege of having white skin in American society. Assets of White privilege as delineated by McIntosh (1988) connote that Whiteness is the standard in American society and that, due to this standard:

> Whites… do not need to have an awareness of the complex human diversity of society in the United States… many white Americans not only are blind to biraciality but also feel comfortable expressing their misperceptions of racial identities and relationships. (Kilson & Ladd, 2009, p. 40)

White privilege is a form of oppression that many White people are not aware they have, but that many People of Color easily recognize in White people. Critical Race Theorists agree that it is a form of social capital held by Whites in relation to People of Color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As Marable (1995) has explained:

> To be white is not a sign of culture, or a statement of biology or genetics: it is essentially a power relationship, a statement of authority, a social construct which is perpetuated by systems of privilege, the consolidation of property and status. There is no genius behind the idea of whiteness, only an empty husk filled with a mountain of lies about superiority and a series of crimes against "nonwhite" people. (p. 6)

Marable (1995) further illustrated that "blackness in a racially stratified society is always simultaneously the 'negation of whiteness.'" (p. 6). In other words, Blackness is the opposite of Whiteness. Being White means having access to social and cultural privilege, so being Black—by default—means being socially and culturally oppressed. Therefore, how do multiracial people of a Black-White mixture view their unique duality when coping with aspects of White privilege in relation to—and in opposition to—the One-Drop Rule? Do multiracial people have access to this type of social capital, power, and prestige? Or does the One-Drop Rule stand in the way? McIntosh (1988) stated:

> To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subjects taboo. Most talk by Whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist. (p. 6)

Because multiracial people of Black-White racial descent are traditionally of two polar opposite races in American society, I contend that these individuals have a distinctive socialization process and identity formation, and have valuable stories to share about their unique mixed-race heritages. Yet, they embody a racial dichotomy, they are also subjected to racial, ethnic, and/or cultural stereotypes and subtle forms of racism—also called "racial microaggressions" (Sue et al., 2007b)—due to their mixed-race background; and these racist acts may have an impact on their multiracial identity development. I assert, therefore, that the multiracial identity development of Black-White individuals is affected by the juxtaposition of having access to White privilege on one side set against the tenaciously entrenched One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent on the other side: and their multiracial identity development is impacted by racial microaggressions inflicted on them within family, school, and society (See Figure 1).

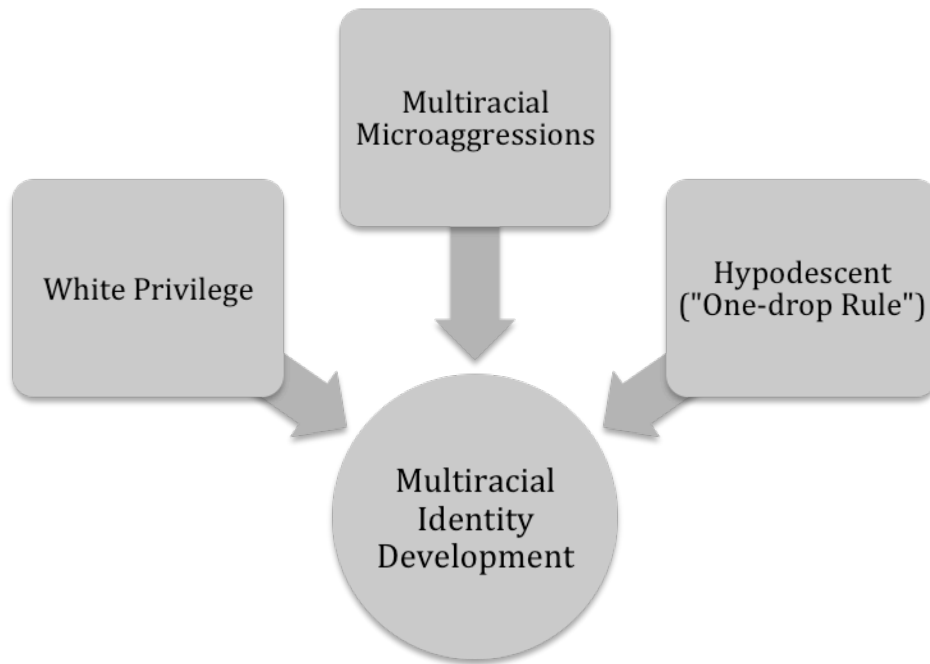

Figure 1. The combination of contributors to multiracial identity development.

Problem Statement

Because of One-Drop Rule ideology and White privilege, I contend that multiracial individuals of Black-White mixed-race background have special stories to share, and unique daily experiences that have shaped their self-identity. I also believe that Black-White multiracial people experience a system of racism based solely on their mixed-race status. They are not quite Black, but not quite White. And their experiences with forms of subtle racism, also called racial microaggressions, might be more intricate and complex based on their mixed-race background.

This study addresses the social justice issue of racism toward multiracial people of Black-White racial background, and examines the ways these individuals are categorized into a monoracial box. This dissertation also seeks to deconstruct the stigma society has for people

who do not conveniently match one racial label; and investigates the ways in which White privilege is still prevalent in our society—much to the detriment of People of Color.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to document the effects of racial microaggressions on Black-White multiracial university students in terms of multiracial identity development. This study examined how the entities of family, schools, and society socialize, educate, and inform multiracial people of Black-White mixed-race background in racial identity formation and help (or hinder) these students in dealing with racial microaggressions. This dissertation will provide a view of multiracial issues from the Critical Race Theory perspective.

In conducting research for this study, I had a particular interest in the social factors of identity formation in Black-White multiracial individuals; and what roles the family, schools, and society play in the socialization process. For example, how is a child of Black-White racial background socialized into a monoracial world fraught with racial, historical, and class structure stereotypes? How does this child navigate his or her Blackness *and* Whiteness, as seen through the eyes of society? How do schools explain to and assist parents and families with that process? How does society accept—or not accept—Black-White multiracial people in socially just or unjust ways? Based on historical and ideological contexts, people of this racial mixture have a more complex identity development and socialization process than people of other racial combinations (Daniel, 1992; Funderburg, 1994; Korgen, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Winters & DeBose, 2003). These individuals must negotiate the formidable societal pressure to conform to a monoracial status or designation due to the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent (Brunsma, 2006; Daniel, 1996; Korgen, 1999; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist,

1937; Sweet, 2005), which perpetuates the struggle for racial identity (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992). Black-White multiracial people also contend with multiracial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Sriken, Vargas, Wideman, & Kolawole, 2011) and monoracial microaggressions (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). External societal expectations and internal personal choices—combined with microaggressive experiences—contribute to the ways in which the Black-White multiracial people achieve and assert a cohesive racial identity.

Significance of the Study

Black-White multiracial individuals are historically from polar opposite cultural backgrounds (Daniel, 1992). The hierarchy of these cultural backgrounds places the White race as the superior category, and the Black race—due to the legacy of slavery and the binary of privilege versus oppression—as inferior. The ideology of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent has perpetuated scientific racism; that a Black-White multiracial person, being that he or she has a fraction of Black blood, is considered legally, socially, and culturally "Black." To that end, these multiracial people, though *part* White and *part* Black, are victims of microaggressions because of being *part* Black and therefore categorized monoracially as "Black." These individuals often have to deal with being labeled in ways that may or may not reflect their multiracial reality. In this light, Nishimura (1995) has stated:

> Racial identity is a unique issue for biracial students in that, biologically, they have a dual racial heritage. As a result, they must articulate for themselves a racial description of who they are, in addition to coping with labels that other people use to describe them. (p. 53)

This reality presents a quandary for Black-White multiracial people: How does one deal with his or her multiraciality in a world that categorizes through single-color designations? How does one attempt to explain and justify his or her mixed-race experience in a society whose One-Drop Rules designate them as monoracially Black?

In forging ahead and determining the ways that Black-White multiracial people describe themselves and deal with racial stereotyping, one must look at the how these individuals are supported in their personal, academic, and social circles by their family members, peers, teachers, and administrators. It is necessary, also, to examine the roles that society plays in deciding which side(s) the multiracial individual places social identification. From the perspective of the administration or an educational leader, of most interest is researching how schools support their multiracial populations, and the understanding the process of making multiracial identity challenges known to the faculty and staff.

This study is important in twenty-first-century educational society because very few studies to date have looked at multiracial identity development through the lens of Critical Race Theory. The historic setting of this study is of significance, as it has taken place during the presidency of Barack Obama, America's first multiracial president. With Mr. Obama's election as the 44th president, the racial color line has been crossed, and people of multiracial background have a role model with whom they can identify.

Positionality

In the summer of 2009, I was enrolled in a course called "Context and Current Topics in Public Education" as part of my doctoral program in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. It was an inspiring class taught by a dynamic teacher whose teaching style was cutting-edge.

Never a dull moment in this class with our professor, as she broached educational topics that included Marxism, environmental issues, and the discussion of the ever-present "binary" in our society. Referring to the "either-or" complex of dichotomous regimes, these binaries always seemed to hold the connotation of "us versus them," and shed light on myriad public issues that could be solved if only leaders could see the total picture and not just from the privileged perspective. White-Black, young-old, rich-poor, male-female, tall-short, thin-overweight—binaries abound, creating a social system whereby one side is privileged while the other side is oppressed. Once opening my eyes to this issue of privilege-oppression in our society, I have never been the same.

I come from background in which I am considered by some to be one of the "privileged." I was raised in an affluent family in an upper-middle class neighborhood in a large metropolitan city on the West Coast. I was privileged to have had private ballet and piano lessons, to have traveled extensively throughout the world, and to have attended college preparatory and boarding schools. I was also a debutante, being presented to society in my cotillion debut. For all intents and purposes, I grew up in a family in which some might feel that I had it all and not a care in the world.

But one critical aspect of my life that has affected me both positively and negatively is that I am a multiracial individual and the product of an interracial union: my father is European American (English, Norwegian, German, French, and Italian) and my mother is African American, Creole (French, Spanish, Native American, and Black), and Native American. In other words, based on his physical appearance, my father is considered monoracially "White," and my mother, multiracial and multiethnic herself, is categorized by society in the monoracial

grouping “Black.” I was raised in a “post-racial” (Haney-Lopez, 2010, p. 1024) family, in which I was protected from matters of race and my parents never referred to another human being by race or color. The color of one’s skin was not the measurement of a person’s values, merit, intelligence, dependability, or credibility.

As I grew and developed as a person, I navigated multiple racial and ethnic pathways, and found quite often that while one half of my genetic make-up was considered “privileged,” the other half was considered “oppressed.” Due to my racially ambiguous appearance and my family’s social standing, I was treated as one of the privileged crowd until my racial background was discovered, revealed, or inquired about. Then, due to the archaic, antiquated, and extremely racist ideology of the One-Drop Rule (that if one has any African American ancestry, one is considered Black), my privilege would be stripped away from me and I would be forced into the oppressed category—and treated as such. Questions like, “What color are you?” “What nationality are you?” and “What *are* you?” dominated many a conversation with my monoracial peers; and society demanded that I choose which *one* race I was going to identify myself as (and identifying as White was not an option, due to the tenacious societal grip of the One-Drop Rule),and to determine which side of my family tree I identified with; and remain there.

So, in July of 2009, when our professor elaborated and expanded on the Critical Race Theory framework as an educational methodology for understanding systems of power and privilege in relation to oppression and racism, my understanding of myself in relation to others in the world changed tremendously. I was given a new vocabulary and tools with which to understand racism. And I was introduced to the concept of racial microaggressions.

It is becoming more difficult to pinpoint instances of racism in today's society. "Old-fashioned racism" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 271), those acts of violence such as cross-burnings, lynchings, and separate-but-equal facilities, are becoming more rare in today's cultural and political landscape, but more hidden and subconscious forms of racism are becoming more common. These more subtle acts are called racial microaggressions (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b) and stem from the Critical Race Theory framework. Whenever a racial microaggression occurs, the victim momentarily ponders "Did that person just say that to me because I am a Person of Color?"—what our professor referred to as a "psychological pause." Racial microaggressions serve as constant reminders that the victim is seen as an "other" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 55) in the eyes of dominant society.

I left class feeling academically energized in a way I had not felt before. As I tried to sleep that night, I tossed and turned with much on my mind. A barrage of events flooded my consciousness, as I reflected on the psychological pause and the binary of privilege and oppression. Numerous instances of subtle racism clouded my mind, and sleep was impossible.

For example, in school, upon discovering my mixed-race background, when classmates "inquired" as to if my parents were "still married since most people like your parents get divorced": that was a racial microaggression.

At the elite single-sex high school I attended, when I was reminded of my "different" racial status by friends who claimed we could be friends at school, but could not visit each other at our homes because I was a "minority": that was a racial microaggression.

When one high school friend in particular said her mother referred to my interracial family and me as "those kind of people": that was a racial microaggression.

Throughout my K–12 schooling, when administrators and teachers at times expressed concern to my parents that I would grow up to be "confused like most mixed children do" or referred to me as "that cute little Black girl," despite my racially ambiguous appearance: that was a racial microaggression.

In university, when I went to class despite being very ill and having a 102° temperature, the White professor said to me, "Oh, you look very pale. I see you're denying your Black roots today": that was a racial microaggression.

When a "well-meaning" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 1) White girlfriend of mine would frequently ask me, "Why do all Black people do this or that?": that was a racial microaggression, and an example of tokenism (Kanter, 1977).

When a White saleswoman at Bullock's Wilshire (an upscale department store) attempted to wait on a White girlfriend of mine and ignored me—despite the fact I was the one actively looking for an evening dress and with the financial means to buy it, the saleswoman continued to ignore me: that was a racial microaggression.

As an elementary teacher, when at my school site, I overheard a White coworker accuse Black school administrative assistant of "playing the race card" (in other words, being overly sensitive about a racial issue): that was a racial microaggression.

When another White coworker, in viewing photographs of my interracial family, asked why some family members look "Black"; and, upon my telling her I was multiracial, she responded with "So do you go to college for free? You must be able to get a lot of great financial aid because of being Black": that was a racial microaggression.

When I met a man who was impressed that I had been a professional ballet dancer, and had danced in numerous dance companies, yet, upon discovering my racial background, said to me, “No wonder you’re a dancer! I’ve bet you’ve got that natural rhythm! Show me some of your Hip Hop moves!”: that was a racial microaggression, and an example of an ascription of intelligence (Sue et al., 2007b).

Acts of microaggression were jarring and disturbing to me whenever they occurred. In reflecting upon these and many more racist incidents, I realized that I experienced a system of racial microaggressions as a mixed-race person of partially European, African, and Native American descent, predominantly by privileged and well-intentioned White (Trepagnier, 2006) people. Because of elements of White privilege and One-Drop Rule policy, I navigate a racial existence daily in which other people simultaneously remind me of who I am *and* deny me who I am. Because my post-racial parents loved me as their child, and did not want to impose a monoracial category upon me, allowing me to decide my identity, I do not identify monoracially as Black. I am proud to be multiracial. However, it is often at times a difficult road, because while my parents gave me the freedom to choose my racial identity, I live in a society that does not give me the freedom to choose.

My multiraciality is like a tie-dyed fabric, with a swirling effect of multiple colors and textures that add to the unique tapestry that is my multicolored life. Yet, I live in a world that rejects my “blended identity” (Daniel, 1996, p. 123) and only sees me in single-color designations. My hope is that this dissertation will help those who traverse a similar mixed-race pathway as they seek to understand how to navigate their tie-dyed realities in this monochromatic world.

Definition of Key Terms

For purposes of this research, certain terms will be used to discuss and articulate the study. The intent is to define the most prevalent terms that will be used in this dissertation. Some terms, although outdated, will be defined, as they were historical or political terms used at the time of the inception of the ideology or legislation.

Biracial: Being of "mixed race" (Zack, 1993, p. 6); "person whose parents are from different racial groups" (Frazier, 2002, p. 165). Another term widely accepted from the 1600s through the early twentieth century was "Mulatto" (Korgen, 1999, p. 13). Present day, it is considered politically incorrect to refer to a biracial Black-White person as a "Mulatto" and is considered "offensive" (Frazier, 2002, p. 165) to some people of Black White background. The term "Mulatto" will be used within the historical context of this dissertation.

Black: A person of African ancestry; also referred to as African American (although this term is not appropriate for people who are considered racially Black but are not of the American nationality). Both the terms *Black* and *African American* will be used within this dissertation. The term *Negro*—used from the 1600s through the middle of the twentieth century—is no longer used. The term *Negro* will be used within the historical context of this dissertation.

First-Generational Mixed (FGM): This term refers to a person who has "one parent who is socially designated and self-identified as Black and one who is socially designated and self-identified as white, regardless of if whether these parents have multiple racial/cultural backgrounds in their genealogy" (Daniel, 1996, qtd. in Root, 1996, p. 128).

Hypodescent: "'One-drop rule' that holds that anyone with any degree of discernible African ancestry is Black" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 148).

Interracial Family: Milan and Keiley (2000) have described interracial families as "any partnership between a White person, a person of color, and their offspring" (p. 309). An alternate term is cross-racial (Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007). Note that *interracial* can also refer to relationships between two different monoracial groups of People of Color.

Miscegenation: "Marriage or cohabitation between individuals of different races; often prohibited by law when one of the parties was White" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 151). Laws prohibiting these unions were referred to as anti-miscegenation laws (Korgen, 1999; Sweet, 2005).

Multi-Generational Mixed (MGM): Individuals who are multigenerational mixed are people whose parents are both self-identified as multiracial (Daniel, 1996).

Multiracial: An "individual whose ancestry includes persons of different races" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.151). This term includes all persons of racial mixtures, and will be used to describe the Black-White mixed-race people in this study, unless another term is used in a direct quotation or from a historical perspective.

One-Drop Rule: "Rule of hypodescent, that any person with discernible Black ancestry is Black and can never be White" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 152).

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality: Three terms often used interchangeably and incorrectly. They refer to three different definitions.

- *Race:* Defined by Delgado and Stefancic (2001) as a "notion of a distinct biological type of human being, usually on skin color or other physical characteristics" (p. 153); for example, the Black race.

- *Ethnicity:* “Group characteristic often based on national origin, ancestry, language, or other cultural characteristic” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 146); for example, Creole, Hispanic.
- *Nationality:* One’s country of national origin; the country in which one was born; for example, if one is born in the United States, one is considered American.

Racial Microaggressions: “[B]rief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color” (Sue et al., 2007b); also, a “stunning small encounter with racism, usually unnoticed by members of the majority race” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 151).

White: A person of European ancestry; also referred to as *White.* This term is also used to describe a person who is racially classified as White, but is of non-European descent (i.e., White Hispanic, Middle Eastern).

White privilege: A system of social, occupational, and other advantages or “unearned benefits” that are granted to White people “purely on the basis of… skin color” (Kendall, 2006, p. xi).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory is a theoretical framework that comes from the field of Critical Legal Studies in the 1980s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). It was the answer to schools of thought that left out People of Color in interpreting legal cases. Since the 1990s, Critical Race Theory has been examined and understood as a viable theory in the field of education as well, and holds

six tenets that explain how race and racism are still part of all aspects of American life. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have delineated these six tenets of Critical Race Theory:

1. Race is central.
2. CRT challenges the stories of White privilege.
3. CRT focuses on the stories of those whose voices are not often heard.
4. CRT believes in the "experiential knowledge of people of color" (p. 26).
5. CRT contains methods of collecting data such as "storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonies, chronicles, and narratives" (p. 26).
6. CRT provides an "interdisciplinary knowledge base" (p. 27).

A limitation of Critical Race Theory in the field of multiracial studies is that it does not directly address the Black-White multiracial experience—the duality of being part of the dominant culture (i.e., White privilege), yet sharing similar experiences of monoracial People of Color (i.e., the "One-Drop Rule"). Multiracial people might experience a system of racism that does not recognize the power of being partially White in a society that privileges a person who is completely White.

Research Questions

The unique issues in the lives of multiracial people might be a sensitive topic for faculty, families, and multiracial individuals alike, and should be discussed particularly in the school community. Adolescence and young adulthood can be a challenging time for young people as they develop their identities as human beings (Erikson, 1968). For multiracial individuals, identity formation can be even more complicated and confusing (Nakazawa, 2003). Within the

educational system, we can no longer pretend that multiracial people do not exist, avoid conversations about mixed-race experiences, or enforce monoracial categories upon them. We must become more aware of the existence of mixed-race people and appreciate that they share two or more unique racial backgrounds. Therefore, some guiding questions regarding the significance of this diverse population of learners serve as the research questions for this dissertation:

1. What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?
2. What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?

Methodology

This dissertation investigated the present-day experiences of Black-White multiracial students though the lens of Critical Race Theory. In utilizing the aspects of Critical Race Methodology, I interviewed Black-White multiracial people, and asked them to share their narratives and counter-narratives about both how racial microaggressions are perpetrated on them on a daily basis and how they identify themselves racially. Data collection involved gathering vignettes through focus groups, individualized interviews, and written narratives. All data were analyzed through Critical Race Methodology, which relies strongly on counter-story-telling as a tool through which to process and understand the experiences of the participants. Looking through the lens of Critical Race Methodology, I was able to examine the words of the participants in relation to Critical Race Theory: race and racism really were central to the experiences of these multiracial people. In listening to my participants' voices and reading their

written words, I understood how necessary and timely their stories are in this period of history. Stories of racial microaggressions and how these subtle acts of racism affect the daily existence of this multiracial population present a counter-story to the dominant narrative.

The data sources of focus groups, individualized interviews, and written narratives were coded and analyzed using a typological analysis (Hatch, 2002) of two typologies of racial microaggressions. The first was the "Racial Microaggressions Typology" created by Sue et al. (2007b), which details common microaggressions experienced by People of Color and other ethnic minorities. The second typological source comes from the research of Johnston and Nadal (2010) and Nadal et al. (2011), and is based on multiracial microaggressions common to the generalized multiracial experience. The research of Johnston and Nadal (2010), and Nadal et al.'s (2011) follow-up research actually was presented by the authors in terms of Categories of Microaggressions. I utilized this information to create a typological chart. Both typologies were synthesized in my research to show the interconnectedness of monoracial and multiracial microaggressions in the Black-White individual's mixed-race experience. Throughout the data collection process, my research prioritized locating unequal power structures in daily experiences—such as racial microaggressions—to understand how race is central to American life, and a pivotal part of Black-White multiracial experiences. Only by hearing the thoughts and feelings of multiracial people as expressed in true-life vignettes of the multiracial microaggressions they shared with other multiracial people in focus groups did I gain a deeper understanding of how multiracial identity development may be impacted. By listening to their stories in individualized interviews, I heard of specific microaggressions they experienced and how these racial microaggressions may have affected social development. And in reading the

narratives of those who may have been oppressed or marginalized, I discovered themes and patterns that explained how privilege and power are unequally distributed to favor the dominant culture over People of Color.

Limitations

A limitation to this study is that the research focused on participants at the university level, both undergraduate and graduate, ages 19–27 years old. Erikson (1968) has delineated that identity formation takes place at earlier ages. The choice for this age group is due to the sensitive nature of this topic and the reluctance of some interracial families to permit their multiracial adolescents to discuss racial issues with a researcher.

Another limitation was the participation or availability level of the participants, some of whom were able to participate in all three parts (the focus group, individual interviews, and written narratives) due to their geographical proximity to the researcher (i.e., living in California). Other participants, due to living in other states or having other time constraints, were not able to participate in the focus groups, but were able to complete interviews via Skype and to write the personal narratives. Also, some participants were only available to participate in the focus groups, as their academic goals or work schedules prohibited continuing the research.

A third limitation to the study was the willingness of each participant to be fully candid. Forthrightness often depends upon the ability of the participant to trust the researcher, and can involve his or her own individual reasons for sharing. Their own comfort in sharing their personal stories is naturally a limitation, as the research is driven through their experiences. Their choice not to fully disclose parts of their stories, for whatever reasons, would limit the study.

The sample of participants was multiracial people of Black-White racial background; however, to ensure an adequate amount of people, individuals of part-Black descent and other racial mixtures (i.e., Black and Hispanic, Black and Asian, Black and Middle Eastern, etc.) were permitted to participate. This study did not include other mixtures of racial combinations (i.e., White and Asian, White and Hispanic, Asian and Hispanic); the focus was specifically on people with part-Black ancestry.

Delimitations

I interviewed university students and recent university graduates transitioning into graduate school because of the sensitivity of the topic, and the participant's ability to articulate his or her experiences growing up. Adults at this age have developed both academically and socially, and it was anticipated that they had resilience in overcoming racial obstacles. Additionally, they were in an academic mindset due to being at college or university, were on a scholastic track, and presumably from social class levels that encouraged academic endeavors.

I also chose to interview both males and females, so this study was not gender-based. I felt it was necessary to hear about the microaggressive experiences of both genders. Throughout the research, I pondered whether any specific microaggressions were more prevalent in the lives of males or in the experiences of females. I queried whether gender had any influence on the types of microaggressions they experienced. Lastly, the length of time in the field collecting data (the focus groups, individualized interviews, and written narratives) was longer than originally intended, which was a positive experience, as it allowed more thorough and complete data collection and analyzing on the part of the researcher.

Findings and Implications

This study recorded evidence of racial microaggressions in the experiences of Black-White multiracial university students and sought to understand the effects of these microaggressions on the participants through their verbal and written counter-narratives. As a result of conducting this research, three overarching themes arose from the data, which demonstrated that Black-White multiracial individuals experience racial microaggressions due to being mixed-race and for being tokenized as monoracially Black by other people.

The first theme generated by the data represented the societal pressure on the Black-White multiracial person to conform to a monoracial Black social designation based on the ideology of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. Racial microaggressions experienced by the participants within this theme were Environmental Microaggressions, Ascription of Intelligence, Alien in Own Land (Sue, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b), Assumption of Monoracial Identity, Denial of Multiracial Reality, Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), and Monoracial Stereotypes and Tokenism (Nadal et al., 2011).

Analysis of the data revealed a theme that reflected the Black-White multiracial person's internalized and continued struggle for a multiracial identity due to exposure to racial microaggressions and the existence and persistence of the One-Drop Rule. Significant microaggressions in this theme included Environmental Microaggressions, Color-Blindness, Denial of Individual Racism (Sue, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b), Assumption of Monoracial Identity, Denial of Multiracial Reality, Exoticization and Objectification, Exclusion or Isolation, and Pathologization (Johnston & Nadal, 2010).

Lastly, the third theme derived from the research illustrated the effects of racial microaggressions on the Black-White multiracial person in asserting a multiracial identity. This theme comprised the outcome of how the Black-White mixed-race participants developed multiracial identities despite exposure to various racial microaggressions. Parental racial socialization, inter-familial relationships, gendered racial microaggressions, and specific impacts on peer and dating relationships affected multiracial identity development.

Implications of this study include specific recommendations that may be beneficial for family members, friends, school officials, and people in general society in recognizing and preventing or reducing racial microaggressions enacted upon multiracial Black-White individuals. The research derived from this study imparts personal examples of racism in the lives of Black-White multiracial university students, in order to describe how encounters with racism have affected multiracial identity development, and to promote multiracial awareness along a social justice parameter.

Outline of the Dissertation Content

In keeping with traditional dissertation expectations, this study follows academic and doctoral guidelines. Chapter One has served as an introduction to the topic of subtle discrimination in the daily lives of Black-White multiracial individuals. Chapter Two will delineate salient pieces of literature that have contributed to understanding this topic. From historical vantage points to sociological theories, the literature review will detail the important aspects of Black-White multiracial identity development and make an argument for how this dissertation research fits in. Chapter Three describes the methodology and data collection process for this project. The methodology chapter details all of the procedures utilized to

complete the research— from how I gained access to participants, to the specifics of the Institutional Review Board forms, and a complete narrative of how I analyzed my data. Chapter Four details the research as collected and gives an in-depth presentation of the findings of the research. Lastly, Chapter Five explains the synthesis of the research gathered, coupled with the literature, and provides a final outcome to the study.

Chapter Summary

In looking at the One-Drop Rule and the laws and policies that have enforced and maintained this ethos throughout American history, one inevitably encounters the issue of social justice. In keeping with Loyola Marymount University's mission statement and the School of Education's R.E.A.L. standards, the concept of the whole-person approach is challenged by the One-Drop Rule.

How can multiracial people of Black-White racial background actively experience a whole-person approach to social justice when historical, legal, political, and social policies demand and expect these individuals to identify themselves monoracially? In not allowing for multiracial identification on forms, or when dominant society imposes racial microaggressions that serve as reminders of "other" status, is American society still trying to find ways to segregate people based on race? We are not as "post-racial" (Haney-Lopez, 2010, p. 1024) as we claim to be.

Expecting multiracial people to identify themselves as only one race requires them to socially deny their other race(s); that limitation defies the whole-person approach. Lastly, for other people to identify multiracial people monoracially is socially unjust because the assumption is that society—not multiracial individuals—decides who that population is racially

and socially based on the One-Drop Rule. American society has relied on this system of determination since 1619 (Korgen, 1999). It is time for a change. It is time to move forward and beyond the One-Drop Rule and encourage and accept new multiracial identities in order to embrace every part of a person. That is the beginning of a socially just society.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

This chapter of the dissertation offers an extensive investigation of the literature available on the topic of multiracial identity, beginning with the foundation of Critical Race Theory, the theoretical framework utilized for this dissertation. CRT provided a guiding structure for understanding race and racism within a multiracial context.

Within this chapter is a wide-ranging discussion of the ideology of racism and the historical background of the legacy of slavery, as well as the legal, political, and social origins and ramifications of the rule of Hypodescent (the One-Drop Rule). An examination of the "Mulatto" in the United States and of deficiency models of the social sciences, which added to the negative depiction of multiracial Black-White people in history, is also featured.

From an historical lens, a discussion of Multiracial Identity Development is presented, including an overview of specific ethnic minority and White identity models, and the multiracial identity models prevalent since the "biracial baby boom" (Korgen, 1999, p. 20) of the post-Civil Rights Era. Emerging from the historical lens is the relationship between Hypodescent and the rationale for the study: that multiracial people of Black-White background live in a racialized system that imposes monoracial stereotypes. Once again, Critical Race Theory places the identity development of the multiracial person at the forefront of this study. Moreover, psychosocial and multiracial self-identity factors, as well as racial socialization processes, all of which affect multiracial identity development, are discussed. Additionally, this chapter offers a succinct

examination of the connection between Colorism and Black Feminist Thought as well as a discussion of Demographic Projections and Multimedia and Multiracial Identity.

Also in this chapter is a detailed description of the types and themes of racial microaggressions and multiracial microaggressions. This section includes an analysis of the dual perspectives of racial microaggressions: from the viewpoint of the victim and the viewpoint of the oppressor. Additionally, information on the effects of racial microaggression is offered. Finally, a critique of the literature concludes this chapter.

Introduction

Multiracial individuals of Black-White racial descent have unique experiences in society based on their historically polar opposite racial backgrounds (Daniel, 1992; Funderburg, 1994; Korgen, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Winters & DeBose, 2003; Zack, 1993). For centuries, these people have been politically, legally, and socially categorized as solely Black and have experienced systems of racism similar to their all-Black counterparts. Daily experiences and subtle, yet distinct, instances of racism (called *racial microaggressions*) are imposed on multiracial people by White people (and sometimes other People of Color), and may negatively affect their schooling experiences and social development (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). Looking at the effects of these racial microaggressions through the lens of Critical Race Theory specifically provides a framework for how to address the social justice issue of racism toward multiracial people.

Critical Race Theory

Racial designation and social affiliation are sometimes seen as cultural liabilities amongst multiracial people. Korgen (1999), in quoting a case study, stated:

> Every child of mixed racial descent has to come to terms with the fact that it is society, and not themselves, that determines how they should be defined racially. For many multiracial persons, this is of major importance in their lives. They believe it is simply impossible to change the prevailing attitudes in society. (p. 46)

This dissertation operates contrary to this societal notion, claiming that the time has come for multiracial people to have the deciding vote in how they identify.

Twenty-five or more years ago, limited literary sources were available. But in the past 10 years especially, various authors have enlightened the masses in terms of multiracial issues. In the literature reviewed, the development of racial identity is at the core. How does a multiracial person develop a cohesive sense of racial identity? How does the family assist with that development? And, how does the school system and general society view that development? In embarking on this study, understanding the historical and cultural components inherent in American history that explain multiracial awareness and racial identity choice is imperative.

Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2003) have asserted "[A] major challenge faced by mixed-race people involves the struggle to define themselves racially within a society that conceptualizes race in a rigidly dichotomous manner and that attaches differential values to each of these dichotomies" (p. 119). In determining the ways multiracial people describe themselves, one must look at the historical system of social categorization of multiracial students and the roles that society plays in deciding which side(s) the multiracial individual places social identification.

Critical Race Theory in education is the guiding theory of this research (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Critical Race Theory (CRT) delineates several salient features that lend credence to this investigation. Yosso (2005) defined CRT in education "as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and

discourses… CRT in education refutes dominant ideology and White privilege while validating and centering the experiences of People of Color" (p. 74). CRT looks at the deficit-thinking model of People of Color, rotating it to look at the "ideology of racism" (Yosso, 2005, p. 74)—or, applied to this study, the ideologies of the One-Drop Rule and White privilege. When society looks closely at ideologies, "racist injuries are named, [and] victims of racism can often find their voice" (Yosso, 2005, pp. 74-75). Yosso (2005) has illuminated the importance of utilizing CRT in deficiency models of research pertaining to People of Color, explicating models of research that have been biased to show the shortfalls of People of Color throughout United States history.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have discussed how the "majoritarian story" (p. 28) applies to individuals who are White, male, middle-to-upper class, heterosexual, and able-bodied, and represents a ubiquitous history that has been readily accepted in our society. This "master narrative" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p. 28) is one, however, that disadvantages People of Color and multiracial people. Yosso (2005) illustrated that "looking though a CRT lens means critiquing deficit theorizing and data that may be limited by their omissions of the voices of People of Color. Such deficit-informed research often 'sees' deprivation in Communities of Color" (p. 75).

CRT, as Yosso (2005) continued, "challenges White privilege… and draws explicitly on the lived experiences of People of Color [through] such methods as storytelling, family histories, [and] narratives" (p. 73). Shifting from a White-dominant culture ideology to one that considers the experiences of people of color allows multiracial voices to be heard. Understanding the

multiplicity of these individuals and their unique familial structures and socialization processes through the lens of CRT encourages new ways of thought for educators.

CRT addresses the elements and remnants of "ontological blackness… the blackness that whiteness created" (Duncan, 2005, p. 95); a Blackness structured in our country's historical framework that "maintain(s) an unequal distribution of economic, social and political resources that privileges White people over people of colour in the US" (Duncan, 2005, p. 95). In the field of Black-White multiracial studies, this notion of the One-Drop Rule abets the ideology of White privilege.

Duncan's (2005) ideas of "ontological blackness" as seen through the eyes of the White-dominant culture in the United States extend from the "notion that Black people were primitive and therefore undeserving of full citizenship rights" (p. 96). This interpretation is substantiated by Aguirre and Turner (1998), who have illustrated that "at one time, African Americans were believed to be biologically inferior; now many believe they are culturally inferior. No matter how benign and progressive the beliefs, they are based on the premise that black people are different" (p. 67). These cultural differences represent a form of the ontological Blackness to which Duncan (2005) referred.

Within the educational system, "White architects of Black education in the U.S." (Duncan, 2005, p. 96), often perpetuate the idea of Black students needing to "adjust… their expectations to align with their presumed fixed economic station in society" (p. 97). Taking this idea a step further includes multiracial students who are pulled between Black and White identities and told by society to "align [their] expectations with social reality in order to avoid frustration and disappointment later in life" (Duncan, 2005, p. 97). In other words: deny your

White heritage, because the One-Drop Rule, which the White majority created, dictates that you identify solely as Black.

CRT honors the methodology of storytelling. Storytelling elicits enthusiasm from the multiracial perspective, because people have unique stories to share. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) specified that narratives are the stories told by members of the dominant society, which reflect the personal experiences and explain the accepted ideology of that society. Contrary to dominant or privileged narratives, therefore, are counter-narratives—less frequently heard stories told by the oppressed or non-dominant groups in society; these are stories are challenge (or contradict) the dominant story (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Duncan, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical Race Theory gives multiracial people a voice to share their experiences through counter-narratives. Cole (2009) has reiterated an important theme of voice in Critical Race Theory as "the concept of the Voice of the Other… [that] prioritizes the Voice of people of color" (p. 7). Dixson and Rousseau (2006) described the concept of voice and detailed how CRT provides a thorough rationale for counter-storytelling as a necessary form for sharing the stories of People of Color:

> "voice"– the assertion and acknowledgement of the importance of the personal and community experiences of people of color as sources of knowledge… Thus, CRT scholars believe and utilize personal narratives and other stories as valid forms of "evidence" and thereby challenge a "numbers only" approach to documenting inequity or discrimination, which tends to certify discrimination from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective. (p. 35)

Yosso (2005) has also argued that Critical Race Theory allows us to "focus on and learn from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" (p. 69). Duncan (2005) illustrated the

importance of the stories of People of Color, the richness of their tales, and how others in society might gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of the people who tell their tales: "[P]roponents of CRT emphasize aesthetic and emotional dimensions in their stories to stimulate the imagination and to inspire empathy to allow others to imagine the mind of the oppressed and to see, and perhaps vicariously experience, the world through their eyes" (p. 102). In this dissertation, the stories of the Black-White multiracial participants, their daily lived experiences with subtle and not-so-subtle acts of racism, are embraced, interpreted, and given their due respect.

Lastly, the use of "language… [as a] cultural rope that connects people across generations and even continents" (Duncan, 2005, p. 102) reminds us of the timeliness of this topic in the educational arena, and that a study like this can provide a useful vocabulary through detailed research with multiracial adults, interracial families, and the educational system. When the voices people who are oppressed are brought to light, and the dominant tale is recognized as a narrative based in White privilege and dominance, a new story emerges.

Ideology of Racism

It is in our school textbooks—the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Middle Passage, the whippings, beatings, and lynchings. It is the cultural fabric of our existence as a country—the horrid backdrop of the "land of the free and home of the brave," and a very ugly part of our history. Being half White and half Black means being part-oppressor and part-oppressed. It means straddling a fine line between privilege and injustice. Multiracial people are victims of microaggressions for being mixed-race and for being part Black. They are castigated by society for having light skin, "good hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001, p. 19; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992,

pg. 85), and exotic looks. And these images and ideas are based in the legacy of slavery and in the political, legal, and social contexts of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent.

A thorough and accurate investigation of "the social construct of race by examining the ideology of racism" (Yosso, 2005, p. 74) within CRT as a knowledgeable framework affords insight into the components of individual, institutional, and systemic racism. Understanding the origins of the racist society in the United States promotes a comprehension of the subtle acts of racism reflected in racialized experiences of contemporary times.

Since European settlers first came to America in the seventeenth century in search of opportunity and a new life, people have found ways to systematically and systemically categorize others based on skin color and other physical features (Korgen, 1999). Along a race-based continuum of superiority versus inferiority, Europeans (i.e., Whites) have enforced systems of brutal slave labor upon people from Africa (i.e., Blacks), savagely taking them from their native land, across the Middle Passage, to work in harsh conditions in a foreign land, in order to build a new country for White society (Franklin, 1980).

For such systems of oppression to operate, White people had to find ways to make non-White people feel and believe that they were inferior. Taking a race-based approach, White people asserted dominance and superiority over other races through discriminatory practices and public policy (Daniel, 1992). Lines of racial demarcation were drawn to assert that Whites were considered the most superior race, whereas Blacks were deemed the most inferior. Dominant ideology dictated that Blacks were considered illiterate, stupid, and easy to capture and enslave (Korgen, 1999). Systems of scientific racism further "explained" the superior nature of Whites, particularly in relation to Blacks (Korgen, 1999).

Throughout United States history, laws and policies were developed specifically to keep Whites and Blacks polar opposites. To develop racial policy and law in reference to people of African descent, three types of law and policy were devised: (a) laws that define Blackness; (b) laws that prohibit interracial marriage; and (c) laws that disenfranchise people of African descent (Sweet, 2005). Historical research reveals how these laws and policies contribute to racial classifications of Black and multiracial people of Black descent. A historical overview of US racial policy and positions will show how the stage was set for the legal and political contexts of the One-Drop Rule.

Historical Background

Korgen (1999) has contended that during the Colonial Era in American history, the racial color line was practically invisible, with White and Black slaves working side-by-side. Differences in color were not the basis for slave labor. However, English law determined that Christians could not be enslaved, meaning that White English slaves had to be released. English settlers attempted to enslave Native American Indians, but that proved difficult because they were very familiar with the terrain and its many escape routes. The only logical choice was to capture Africans—assumed to be non-Christian—and enslave them. Once this slavery system was intact, differences in terms of race became more recognizable as a way of distancing slaves from slave-owners. Korgen (1999) contended: “In order for Black slavery to work, however, ideas of race inferiority and superiority based on color had to be devised and promulgated” (p. 10). Additionally, religious entities developed the ideology that interactions between the races—whether sexual or social—were sinful, thereby furthering racial division (Korgen, 1999).

As race-based systems of oppression were devised and slavery developed, White and Black race mixing occurred. In certain communities, slave labor looked increasingly light skinned with more European features; to explain these "white looking slaves" (Sweet, 2005, p. 304), a justification for this slave labor had to be made. Whiter-looking slaves came from one of two scenarios: the union of a Black slave mother and a White slave-owner father, or the union of a Black freed man and a White woman. Although neither union was favored, the latter was the least socially acceptable. As Judice (2008) explained:

> This early distinction between the sexual behavior of black males and white females versus that of white males and black females is important because it framed how Americans viewed interracial marriages from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. White Americans could tolerate and excuse the sexual proclivities of white men with black women, but the coupling of black men and white women received swift – and a far greater degree of – social condemnation, remnants of which are still in existence in twenty-first century America. (p. 13)

Race mixing, therefore, created a dilemma about how to legally classify these light brown babies. Whites had asserted themselves as the superior race, and consigned Blacks to inferiority—what did this characterization mean for children born from these unions? Punishment of citizens guilty of race mixing was articulated through various laws and policies ultimately created to keep the White race pure (Sweet, 2005).

As the nation developed, colonial policies decreed that interracial marriage and sexual relationships between the races were against the law. Sweet (2005) contended that the colonies also began to legislate who was considered Black and, therefore, an unsuitable marriage partner. These laws were the beginning of the United States's socially determined *de facto* color line; an invisible line that demarcates who is an acceptable partner for marriage for the White race, and who is not (Sweet, 2005).

However, this fiat did not keep the races completely apart, and multiracial people continued to be born, thereby causing legal policy to be enacted to demarcate where these people should be on a societal level. Colonial legislation determined that multiracial children be categorized as slaves. Throughout colonial times, children of multiracial ancestry—known also as "Mulattoes"—were, at times, ostracized by White society, yet not quite fully accepted by Black society. Mulattoes were not seen as Black, could earn White status through "behavior and reputation" (Brunsma, 2006, p. 17), and at one point were even allowed to intermarry with Whites. Sometimes, multiracial people found pseudo-acceptance from Whites, being seen as a "buffer class" (Korgen, 1999, p. 14), but continued to be an "othered" group on both sides. Brunsma (2006) has contended that "by the early 1700s, the one-drop rule [sic] had become the social definition of a Black person in the upper South, and from there it spread southward" (p. 17).

During the mid-nineteenth century, "scientific racism also helped to increase the distinction in the minds of 'pure' White people between themselves and those of any African descent" (Korgen, 1999, p. 15). Multiracial individuals experienced greater acceptance from Blacks due to the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. Korgen (1999) stated: "Gradually, those of mixed racial background came to understand… they would always be seen as Black by the White population" (p. 17).

The American Civil War and Reconstruction period enforced the acceptance of the One-Drop Rule. Brunsma (2006) has explained that, during this time, "mulattoes of all shades would be defined as Blacks" (p. 17). During the Reconstruction, most Black people were no longer enslaved mostly because of the North's military occupation of the South, which saw that Black

people were allowed some human privileges. This period ended when "Jim Crow" laws were established with the passing of the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896, calling for segregation: the separation of people according to their race, in this case, between White and Black people. The One-Drop Rule was widely accepted in the North, and served as the catalyst for the adoption of Jim Crow laws in the South in early twentieth century (Brunsma, 2006).

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) allowed Black people to have "separate but equal" facilities (Franklin, 1980; Klarman, 2004; Korgen, 1999; Lofgren, 1987; Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 1896; Tushnet, 2008). But these facilities were always inferior to the facilities of White people. The separation laws carried over into the middle of the twentieth century. In many states extending beyond the South, Jim Crow laws were used to propagate notions of Black inferiority to White people. There were also strict rules on miscegenation (Dorr, 2010; Franklin, 1980; Judice, 2008; Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, 1967; Lubin, 2005; Newbeck, 2004; Sweet, 2005; Taylor, 2009, Virginia, Racial Integrity Act, Chap. 371, SB 219, 1924) that prohibited marriage between a White person and a Black person or a person of partially Black descent, (i.e., a Mulatto); and specified that any such union was considered illegal and void.

Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, Jim Crow Laws were enacted to segregate Blacks from Whites, further exacerbating the racial divide. Brunsma (2006) stated, "By WWI, the one-drop rule [sic] was backed uniformly by US Whites" (p. 17). Mulatto and Negro activists fought to raise the Black community and tremendous measures were taken to improve racial conditions and gain equality. During the Civil Rights Era (1954–1968), with the end of school segregation through the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954), and the end of Jim Crow laws through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965,

multiracial people were still seen as solely Black. To peacefully co-exist with the White population, multiracial Americans had to continue to renounce one side of their heritage.

However, among the shifting ideologies of the 1970s and 1980s, "multiculturalism… encouraged the affirmation of all racial combinations" (Korgen, 1999, p. 22). Terms to describe mixed-race people of Black-White descent included *biracial, multiracial, bicultural,* and *multiethnic* (Frazier, 2002). Proponents of multiracial identity encourage multiracial people to identify all sides of their genetic makeup, for "to neglect one or the other parent's identity [is] to detract from a clear racial identity" (Korgen, 1999, p. 22). Current studies in the field of multiracialism aim to help multiracial individuals develop a voice based on understanding the historical and sociological perspectives, and then move forward from that point.

Now, in the twenty-first century, in the era of the first multiracial president of the United States, President Barack Obama, society is increasingly populated with people from multiple racial backgrounds. Multiracial celebrities are more recognizable in entertainment and sports industries, and are finding ways to make their interracial familial backgrounds noticed. There are more activist strides for multiracial people to identify as both or all of their races, with some theorists such as Powell (2005) insisting on a White multiracial option, thereby completely terminating the One-Drop Rule ideology.

Demographic Projections

Korgen (1999) has specified that most biracial Black-White people born before 1967 (the traditional cut-off date of the historical Civil Rights Era) tend to monoracially identify as Black; whereas more multiracial people born after 1967 tend to identify as biracial or multiracial. Powell (2005) has asserted the need for a multiracial White option. Current research indicates

that the more multiracial people assert a multiracial identity, the more the One-Drop Rule will be dismantled and the less power the United States's color line will be in keeping races segregated and separated (Sweet, 2005).

Census 2000 initiated a new form that, for the first time in United States history, presented racially mixed people with more than one racial option to identify themselves. They were able to self-select all of their races by, in the form's words, "indicat(ing) what this person considers himself/herself to be" (Census 2000). Multiracial people could choose all of their races and had a number of choices from which to choose; a space was also offered for "Some Other Race" to be checked, with a space in which that "other race" could be explained. The Census 2010 form was similarly laid out. It is interesting to note that President Barack Obama, as the first multiracial president of the United States, identified himself monoracially as Black in Census 2010. Researchers might agree that because he was born before 1967, he was operating under the well-defined system of the One-Drop Rule (Korgen, 1999). Yet it should be his choice how to self-select, not society's.

Census 2000 revealed that 6.8 million people or 2.4% of the United States population identified as multiracial; the number of people who self-identified as multiracial increased to 9 million or 2.9% of the population in the results of Census 2010. Looking toward the future, one might wonder how the opportunity to select more than one race might help multiracial people. Will there be better services and facilities available, or will multiracial people continue to be marginalized in monoracial ways? According to the Census 2010 website:

> Asked since 1790, race is key to implementing many federal laws and is needed to monitor compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act. State governments use the data to determine congressional, state and local voting districts. Race data are also used to assess fairness of employment practices, to monitor racial

> disparities in characteristics such as health and education and to plan and obtain funds for public services.

Even with the above explanation of why racial data are necessary, questions remain about how that data will serve multiracial communities, particularly those consisting of people who strongly assert and maintain multiple racial backgrounds.

Multimedia and Multiracial Identity

A breakthrough in current thought concerning the One-Drop Rule is in the entertainment industry, where celebrities and athletes are asserting multiracial identities, and are not falling victim to the One-Drop Rule. Professional golfer Tiger Woods, who is one-fourth Thai, one-fourth Chinese, one-fourth Black, one-eighth Native American, and one-eighth White, asserts his racial title as “Cablinasian,” in order to encompass all branches of his family tree (O’Hearn, 1998; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005). Other mixed-race celebrities of reported part-Black background include wrestler and actor Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, actresses Halle Berry, Jennifer Beals, and Zoe Saldana, actor Vin Diesel, and singer Mariah Carey. Some of these celebrities identify themselves as multiracial, whereas others claim a monoracially Black identity. The critical argument is that individuals, not society, should choose how to self-identify.

Society still needs to be informed and educated along the parameters of multiracial equality and choice. Many forms for schools still have monoracial categories or have only an “Other” box, with no space for parents to write in all of the races that apply. Although many possible racial mixtures can comprise a “multiracial” person, current public forms should reflect the diversity to the United States population.

Lastly, social networking sites such as Facebook now contain mixed race groups, and there are also Internet chat rooms, pod casts on multiraciality, and blogs for people to write and discuss their experiences as multiracial human beings. Monoracial people should be made aware of these technological resources and gain knowledge about multiracial experiences. Documentary films are also being made within multiracial communities on multiracialism. One in particular, *I'm Biracial, Not Black, Damn It!*, made by biracial filmmaker Carolyn Battle-Cochrane (2009), concurs that multiracial people of Black descent have been conditioned to classify themselves as monoracially Black. Informational programs such as this documentary reflect a new trend to dismantle the One-Drop Rule.

Hypodescent

The One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent is a social ideology and a uniquely American phenomenon of multiracial people of Black-White descent (Sweet, 2005). A term from the field of Anthropology, Hypodescent is defined as the rule that "automatically places the children of a union or mating between members of different groups in the minority group" (Kottak, 2002, p. 198). Often informally called the One-Drop Rule, the term describes the racial status of Black-White offspring through a political, sociological, and legal lens in the United States. Brunsma (2006) has noted that the "one-drop rule [sic] [is] a Hypodescent rule because mixed Black/White children are assigned the status position of the lower status parent group – that of Blacks" (p. 17). The One-Drop Rule as a policy is not as enforced on multiracial people of other mixtures (i.e., Hispanic-Asian, White-Hispanic, White-Asian); no other racial mixture is subjected to this type of monoracial categorization to the degree of Black-White individuals. Because the One-Drop Rule is only applicable to people mixed with Black (African American)

heritage, people outside of the United States do not subscribe to this logic of a single race identity (Sweet, 2005).

The legal, political, and social contexts of the One-Drop Rule are critical to comprehending the complex dynamic between White privilege and the rules of Hypodescent in the lives of multiracial people of Black-White racial background. White privilege is a system that promotes White superiority (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988; Trepagnier, 2006). The One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent is an aspect of White privilege (Daniel, 1996). This rule was created to determine who was to be classified Black as a means of keeping the White race pure; anybody who might be part-White, but also part-Black, is monoracially classified in the socially constructed racial group "Black" (Brunsma, 2006; Daniel, 1996; Davis, 1991; Korgen, 1999; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005).

Winters and DeBose (2003) have expounded on the nature of racial identity, explaining that

> [I]n determining how society's benefits are assigned and how people are responded to individually and collectively. Because racial identity can influence how one is received or how rewards are distributed, group membership becomes especially important for biracial people and society itself. (p. 128)

The One-Drop Rule, therefore, is the catalyst for perpetuating and enforcing racial microaggressions on Black-White individuals; it is a way of monoracially and socially categorizing mixed-race people of Black African descent.

Legal Context of the One-Drop Rule

The One-Drop Rule is a societal policy with legal implications, as directed through other restrictive laws on race. No actual legislation in the United States Constitution decrees that all people of Black African descent must be legally classified as Black—meaning that, at the

national level, there are no nor ever have been any laws or amendments that classify a person as Black. But many states adopted various One-Drop policies and, through state statutes, it became nationally accepted policy.

The One-Drop Rule stems from a system of White oppression toward People of Color and is the social and societal belief that if a person has any Black blood, he or she is legally Black—despite physical appearance, blood fraction, or association (Sweet, 2005). It is not based on scientific fact, as race is a social construct (Haney-Lopez, 1996; Omi & Winant, 1994); rather, it is an ideological policy that has permeated every facet of American life, whereby a person's race has come to determine privilege and/or oppression.

Political Context of the One-Drop Rule

The One-Drop Rule is the political system of racially classifying people of Black-White descent, dating back to the origins of the United States. Three types of policies led to legislation that enforced the One-Drop Rule on both statewide and nationwide levels: (a) policies that define Blackness (Negro status); (2) policies that prohibit interracial marriage (anti-miscegenation); and (c) policies that disenfranchise Blacks (to segregate the races).

Definitions of Blackness (Negro status policies). Before the Civil War, policies that defined Blackness or Negro status—particularly in relation to and in opposition to Whiteness— determined slave status. Post-Civil War, these policies determined what legal Blackness was in terms of degree or blood fraction (Sweet, 2005).

The Virginia colony created the first two pieces of legislation that indicated how to determine who would be considered Black and, therefore, is the origin of the One-Drop Rule. They are as follows:

- 1662: Virginia's policy of "*partus sequiter ventrem*" (Sweet, 2005, p. 122) stated: "Virginia reverses the presumption of English law that the child follows the status of the father, and enacts a law that makes the free or enslaved status of children dependent on the status of the mother" (Taylor, 2009, p. 35).
- 1664: Virginia was the first colony to enact legislation to determne permenant slave status for Africans and people of African background:

  > In Virginia the enslaved African's status is clearly differentiated from the indentured servant's status for the first time when colonial laws decree that enslavement is for life and the condition is transferred to the children through the mother. The terms "Black" and "slave" become synonymous and enslaved Africans are subject to harsher and more brutal control than other laborers. (Taylor, 2009, p. 36)

- 1705: Virginia created the first law determining who was Black based on percentages of blood, and imposed a "one-eighth blood-fraction rule" (Sweet, 2005, p. 127). This law was amended in 1785 to a percentage of "one-quarter or more Negro blood" (Sweet, 2005, p. 171).

Judice (2008) has explained that

> state legislatures had gone to great lengths to define "black" and "white" long before the end of the colonial period, a task complicated by the fact that many people of mixed racial ancestry were indistinguishable in appearance from whites. (p. 14)

Zack (1993) informed that by the time of the American Revolution, it "became necessary… to define a Negro legally" (p. 80). Due to an increasing population of Mulatto slave labor, justifications for more White-looking slaves had to be made. By the nineteenth century, physical appearance was the determining factor of race; if one looked Black or had a more African-looking appearance, he or she would be considered Black. Individuals who had more White-

looking features could be considered White. The term Mulatto as a racial category was also an accepted classification.

Sweet (2005) has contended that by the 1830s, "almost every state legislated a statutory definition of endogamous group membership based on blood fraction" (p. 172). This historical moment marked the legal beginning of the One-Drop Rule. By the early twentieth century, these definitions of Blackness were assigned a statewide statute either by blood fraction or the One-Drop ideology.

Jim Crow laws. As definitions of Blackness were created and codified in state law, other laws to further separate the White and Black races were devised to deprive Black people of power or to severely limit what Blacks could do. Jim Crow laws required Blacks and Whites to have access to facilities that were "separate but equal" in condition (Franklin, 1980; Klarman, 2004; Korgen, 1999; Lofgren, 1987; Tushnet, 2008). Restrictions codified in the laws included separate cars in trains; designated entrances to restaurants, theatres, and stores, and areas for both races divided by partitions or separate rooms; restroom facilities and drinking fountains; educational facilities; telephone booths; and separate places in libraries for Black people (Franklin, 1980; Klarman, 2004; Korgen, 1999; Lofgren, 1987; Tushnet, 2008). Unfortunately, the facilities available for Blacks were usually inferior.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Although Jim Crow laws had been in existence since the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877), the legal case that constitutionalized separate facilities for Blacks and Whites was Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Homer Plessy was part of a committee interested in challenging Louisiana's Jim Crow laws. Plessy, a multiracial man of White and Black background, was seven-eighths White and one-eighth Black (also known as an

“Octoroon”), which meant, according to Louisiana’s definition of Blackness, that Plessy was a Negro or Colored (Medley, 2003). In a local newspaper of that time, *The Crusader*, Plessy was physically described as “as White as the average White Southerner” (Medley, 2003, p. 146). To dispute the Jim Crow laws, Plessy purchased a train ticket and proceeded to sit in the White section in an intentional act of law breaking. When asked by train attendants if he was Colored, Plessy replied that he was. The train attendant asked Plessy numerous times to ride in the Colored section of the train; each time, Plessy refused, and was ultimately arrested and charged (Medley, 2003). In taking his case to the Louisiana State Supreme Court, Plessy argued that his citizen rights under the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments had been violated; that for people of Black or partial Black background to be required to sit in a separate car for Negroes implied that Blacks were inferior. Judge John Howard Ferguson ruled against Plessy’s plea; railroads could regulate as they wished (Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 1896).

Plessy appealed his case to the United States Supreme Court, asserting that “separate” accommodations on the trains implied Black inferiority. The United States Supreme Court ruled 7-1 in favor of “separate but equal” facilities, in agreement with the previous Louisiana Supreme Court decision, and deemed these facilities as constitutional; Plessy’s rights, in the Court’s determination, had not been violated (Fireside, 2004; Lofgren, 1987). In addition to separating the races in public accommodations, the Plessy case demonstrated the change in ideology at that time: that people of mixed Black-White racial background, despite physical appearance (Sweet, 2005), were no longer seen as a separate race, referred to as Mulattoes (Korgen, 1999; Reuter, 1918; Spickard, 1989; Zack, 1993). These mixed-race individuals were categorized as Black,

specifically classified as Negroes, and were expected to conform to that monoracial classification on a social level.

Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas (1954). Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas (1954) is the legislation that ultimately overturned the original Plessy decision, stating that "separate but equal" facilities were "inherently unequal" for Black citizens in the educational arena (Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483, 1954; Kluger, 2004; Medley, 2003, Patterson, 2001; Tushnet, 2008). White public schools were required to gradually desegregate and to allow students of Black background, as well as other non-White ancestry, to attend.

Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas (1954), reversed the Plessy decision and allowed integration of the public schooling system (Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483, 1954; Kluger, 2004; Medley, 2003, Patterson, 2001; Tushnet, 2008). This legislation meant that multiracial and Negro students would have the same access to education as their White peers. It called an end to "separate but equal" facilities in the public arena, and was a step toward racial equality. However, the decision of Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas (1954), was only upheld in the educational field; it was still a number of years before antimiscegenation laws were disbanded.

The objective of these first two types of policies—defining Blackness and policies that disenfranchised Black people (Franklin, 1980)—was clear: to keep the White race pure (Sweet, 2005). Both types of policies were set in place by Whites, and the legislation that was developed and enforced at that time led to a third type of policy, which further specified what rights would be afforded to people of African or partial African ancestry: anti-miscegenation laws prohibiting

interracial marriage between Whites and non-Whites. These laws included the stringent and definitive Racial Integrity Act of 1924 from the state of Virginia and legally ended with the ruling of Loving v. Virginia in 1967.

Anti-miscegenation laws. Another legislative move that enforced the One-Drop Rule were policies banning interracial marriage—also known as Anti-Miscegenation Laws. These laws prohibited interracial marriage between Whites and non-Whites (particularly Blacks), thus lowering the possibility of racially mixed babies being born and keeping the races separate (Lubin, 2005). Judice (2008) contended:

> The earliest law prohibiting interracial marriages between blacks and whites was enacted in Virginia in 1681, and eventually all of the colonies followed suit. Racial intermarriage was thus not only a breach of Puritan morality, but also a threat to slavery and the stability of the servile labor force. (p. 12)

Anti-miscegenation laws were not codified into the United States Constitution (1789); they were legislated and implemented at the state level. The main purpose of laws banning interracial marriage was "to keep black men and white women apart. The legal process was not concerned with white males who had sexual contact with black females as long as the liaison remained formally unrecognized" (Judice, 2008, p. 13).

Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924. Although state-imposed anti-miscegenation laws had been legislated for years, the most detailed was the state of Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924. It was an amendment to the original 1662 and 1664 acts that defined individuals of Negro status (along maternal lines), and the 1705 and 1785 blood-fraction laws of Hypodescent (Sweet, 2005). The 1924 law required stricter legislation in terms of defining Blackness, classifying all people who were not pure White as Colored. It also required that all birth certificates indicate the race of the child as either White or Colored, further reinforcing the One-

Drop Rule. And it prohibited non-White people and White people from marrying, making this piece of legislation a law to preserve the White race (Dorr, 2010; Newbeck, 2004).

The Racial Integrity Act was yet another piece of legislation to compound the "One-Drop Rule"; by only having two choices—White or Colored—people of mixed racial background were placed into the monoracial category of "Colored." This act specified that any person of a "non-Caucasic strain, and if there be any mixture" would be considered Colored (Virginia, 1924 Racial Integrity Act, Chap. 371, SB 219).

Of the 41 out of 48 states that had laws banning interracial marriages of Whites and non-Whites (particularly Blacks), 11 states repealed their antimiscegenation laws by 1887, the end of the Reconstruction era. From 1948 through 1967, several more states repealed their antimiscegenation laws. Beginning in 1948, when California voided the law on interracial marriage, 14 more states nullified these laws against marriage between White people and non-Whites (Newbeck, 2004; Taylor, 2009). The remaining 16 states, all located in the South, had their antimiscegenation laws overturned by the ruling in Loving v. Virginia on June 12, 1967 (Taylor, 2009).

Loving v. Virginia (1967). Gregory and Grossman (2007) have explained that Richard Loving (a White man) and Mildred Dolores Jeter (a multiracial Black and Native American woman) were an interracial couple living in Virginia who wished to be married. Due to the Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which prohibited miscegenation between White people and non-White people, they decided to get married in Washington, DC, a locale without antimiscegenation laws, in June of 1958 (Newbeck, 2004). When they returned to their home in Virginia, they were arrested in violation of the Racial Integrity Act. They were given a sentence

of 1 year in prison, but given an alternative order to leave the state of Virginia. Six years later, through a series of similar legal cases instigated by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), their case was brought before the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, on June 12, 1967, handed down a unanimous decision that permanently disbanded antimiscegenation laws nationwide, stating, "Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man'… Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State" (Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, 1967). The Loving v. Virginia decision struck down the remaining antimiscegenation laws in all 16 Southern states, including the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, putting an end to all laws prohibiting interracial marriage, and marking the beginning of what Korgen (1999) has referred to as the "biracial baby boom" (p. 20) in the United States.

The combination of these three types of policies made the One-Drop Rule a nationwide tradition (Sweet, 2005) and maintained systems of oppression for people of African descent. The One-Drop Rule is a societal policy created and maintained through legal and political apparatuses, and sustained through other laws on race and through restrictive legislation such as "separate but equal" statutes, racial purity and blood fraction policies, and anti-miscegenation laws (Sweet, 2005).

Social Context of the One-Drop Rule

The United States Supreme Court ruling to disband previous antimiscegenation laws, making these statewide laws unconstitutional, was the start of a "biracial baby boom" (Korgen, 1999, p. 20), starting in 1967. Nationwide, Whites and Blacks were free to intermarry, which resulted in an increased number of multiracial births. The Multiracial Identity Movement in the

1980s and 1990s (Davis in Brunsma, 2006) was a direct result of this biracial baby boom, and multiracial people wanted to embrace all sides of heritages, not just one. This change also sparked the development of multiracial organizations in the 1980s and 1990s (Davis in Brunsma, 2006).

Despite breakthroughs in identity choices of multiracial people, social and societal policies that maintain the One-Drop Rule. Powell (2005) has explained that the One-Drop Rule is firmly entrenched in our national ideology, and is accepted by both Blacks and Whites. Powell's (2005) theory is that the One-Drop Rule is maintained and reinforced by Black people as a way of maintaining the status quo of racial inequality for people of Black or part-Black background, and is strongly implemented by a number of Blacks. According to Brunsma (2006), Blacks have supported the One-Drop Rule ideology out of fear of losing political power and backing if people who are mixed-Black identify as multiracial; as if Blacks are losing benefits in the community, and losing voice.

A more contemporary piece of legislative action took place in 2009, when Louisiana Justice of the Peace Keith Bardwell refused to marry a Black-White interracial couple. Bardwell refused to officiate the ceremony based on the residual notion of the One-Drop Rule and society's stigmatization of mixed-race Black-White children. According to Bardwell, "I think those children suffer and I won't help put them through it" (Associated Press, 2007). His thought was that the children would be brought up in a world in which they would be marginalized and confused.

How does society continue to keep Black-White mixed-race people embedded in identity choices based on the One-Drop Rule? Although better financial assistance is available through

scholarships and grants to People of Color and those of mixed-race status, thus affording better schooling opportunities, White privilege (McIntosh, 1988) is still prevalent in our society. The systems of oppression of days past (racial purity laws, antimiscegenation legislation, and segregation laws) have been exchanged for more subtle forms of racism through racial microaggressions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These microaggressions, whether conscious or unconscious, remind multiracial individuals of their racialized non-White status. It is the "silent racism" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 5) mentality of "otherizing… [in which] Blacks are racialized and Whites are not" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 55).

The One-Drop Rule has served as the sole racial classification for multiracial people of partially Black descent. That these people have been legally and socially categorized as Black—despite physical appearance, social groups affiliation, or blood fraction amounts (Sweet, 2005)—has had significant impact on multiracial identity. A multiracial person might identify him- or herself as one racial label (i.e., White-Black multiracial), whereas many societal schools of thought—deeply entrenched in One-Drop Rule policy—might consider them monoracially Black. Subtle acts of racism, also known as microaggressions, are perpetrated on multiracial individuals, reinforcing socially established racial labels.

Being of both a White and Black mixed-race ancestry represents the duality of being part of the dominant culture, that is White privilege (McIntosh, 1988), and yet sharing similar experiences of monoracial People of Color, for example, the One-Drop Rule. Historical research indicates that multiracial people have experienced a system of racism that does not recognize their partial Whiteness, or has recognized it along a continuum of percentages of Black blood, and thus have been stigmatized and marginalized along monoracial lines of separation from their

White status. CRT provides a lens through which one may look at race and systems of racial classification and oppression in America

Counter-Examples

Brunsma (2006) has contended that the One-Drop Rule was created and enforced by Whites, and accepted by most Blacks. Populations that have rejected the One-Drop Rule as status quo include "some children of mixed marriages [who] are socialized to reject the Black-only identity… people of Creole background… Hispanic people with Black ancestry… [and] Native Americans with Black ancestry" (Brunsma, 2006, p. 19). Yet it is a difficult ideology to contravene, as people who have rejected the monoracial categorization of the One-Drop Rule are up against centuries of policy and law that indicate and expect cooperation with the notion that if you are "one-drop" Black in the United States, you are considered legally Black. Brunsma (2006) substantiated that "the most common response to deviations from the rule in both the Black and White communities is to condemn the deviations and affirm the rule" (p. 19).

Historical Representation of Black-White Multiracial People in the United States

In alignment with the tenets of CRT in education, Dixson and Rousseau (2006) have illustrated that any viable examination of race and racism requires "historical and contextual analyses" (p. 49). To understand the ideology of the One-Drop Rule vis-à-vis White privilege, the sociological perspective from theorists in the early twentieth century provides an examination of the Mulatto in history. Sociology has permeated the ways that the Black-White multiracial individual has been viewed in society—filtered through academic viewpoints of prominent sociologists to the widespread social modes of media and cinema. This section deconstructs how theorists have explained and described the lived experiences of Black-White multiracial people

from the end of slavery, through the Reconstruction and Jim Crow segregation periods, to the pre-Civil Rights Era, spanning nearly a century from 1863 to 1954.

The two major authors in the early twentieth century who studied the Mulatto from a sociological perspective were Edward Byron Reuter and Everett Stonequist. These theorists told a majoritarian tale of multiracial people of Black-White background in America, reflecting the ideology of that time period. Their writings promoted the pervasive belief of the "Mulatto" as a problematic and deficient being.

Deficiency Models of Social Sciences of the Past

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have discussed deficiency models as detailed by theorists in the social sciences. The basic premise of these models is that something is "wrong" with People of Color, biologically and developmentally (academically). This perception is common in sociological and educational texts from the early part of the twentieth century through to contemporary times. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have highlighted how CRT is a response to the "master narrative" (p. 28) told by White society to hinder communities of color.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have illustrated the history of the dominant tale in the social sciences by discussing both sociological and cultural deficiency models that demonstrate the academic and social differences between White children and Students of Color. These dominant stories exemplify the binary between White people and People of Color, whereby all aspects of dominant society are viewed as acceptable and normal, whereas Cultures of Color are seen as flawed, faulty, and abnormal. This binary relationship has been evidenced throughout past accounts related to social science, legal policy, and educational injustices.

These deficiency models filter down to multiracial people when they are tokenized (Kanter, 1977) to represent their of-Color background(s). The historic legacy of the literature traces the dominant tale of Black-White individuals previous to civil rights legislation (Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas, 1954, and Loving v. Virginia, 1967), the subsequent "biracial baby boom" (Korgen, 1999, p. 20), and more contemporary multiracial identity development models from the 1980s through the present day.

The dominant story about multiracial people of Black-White racial background often includes sociological characters that illustrate an element of pathology—such as the marginal man narrative and the tragic Mulatto/Mulatta myth (Bogle, 1994; Park, 1928; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937). These characters are prevalent in historic literature on mixed-race people, as well as in the media and cinema and, indeed, were long accepted as reality. These stereotypical images of Black-White mixed-race people were so accepted as reality until more contemporary times reflected a more socially accurate description of the multiracial Black-White experience.

Whereas Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have discussed historical accounts, the most prevalent theories in the history of Black-White multiracial individuals are the deficiency models described by Reuter (1918, 1931) and Stonequist (1937). Their writings on the Mulatto offer an historical lens that reflects the dominant narrative, thus illustrating the societal viewpoint that cast the part-Black multiracial person as anomalous and deviant. Highly esteemed and well-respected leaders in their field of study, Reuter and Stonequist were both mentored by Professor Robert E. Park, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago and researcher at Tuskegee

Institute, who the first theorized the "marginal man" (1928) and who incited both theorists to research the hybrid person (Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937).

Another vehicle through which the Black-White multiracial person has been deficiently viewed is in the media, particularly in film. Often featured is the tragic Mulatta archetype (Bogle, 1994), as seen in such films as *The Imitation of Life* (1934,1956), *I Passed For White* (1960), and *Pinky* (1949). Her story, as a role in the dominant master narrative, will be described later because it reflects the social trends and beliefs of the media as a tool of society.

The Mulatto as a "Problem in the Community"

A leader in the field of sociology in the early part of the twentieth century, Edward Byron Reuter was the 22nd president of the American Sociological Association and a professor of sociology at the University of Iowa. Although he authored multiple works, two pieces provide an understanding of the historic background of Black-White mixed-race individuals. The first work, "The Mulatto in the United States" (1918), was his doctoral dissertation at the University of Illinois, and an important historical document in the discourse of multiracial identity. An additional work, written 13 years later, "Race Mixture" (1931) continues Reuter's research concerning the Mulatto, and substantiates his original dissertation topic. In his work, Reuter (1918, 1931) detailed the sociological nature of the Mulatto in terms of the overarching "American Race Problem" (Reuter, 1927, p. 1) then reasserted, over a decade later, that the Mulatto is "an unadjusted person… a man of divided loyalties" (Reuter, 1931, p. 216) and a "problem in the community" (Reuter, 1918, p. 18).

Much of Reuter's work concerning the Mulatto is representative of the origins of deficit thinking in terms of multiracial identity. For instance, Reuter (1918) referred to the Negro race

as “backward” (p. 18) and explained that the term does not imply a “biological” (p .18) or scientific distinction, but a “cultural designation” (p. 18). Within this implicit caste system based on a cultural designation in the United States, the Mulatto, as a “half-caste” (p. 19), represents a “problem in the community” (Reuter, 1918, p. 18). The Mulatto is part-White and part-Black, and, therefore, part of the dominant race and part of the “backward” (Reuter, 1918, p. 18) race. Within this caste structure, the two races are diametrically opposed in every possible way, but especially culturally and socially. The product of such a union would be offspring that may have a unique physical appearance that “separates them from both groups and makes them alien in both” (Reuter, 1918, p. 19), as well as having “peculiar mental traits and attitudes which are not racial but are determined by the social situation in which they find themselves” (Reuter, 1918, p. 19). The Mulatto, therefore, represents both a “psychological type and… a social problem” (Reuter, 1918, p. 26).

Repeatedly throughout “The Mulatto in the United States,” Reuter (1918) referred to the Mulatto as a person who is superior to the Negro, but inferior to the White race. The Mulatto asserts himself as leader of the Negro race, while vying to be seen as an equal by the White race. Reuter (1918) also discussed the importance of skin color and “absence of… racial marks” (p. 68) as representative of his superiority to the Negro race, yet as a “distinguishable” (p. 19) feature that separates him from being a complete member of either race.

Reuter (1918) gave an historic and legal examination of the Mulatto through history, beginning with legislation that proclaimed the racial status of the interracial individual and detailing the legacy of slavery into his contemporary era. Reuter (1918) clarified the sociological positions of the members of the White and Black races, as well as developed the

foundation of the Mulatto as a person between these two races. The White race does not see the Mulatto as equal and does not trust the Mulatto because of "lower ancestry and presumption of a dubious origin" (Reuter, 1918, p. 103). Conversely, the Black race acclaims the Mulatto as superior due to his lighter skin color, believing that "possession of white blood is […] evidence of superiority" (Reuter, 1918, p. 103). Reuter's (1918) research on the Mulatto's lighter skin tone in relation to the Negro race reflects the origins of colorism—the cultural and social value attached and assigned to skin color. The ideology of colorism is still prevalent in present-day discourse and will be addressed later in this dissertation.

Mulattoes, according to Reuter (1918), are "a dissatisfied and an unhappy group" (p. 103); between two opposing racial sides, they do not identify as either race. They do not want to be associated with the "lower" (Reuter, 1918, p. 103) Negro race, and attempt to conceal the "bitterness born of their degrading association with it" (Reuter, 1918, p. 103). At the same time, they "envy the white [race], aspire to equality with them, and are embittered when the realization of such ambition is denied them" (Reuter, 1918, p. 103). The outcome of this dilemma is a "discontented and psychologically unstable group which gives rise to the acute phases of the so-called race problem" (Reuter, 1918, p. 103).

From a sociological viewpoint, and in accordance with the One-Drop Rule, "the social and cultural status of these half-caste individuals is determined by the attitudes of the politically and culturally dominant group" (Reuter, 1918, p. 3). In other words, the White race determines the plight of the Mulatto. One-Drop Rule ideology, therefore, would designate the Mulatto as a faction of Negro society, albeit a more "superior" faction because of his partial Whiteness. This assessment contributed to a type of "division between the Negroes" (Reuter, 1931, p. 69) based

on whether one was a Negro "because of ancestry… or by force of social circumstances" (Reuter, 1931, p. 69). Yet, the One-Drop Rule held firm; if one had any fraction of Black blood, he or she was considered socially Black; still, any drop of White blood contributed to a more superior Black status.

Having White blood, therefore, afforded better social opportunities and advantages— a remnant of the legacy of slavery, when the lighter-skinned Mulatto usually worked in the master's house, while the darker-skinned monoracial Negro was a field slave. In the same vein, the Mulatto may have received more access to education and other benefits, most likely because of being the offspring of the White master, while the Negro may have received cruder treatment and had little to no chance for cultural or social advancement (Korgen, 1999; Reuter, 1918). For this reason, the Mulatto often emerged as the leader of a given Negro group because of his advanced educational level.

Reuter's (1918, 1931) works represent the ethos of his time period, acknowledging the marginal (Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937) position of Mulattos in terms of both "parent races… [adding that…] Both races despise and reject them" (Reuter, 1918, p. 98). Throughout his research, Reuter (1918) discussed that even as the Negro despises the Mulatto because of his superior social and cultural value, the Negro looks to the Mulatto to be a leader for Negroes. Because of the Mulatto's place in society in relation to White society (not seen as equal, but as superior to the Negro), he is revered in a leadership capacity.

"The Mulatto in the United States" was written in 1918, three years after the anti-Negro silent film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was released in theatres. This film reflected popular perceptions by depicting various Negro characters in negative (yet hauntingly and historically

accurate) ways; ways which were representative of the post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow era (Bogle, 1994). Most notable is the deficiency representation seen in the portrayal of the Mulatto character as deranged, which perpetuates the idea of the Mulatto as insane, “unstable” (Reuter, 1918, p. 102), and a “psychological type” (Reuter, 1918, p. 26). Literature, cinema, and media, therefore, all concurrently endorsed the idea of the Mulatto as a deficient being.

The Marginal Mulatto

Everett Stonequist (1937) perpetuated the idea of the Mulatto as a “special problem for the community” (p. 10) through his research on marginal people. Stonequist was a recognized professor of sociology at Skidmore College in the 1930s and a researcher in the field of hybrid peoples in the world. His mentor, Dr. Robert E. Park, coined the phrase “marginal man” (1928) as a “sociological frame of reference” (Stonequist, 1937, p. vii). Stonequist (1937) expanded on Park’s concept in his research, having studied “the Eurasians or Anglo-Indians of India, the Cape Coloured of South Africa, the Mulattoes of the United States, the Coloured people of Jamaica, the Indo-Europeans of Java, the part Hawaiians, and the *Métis* of Brazil” (p. 11). Like Reuter, Stonequist was a well-respected and highly esteemed leader in his field of study.

Stonequist (1937) defined marginal people as “individuals who fall between two major racial or cultural groups, but [marginalization] is also apparent in the relations of minor groups such as social classes, religious sects, and communities” (p. 2). The marginal man “finds himself on the margin of each [group] but a member of neither” (Stonequist, 1937, p. 3). Stonequist (1937) talked about how, living in two distinct worlds, this person is not a full member in either one—he has a “kind of dual personality” (p. 4).

The Mulatto is a marginal man, living on the borders of both his White side and Black side, yet not a part of either side (Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937). Stonequist (1937) referred to the Mulatto as a "racial hybrid" (p. 10). Recognizing that the concept of race is a strictly sociological idea, Stonequist (1937) looked at the personality and character features of the Mulatto, concurring with Reuter (1918, 1931) about the Mulatto's leadership roles in the Negro community. Yet Stonequist's (1937) description of the Mulatto in terms of individual qualities varied. The Mulatto is "restless and race-conscious, aggressive and radical, ambitious and creative" (Stonequist, 1937, p. 25); and the Mulatto's desire to be accepted to be part of White society is continually denied him because of the "extreme racial policy" (Stonequist, 1937, p. 24) of the One-Drop Rule. Consequently, Stonequist (1937), like Reuter (1918, 1931), illustrated the Mulatto as one who is granted certain social privileges because of his Whiteness, yet expected to conform to his expected position as a member of the Negro race.

Stonequist (1937) continued his marginal man theory by classifying the American Negro as a "cultural hybrid" (p. 83). Lacking a connection to his African culture of origin, and yet, not completely accepted as an American, he is a marginal man. Due to the legacy of slavery and post-Reconstruction and Jim Crow legislation of the time in which Stonequist (1937) conducted his research, the Negro straddled the line between a nonexistent African identity and a not-accepted American identity. This notion is coupled with the idea of the Mulatto as part of Negro society in being subjected to "the effect of the white man's 'stereotype' of the Negro" (Stonequist, 1937, p. 108) as an inferior individual. The Mulatto was classified as superior to the Negro and afforded more opportunities for advancement and leadership within the Negro community. In agreement with Reuter (1918, 1931), Stonequist (1937) concluded that because

“standards of beauty are derived from the white world” (p. 113), and because the Mulatto is seen as superior to the Negro, “social distances and discrimination” (p. 112) formed within the Negro community. The Mulatto’s marginal place—caught between wanting to be accepted by White society and being forced into Black society—creates a sense of “bitter frustration and mental conflict” (Stonequist, 1937, p. 112) for the Mulatto.

Therefore, Stonequist (1937) substantiated Reuter’s (1918, 1931) research conclusions about the Mulatto as a marginal man trapped in the binary of Black and White, inferior and superior. He is envied by the Negro for his lighter skin tone and more Anglicized physical features, and elevated as leader of the Negro race. He is given special privileges by White society, yet not considered an equal. In other words, the Mulatto is a marginal individual within an already marginalized segment of society: he is marginal because of being Mulatto, and because of being “one-dropped” as a Negro.

The Tragic Mulatta

Literature and cinema have perpetuated White privilege, racism, and negative stereotypes regarding the personality and behavior of the Mulatto. Whereas Reuter and Stonequist spoke of the Mulatto in masculine terms (referring to the Mulatto as “he” or “him”), media have denoted the Mulatto specifically as a female character (the tragic Mulatta). This figure is deemed exotic because of her unusual physical beauty, “tragic” (Bogle, 1994) because of her desire to ingratiate herself with dominant society, and hopelessly constrained by Black social reality. The One-Drop Rule dictates her Black societal identity. Such characterizations in the early days of film fueled beliefs that the Mulatto was bitter, unstable (Reuter, 1918; Reuter, 1931), and conflicted (Stonequist, 1937); in other words, the Mulatto is a tragic being.

The film *The Imitation of Life* (made in 1934; remade in 1956) epitomizes the issues in this study. A woman who is considered Black wishes to "pass" (Ali, 2003; Bogle, 1994; Daniel, 1992; Davis, 1991; Korgen, 1999; Zack, 1993) for White, based on her light skin and White facial features. She hopes to be accepted into White culture and receive the inherent advantages of White privilege. However, her friends and family stigmatize her for socially identifying with White culture; in the 1956 version, she is beaten by her White boyfriend when he discovers she is what he perceives to be Black. (He has co-opted the One-Drop Rule.) Running away from home, she severs ties with her Black mother, denounces ties to the Black community, and claims her position in White society. However, that society enforces a Black social identity despite her physical appearance, she must identify as Black. She will not be considered socially acceptable unless she concedes to her Black ancestry. Ultimately, she accepts her fate as a Black woman in a White world; she knows that she will never escape her Blackness. Although these, and other similar films, are outdated in this new era of multiracial history, they nevertheless depict the deficiency beliefs that dominant society long advocated and perpetuated as truth for multiracial people of Black-White background.

Summary

The marginal man and the tragic Mulatta are deficit representations that serve as a foundation for current-day racial microaggressions against Black-White multiracial people. Nearly 100 years later—in the twenty-first century—Reuter's (1918, 1931) research on the Mulatto in the United States and Stonequist's (1937) marginal man theory seem extremely archaic and illogical. Although these scholars' appear matter-of-fact and explanatory, present-day theorists might find their works inaccurate in light of current multiracial sociological trends.

This deficit thinking was the forefront ideology for racial identity development models in the first half of the twentieth century. There were no specific multiracial identity development models as such, because “Mulattoes” were categorized as a form of “Negro”; the One-Drop Rule was prevalent in the social sciences. Thus, because of the historic legacy of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, and the academic and popular representations of the Black-White multiracial person as the tragic Mulatto/Mulatta and marginal man, the racial and ethnic identity models of the 1970s and 1980s tended to limit multiracial identity to monoracial categories. Racial socialization processes reflected the tendency toward Hypodescent. Multiracial identity theorists since 1990, however, have reflected multiple, varying racial options for multiracial individuals.

Racial Socialization Processes

Families, schools, general society, and individual choice influence the multiracial identity development of Black-White multiracial individuals (See Table 1).

Table 1

Major Factors that Influence Multiracial Identity Development

	Family	School	Society	Self
Significant	Parents	Administrators	Friends	Phenotype
People	Siblings	Faculty/Staff	Dating	Personal Choice
	Extended	Students	General	
	SES	(see also Friends)		

Note. Table 1 is a synthesis of research in the field of multiracial identity development. This table represents the combination of factors that influence the racial socialization of multiracial individuals (Brunsma, 2005; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Herman, 2004; Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; McHale et al., 2006; Morrison & Bordere, 2001; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Rockquemore, Laszloffy, & Noveske, 2005; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1992).

Family Socialization Factors

The racial socialization process relies on the identity formation strategies outlined by theorists in the field of multiracialism (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992, 2000). Still, the terminology explaining familial socialization for multiracial people is limited. McHale, Crouter, Kim, Burton, Davis, Dotterer, and Swanson (2006) researched the dynamics of racial socialization specifically within the Black family. McHale et al. (2006) quoted Hughes and Johnson (2001) in defining racial socialization as the ways in which "parents shape children's learning about their own race and about relations between ethnic groups" (p. 1387). This definition is easily translatable to the socialization process inherent in interracial families, whereby parents inform their child of both sides of their heritage, in relation to other racial groups.

The family is the first place a multiracial child is socialized into monoracial society (McHale et al., 2006; Morrison & Bordere, 2001; Rockquemore, Laszloffy, & Noveske, 2005). Within the family, parents socialize their children to understand the world, particularly the United States, and help to form the child's racial identity(ies). Parents may socialize their multiracial offspring to identify him- or herself as monoracial, multiracial, or another designation (Renn, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 2003b).

Brunsma (2005) investigated parental socioeconomic status as a determinant of multiracial socialization in how parents assign a racial designation to their children. Brunsma (2005) found that "parents from higher socioeconomic statuses [tended] to racially identify their mixed-race children as multiracial and/or White, and be less inclined to identify these children as

minority" (p. 1135). Conversely, paternal identification contributed to racial socialization of the Black-White multiracial child. Brunsma (2005) stated that

> the father's race has a significant impact on the child's racial identification. If a Black-White child's father is Black, he is more likely to be identified as Black and not as White or Multiracial. Mother's race does affect the pull – away from Multiraciality and towards black. (p. 1148)

These findings prompt further investigation as to family economics, class structure, and educational capital, and how these factors contribute to the racial socialization of the multiracial child.

Family relationships with siblings and other extended family members also contribute to an individual's identity choices. Acceptance or nonacceptance by family members (i.e., grandparents, aunts, and uncles, other relatives) affects how the multiracial person determines a cohesive racial identity. Lastly, family social class and neighborhood demographics determine how the multiracial person racially identifies himself or herself, based in the connection between racial systems and class levels.

School and Society Socialization Factors

Schools also shape how multiracial students perceive their racial identities and identify themselves. As the place where multiracial children interact with other children, schools are major sites in which society either helps or hinders identity formation. In generations past, Black-White multiracial children were expected to identify solely as Black, and society—not the child or family—designated the racial category. Multiracial children were expected to conform. As times change, theorists like Powell (2005) have urged and demanded that these individuals have the option of identifying as "white mulatto or mixed white" (p. 13); society's labels must change to recognize the duality of these people.

Schooling experiences with administrators, faculty, and other students can either exclude or include the multiracial individual. Racialized experiences, both in school and in general society, affect the ways in which the multiracial individual self-identifies. The ways that friends and dating partners either accept or reject the multiracial person socially also contributes to how the multiracial individual self-identifies.

Multiracial Self-Identity Factors

Lastly, the multiracial individual's personal label of self-identification—whether recognizing both races, monoracially, or nonracially—helps define how that person wishes to identify him- or herself to the world. Although phenotype largely determines how he or she might racially describe him- or herself (or how that person is racially identified by other people), identity choices should truly be the choice of the individual. As delineated by theorists in the field, the ways that a multiracial person may choose to identify him- or herself vary from person to person, and from situation to situation (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Root, 1990).

Herman (2004) has also addressed the ways that multiracial children develop a racial identity, as well as how interracial families facilitate that process. The socialization process is especially critical during adolescence, when multiracial teenagers must not only form a social identity but a multiple racial heritage. Factors to consider include ethnic identity (based on cultural background), phenotype (physical features and skin color), class level, community, peer associations, and school. Herman (2004) illustrated that "in addition to ethnic identity, the racial composition of the neighborhood, peer group, cohabitating family members, and school all had significant impacts on racial identification" (p. 744). Therefore, choice of friends, family

socioeconomic status, and community demographics, as well as racial phenotype, all contribute to the self-identification and self-definition that the multiracial child chooses.

Multiracial Identity Development

Multiracial identity models delineate possible ways that multiracial children develop a sense of identity and map developmental stages to how multiracial individuals make sense of their complex varied backgrounds. In the case of Black-White multiracial children, individuals are not solely limited to Black racial identity models, or White models. There is a need for a deeper understanding of how these individuals develop a racial sense of identity, within the family, schools, society, and individually.

Multiracial identity models provide a vocabulary and theoretical understanding through which multiracial people may understand their unique developmental processes as racial beings (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992, 2000). Society, however, might ignore or devalue the identity choices made by the multiracial individual; if one asserts a multiracial or biracial label for him- or herself, and society calls that person Black, a disconnect may emerge in the relational process. This conundrum returns to the One-Drop Rule and White society's power structure, both of which deny a mixed-race person's entire racial heritage in order to maintain systems of White privilege.

Decades of monoracial ethnic identity development models included monoracially classifying Black-White multiracial individuals due to the One-Drop Rule. Literature of that period delineated psychosocial factors such as marginalization (Korgen, 1999; Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937), tokenism (Funderberg, 1994; Kanter, 1977), invisibility (King, 2008), and

social invalidation (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). But a shift occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, in which experts in the field of multiracial studies described several models of multiracial identity development. These theorists discussed the role of the Racial Socialization Process, which included the socialization factors of families, schools, and general society, in shaping the identity development of multiracial people.

Concepts of Multiracial Identity Development

Until the 1990s, a small number of ethnic identity models served People of Color and so-called ethnic minorities, but did not concentrate exclusively on multiracial individuals. These monoracially centered ethnic identity models were often adapted to included multiracial people and created a deficit model of thinking (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002)—that is, the notion that something is "wrong" with the multiracial person in the formation of his or her identity, and that he or she must ultimately choose only one race, thus divesting that individual of the depth and uniqueness of the multiracial experience. Hypodescent ideology, or the One-Drop Rule, required American multiracial children to identify themselves—and be identified by others—as "Black." Most studies contend that Black-White multiracial people should fit neatly into the Black or ethnic minority identity models. Therefore, the experiences of multiracial Black-White people were usually monoracially centered. The following tables show the development of these racial and ethnic identity development models. Table 2 indicates the background of the historical eras in terms of the legislation of the One-Drop Rule in Black-White multiracial identity. Table 3 indicates the development of the various Racial and Ethnic Identity Development models.

Table 2

Historical Eras Delineating the Legal Definitions of Race (Based on Legal Policy)

Historical Era	Years	Legal Definitions of Race
Era of Slavery	1619–1865	Racial Status of the mother (Black female slave and White male slave-owner) Negro slaves and Mulatto descendants were categorized as Slave Status Some Individual State Laws of Hypodescent
Post Civil War Era	1865–1875	Individual State Laws of Hypodescent
Reconstruction through Jim Crow Era	1875–1954	Individual State Laws of Hypodescent "Separate But Equal" legislation in some states, based on White racial purity Mulatto is the leader of the Negro race (Reuter, 1918, 1931) Mulatto is marginal (Stonequist, 1937)
Civil Rights Era	1954–1967	Individual State Laws of Hypodescent End of Anti-Miscegenation Laws in the United States (Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, 1967) Beginning of the Biracial Baby Boom (Korgen, 1999)

Note. Before Reuter (1918, 1931) and Stonequist (1937), there were no specific racial identity models. Racial categories were based on legal definitions of race (Fireside, 2004; Franklin, 1980; Judice, 2008; Klarman, 2004; Korgen, 1999; Lofgren, 1987; Medley, 2003; Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 1896; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005; Taylor, 2009; Tushnet, 2008; Zack, 1993). Table 2 represents the time periods in which the concept of race was legally defined per monoracial designations and based on tenets of White society, with no attention toward recognizing multiracial identity. Eventual models of multiracial identity development arose from the stigmatization of multiracial individuals in monoracial society, as well as from monoracial ethnic identity development models that were limiting to the multiracial experience.

Table 3

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development Models (Based on Social Research)

Theorist	Year	Model	Stages
Reuter	1918, 1931	Mulatto as a Problem in the Community	No delineated stages / Mulatto is confused, arrogant, leader of the Negro race
Stonequist	1937	Marginal Man Theory	No delineated stages / Mulatto is confused, living on margins of both worlds not a part of either
Cross	1971	Black Racial Identity Model ("Nigrescence")	1. Pre-encounter 2. Encounter 3. Immersion-emersion 4. Internalization 5. Commitment
Atkinson, Morten, and Sue	1983	Minority Identity Developmental (MID) Model	1. Conformity 2. Dissonance 3. Resistance and Immersion 4. Introspection 5. Synergistic
Phinney	1989	Ethnic Identity Model	1. Unexamined Ethnic Identity - Diffusion - Foreclosure 2. Ethnic Identity Search / Moratorium 3. Achieved Ethnic Identity

Table 3, continued

Poston	1990	Biracial Identity Developmental Model ("new and positive")	1. Personal identity 2. Choice of group categorization 3. Enmeshment/denial 4. Appreciation 5. Integration
Root	1990	Biracial Identity Model	1. Acceptance of identity society assigns 2. Identify with both racial groups 3. Identify with single racial group 4. Identify as new racial group 5. Symbolic Race
Helms	1990	White Racial Identity Model (Seven Statuses)	1. Contact 2. Disintegration 3. Reintegration 4. Pseudo-independent 5. Immersion 6. Emersion 7. Autonomy
Wardle	1992	Biracial Ecological and Developmental Model	1. Birth to age 3 2. Ages 3 to 5 years 3. Ages 5 through adolescence 4. Adolescence
Kerwin and Ponterotto	1995	Biracial Identity Model	1. Preschool 2. Entry to school 3. Preadolescence 4. Adolescence 5. College and young adulthood 6. Adulthood
Rockquemore, Brunsma and Rockquemore	1999 2001	Biracial Identity Model	1. Border identity 2. Singular identity 3. Protean identity 4. Transcendent identity

Table 3, continued

Renn	2004	Biracial Identity Model	1. Monoracial identity 2. Multiple monoracial identities 3. Multiracial identity 4. Extraracial identity 5. Situational identity

Note. Table 3 shows the development of and transition to racial identity development models, beginning with deficiency models (Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937), traversing to monoracial ethnic identity models (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1983; Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1989), and culminating with various multiracial identity models (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1992).

Tables 2 and 3 trace the development of these racial identity development models to delineate the evolution of academic, social, and psychological thought from monoracial to multiracial perspectives. These racial identity development models provide a vocabulary and scope to the multiracial identity development experience from a historical vantage point, tracing the Black-White multiracial person as marginal and confused (Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937), being identified socially and culturally as Black, and having the same racial issues as monoracial Black people. More recent development models (since the late 1980s) applying a multiracial lens show the insistence and importance of recognizing the multiple sides of the multiracial individual.

Ethnic Minority Identity Development Models

Cross's (1971) African-American Identity Model gives a phase-developmental approach to feelings experienced by Black individuals during identity formation, but can only focus on the Black experience, and cannot delineate the complexity of being of mixed-racial background. It is called a "Negro to Black Conversion Experience" (Cross, 1991, p. 159), in that the term "Negro" holds the connotation of self-hatred, whereas the term "Black" indicates pride (Cross, 1991). This identity model, therefore, is also called a model of "*Nigrescence*, the 'process of becoming Black'" (Cross, 1991, p. 157). There are five stages in this model as such:

1. Pre-encounter Stage: The stage whereby Black people understand and accept dominant (White) cultural norms as the accepted ways in society. Dominant values are respected over alternate forms.
2. Encounter: The stage whereby some type of incident or event shifts the focus of Black people from the accepted White status quo to becoming "receptive… to conversion" (Cross, 1991, p. 159). The shift is from dominant cultural norms to searching for a new way of identifying.
3. Immersion-Emersion: This two-fold stage indicates a dichotomy of extremes. On the one hand, being thoroughly immersed in Black culture comes at the risk of over-immersing oneself into Black cultural norms and belittling White culture. The emersion stage represents a "cognitive openness" (Cross, 1991, p. 159) or receptiveness to embracing one's blackness but not at the expense of other cultures.
4. Internalization: This stage represents the process of feeling deeply tied to one's own culture, while understanding the need for interracial connections.
5. Commitment: The final stage represents maintaining this way of identifying as a Black person as a "lifelong commitment to Black affairs and social justice issues" (Ponterotto, Utsey, and Pedersen, 2006, p. 74). The individual has come full circle in achieving Black self-pride.

Cross's (1971) Nigrescence model represents the "conversion" (Cross, 1991, pg. 159) experience in actualizing a monoracial Black identity in stages and provides a lens through which to begin to understand identity development. This model is similar to other racial identity models because it is monoracially centered (See Atkinson et al., 1983; Helms, 1990; Phinney,

1989), and would work for monoracial Black people and/or multiracial Black individuals who identify with the Black cultural and social experience. This model may not be as beneficial in the multiracial experience (and may not apply completely to a person of partially Black background) if that person does not identify him- or herself monoracially as Black.

Atkinson et al.'s (1983) Minority Identity Developmental (MID) Model has served as a basic developmental model for all ethnicities in relation to the dominant culture, but does not take into account the diversity of the multiracial experience. As an ethnic minority model, it pertains to racial and ethnic minorities, and was developed by theorists (including Dr. Derald Wing Sue, a pioneer in research on racial microaggressions) to facilitate counseling work with ethnic and racial minorities; and to understand the complexities and/or subtleties that People of Color may experience (Atkinson et al., 1993). The stages, as outlined by Atkinson et al. (1993), serve as a guide and are not representative of the experiences of every Person of Color, nor elaborate the multiplicity of multiracial people. The five stages are:

1. Conformity Stage: This stage represents the individual conforming to dominant society's cultural norms and exhibiting negative attitudes toward one's own racial or ethnic group of origin (Atkinson et al., 1993)
2. Dissonance Stage: This stage represents conflict between acceptance of dominant cultural norms and identification with one's own racial or cultural group.
3. Resistance and Immersion Stage: Individuals in this stage "reject the dominant society and culture" (Atkinson et al., 1993, p. 31) and exhibit the desire to understand one's own culture better. Within this stage, the individual has resistance to dominant culture and desires to be immersed in his or her culture of origin.

4. Introspection Stage: This stage characterizes the internalizing and positive acceptance of one's own cultural/racial group, as well as "greater individual autonomy" (Atkinson et al., 1993, p. 32).
5. Synergistic Stage: The final stage indicates resolving the dichotomy of dominant culture and racial self-identity choices and appreciation for other cultural groups.

Atkinson et al.'s (1983) Minority Identity Developmental (MID) Model is a general ethnic identity model that can be generalized to represent the experiences of People of Color. This model works for monoracial People of Color to explain their identity development. This MID model could work for multiracial people whose racial combinations are from two different minority races, and are not part-White. This MID model is different from the other identity development models because although it encompasses the experience of being a Person of Color, it does not reflect the duality of a multiracial person who is also part-White.

Phinney (1989) provided an Ethnic Identity Model, but this model, like the others previously mentioned, still does not encapsulate the entire meaning of the multiracial experience. Phinney's (1989) Ethnic Identity Model is an identity theory based on Erikson's (1968) work in the field of identity development. Her work has been highlighted in the field of ethnic and racial studies, as well as adolescent racial identity development. Phinney (1990) detailed three distinct stages of ethnic identity development as such:

1. Unexamined Ethnic Identity: in which the individual has not explored his or her particular ethnic identity either due to:
   - Diffusion: defined by Phinney (1990) as a "lack of interest in or concern with ethnicity" (p. 503).

- Foreclosure: whereby "views of ethnicity [are] based on opinions of others" (p. 503).

2. Ethnic Identity Search (Moratorium): in which the individual desires an understanding of his/her ethnicity/racial culture.
3. Achieved Ethnic Identity: final stage, where the individual has attained a "clear, confident sense of [his/her] own ethnicity" (p. 503).

This succinct model of identity development is a simpler form of racial identity development model, similar to Atkinson et al. (1993) because it demonstrates the person transitioning from a stage of unawareness of racial identity to searching for an understanding amid societal pressure, to finally achieving a complete sense of racial self (Atkinson et al., 1993; Phinney, 1990). This model, however, seems to be too simplistic in understanding the multiracial experience.

White Identity Development

An alternate racial identity development model, not usually applied to Black-White multiracial people, but which gives credence to elements of White privilege and a platform through which microaggressions may develop, is Helms's White Identity Model (1990). Helms (1990) referenced McRoy and Zurcher (1983) in detailing that a fraction of Black ancestry (one-sixteenth) entails Black classification, subscribing to One-Drop Rule thinking. Additional literature by Helms (1990) has detailed Black identity models up through 1990 and then delineated a White Racial Identity Model. Helms's research seems to dichotomize racialized experiences between Whites and Blacks, but does not discuss relationships between Whites and other People of Color. Helms (1990) further explained:

> the development of White identity in the United States is closely intertwined with the development and progress of racism in this country. The greater the extent that racism exists and is denied, the less possible it is to develop a positive White identity. (p. 49)

Helms's (1990) White Racial Identity Model stages—also called seven statuses—are:

1. Contact Status: This stage presents the first-time actual encounters of Whites with Blacks, where there is "limited interracial social or occupational interaction with Blacks" (Helms, 1990, p. 57). This is a place of discovery for White people, where Whites use stereotypes to process interactions with Black people, and, therefore, an ample place for racial microaggressions. In this stage, there is White awareness of Black stereotypes, but not of their own individual White racial identity.
2. Disintegration Status: This stage "implies conscious, though conflicted, acknowledgment on one's whiteness" (Helms, 1990, p. 58). The disintegration status represents a dismantling process, whereby the White person becomes aware of his or her Whiteness in relation to power versus oppression structures in interracial relationships, and feels compelled to find deeper racial understanding.
3. Reintegration Status: In this status, "the [White] person consciously acknowledges a White identity" (Helms, 1990, p. 60) and asserts the notion that White people are superior and Black people are inferior as the status quo, and blames Black people for racial problems. This stage also tracks awareness of White identity, but "intolerance for other [racial] groups" (Helms & Cook, 1999, p. 90).
4. Pseudo-independent Status: This "is the first stage of redefining a positive White identity" (Helms, 1990, p. 61). This stage is characterized by White people who are "well-meaning" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 1) and espouse a nonracist stance, but believe

that race problems can be resolved by People of Color "conform[ing] to White standards of merit" (Helms, 1990, p. 90).

5. Immersion Status: In this stage, individuals are "immerse(d) in the search for accurate information about race and a deeper understanding of their own racist socializations as White people in America" (Ponterotto, 2006, p. 95). This status represents gaining understanding in one's own Whiteness.
6. Emersion Status: This status represents "a sense of discovery, security, sanity, and group solidarity and pride that accompanies being with other White people who are embarked on the mission of rediscovering Whiteness" (Helms & Cook, 1990, p. 90). This stage is reflective of racism-conscious White people finding other like-minded people with whom to identify.
7. Autonomy Status: In the final status, "the [White] person no longer feels a need to oppress, idealize, or denigrate people on the basis of group membership characteristics such as race because race no longer symbolizes a threat to him or her" (Helms, 1990, pp. 62–66). The person's racial identity is finalized, and the White person recognizes his or her responsibility in having originally promoted White privilege and eventually dismantling that same privilege.

This model is beneficial to assisting monoracial White people in understanding how their White privilege has been developed and nurtured in society, and how Whiteness has been exalted. This type of identity development model is similar in a way to Cross's Nigrescence model (1971), in that it reflects a type of conversion process; the conversion experience for White people, however, is one of understanding the benefits of their Whiteness and how

achieving awareness of the personal responsibility of Whiteness can be utilized as an educational tool for social change.

Biracial and Multiracial Identity Development Models

A notable change occurred in the 1990s, when researchers realized that multiracial people have specific developmental characteristics that do not fit into only one racial identity model (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990, 2003b; Wardle, 1989, 1992, 2000). There was a demand for multiple ways of identity formation, and multiple experiences in how racial identity can be shaped. Noteworthy, however, is that although they provide a structure through which racial identities are developed, these identity models do not describe the experiences of every person of mixed racial background. Other identity development models serve both monoracial groups (not Black or White) and/or other multiracial combinations, but this dissertation looks at those representing the Black-White multiracial experience.

Poston (1990) found that previous identity models were inadequate in encapsulating the multiracial experience, and developed a “new and positive model” (p. 152). Although Poston’s (1990) five-stage model appears similar to previous stage models of ethnic identity development (Atkinson et al., 1983; Cross, 1971) in its “life-span focus” (Poston, 1990, p. 154) of developmental stages, it is not focused solely on a monoracial identity development. Poston’s (1990) Five-Stage Model indicates that identity development for multiracial people is an uplifting experience:

1. Personal identity: This stage is characterized by children, who, unaware of racial identity, may identify themselves without racial labels or according to other

personality characteristics. The individual's "sense of self… is somewhat independent of his or her ethnic background" (Poston, 1990, p. 153).

2. Choice of group categorization: This stage is marked by societal influences for the multiracial person to choose a racial category. Poston (1990) has stated: "[I]ndividuals at this stage are pushed to choose an identity, usually of one ethnic group" (p. 153). Three factors dictate which group the individual may learn to identify him- or herself with, depending on familial status factors (such as socioeconomic status or neighborhood demographics), social support factors (such as the family's choice(s) in identifying themselves racially), or personal factors (such as the multiracial person's phenotypical characteristics and/or cultural experiences).
3. Enmeshment/denial: This third stage details the dilemma a multiracial person may feel when expected to identify monoracially in favor of one of his or her racial groups, while denying the other group. The individual may feel "confusion or guilt at having to choose one identity that is not fully expressive of one's background" (Poston, 1990, p. 154).
4. Appreciation: This stage marks the beginning of resolving the racial conflict. Poston (1990) has explained that whereas the individual may still identify as one racial category, he or she begins to appreciate all sides of his or her racial background.
5. Integration: Lastly, the multiracial person, despite personal identity choices, has discovered or created ways to integrate all sides of his or her racial background.

Poston's (1990) "new and positive model" (p. 152) is similar to Phinney's (1989) model in the beginning and ending stages. Like, Phinney's, Poston's model originates with the

multiracial person's unawareness of his or her own racial identity. As the person traverses the different stages, his or her final outcome is the achievement of an integrated racial sense of self (Phinney, 1989; Poston, 1990). The choice of group categorization stage reflects the importance of additional factors (family, school, and societal experiences) as contributing entities to the multiracial person's identity choices. This model represents the transition from monoracially centered ethnic development models to including the multiracial experience.

Root (1990) is a leading scholar in the field of multiracialism. Her "Bill of Rights For People of Mixed Heritage" (1996) has become a popularly represented anthem in multiracial studies (See Appendix A). Through research with biracial adults in the 1980s, Root (1990) developed an "Ecological Framework for Understanding Racial Identity" model that consists of four options for multiracial identity. Root (2003b) added a fifth identity category within the Ecological Framework, which was based on research obtained from the next generation of young biracial children, and which considered the impact of individual phenotype. Therefore the five identity options for the multiracial person to racially self-identify are:

1. Accept the Monoracial Identity Society Assigns (Root, 2003a, p.115) / also called Assignment by Hypodescent (Root, 2003b, p. 34): This option consists of choosing to identify with the race category assigned by society. This is typically a monoracial designation and is based on the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent.
2. Actively Choose a Monoracial Identity (Root, 2003a, p. 115) / also called Monoracial Fit/Self-Assignment (Root, 2003b, p. 34): This monoracial option is chosen by the multiracial individual upon determining how society assigns a racial category, and

then determining that the selected racial category is comparable to how one identifies oneself.

3. Define Self as Biracial or Multiracial (Root, 2003a, p. 115; Root, 2003b, p. 34): This option signifies that the mixed-race person identifies himself or herself as being a part of all of his or her racial sides.
4. Develop a "New Race" Identity (Root, 2003a, p. 115) / also called Blended Identity (Root, 2003b, p. 34): This option is characterized by the mixed-race person creating a new way of identifying him- or herself, such as Tiger Woods referring to himself as "Cablinasian" (O'Hearn, 1998; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005).
5. Symbolic Race (Root, 2003a, p. 116) / also called White With Symbolic Identity (Root, 2003b, p. 34): This identity option represents "the declaration of a White identity with simultaneous attachment to and detachment from one's heritage of color" (Root, 2003a, p. 116). In this choice, the multiracial individual identifies himself or herself as White, while recognizing and valuing his or her other races. This identity choice challenges the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent.

Most notable with the Ecological Framework for Understanding Racial Identity is the transcendence from Hypodescent ideology to a "symbolic" racial representation. The first two identity choices align with One-Drop Rule societal thinking. The next two identity choices contradict the societal expectation and represent a more "blended" view in identifying oneself as multiracial or even a "new" category. Lastly, the fifth identity choice of a White identity, which recognizes the person's other races, corresponds with Powell's White multiracial option,

allowing the person to select his or her identity choice, regardless of the tenets of the One-Drop Rule.

Wardle's (1992) Biracial Ecological and Developmental Model discusses the importance of the biracial identity process and questions how society impacts the developmental process. Because of One-Drop Rule thinking, many societal groups are programmed to identify a multiracial Black-White child as solely Black. Recognizing ways to counter society's monoracial labels, parents and families need a strong sense of group identity to produce children with strong identities in general, not just racial identities. Wardle (1989) contended that families are in themselves small groups in society, so not every society sees multiracial Black-White children as Black, because families may see themselves as multiracial; and parents can inform schools and other entities to respect their decision to identify their children as multiracial.

Wardle (1989) also discussed age-appropriate stages in explaining parental roles. From birth to age three, children are building trusting relationships with parents, and parents are the sole providers of safe societal interactions. From ages 3 to 7 years, children become interested in differences in people and themselves. This stage is the critical time when parents can answer questions about race and offer children ways to understand and appreciate differences. This is also the stage when children "begin to create their own unique identity" (Wardle, 2000). From age seven through adolescence, children are forming friendships, and expanding society groups, and tend to identify along a number of parameters based on interests in sports, academics, and the arts. Adolescence is a period of challenging society's norms, so it is critical to have established a strong sense of racial identity. Parents can help and teach children that it is

acceptable to tell people they are multiracial when labeled monoracially, and provide ways for their multiracial children to counter monoracial labels (Wardle, 1989, 2000).

Wardle's (1992) Biracial Ecological and Developmental Model was not an identity development model in the same sense as the previously delineated ethnic identity development models. This model did not give specific stages for identity development, but provided a general explanation of what children go through in identity formation at two different ages of life. Wardle's research is beneficial for explaining how children develop identity in relation to their interracial parents.

The Kerwin-Ponterotto (1995) Model of Biracial Identity Development is a six-stage, age-appropriate model with a life-span focus on the multiracial person. Similar to other biracial models, Ponterotto, Utsey, and Pedersen (2006) illustrated that numerous factors contribute to identity development, such as "personal, societal, and environmental factors" (p. 114). Beginning in childhood, the six stages in the Kerwin-Ponterotto model include:

1. Pre-school: Through age 5, children have recognition of the physical differences in people in terms of skin color, but do not make a social connection to what these differences mean.
2. Entry to school: It is at this stage where children "begin to develop labels or descriptive terms to define themselves" (Ponterotto et al., 2006, p.114). Additionally, parents might help their multiracial child find names to describe their appearance.
3. Preadolescence: This is the stage where multiracial individuals begin to realize how race and physical appearance is related to social group origin.

4. Adolescence: This stage is marked by peer pressure for the multiracial adolescent to choose a side, and identify him- or herself as monoracial. Dating relationships also are scrutinized as the multiracial person's racial choice might show which side of their heritage they romantically relate to. They might also have to deal with racism from the parents of the person they choose to date.
5. College/young adulthood: This stage highlights a time of change, where the multiracial person might leave home for the first time, and make new friendships with peer groups of different races. At this stage, "individuals develop a more balanced biracial and bicultural identity" (Ponterotto et al., 2006, p. 115).
6. Adulthood: It is in this final stage where the multiracial person has attained a healthy identity that is "integrated and balanced" (Ponterotto et al., 2006, p. 115).

The Kerwin-Ponterotto (1995) Model of Biracial Identity Development bears some similarities to other racial and multiracial identity development models. It is similar to Wardle's (1992) research because it delineates age-developmental stages that are appropriated across the lifetime of the multiracial person. This model is also similar to Phinney's (1989) Ethnic Identity Model and Poston's (1990) New and Positive Model for Biracial Identity because with these three models for identity development, the expected and hopeful outcome of the final stage is a cohesive and solidified racial identity choice.

Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) have expressed identity choices for biracial individuals that are similar to Root (1990), and based on previous research by Rockquemore (1999). Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) highlighted that whereas physical appearance plays a part in multiracial identification choices, other factors contribute, such as physical geography,

family socialization, class demographics, socioeconomic status, and other social networks (such as friends, schools, community) (Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2008). Their biracial identity model asserts four identity options for Black-White multiracial individuals:

1. Border identity: The multiracial individual racially identifies as a "new category… [which] encompasses both the socially accepted racial categorizations of Black and White, but includes an additional element from its combination" (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008, p. 62). This identity choice would include biracial or multiracial.
2. Singular identity: The multiracial individual chooses to identify him or herself monoracially as either Black or White.
3. Protean identity: The multiracial individual as a fluctuating identity, identifying him or herself at times as Black, White, or biracial, depending on context and situation.
4. Transcendent identity: A unique identity choice whereby the multiracial individual chooses a "nonracial or transcendent identity… [and does] not use race as a construct to understand the social world or their relative place in it" (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008, p. 71).

The biracial identity development model as outlined by Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) is specifically for Black-White multiracial individuals; this model works very well for Black-White multiracial people and perhaps for people who are part-Black but not part-White. This model reflects research from previous models (Poston, 1990; Wardle, 1992) in describing the importance of varying factors such as family background and socioeconomic status (Rockquemore et al., 2005), social experiences, and phenotype on the multiracial person's

identity choices. This model is similar to the model proposed by Root (1990) and also bears similarities to Renn's (2004) model in that these three models reflect similar identity choices.

Whereas the model proposed by Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) is particular to Black-White multiracial people, Renn's (2004) model is generalized for any individuals of multiracial background. Renn (2004) conducted research with biracial college and university students and found five identity patterns. This identity model utilizes the tenets of Root's (1990) model, but looks specifically at the development of college students through an "ecological perspective" (Renn, 2004, p. 16). This ecological lens means that racial identity development has many factors that contribute to how a multiracial person's identity as a racial being is developed. These factors include phenotype, peer group association, and cultural awareness; and are fostered or developed notably during the college years. Renn (2004) detailed these five stages as such:

1. Monoracial identity: The multiracial individual chooses to identify him- or herself monoracially. For instance, a person of Black-White background might self-identify as Black or as White only.
2. Multiple monoracial identities: The multiracial person may identify him- or herself as monoracial, but in different ways depending on other social factors such as peer group or community demographics.
3. Multiracial identity: The multiracial person might choose to identify him- or herself as "multiracial," allowing all sides of his or her heritage to be represented.
4. Extraracial identity: The multiracial individual might decide that a "one-size-fits-all" racial identity approach is too limiting, and might choose not to identify as any racial

group or groups; or might find other ways to identify along racial parameters. For example, Tiger Woods identifies himself as "Cablinasian," a term that he developed for himself to include his White, Asian, Black, and Native American heritages (O'Hearn, 1998; Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2005).

5. Situational identity: The multiracial person identifies him- or herself in different ways depending upon the situation. For example, he or she might identify monoracially as one race on school forms or college paperwork, then identify monoracially as the other race when in a peer group, and identify multiracially in yet other circumstances.

Renn's multiracial identity development model looks specifically at university students, which makes this model applicable to the research for this dissertation. Renn's model is beneficial for describing identity choices for university students, as college is often a time in which multiracial individuals experiment and search for a solid racial identity. This model is similar those of Root (1990), Rockquemore (1999), and Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) because the identity choices demonstrate monoracial, multiracial, or situational choices. Unlike other models, such as Poston (1990) or Wardle (1992), Renn's model does not take into account the age or stage development for younger children.

Summary

Because of One-Drop Rule thinking, previous identity models indicated stages of development that were suited for monoracial people; multiracial people were not seen as mixed-race, but were expected to conform to one racial side, usually along the parameters of Hypodescent. Naturally and organically, the racial identity models evolved to included mixed-race people; some were designed for multiracial people in general, whereas other models were

developed for people of specific racial combinations based on the particular experiences of those individuals.

Racial identity development models may or may not explain an individual's experience. These models are generic. Specific models that allow for the individual to choose an identity (Renn, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 2003a, 2003b) work well for multiracial people, because these models allow the mixed-race person to name his or her experience, in spite of society's label. Identity is a personalized experience, and these models serve only as a guide to understanding the mixed-race experience. Ultimately, it is the multiracial person's choice as to how he or she wishes to define his or her existence as a racial being.

Critical Race Theory and Identity Development

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Multiracial Identity Development are integral to this research. The CRT framework can be utilized to view racial identity development in multiracial individuals. Firstly, CRT indicates that race is central to American life (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In the daily life of a multiracial person, race is a critical and crucial aspect of identity formation; how one defines and describes one's self racially directly relates to how society defines and describes the multiracial person (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990, 2003a, 2003b; Wardle, 1989, 1992). Therefore, racial identity is central (whether directly or indirectly) to multiracial daily life. Because race is central to American life, we are conditioned to racially label and classify all people to some degree.

How do we classify a mixed-race person who does not neatly fit into a predetermined category? Race is a central part of multiracial life because how one describes (or does not

describe) one's self may (or may not) be congruent with how society racially describes that person.

Secondly, CRT challenges the stories of White privilege, and the identity choices of multiracial individuals are in and of themselves a challenge to White privilege structures that assert monoracial identification. When a multiracial person identifies with both racial groups (Root, 1990), claims a border identity (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008), or a multiracial identity (Renn, 2004), that choice refutes the ideology of White privilege as undergirded by the One-Drop Rule. The multiracial person, in identifying him- or herself as "multiracial," opposes the confining nature of White privilege (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988; Trepagnier, 2006).

Thirdly, CRT focuses on stories of populations not often heard and relies on the experiential knowledge of People of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Multiracial people represent a diverse population of unique individuals, with varying ways of identifying themselves. Multiracial people are no longer limited to identifying themselves with a monoracial Black identity, and, indeed, have various ways to identify, encompassing their various experiences and stories (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Powell, 2005; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore 1999; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1992).

Lastly, CRT includes qualitative methods of data collecting such as storytelling, family histories, narratives, and relies on an interdisciplinary knowledge base (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In this vein, CRT provides a theoretical framework through which to look at the multitude of ways multiracial people may identity themselves, and biracial/multiracial identity models provide a framework through which multiracial people may label themselves. CRT and

identity models are uniquely interrelated because CRT provides the research structure whereas identity models provide a vocabulary (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Powell, 2005; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Wardle, 1989, 1992, 2000).

CRT focuses on the stories of people whose experiences are not immediately recognized. Perhaps these marginal people are beginning to demand that their voices be heard. Because of the CRT data collection strategies of narrative and storytelling, multiracial people may find their voices by sharing their stories of happiness and hope, of pain and sorrow, of times of acceptance and inclusion, and of experiences of feeling marginalized and tokenized. They might share these stories in the hope of helping other people, to encourage and foster social knowledge, to break the chains of ignorance, and to sever the binds of monoracial expectations, social invalidation, and invisibility. In other words, Critical Race Theory and Multiracial Identity Development are traditional academic terms for a very personal experience: being a multiracial individual in a monoracial world.

Psychosocial Factors in Multiracial Identity Development

Although some might say that being multiracial is the "best of both worlds" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135), multiracial individuals in general, and those of Black-White racial descent in particular, experience negative issues in dealing with society in terms of their racial background. They might experience racism in issues such as marginalization (Korgen, 1999; Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1937), tokenism (Funderberg, 1994; Kanter, 1977), invisibility (King, 2008), and social invalidation (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). These experiences communicate to multiracial people that they are not completely part of either side of their family

tree; or that they must denounce or deny one side to receive acceptance from the other side. One-Drop Rule thinking places the expectation on multiracial people of Black-White racial descent that their "choice" should be the Black side, which results in expectations about dress, action, and behavior based on racial status.

Marginalization

The idea of the "marginal man" was first conceptualized by sociologist Stonequist (1937) based on the work of Park (1928). The marginal man is part of two differing and opposing societal groups (i.e., the Black-White multiracial person) and yet is typically not socially accepted into either group. Korgen (1999) has contended that biracial individuals, as marginal people, are from two different factions of society, and are "doomed to live as a stranger in both these worlds" (p. 69). Individual self-identification as seen through the lens of marginality requires that society's frame change from Black to biracial (Korgen, 1999), as census forms and professional questionnaires add multiracial categories. But where do multiracial people fit in? In terms of discrimination and affirmative action, people from mixed-race background are often still discriminated against on various levels (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011). As racial identification transforms on a personal level for multiracial individuals, so must society's need to monoracially categorize be diminished. Otherwise, multiracial people, while asserting themselves as "biracial" or "multiracial," will still be forced to fit in the stereotypical one-race designation imposed by society and be expected to continue to deny the duality of their racial heritages.

Tokenism

Kanter (1977) detailed the topic of tokenism in the realm of gender relationships between men and women, but elements of this theory apply to this study. A token is a person in a social group who is expected to conform to a predetermined societal role set forth by the dominant culture as the representative of all entities in the token's group of origin (Kanter, 1977). Questions to the Black-White multiracial person such as, "Why do all Black people do this or that?" demonstrate that even if one identifies one's self as multiracial, one is seen as the racial representative for all Black people; expected to answer questions about an entire race of people, or serve as a translator between the two cultures. This issue of tokenism is one with which many multiracial people have to contend. Funderberg (1994) explained that the multiracial token individual in a group is at times placed in the position as a "spokesperson" (p. 173) for his or her race or color. Continuing to elaborate on this idea of tokenism, Funderberg (1994) addressed this problem:

> If not thrust into a role of spokesperson, then biracial people can find themselves looked to as mediators between [their two races], either to explain behaviors and attitudes that one finds inscrutable, or to communicate what one side is uncomfortable saying directly to the other. (p. 173)

Invisibility

Multiracial people are not readily recognized in mainstream media, which contributes to a sense of invisibility that some mixed-race people may experience in society (King, 2008). Being racially invisible, the multiracial experience is not as prevalent or is sometimes dismissed in accordance with the One-Drop Rule. Multiracial people are categorized into single race categories and are not always allowed the freedom to identify with all of their racial sides. At

times, as racial tokens (Kanter, 1977), they are expected to conform to a monoracial designation and to answer to negative cultural stereotypes.

Although there are more multiracial role models in the media in today's society (i.e., President Barack Obama, Tiger Woods, Halle Berry, and other multiracial celebrities of partially Black descent), many of these people are still monoracially categorized as Black. The monoracial identification of these multiracial celebrities perpetuates the legacy of the One-Drop Rule. Although multiracial celebrities are more vocal about their rich and multiple heritages, many in society continue to identify themselves monoracially. Multiracial people, therefore, are in some areas still not adequately portrayed along the continuum of racial equality and representation (Beltrán & Fojas, 2008).

Media images such as marketing products, television commercials, and other public relations materials are slowly beginning to recognize or utilize multiracial people and/or interracial families in their advertisements; such as the 2013 Cheerios commercial that showed a White mother, Black father, and biracial child. Despite a societal movement toward depicting a racially blended family, this unique family was stigmatized because of being interracial and the commercial received numerous racist reviews (Huffington Post, June 5, 2013). Despite negative responses from some people, mainstream media that is showing interracial couples and families, thus dismantling a monoracial ideology, and making multiraciality more visible and mixed-race people more societally represented.

Social Invalidation

Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2003) illustrated how multiracial individuals "routinely encounter social invalidation from others related to their chosen racial self-identification" (p.

119). These theorists explained the distinct concerns of people of Black-White mixture, and how the historical opposition to their racial heritages creates delicate psychological responses; how the "legacy of slavery… the One-Drop Rule… skin color stratification and physical appearance" (p. 121) are interconnected in the conflict between individual self and social categorization. Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2003) contended "the creation and maintenance of a racial identity is a social process in which the degree of validation and invalidation experienced from others around a preferred racial identity is more critical than the actual identity selected" (pp. 121–22).

Feminist Thought

Feminist thought is concerned with the connection among issues of race, gender, and class in the lives of women (Hill-Collins, 1991). Feminist literature addresses how women of all races are victims of various types of oppression. Most notably for this dissertation are the types of oppression evidenced in the lives of Black women and White women. While both White women and Black women may be oppressed along class lines, White women have been historically oppressed along gender lines, being female in a male-dominated world. Conversely, Black women have been oppressed traditionally along both racial and gender lines, for being both female and Black in a White, male-dominated world (Hill-Collins, 1991).

Literature in Black feminist thought considers the legacy of slavery as contributing to stereotypical or "controlling images" (Hill-Collins, 1991, p. 7). Historically, the White woman, although in a lower place in life due to being female, was viewed as a fragile, weak entity, and a possession to be protected. Her delicate nature had to be protected from any controversial matters. The Black woman was a slave, a laborer who was needed only for exhausting labor and breeding (Hill-Collins, 1991). She was not valued in any way other than for what she could

produce to enhance the quality of life for her White master and his family. In other words, the White woman, although a lower being, was exalted while the Black woman was denigrated.

Colorism and Black Feminist Thought

Another prevalent issue in the lived experiences of multiracial Black-White women in relation to monoracial Black women is the idea of colorism. Colorism is a critical aspect of the multiracial individual within the larger context of the Black experience whereby “skin color and hair texture are assigned values” (DeCuir-Gunby, qtd. in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p. 89). Russell et al. (1992) discussed the phenomena of colorism, or the “color complex” (p. 2), which they defined as

> dark-skinned African-Americans spurning their lighter-skinned brothers and sisters for not being Black enough. The complex even includes attitude about hair texture, nose shape, and eye color. In short, the “color complex” is a psychological fixation about color and features that leads Blacks to discriminate against each other. (p. 2)

This complex dates back to the era of slavery, when the White woman was valued as the epitome of feminine beauty. At the same time, the Black physical appearance was debased as “strange and ugly” (Reuter, 1918, p. 168); in terms of physical characteristics, the Negro was seen as repulsive. DeCuir-Gunby (2006) illuminated:

> Whites considered the natural hair texture of Africans to be like wool, more animal-like than human-like, unlike the hair texture of those of European descent. Dehumanizing the African by comparing his hair texture to that of an animal made hair texture an important indicator of blackness. This degradation of African heritage further demoralized slaves and created a pathological self-hatred of all that was African – especially physical features. (Qtd. in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p. 95)

This characterization may have contributed to the internal pathology experienced by slaves of darker skin tones in relation to the Mulatto slave with more White hair texture and physical features. This difference in physical appearance, perpetuated by both White society and the

Black community, created a binary way of thinking of Whiteness, and anything associated with it, being good, and Blackness being bad.

From a sociological vantage point, Reuter (1918) substantiated in his research how the differences in skin color coupled with differences in social levels results in this binary thinking:

> When color differences coincide with differences in culture levels, then color becomes symbolic and each individual is automatically classified by the racial uniform he wears… Where the two groups is a racial situation thus have differed widely both in culture and in color, they everywhere have tended toward an adjustment on the basis of superiority and subordination. (pp. 99–100)

In relation to Black feminist thought, several "controlling images" (Hill-Collins, 1991, p. 7) have been pervasive since slavery. Black women have been expected to fill certain societal roles, and multiracial women, as women of part-Black ancestry, are privy to these stereotypical images. Due to issues of colorism, Black females might experience resentment toward lighter-skinned multiracial women. This antipathy has its origins in the stereotype of the exalted lighter-skinned multiracial woman, seen in media throughout history as the tragic Mulatta (Bogle, 1994). While cinema and media has perpetuated the tragic Mulatta as the heartrending heroine, caught between wanting to be White and being constrained by the tenets of the One-Drop Rule, another character has been evident in cinema: the mammy. Mammy is usually an overweight and much darker skin-toned Black woman who is the strong role and the voice of reason (Bogle, 1994).

Although these archetypal roles first appeared in literature, they were eagerly assumed in cinema, which perpetuated contemporary stereotypes and fueled resentment from Black females toward their lighter-skinned counterparts. Media messages that multiracial women are superior to darker women promote colorism within the Black community, and promote White privilege,

that lighter skin (from the Black perspective) is a more valued asset, thereby sending the message that White is better.

This system promoted the belief that beauty is to be assessed according to the White ideal (Reuter, 1918). If the feminine physical appearance is a symbol of sexuality, then the exalted White woman and her aesthetically pleasing physical characteristics are the ideal. Black women who do not have European or White body types or facial or other features are deemed unattractive in comparison to the White ideal. Multiracial women who might have more pleasing appearances due to their mixed-race heritage, might have lighter skin, a finer grade of hair, or other more White features (DeCuir-Gunby, 2006; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Russell et al., 1992). Consequently, if the White physical appearance is the ideal, and a multiracial woman has features that resemble the aesthetic ideal, then Black men might be more attracted to lighter-skinned women and less inclined toward the monoracial Black women. This discrimination advances the structure of colorism in the Black community and contributes to resentment prevalent among some darker-skinned Black women toward multiracial women (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Russell et al., 1992).

Acting White

Christie (2010) has detailed the notion within the Black community of "acting White" (p. 6), as demonstrated when somebody from a Black background is accused of emulating characteristics thought to be inherent solely to White people. Specific characteristics such as being well-spoken, dressing in certain types of clothing, engaging in particular activities, and espousing definite behaviors associated with White culture are expected to be rejected by Black people in the Black community (Christie, 2010). When one adopts one of these presumed White

customs, he or she is accused of "acting White" (Christie, 2010, p. 6), is seen as a "sellout" (Christie, 2010, p. 5) within the Black community, and is told that he or she resents being Black. The stigma of "acting White" is also evidenced in the lives of multiracial part-Black people, regardless of whether they are part-White (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Acting White sets up the assumption that it is not acceptable to identify as White or anything related to being White. This stems, once again, from One-Drop Rule ideology.

Racial Microaggressions

Sue et al. (2007b) defined racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color" (p. 271). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) also described racial microaggressions as "stunning small encounter with racism, usually unnoticed by members of the majority race" (p. 151). Sue et al. (2007b) also delineated a typology of general microaggressions imposed upon People of Color (see Appendix B).

While the term "microaggression" has been in circulation in the social sciences field since 1970—when Chester W. Pierce first described these acts as "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put-downs'" (Pierce, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 65)—the study of racial microaggressions remains a relatively new field of research in the topic of racism. Large acts of racism (i.e., hate crimes, riots) are now generally recognized as repugnant. When these grand-scale acts of racism occur, many in society are appalled that these types of crimes even still exist. But more subtle acts of racism—racial

microaggressions—are "innocuous and insidious" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 273) and often unnoticed by the perpetrator, but not by the victim.

Racial microaggressions are an aspect of Critical Race Theory and demonstrate how racism pervades society through verbal interactions and body language. Racial microaggressions are acts of discrimination against marginalized groups, and have "hidden and damaging consequences… for persons of color" (Sue, 2010b, p. 5). Research has suggested that microaggressions happen consistently and shows that racial microaggressions may be evident in any interracial relationship between people of two different racial categories (Sue et al. 2007b), but happen more frequently in situations where a White person is the perpetrator and a Person of Color is the target. In the experiences of Black-White multiracial individuals, racial microaggressions serve as the vehicle through which society sustains the One-Drop Rule policy and White privilege systems. As a marginalized group, multiracial people of Black-White background might experience a unique set of racial microaggressions based on their opposing racial sides (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Microaggressions can cause stress, harm, and damage to People of Color and other ethnic minorities (Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hill, Kim, & Williams, 2010; Lin, 2010; Rivera, Forquer, & Rangel, 2010; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008a; Sue et al., 2008b; Watkins, LaBarrie, & Appio, 2010). These racist instances can be so understated in their delivery or message that the recipient of the microaggression might not be aware of the intent of the microaggression until after it has occurred (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). The person, therefore, is left wondering precisely what the statement meant, at times asking him- or herself if

what happened actually happened. Over time, in dealing consistently with microaggressions, People of Color may begin to feel emotionally drained, psychologically demeaned, and socially guarded (Smith et al., 2007; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b).

The prefix "micro-" in the word "microaggression" is not meant to suggest any insignificance to the presumed racist event. The microaggressive incident is actually quite large-scale to the recipient, due to the dailyness or frequent occurrence of these types of acts (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). Yet, the perpetrators are usually unaware that their statements or ways of acting are even hurtful to the victim, and might respond in an insensitive manner, making statements that deny or minimize any personal responsibility on the part of the perpetrator. In other words, the perpetrators are often not aware of the harm of their racial slights; hence, the act is viewed on a "micro" level. Sue et al. (2007b) determined that the offenders look at the microaggression as a one-time slight; a small, insignificant statement or act that occurs on an incidental basis. For People of Color, however, these are daily or regular, consistent experiences that have, over time, psychologically and physically detrimental effects on well-being, self-esteem, and social interaction (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b).

Types and Forms of Microaggressions

Sue (2010a) has delineated three types of microaggressions prevalent in society: racial, gender, and sexual orientation. Sue (2010b) indicated that disability, class, and religion microaggressions also occur. For the purpose of this dissertation, mixed-race people are mostly impacted by racial and multiracial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011).

The structure of racial microaggressions itself consists of three forms: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). A microassault is defined as “a[n] explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions… ‘old fashioned’ racism” (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 274). Microassaults are generally large-scale acts of racism; examples include riots, cross-burnings, lynchings, separate facilities based on race, and hate crimes.

Microinsults and microinvalidations demonstrate more subtle forms of racism. Microinsults are “characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity… represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color” (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 274); for instance, if a teacher assumes that a Student of Color will or will not succeed academically because of that student’s race (e.g., Ascription of Intelligence: Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). Sue et al. (2007b) described microinvalidations as “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color” (p. 274). An example of this type of microaggression is when a White person claims to be non-racist because of “hav[ing] several Black friends” (e.g., Denial of Individual Racism: Sue, 2007b, p. 276). A schematic taxonomy of these three forms of racial microaggressions and relationships between categories of microaggressions is provided in the Appendices (See Appendix B).

Categories of Racial Microaggressions

Sue et al. (2007b) delineated nine categories of racial microaggressions:

1. Alien in own land
2. Ascription of intelligence
3. Color blindness
4. Criminality/assumption of criminal status
5. Denial of individual racism
6. Myth of meritocracy
7. Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles
8. Second-class citizen
9. Environmental microaggressions (p. 275)

Table 4, below, provides a detailed list of examples of these categories of racial microaggressions.

Table 4

Examples of Racial Microaggressions

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	Where are you from?”	You are not American.
When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	“Where were you born?”	
	“You speak good English.”	
	A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	You are a foreigner.
Ascription of intelligence	“You are a credit to your race.”	People of Color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.
Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race	“You are so articulate.”	It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.
	Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem	All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
Color blindness	“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”	Denying a person of color’s racial/ethnic experiences.
Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	“America is a melting pot.”	Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture.
	“There is only one race, the human race.”	Denying the individual as a racial / cultural being.

Table 4, continued

Criminality / assumption of criminal status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes. A storeowner following a customer of color around the store. A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are a criminal. You are going to steal/You are poor/You do not belong. You are dangerous.
Denial of individual racism A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not racist. I have several Black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
Myth of meritocracy Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job." "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of Color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race. People of Color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Pathologizing cultural values / communication styles The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant / White culture are ideal	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud / animated? Just calm down." To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." "Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up race / culture in work / school setting.	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.

Table 4, continued

Second-class citizen Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	Person of color mistaken for a service worker	People of Color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions.
	Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger	You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood.
	Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you	Whites are more valued customers than people of color.
	"You people . . . "	You don't belong. You are a lesser being.
Environmental microaggressions Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper class males .	You don't belong / You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go.
	Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color.	You are an outsider / You don't exist.

Note. Reprinted with permission from, "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," by D. W. Sue, C. M. Capodilupo, G. C. Torino, J. M. Bucceri, A. M. B. Holder, K. L. Nadal, and M. Esquilin, 2007b, *American Psychologist, 62*(4), p. 276.

Research in multiracial microaggressions by Johnston and Nadal (2010) listed five categories of microaggressions. In a subsequent study, Nadal et al. (2011) added a sixth category. All six categories are listed as follows:

1. Category 1 – Exclusion or Isolation
2. Category 2 – Exoticization and Objectification
3. Category 3 – Assumption of Monoracial (or Mistaken Identity)
4. Category 4 – Denial of Multiracial Identity
5. Category 5 – Pathologization of Identity and Experiences (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, pp. 132–137)

6. Category 6 – Racial Microaggressions Based on Monoracial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011, p. 42)

Table 5 provides a detailed list of examples of these categories of multiracial microaggressions.

Table 5

Examples of Multiracial Microaggressions

Category	Definition	Examples
Category 1: Exclusion or Isolation	occurs when a multiracial person is made to feel excluded or isolated based on their multiracial status	A multiracial person is told, "You have to choose; you can't be both."
		A multiracial person has difficulty filling out a form that asks for a single race only.
		A multiracial person is not accepted by grandparent(s) or relatives because of their parents' interracial relationship.
Category 2: Exoticization and Objectification	occurs when a multiracial person is dehumanized or treated like an object	A multiracial person is asked, "What are you?"
		A multiracial person is told, "Mixed-race people are so beautiful."
		A multiracial person is told, "We all will be like you someday."
Category 3: Assumption of Monoracial Identity (or Mistaken Identity)	occurs when multiracial people are assumed or mistaken to be monoracial (or a member of a group they do not identify with)	A multiracial person witnesses comments others might not say if they knew how the person identified racially.
		A multiracial person's mother is assumed to be a nanny or babysitter, or father is assumed to be an older boyfriend.
Category 4: Denial of Multiracial Reality	occurs when a multiracial person is not allowed to choose their own racial identity	A multiracial person is subjected to competition over "claims" from different racial or ethnic groups.
		A multiracial person is accused of "acting or wanting to be White."

Table 5, continued.

Category 5: Pathologizing of Identity and Experiences	occurs when multiracial people's identities are viewed as psychologically abnormal	A multiracial person overhears someone say, "All multiracial people have issues."
		A multiracial person is told, "You are a mistake."
Category 6: Microaggressions Based on Monoracial Stereotypes	"in addition to multiracial microaggressions, these individuals also experience microaggressions based on their phenotype or one of their racial groups" (Nadal et al., 2011, p. 42).	Based on monoracial stereotypes. Similar to Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions Typology

Note. Reprinted with permission from, "Multiracial Microaggressions: Exposing Monoracism in Everyday Life and Clinical Practice," by M. P. Johnston and K. Nadal, 2010, in D. W. Sue (Ed.) *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact* (pp. 123–144). New York: Wiley & Sons; "Microaggressions and the Multiracial Experience," by K. L. Nadal, Y. Wong, K. Griffin, J. Sriken, V. Vargas, M. Wideman, and A. Kolawole, 2011, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1*(7), pp. 36–44.

The Dual Perspectives of Racial Microaggressions

The Racial Microaggressions Process Model (Perspective of the Victim). Sue (2010b) presented a Microaggression Process Model, which describes the chain of events from the perspective of the victim, and can be deconstructed as such:

1. Phase One – The Microaggressive Incident: The perpetrator makes a statement or commits a microaggressive act.
2. Phase Two – Perception: The victim reflects upon that statement or act, asking him- or herself if what occurred happened he or she is a person of color.
3. Phase Three – Reaction: The victim reflects on how to react to the incident; the reaction is based on thoughts, emotions, actions, and past experience with such encounters.

4. Phase Four – Interpretation of the Racial Microaggression: The victim considers the context of the microaggression and determines "what meaning is construed to the microaggressive incident" (Sue, 2010b, p. 77); considers who made the statement, what the significance is, and if this scenario is a part of a larger interactional style between victim and perpetrator.
5. Phase Five – Consequence and Impact: The victim decides what to do about the microaggression and its perpetrator; to ignore it or to discuss it with the perpetrator, understanding that the perpetrator may respond in an abundance of positive or negative ways. (Sue, 2010b, pp. 67–83)

The perpetrator's perspective. Sue (2010b) delineated "four psychological fears" (p. 123) that the perpetrator of a racial microaggression may have in dealing with his or her racial biases. These layered fears may arise when the perpetrator is made aware of the microaggression and its impact on the victim:

1. Layer One – Fear of Appearing Racist: Trepagnier (2006) has discussed well-intentioned White people who abhor being seen as a racist. Appearing racist in modern-day society means being equated with the Ku Klux Klan and White Supremacists.
2. Layer Two – Fear of Acknowledging One's Racism: This fear refers to a well-intentioned White person admitting holding racial biases toward People of Color (Trepagnier, 2006). When microaggressive statements are made or microaggressive incidents occur, despite good intentions, subtle acts of bias demonstrate racism. It

can be difficult for the perpetrator to admit his or her own racist views, because he or she does not want to appear racist (See Layer One above).

3. Layer Three – Fear of Acknowledging White privilege: Racial microaggressions reinforce the binary of privilege in as opposed to oppression. White people may not want to acknowledge their privilege because that acknowledgment requires an admission of being part of a racialized system that created injustice (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988; Trepagnier, 2006).
4. Layer Four – Fear of Taking Personal Responsibility to End Racism: This fear refers to the sentiment by a number of White people that because the privilege-oppression binary was not started directly by them—even if they may benefit form the effects of White privilege—it is not their problem to solve. They do not claim any personal responsibility to undo systems of injustice. (Sue, 2010b, pp. 123–128).

The four dilemmas. Looking at racial microaggressions from both the perspectives of the victim and the perpetrator highlights a conflict. Sue et al. (2007b) stated, "microaggressions operate to create psychological dilemmas for both the White perpetrator and the person of color" (p. 277). To illustrate, the researcher has synthesized Sue's Four Dilemmas (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b) in Tables 6 through 9, below.

Table 6

Dilemma 1: Clash of Racial Realities

Person of Color (Victim)	White Person/Another Person of Color (Offender)
White people treat People of Color as inferior.	People of Color and ethnic minorities are doing well.
Racism is still a part of daily life.	There is no more racism; or, racism is on the decline. (i.e., Claiming a "post-racial" (Haney-Lopez, 2010, p. 1024) American society because President Obama, a person of mixed-race Black ancestry, is president of the United States.
The educational, housing, financial, occupational playing fields are very unlevel.	The educational, housing, financial, occupational playing fields are level.

Table 7

Dilemma 2: The Invisibility of Unintentional Expressions of Bias

Person of Color (Victim)	White Person/ Another Person of Color (Offender)
The microaggressive incident:	The microaggressive incident:
shows racial bias on the part of the White perpetrator.	is not biased on the part of the White perpetrator.
is insulting and demeaning (whether or not it is subconscious or meant as a joke).	is subconscious and/or intended as joke.
is part of a pattern of similar racial incidents in the daily life of the victim, with "cumulative" (Sue, 2010b, p. 52) effects.	is a singular incident in the daily life of the perpetrator, with no residual effects.

Table 8

Dilemma 3: Perceived Harm of Racial Microaggressions

Person of Color (Victim)	White Person/ Another Person of Color (Offender)
Believes that the microaggressive incident, no matter how subtle or small, is: Hurtful Psychologically and physically harmful, and stressful (Sue, 2010)	Believe that, concerning the microaggressive incident: People of Color are "overreact[ing] and [are] being overly sensitive and/or petty" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 278). And are: Dismissive concerning potential harm to the victims; "It's no big deal."

Table 9

Dilemma 4: The Catch-22 of Responding

Person of Color (Victim)	White Person/ Another Person of Color (Offender)
How do I respond to this microaggressive incident?	How the Person of Color responds to the microaggressive incident determines how the White Person responds:
If I ignore it…	that sends the message that it was insignificant.
If I attack it…	that propagates possible future stereotypes of people of color.
If I discuss it…	that provokes the idea of "playing a race card."
The bottom line: "Damned if you do, and damned if you don't" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 279).	

The Catch-22 of responding to racial microaggressions (as indicated in Dilemma 4) demonstrates the inexhaustible nature of dealing with microaggressions for the Person of Color. In looking for ways to navigate microaggressive instances, the Person of Color experiences a number of negative effects as a result of the conflict of racial microaggressions. The Four Dilemmas of racial microaggressions indicates the need for more research in making individuals of all races aware of these subtle acts of racism.

The Effects of Racial Microaggressions

Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework places race as the primary force in American society and allows the stories of marginalized people to be guiding tools for understanding. Sue's (2010b) work explained, "[M]icroaggressions have the lifelong insidious effects of silencing, invalidating, and humiliating the identity and/or voices of those who are oppressed" (p. 66). Therefore, CRT provides a necessary lens through which the effects of racial microaggressions may be deconstructed, understood, and explained.

Sue's (2010b) research explained the physical, psychological, and emotional effects that chronic exposure to racial microaggressions have on the recipient. This wealth of research starts with looking at Selye's (1956, 1982) contribution of General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) by providing a basis for understanding biological stressors that is translatable to racial and other microaggressions (Sue, 2010b). GAS was an initial framework through which researchers looked at microaggression research. The three stages of the GAS Model are (a) the Alarm stage; (b) the Adaptation or Resistance Stage; and (c) the Stage of Exhaustion (Sue, 2010b, p. 89). These stages, looking at severe forms of biological stress, provide a "good psychological analogy for understanding the effects of microaggressions" (Sue, 2010b, p. 88)

Sue (2010b) has highlighted the works of De La Fuente (1990), which looked at psychological and social stressors and presented a Crisis Decompensation Model (CDM). This CDM model provides a similar interpretation for severe acts of trauma in three stages: (a) impact; (b) attempted resolution; and (c) decompensated adjustment phase (Sue, 2010b, pp. 90–91). Sue (2010b) discussed the impact of racial microaggressions, stating that although these acts are not as traumatic as "natural disasters, robberies, murders, automobile accidents, terrorist attacks, airplane crashes, etc." (p. 91), they are significant events and are "sufficiently stressful to produce psychological and physical harm to targets" (p. 91). Sue (2010b) has also discussed the type of stress that racial and other microaggressions impose on the recipient. The stress experienced is more than the daily stressors one may encounter; microaggressive stress comes from a deeper source. Sue (2010b) cites Duran (2006) when referring to the long-lasting nature of racial and other microaggressions, in showing the nature of "historical trauma" or the "soul wound" (p. 95). These microaggressions have a basis in the traumatic histories of oppressed people: "Jews who also suffer from a historical trauma (the Holocaust), Japanese Americans remember their internment experience during World War II, and African Americans remember their enslavement" (p. 96). These stories are instilled in our society through oppressive forms of racial microaggressions imposed upon marginalized people by the dominant group.

Sue (2010b) has explained how microaggressions are "more impactful, harmful, and distressing to African Americans than ordinary stressful life events" (p. 96). One reason would be that slavery was a centuries-long and overtly brutal form of oppression, whose aftermath lingered into the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and continues through racial

microaggressions and cultural stereotypes toward people of African American ancestry today. Sue (2010b) listed the reasoning behind this thought process:

1. "Microaggressions are symbols and reminders of racism" (p. 96).
2. "Microaggressions are continual and perpetual while stressful life events are time-limited" (p. 96).
3. "Microaggressions impact nearly all aspects of the target's life – education, employment, social interactions, and so forth" (p. 96).
4. Stressful live events have a recognizable cause while microaggressions are often ambiguous and invisible" (p. 96).

Racial microaggressions affect the "biological, cognitive, emotional, psychological, and social well-being, or position in life" (Sue, 2010b, p. 96) of the victim. Sue (2010b) detailed the harmful effects exposure to racial microaggression has in terms of biological – "physiological reactions… or changes in the immune system" (p. 97), cognitive – "including thoughts and beliefs about the meaning of the stressor," emotional – the array of emotions one might feel in response to the microaggression, and behavioral – "the coping strategies or behavioral techniques" (p. 97) and strategies the victim employs to deal with microaggressions. In other words, dealing with microaggressions is draining on a number of levels for the recipient.

The recipient of microaggressions might deal with health-related issues, lower self-esteem, depression, deficient quality of life, decreased happiness, anxiety, anger, and overcompensation (Sue, 2010b). Sue (2010b) illuminated that "microaggressions have exacted a tremendous and terrible psychological toll on the targets and have potentially altered their life course… fatigue, cynicism, anger, and even actions to change [college major]" (p. 66).

Racial battle fatigue. Smith et al. (2007) discussed the effects of racial microaggressions and stereotypes on People of Color. Smith et al.'s (2007) research labeled the experiences of chronic microaggressive stress as "racial battle fatigue" (p. 552), defined as:

> An interdisciplinary theoretical framework that considers the increased levels of psychosocial stressors and subsequent psychological… physiological… and behavioral responses… of fighting racial microaggressions in MEES (mundane, extreme, environmental stress). (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011, p. 68)

Racial battle fatigue, particularly in the lives of people of African American background, is connected to Sue's (2010b) work and the five phases of microaggressive incidents. These microaggressive experiences are often so subtle in their technique that the victim ponders, "Did I hear what I thought I just heard?" (Smith et al., 2007, p. 555). The victim, in disbelief, tries to deconstruct or make sense of the event. As Smith et al. (2007) detailed, "[T]hese negative feelings or the associated collective memories seldom fade; instead, they become a part of a person's life history" (p. 555). This ties into the "soul wounds" that Sue (2010b) cited from Duran (2006). These racial wounds impact the victim and become a part of his or her personal story. Winters and DeBose (2003) illuminated that the history of Black people in the United States consisted of "slavery, reconstruction, Civil War, and Jim Crow laws [that] have had a major impact on the African American and the African American family" (pp. 129-130). This impact is felt by people of African American descent, and represents the soul wounds of an entire population. These theorists discussed the role society plays in that response, stating, "[T]he overall impact has left a negative impact on the perception of the entire African American community" (Winters & DeBose, 2003, p. 130). Society, therefore, perceives people of African American background in a negative way, and imposes microaggressions and stereotypes. As people who are part-Black, Black-White multiracial people feel the negative effects of the impact

of the history of African American people. But, also being of mixed racial heritage, they have a unique perspective. Hence, a CRT framework elucidates studies of how the marginalized and oppressed can be voiced and validated.

Smith et al. (2011) concurred:

> [R]acism is omnipresent and therefore all racially subjugated people feel racial microaggressions, whether consciously or in a maladaptive state of denial. Therefore, People of Color in the U.S. confront the withering cumulative effects at both the individual and group level. (pp. 67–68)

Objects of racial microaggressions are affected on personal levels from individual microaggressions based on racial stereotypes, to environmental microaggressions that privilege the dominant group over marginalized people. The personal stories of these oppressed people are quite often not represented in main dominant tale—representing yet another form of environmental microaggression.

Smith et al. (2007) compared the horrifying experiences of a soldier at war with the atrocious frequency of racial microaggressions in the lives of People of Color. The image of being in battle involves known and unknown enemies, clearly defined and undefined opponents, who can attack at anytime without warning or provocation. Smith et al. (2007) listed both the physiological and psychological symptoms of racial battle fatigue, and detailed how these effects place a "strain exacted on racially marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism" (p. 555). Some of the physiological symptoms include:

> (a) tension headaches and backaches
> (b) elevated heart beat
> (c) rapid breathing in anticipation of racial conflict
> (d) an upset stomach or "butterflies,"
> (e) extreme fatigue

(f) ulcers
(g) loss of appetite and
(h) elevated blood pressure. (Smith et al., 2007, p. 556)

Smith et al.'s (2007) research delineated the numerous psychological symptoms inherent in racial battle fatigue as:

(a) constant anxiety and worrying
(b) increased swearing and complaining
(c) inability to sleep
(d) sleep broken by haunting, conflict-specific dreams
(e) intrusive thoughts and images
(f) loss of self-confidence
(g) difficulty in thinking coherently or being able to articulate (confirming stereotype)
(h) hypervigilance
(i) frustration
(j) denial
(k) *John Henryism*, or prolonged, high-effort coping with difficult psychological stressors
(l) emotional and social withdrawal
(m) anger, anger suppressions, and verbal or nonverbal expressions of anger
(n) denial
(o) keeping quiet and
(p) resentment. (Smith et al., 2007, p. 556)

This extensive list of symptoms illustrates how daily experiences with racism and racial microaggressions are evidenced through physical and psychological issues for the victim (See Figure 2). Racial microaggressions are anything but "micro" to the recipient; they result in negative effects that affect the life and lived experiences of the victims.

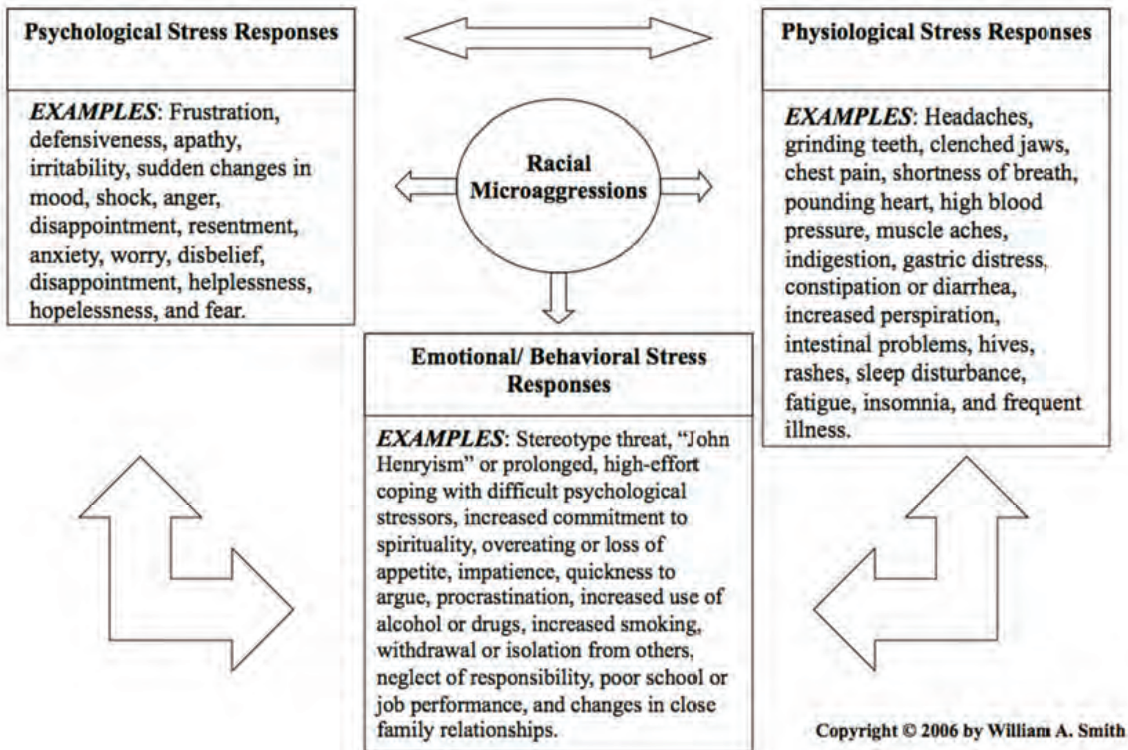

Figure 2. Causes and stress responses to racial battle fatigue.

Note. Reprinted with permission from, "Racial Battle Fatigue and the *Mis*education of Black Men: Racial Microaggressions, Societal Problems, and Environmental Stress," by W. A. Smith, M. Hung, and J. D. Franklin, 2011, *The Journal of Negro Education, 80*(1), p. 68.

Relationship between Hypodescent and the Rationale for the Study

Hypodescent (the "One-Drop Rule") indicates that the Black side of the genetic (racial) make-up of a mixed-race Black-White person is invisible to or ignored by the dominant culture in order to keep the dominant race pure. The rationale for this study is to bring to light the unique mixtures of Black-White multiracial people, and to show the iniquities or injustices done to these people when microaggressions are imposed upon them based on their Blackness.

Despite the various multiracial identity models that serve to delineate stages of racial identity development within the multiracial individual, society often maintains how people view these people based on the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent (Brunsma, 2006; Korgen, 1999; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005), both by Whites (concerning the privilege to dictate who is White and who is not) and by Blacks (Daniel 1996; Powell, 2005). Whereas some see an implicit privilege to being half-White, One-Drop Rule social thinking negates that apparent privilege. The societal notion of recognizing Black-White multiracial people as monoracially Black is, in and of itself, a form of environmental microaggression (Nadal et al., 2011).

A number of factors ultimately determine how society and the multiracial individual identify. Although society and the individual may have conflicting viewpoints, usually the voice of society wins out. American society has been programmed to identify people with any Black blood as Black, despite phenotype or individual identification, which reflects the social wiring of the One-Drop Rule. That microaggression occurs consistently in the lives of multiracial people substantiates the need for this study on the impact of these and other microaggressions on this population.

Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Identity Development

Critical Race Theory as a foundational framework offers six tenets through which to explain the nature of racism in the United States. Whereas Critical Race Theory and multiracial identity development are connected in methodology and theoretical scope, CRT does not directly address the biracial/multiracial experience. CRT as a framework for research is designed to dichotomize people, producing a binary effect based on power versus oppression. In the case of

multiracial individuals of Black-White background, that dichotomization may be found within the same person. Although it asserts that race is central, CRT does not take into account bi/multiple races and looks at race through a monoracial lens.

People who are Black-White multiracial are members within both racial societies. Even if One-Drop Rule ideology is still prevalent in many factors of life, there are also elements of Whiteness. CRT does not, therefore, explain the multiracial experience, which is not to suggest that multiracial people should become a "buffer" (Korgen, 1999, p. 14) between the two races; but a theoretical framework is required in which historical and sociological lenses are utilized and viable solutions are found based on the multiracial experience. A critical mixed-race framework particularly for the Black-White mixed-race experience is necessary to literary dialogue.

The historic literature, although outdated for current multiracial ways of thought, is consistent with White privilege ideology. It shows the development of the stereotypical mentality prevalent in most of White society in the time periods in which it was written. Reuter (1918, 1931) and Stonequist (1937) reflected the sociological standpoints of the Mulatto and Negro in early twentieth-century schools of thought. Cinema of the day, with the tragic Mulatto/Mulatta archetype (Bogle, 1994), developed from White dominant discourse of the "American Race Problem" (Reuter, 1927).

Discussed in limited scope within the literature is the implicit privilege of Whiteness in Black-White multiracial individuals. Phenotype contributes to racial identity choices (Root, 2003b; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008), but the societal norm is to classify monoracially as Black when the Black heritage is known. One example previously discussed is the case of

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Plessy, a multiracial man who was seven-eighths White and one-eighth Black, and considered to be legally Black under the One-Drop Rule, phenotypically appeared White, but was classified as Black because his percentage of Black blood was publicly known. Other literary sources, such as James McBride's *The Color of Water* (the autobiography of his childhood as the Black son of a poor, White, Jewish mother) and Bliss Broyard's *One-Drop* (the biography of the life of her Creole father, Anatole Broyard, who "passed" for White), represent societal wiring to designate a person as Black, despite White phenotypic qualities. In other words, multiracial individuals retain their implicit privilege of Whiteness unless their racial background are fully disclosed.

Alternately, once the Black racial heritage is discovered, societal notions of marginalization, stigmatization, tokenism, invisibility, and social invalidation prevail. This phenomenon was once referred to as "passing"—whereby a person of partially Black descent, in order to gain more privileges in White society, used his or her more White features to "pass" for White, thereby denying his or her Black roots (Ali, 2003; Daniel, 1992; Davis, 1991; Korgen, 1999; Zack, 1993). Many films have represented this duality, usually portraying the multiracial character as the tragic Mulatto/Mulatta, or the person who has to hide his or her Black roots in order to gain acceptance within White society (Bogle, 1994). When their Blackness is discovered, they are ostracized and stigmatized, and forced to assume their "rightful" place in Black society. Although movies such as *The Imitation of Life* (1934, 1956), *Pinky* (1949), and *I Passed For White* (1960) are somewhat outdated, the notion of the One-Drop Rule prevails. Racially ambiguous multiracial people may be questioned as to why they do not pass as White based on phenotype; the implication being that if one looks White, why not identify solely as

White? Powell (2005) asserted a label for mixed-race Black-White people who phenotypically are racially ambiguous or have more White features to identity as “white mulatto or mixed white” (p. 13): a description which seems to negate the outdated notion of passing for White, and instead, encompasses both their White side and a multiracial identity label. Powell (2005) is one of the few theorists who espouse this type of racial labeling. Most literature in the field of multiracial studies offers the terms “biracial” and “multiracial” as viable racial options, but not White multiracial (Powell, 2005).

As multiracial people of Black-White background become more readily recognized as being both races and are allowed to self-identify as they wish (not according to society’s dictates and the tenacious “One-Drop Rule”), more literature will need to focus on the positive experiences of these people. Missing from current literature is an assortment of books for children and adolescents on this topic. One popular series is Kim Wayan and Kevin Knott’s *Amy Hodgepodge*, but more ample selections for all age groups and across all genres are needed.

The amount of literature on monoracial microaggressions (Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hill, Kim, & Williams, 2010; Lin, 2010; Rivera et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2007; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007a; Sue et al., 2007b; Sue et al., 2008a; Sue et al., 2008b; Watkins et al., 2010) is growing, but until 2010, a limited amount of information on multiracial microaggressions existed. Johnston and Nadal (2010) and Nadal et al. (2011) discussed general multiracial microaggressions on people of all mixtures, but did not discuss the specificity of multiracial microaggressions on Black-White individuals, which is what this dissertation attempts to examine.

Chapter Summary

Multiracial individuals have distinct stories to share based on American societal elements of White privilege (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988; Trepagnier, 2006), historical legacies based on race (Sweet, 2005), and biracial or multiracial identity formation (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992, 2000). They may have experienced racial discrimination in ways similar to monoracial People of Color (Sue et al., 2007b; Nadal et al., 2011), but may also have faced racism in specific ways based on their racial mixtures (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011). Literature in multiracial studies delineates the issues that multiracial people may experience: marginalization, invisibility, tokenism, and social invalidation.

Of the literature reviewed, one common thread concerns identity development. Recent literature reflects the notion of empowerment, both individually as well as for people who deal with multiracial students. New terms for the self-identification of multiracial individuals are arising out of necessity to identify multiracially, rather than monoracially. There is a trend toward enlightening society to form a better understanding of multiracial individuals who celebrate their multiple existences in the social arena. The literature substantiates that multiple racial membership may be gaining recognition in our world's population, and society must develop a greater social acceptance.

Literature on racial microaggressions, specifically in the Black-White multiracial experience, is extremely limited. Multiracial people of Black-White mixtures may be victims of racial stereotypes and microaggressions that discriminate and remind them of their "otherness"

and how they are marginalized. The research from this dissertation hopes to fill this gap in the literature and is where this study adds to scholarship in the field.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods the researcher used in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data obtained. Racial microaggressions are subtle acts of racism that cause harm to People of Color (Sue, 2010a). The effects of these subtle yet impactful behaviors can leave indelible marks on the lives of racial and ethnic minorities, including multiracial people (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Sue, 2010a). This study explored the types of common microaggressions experienced in the lives of Black-White multiracial people and examined how those microaggressive remarks and behaviors impact the racial identity development of these individuals, particularly in family, school, and society.

This study researched the impact of racial microaggressions on 11 Black-White multiracial university students in a Western state. Data were gathered from these 11 participants of part-Black multiracial background; the final six participants were Black-White multiracial. A purposive nonrandom group of multiracial Black persons was selected. Three venues were utilized to find and recruit participants: the Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference, the participants' university student organizations, and Facebook social networking. Through one of these three venues, individual participants were recruited and selected based on criteria of their identifying as Black-White multiracial, being between the ages of 18 and 27 years of age, being currently enrolled in university, and being available to participate in the individualized interview sessions and write a counter-narrative. A total of six final individuals who met the criteria participated in the study.

Data were collected to discover the nature of these microaggressions through two focus groups in Northern and Southern California, 22 individualized interview sessions, and six personal written counter-narratives between January and December 2011. A total of 11 individuals were participants in at least one part of the data collection.

First, the two focus group interviews formed an introductory activity for meeting a group of Black-White multiracial university students and to share stories. In both focus groups, the four participants in each group were given a vignette to read and discuss. The vignette, written by the researcher, detailed a fictional story of two college students (one who is White and one who is Black-White multiracial) participating in a dialogue in which the White character makes racially microaggressive comments toward the multiracial character.

Then, 22 individualized interview sessions occurred in both the northern and southern parts of the state. Interview sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted using interview protocols created by researchers in the field of racial microaggressions (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Milville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005). The interviews provided opportunities for participants to discuss specific instances of racial microaggressions in the family, school, and society. During the interview sessions, the six final participants were asked to produce narratives, responding to a written counter-narrative prompt.

Finally, six participants wrote a one- to three-page narrative about racially microaggressive experiences in their lives. These counter-narratives provided participants an opportunity to write about prevalent racial microaggressions they may have experienced as a result of being multiracial.

Data were coded through the elements of Critical Race Methodology, utilizing Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions Typology and Johnston and Nadal's (2010) Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy. HyperResearch Qualitative Software was used to code the focus groups, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study:

1. What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?
2. What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?

Research Design: Qualitative Critical Race Methodology

A qualitative study fits into the Critical Race theoretical framework because it allows the voices of oppressed people to be heard, allows people to tell their stories from the participants' frames of reference, and encourages marginalized people to talk about their issues (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Qualitative research bases the data collection process in the lives of human beings—in discourse, observations, and real-life situations. Hatch (2002) presented qualitative research as a viable form of data collecting in educational settings. The data in this study were gathered through the "lived experiences of real people in real settings" (Hatch, 2002, p. 6). These data informed the focus groups, individualized interviews, and written narratives conducted in this study.

Creswell (2009) has listed various characteristics of qualitative research in an educational setting; natural setting, researcher as key instrument, multiple sources of data, and participants'

meanings were the pivotal characteristics emphasizing the need for qualitative research in this study.

Critical Race Methodology (CRM) in education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and qualitative research methodologies mean that the research occurs in the participants' natural setting (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998), and where the "participants experience the issue or problem under study" (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). For this study, the natural settings of the participants were at their universities (in conducting both of the focus groups and some of the interviews) or in their homes via Skype on their computers (when the participants and the researcher were not in the same city). These locations were places in which racial microaggressions may have occurred for the participants in their everyday lives and not in "contrived situation(s)" (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). These were places where the researcher could examine "how the individuals… make sense of their everyday lives" (Hatch, 2002, p. 7).

A significant factor in qualitative research is the researcher as the key data-gathering instrument (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002). Through the CRM methodology of storytelling, the forms of data collected for this study to discover the counter-narratives of the participants included "field notes… and transcriptions of interviews" (Hatch, 2002, p. 7) and focus groups, as well as "examining [the] documents" (Creswell, 2006, p. 175) of the written counter-narratives. Within this study, while the researcher utilized specific protocols for the individualized interviews and focus groups, and a prompt for the written counter-narrative, the researcher herself collected the necessary forms of data from the participants. The ideas of the researcher as key instrument puts the researcher at the locus of collecting data, which provides another key

aspect of qualitative researcher in the "face-to-face interaction" (Creswell, 2006, p. 175) between participant and researcher.

The researcher, as the key data-gathering instrument (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998), entered into the natural setting of the participants to experience the topic of study in as detailed a manner as possible, through the lens of the participants. In this study, multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002) were collected through the focus groups, individualized interview sessions, and written counter-narratives of the participants. These multiple sources of data permitted the researcher to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences with racial microaggressions.

Through a triangulated study (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998), the researcher used multiple data sources to investigate the research topic of racial microaggressions and their effects in the lives of the participants. The purpose of this investigation was to examine and describe the meanings derived from the participants' data and to document how the participants "make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). To that end, the focus in qualitative research is on the participants' experiences and not based on the meanings of the researcher's experience.

This qualitative ethnographic study included a purposive non-random sample of 11 multiracial Black university students, ages 19-27, selected from two California universities, as well as through the social networking medium of Facebook and the Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. The researcher met with two focus groups of four multiracial students per group in the natural setting of their school communities. The researcher also held 22 interviews with six final participants (three interviews each and four

follow-up interviews). The researcher collected written narratives about a racially microaggressive experience from the six interview participants. The researcher conducted qualitative research in a manner whereby conversations, interviews, and written narratives were the basis of the study. Participants' meanings were analyzed through a Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and typological analysis (Hatch, 2002), whereby the researcher coded the focus group interviews, individualized interviews, and written narratives, and determined the significance of the participants' experiences. The stories of the multiracial people unfolded through the methods of Critical Race Methodology and informed the questions and prompts used in the focus group interviews, individual interviews, and the participants' written narratives.

Critical Race Methodology

The researcher utilized a Critical Race Methodology in education framework (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) in order to collect and analyze the data. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have defined Critical Race Methodology (CRM) as:

> Research that (a) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process… challenges the separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing how these three elements intersect to affect the experiences of students of color; (b) challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color; (c) offers a liberatory and transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; (d) focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classes experiences of students of color; (e) uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color. (p. 24)

The basic elements of Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology in education are connected through five basic criteria. Firstly, race is central and "racism is endemic to American life" (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6). In the field of education,

Solórzano and Yosso contended that race and racism are "endemic [and] permanent" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25). Racialized oppression is interconnected with other forms of oppression such as class levels or gender differences. Within the context of this study, the participants' data revealed that racial discrimination was evident in their daily lives and exposure to racial microaggressions was chronic and frequent. The participants had all experienced forms of racism on regular bases.

Secondly, Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology are a "challenge to dominant ideology" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26) in that the methods of collecting data with People of Color as the guiding force of research challenged the stories of White privilege and focused on stories of People of Color as a basis for better understanding of societal structures. Qualitative research benefits this study, allowing participant perspectives to decipher meaning (Hatch, 2002). Specific to this study was the counter-narrative aspect of data collecting; through focus groups, interviews, and written counter-narratives, the participants' stories reflect the experiences of a population of people whose stories interrogate and deconstruct the dominant ideology of White privilege.

Thirdly, Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology provided tools for social justice, whereby stories of populations not often heard can be brought to the forefront of educational arenas and made known for greater understanding. For this study, the tools that assisted the researcher in obtaining counter-narratives were the protocols for the focus group and interviews, which were designed by researchers in the field of microaggressions and adapted by the researcher for this study. The researcher was concerned with how racial microaggression affected the participants; so all protocols were adapted to reflect the impact of racial

microaggression on the lives of the participants. The methodological tools of these protocols offered each participant an opportunity to provide his or her counter-narrative. Also, the coding was facilitated through the use of two typologies found in literature on racial microaggressions, and provided a structure by which the researcher could develop themes in analyzing the data.

Fourthly, both Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology considered the "experiential knowledge of people of color" and relied on methods of collecting data such as "storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonies, chronicles, and narratives" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26). These methods collected new information that may result in societal transformation. In this study, storytelling opportunities were in the forms of focus group interviews, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives.

Lastly, Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology involve multiple educational areas and "use the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26). We are no longer reliant on the dominant White male perspective; other stories now can be heard and told. The counter-narratives of the participants in this study reflect an interdisciplinary knowledge base in that the participants themselves were from different regions of the United States and yet their experiences with racial microaggression were similar regardless of their geographic location.

Although literature in the field of multiracial studies details the pervasiveness of dominant ideology through history, law, and policy, multiracial microaggressions are a topic that has received limited research attention. The specific counter-narrative techniques of Critical Race Methodology were utilized in this study to discover the types of microaggressions

experienced in the lives of the participants and the effects of these microaggressions on the participants. Therefore, Table 10 shows how the components of Critical Race Methodology are connected to the data collection tools (focus groups, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives) of this study.

Table 10

Components of Critical Race Methodology (Data Collection Approaches)

Components of CRM	Focus Groups	Individual Interviews	Written Counter-narratives
Intercentricity of race and racism	X	X	X
Challenge to dominant ideology	X	X	X
Commitment to social justice	X	X	X
Experiential knowledge of People of Color	X	X	X
Transdisciplinary perspective	X	X	X

Note. Adapted from "Critical Race Methodology in Education: Counter Storytelling As an Analytical Framework For Education Research," by D. G. Solórzano and T. J. Yosso, 2002, *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*, p. 23.

Counter-Narratives

As a methodological approach, Critical Race Methodology looked at the narratives of People of Color, and the dominant narratives that other people tell about such people. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) contended that American history as a story is from the perspective of dominant White society. It is a "master narrative" (Montecinos, 1995, qtd. in Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), or story told by the dominant culture to maintain White dominance over People of Color and that blatantly identifies People of Color in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002) Critical Race Methodology in education

> provides a tool to "counter" deficit story-telling… offers space to conduct and present research grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of color… [and] develop[s] new theories that will help us to better understand those who are at the margins of society. (p. 23)

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) have contended that People of Color also have stories to share about what their lives have been like as people who may have been socially, culturally, or historically oppressed. These counter-stories work against the dominant White narrative, and add importance, value, and meaning in educational discourse on race, gender, and class differences.

In the research obtained for this study, Critical Race Methodology relied on the "counter-story as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society)" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). Story-telling within the multiracial experience, therefore, becomes a powerful tool for deeper societal understanding and a transformative practice through which people might understand the rich and varied experiences of this most diverse population. Methods utilized to impart the Black-White multiracial participants' counter-stories included talking with other multiracial people in focus groups, discussing racial microaggressions in individualized interviews, and writing personal counter-narratives.

Data Collection Methods

Critical Race Methodology in education is a qualitative research method of data collection that allowed the narratives of the participants to be the focal point and where direct contact with participants is the norm (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Focus groups, individualized interviews, and written narratives enabled face-to-face story-telling through the personal stories of the participants.

Participants' Criteria

Participants were multiracial (parents from two or more different racial categories). The sampling method was purposive nonrandom sampling, whereby the sample comprised of people who fit the description of part-Black multiracial (parents of different races) and were thus mixed-race with Black ancestry. The original research sample included people of any mixture of partially Black/African descent and other racial background. Participants who were multigenerationally mixed (MGM) were included in the study. MGM participants were people whose parents themselves were considered Black-White multiracial (first-generationally mixed) and, therefore, whose offspring would be considered multigenerationally mixed. The final six participants selected were Black-White multiracial.

Participants were 18 years of age or older. Individuals over the age of 18 were chosen due to the sensitivity of this topic; younger students and their families may not want to discuss this issue within the frame of research. This age group was also chosen due to age proximity closer to childhood and questions asking them to reflect upon their recent adolescence to review how their racial, academic, and social identities were shaped. The final six participants selected were between the ages of 19 and 27 years of age.

Additionally, participants were currently enrolled in college/university or in transition from undergraduate and graduate levels; two of the participants were recent college graduates and were beginning a master's program the next semester. University students were chosen because the researcher felt that students in college might have had experiences throughout their academic careers that would inform the study of microaggressions within the school system from early childhood through young adulthood and university life. The researcher also chose

college/university students because of the expectation that the participants would tell their stories and be able to document microaggressive experiences. The researcher anticipated that adult college-age contemporaries would share similar generational experiences as multiracial people. The final 6 participants were either currently enrolled in university or were transitioning to a graduate program.

Lastly, participants had to be willing and able to participate in the study. Since some of the participants did not live in the same city as the researcher (Los Angeles), some interviews were conducted via Skype, so these participants needed to have a computer and be able to access Skype so that interviews could take place via this form of telecommunication. The final six participants had to be available to complete at least three individualized interview sessions and be able to write a written counter-narrative.

To review, involvement in the research study required that participants:

1. Identify as Black-White Multiracial
2. Be between 18–27 years old
3. Be enrolled in a university (undergraduate or graduate levels)
4. Be available to participate in individualized interview sessions and write counter-narrative.

Research Sample

The sample size consisted of 11 part-Black multiracial individuals who were university students attending schools in California, New Jersey, Texas, and Virginia. The participants were between the ages of 19 and 27 years of age, with one exception, John, who was 30 years of age and only participated in the Hillside Focus Group.

Each participant selected a pseudonym to protect his or her anonymity. Of the 11 participants, there were three males and eight females. Six participants were Black-White multiracial, two were MGM Black-White multiracial, two were Black-Hispanic, and one was Black-Asian.

Location

In arranging individual interviews, the researcher met participants wherever it was most convenient for them on the college campus (preferably a quiet study room in the college library or any suitable place free from distractions and interruptions) and at times that were convenient for the participants. In the event of long-distance interview sessions, the researcher arranged interview sessions to take place via the Skype computer program at convenient times for those participants.

The two focus groups and some of the interviews (Amber, Ana, Elyse, and Toad) occurred at the universities of the participants. Amber, Ana, and Elyse attended a small private Catholic university (Undergraduate students: 5,962; American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.3%; Black: 5.6%; Asian: 9.8%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0.2%; Hispanic/Latino: 22.0%; White: 50.6%; Multi-race: 7.3%; International: 4.2%) in the suburban part of a large western city. Toad attended a large public university (Undergraduate students: 25,885; American Indian/Alaska Native: 1.0%; Black: 4.0%; Asian/Pacific Islander: 43.0%; Hispanic: 13.0%; White: 33.0%; Race/Ethnicity Unknown: 6.0%; International: 9.0%) in an urban part of a mid-sized western city. Although Toad was not a student of the same university as Amber, Ana, and Elyse, Toad's interviews were conducted at the same university because she was on vacation in the same large western city.

The remaining participants (Peach, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, and Yoshi) were in their homes located in the following regions: a midsized East Coast city, a midsized city in the southern United States, a suburban area in the south-western region of the United States, and an urban section of a midsized west coast city. These participants were interviewed via computer, using the Skype program.

Consent

All participants were informed of their privacy and right to decline; and received a Consent Form (see Appendix I) to read and sign. All participants were informed of risks and benefits. Possible risks included discussing multiraciality issues in the focus group setting, in individualized interviews, and in their written narratives. Potential benefits of participating in the study included sharing multiracial experiences (both positive and negative) with other multiracial people, learning something more about themselves, sharing their personal stories, and contributing information that might benefit society. Participants were informed that they might experience feelings such as discomfort or embarrassment as a result of being asked about their multiracial experiences. Participants were advised that if they did not feel comfortable participating in any part of the focus group or individualized interview protocols or writing the narratives, they could discontinue their participation without any penalty.

Participants were informed that any information obtained from the focus groups, individualized interviews, and written narratives would be used solely by the researcher for the purpose of this study, and for no other purposes. Participants were informed that if they did not want their responses to be used, they might ask to have them eliminated from the study. Lastly, participants were given the contact information for the researcher and the chairperson of the

Human Subjects Review Committee at the researcher's university in the event that the participants had any questions or concerns about the study. The participants were also informed that, if needed, they could receive information on how to contact Student Psychological Services at the researcher's university if they wished to speak with a professional counselor.

Additionally, all focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded using a digital recorder device, which ensured accuracy of detail about the questions asked by the researcher and the responses of the participants. The researcher also took notes during the focus groups and individualized interviews that were collected in three notebooks.

Participants who completed all three sections of the study were remunerated with a $40.00 gift certificate to Starbucks or Target for their participation and time commitment for the focus group, the three individualized interviews, and the written counter-narrative. If participants participated in fewer than three sections, they were remunerated in lesser amounts, as specified in the Consent Form (see Appendix I).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is paramount in the data collection process. In qualitative research, the researcher is an active participant in the study as a key instrument (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002). Yet, the notion of researcher as instrument is fraught with biases. In a qualitative ethnographic study, the proximity that the researcher may have to the participants and/or the topic of study may be of an emotional or personal nature and may cause the researcher to have biases because of his or her personal investment.

In this study, the researcher was a Black-White multiracial female, born after the Civil Rights Era and raised during the "biracial baby boom" (Korgen, 1999, p. 20) of the 1970s and

1980s. Because of being multiracial, the researcher may have had potential biases in this study due to experiencing a lifetime of racial microaggressions. The researcher had directly experienced access to White privilege and stigmatization based upon the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. The researcher was a victim of racial microaggressions due to her mixed-race status. Because of the researcher's lived experiences with racism, the researcher could relate to her participants on an emotional level, but this relatability may have prevented the researcher from separating her own wounds with racial oppression from the counter-narratives of the participants.

The researcher's positionality placed her in a role in which she could relate to the participants' experiences. This positionality, therefore, could be perceived as benefit, in that the participants may have felt a sense of commonality in experiences, which may have made the participants feel more comfortable in telling their counter-narratives to the researcher. But this positionality could also be perceived as a hindrance or barrier for the researcher, in that the researcher had to listen to the participants' stories without making any judgments of the participants' lived experiences that were based on the researcher's own experience. Any potential biases the researcher may have had could affect the methodology approaches in how the researcher conducted the focus group and interview protocols, and in the coding rounds of the data.

Because the researcher was a Black-White multiracial individual and had experienced microaggressions as a result, her interest in multiracial studies was the origin of her dissertation research. When she was a young adult in university in the 1990s, multiracial student unions (MSU) were not as widespread as these groups are in present day. The researcher's

undergraduate university (Hillside University) only had monoracial groups for Students of Color. In embarking upon the research for this study, the researcher discovered that a larger number of universities were creating student organizations specifically intended for multiracial and/or multiethnic students. At the onset of the study, Hillside University had just started a MSU organization. The researcher attended this group as a participating member and was asked to inform the other members of her study by the MSU president. The researcher also attended MSU meetings at two other universities, Westside University and Bayside University, in the capacity of doctoral candidate and multiracial researcher.

Another significant factor that influenced the researcher was the First Annual Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) Conference, which was held at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois in November 2010. Previous to that conference, the researcher had not known of national conferences specifically dedicated to multiracial research. The researcher attended CMRS as a doctoral candidate.

Presently, the social networking medium of Facebook has numerous multiracial groups and pages dedicated to aspects of the multiracial movement. The researcher utilized this form of networking as a way of contacting a large population of individuals across the country for the purpose of communicating her study, recruiting people to participate, exchanging similar ideas concerning the mixed-race experience, and interacting with other multiracial people.

Instruments and Measures

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) detailed three types of counter-stories that are a part of Critical Race Methodology: (a) personal stories and narratives; (b) other people's stories or narratives; and (c) composite stories or narratives. For this study, both personal narratives and

composite stories were utilized as forms of data collection. In the first instance, the researcher constructed a vignette of a composite story based on multiracial issues and racial microaggressions that the focus group participants read and discussed with the researcher and with one another. As a second form of data collection, the researcher utilized the personal stories and narratives of the participants, asking the participants to both verbalize in individualized interviews and write in a narrative form their personal stories of multiracialism and experiences with racial discrimination.

Because of the qualitative ethnographic nature of this research, the tools used to elicit and collect the counter-narratives of the participants were: (a) the focus group and individualized interviews protocols; (b) the written counter-narrative prompt; (c) the participants; (d) the researcher; and (e) the technology of the Sony digital audio-recorder and Skype computer programs. The tools the researcher used to measure and analyze data were Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework, definitions of racial microaggressions, the Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et al., 2007b), the Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011), and the transcribed and coded data of the focus groups, interviews, and written counter-narratives.

Focus groups and vignettes. Two focus groups were conducted. According to Templeton (1994), "[A] focus group… is a small, temporary community, formed for the purpose of the collaborative enterprise of discovery" (p. 4). Morgan (1997) expounded that focus groups are characterized by the "explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (p. 2). In the field of education, focus groups are used as group interview structures whereby a specific number of people gather

with the purpose of discussing a particular topic where "it is the researcher's interest that provides the focus, whereas the data themselves come from group interaction" (Morgan, 1997, p. 7).

The focus group technique served a significant purpose, as it was a way to introduce the topic in a group setting to enable participants to feel comfortable in talking with others like them. It also elicited a lot of information that might otherwise take several individualized interviews with the same amount of people. Morgan (1998) referred to the purposive sampling method as follows: "The goal in focus groups is to gain insight and understanding by hearing from people in depth, and this requires selecting a purposive sample that will generate the most productive discussions in the focus group" (p. 56). The researcher selected the participants for the two focus groups in a purposive nonrandom sampling method in that the focus groups were comprised of people who were part-Black multiracial. Morgan's (1998) work has detailed the importance of focus group work and specified the notion of homogeneity of the group, where group members share similar characteristics:

> In determining the composition of individual focus groups, compatibility is the key concern. When the participants perceive each other as fundamentally similar, they can spend less time explaining themselves to each other and more time discussing the issues at hand. (p. 59)

The term "racial microaggression" was defined for the participants as preparation for understanding the nature of the focus group, interview protocol questions, and the written narrative prompt. Participants were given a vignette of a multiracial experience based on racial microaggressions. Vignettes are "sketches of fictional (or fictionalized) scenarios… [and] collect situated data on group values, group beliefs, and group norms of behaviour" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 183). The researcher composed the vignette with true-to-life examples of racial

microaggressions and stereotyping in a dialogue between two fictional characters based on many different microaggressive examples (see Appendix B). Participants read the vignettes, and then discussed in the two focus groups, sharing instances of similar experiences, discussing feelings the vignettes elicited, and exchanging ways of coping in similar circumstances.

Reading and discussing the vignette in the focus groups triangulated and supported the data qualitatively and through narrative, a form of Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The vignette engaged the participants to think about whether they had been in similar circumstances and to reflect on how they may have dealt with racial microaggressions. The focus groups provided a common forum in which multiracial people could discuss their thoughts and feelings about the vignettes, and how they dealt with microaggressive experiences.

After reading the vignette, focus group questions were asked from The Multiracial Focus Group Interview Protocol, which was adapted from “Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience” by Sue et al. (2007a) (see Appendix D). The purpose of the focus group interview was to provide participants an opportunity to discuss in a group format comparable encounters with racial microaggressions. The focus group questions allowed the participants to describe some of the ways other people may have subtly expressed their stereotypical beliefs to the participants, to communicate ways other people may have invalidated the participants’ experiences, and to reflect on the overall impact that experiences with microaggressions had on the participants’ lives.

Individualized interviews. The researcher conducted 22 individualized interview sessions; three interviews took place with each of the six participants, with four follow-up interviews. Interviews are individualized, face-to-face meetings between the researcher and the

participant (Seidman, 2006). These verbal story-telling opportunities offered a chance for the researcher to gain insight about the lived experiences of the multiracial participants and to hear the stories of multiracial people in their own words.

Seidman (2006) contended that the purpose of interviews is not merely to ask questions and receive answers, but also to hear the lived experiences of the participants and to gain a deeper understanding of the story told by the participants through the particular lens being applied. The goal of the researcher should be to listen more and talk less, refraining from adding comments based on experience or expertise, and instead listening to the stories of the participants so as to gain perspective and to understand how these people make meaning of their multiracialness.

Interviews are connected to Critical Race Methodology in that the gathering of information stems from directly engaging with the participants, asking questions about their lived experiences, and listening to how these people make sense of their multiracial existence on many levels. The interview process placed the researcher as the key data-gathering instrument.

The Individualized Interview Sessions #1 and #2 were conducted using interview protocols by researchers in the field of microaggressions (see Appendices D and E). The protocol for the first interview, Individualized Interview #1 Protocol, was adapted from Milville et al. (2005) (see Appendix E). This protocol asked questions concerning multiracial identity and the participants' experience growing up as multiracial people.

The protocol for the second interview, Individualized Interview #2 Protocol, was adapted from. Constantine and Sue (2007) (see Appendix F). The questions in this protocol were

concerned with aspects of schooling (K–12 and University) in relation to academic relationships with respect to experiences of racial microaggressions.

The protocol for the third interview, Individualized Interview #3 Protocol, was written by the researcher (see Appendix G). This protocol was designed to be a culminating activity, resulting in questions asking the participant to reflect on his or her answers from Interviews #1 and #2. Interview #3 Protocol allowed the researcher to check the accuracy of the data collected in the first two interviews and/or the focus group

Multiracial counter-narratives. The six interview participants were asked to write short narratives about a racial microaggressive experience or a racial instance in their lives that resulted from being multiracial; one in which they may have felt stereotyped, victimized, or marginalized based on their mixed-race status, and/or one in which they may have dealt with specific microaggressions. The Written Narrative Prompt was written by the researcher (see Appendix H). Counter-narratives are an aspect of Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These types of verbal or written personal stories challenge White privilege and encourage People of Color to tell their stories so that society can understand their lived experiences as marginalized people.

The participants' counter-narratives were pivotal to the study in providing them an opportunity to journal about any microaggressive experience without sharing in the context of the focus group with other people present or in an interview session with researcher-driven questions.

Gaining Access/Recruitment of Study Participants

The researcher gained access to the study participants through three venues: (a) the First Annual Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference; (b) undergraduate student organizations; and (c) the social networking medium of Facebook. Table 11 illustrates these three venues and the specific entities that the researcher contacted concerning finding participants.

Table 11

Recruitment of Research Participants

Venue	Specifically
CMRS Conference	Mixed Chicks Chat Radio Show and Mixed Roots Film Festival
	MixedStudies.org website
	MASC
	Individual CMRS Conference attendee
Undergraduate Organizations	Bayside University – MSU
	Hillside University – MESU
	Westside University – MSU
Social Networking	Facebook

Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) conference. The researcher attended the First Annual Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) Conference as a doctoral student participant at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, in November 2010. The researcher met individuals involved in aspects of the multiracial academic community. These individuals and their multiracial organizations were instrumental in finding study participants: Mixed Chicks Chat

Radio Show and Mixed Roots Film Festival, Mixed Studies.org website, Multiracial Americans of Southern California, and the Multiracial Student Organizations at Hillside University (pseudonym), Westside University (pseudonym), and Bayside University (pseudonym).

Mixed Chicks Chat radio show and Mixed Roots film festival. The researcher contacted Fanshen Cox at CMRS in November 2010. She and the researcher had previously communicated online via Facebook. The researcher informed Cox of the purpose of this study, who invited the researcher to briefly describe the study on Cox's Internet radio show, "Mixed Chicks Chat," which she cohosted with Heidi Durrow. On the radio show in November 2010, the researcher spoke about multiracial microaggressions and discussed the study procedures, as per the study hand-out (see Appendix N), as well as how interested people could contact the researcher via telephone and email. The researcher was also a guest speaker on Cox and Durrow's radio show in March 2011, during which time the researcher shared her personal story as a multiracial person. The two appearances on the radio show did not result in study participants.

Mixed Studies.org website. At CMRS, the researcher also met Steven Riley, website operator for the www.mixedstudies.org website, a website where mixed-race scholars and others interested in multiracial studies share research interests and critical work. Riley and the researcher conversed about the study, and Riley invited the researcher to post the study details on the website as a way to meet participants on November 22, 2010. The website posting did not result in study participants.

Multiracial Americans of Southern California. At CMRS, the researcher met Thomas Lopez from the organization Multiracial Americans of Southern California (MASC). The

researcher informed Lopez of the details of her study, and Lopez informed the researcher that an intern for MASC was an undergraduate student at Hillside University, and was forming a multiracial student organization at that university. Lopez invited the researcher to post the details of the study on the MASC Facebook page, which she did on November 17, 2010. The Facebook page posting did not result in study participants.

On November 22, 2010, the researcher emailed Lopez via Facebook requesting the intern's contact information. On the same day, Lopez contacted the researcher via Facebook and gave the researcher the contact information for the intern.

On November 22, 2010, the researcher emailed the intern to inquire about the multiracial student organization and to inform him about the study. The researcher and the intern communicated through Facebook and arranged to meet once the multiracial student union at Hillside University was closer to starting.

An individual participant through CMRS. The researcher also met a male college student at CMRS in Chicago, who became one of the participants for the individualized interviews and written narratives. His pseudonym was Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey).

Undergraduate student organizations. In the summer of 2010, when research first began, the researcher contacted Hillside University to see if the university had a Multiracial Student Union (MSU) and was informed that there was no such organization. The researcher had planned to go to local universities and attend their MSU group meetings to meet potential study participants. Phone calls to local universities revealed that several universities had Hapa groups (multiracial groups specifically for multiracial Asian students), but few had multiracial groups for all multiracial combinations. Most universities informed the researcher that MSU

groups were on vacation until the fall. In other cases, the researcher was advised to speak to somebody in the Black Student Union to find multiracial Black students. Mostly, the researcher was disappointed that her university did not have a group specifically for multiracial people. Fortunately, by February of 2011, Hillside University had established its first MSU.

Multi-Ethnic Student Union at Hillside University. In January 2011, the researcher met with the president of the newly founded MESU at Hillside University. The MESU president invited the researcher to attend the first meeting in February 2011, to share the study in detail with the MESU group.

During the first MESU meeting, the researcher described the details about the study. The researcher also distributed the Multiracial Microaggressions Handout (see Appendix N). At the end of the meeting, a young woman inquired further about the study and asked to be a participant. She would become a participant named Amber (a pseudonym).

Through MESU, the researcher was invited to speak on a panel at Hillside University in March 2011, called, "What Are You? Exploring Biracial Identity." At this panel, the researcher met two more MESU students who would become study participants, Ana and Elyse (pseudonyms). In March 2011, the researcher sent an email to Amber, Ana, and Elyse, informing them of the details of the research and study procedures. At this same time, the researcher invited a doctoral student named John (a pseudonym) to participate. Also in March 2011, the researcher posted a Research Study Request on the MESU Facebook page; however, no one responded to this posting. The researcher scheduled the focus group meeting for Sunday, March 20, 2011, with Amber, Ana, Elyse, and John.

Multiracial Student Union at Westside University. At CMRS, the researcher also met Marc Johnston, doctoral candidate and research assistant at Westside University. Johnston, along with his academic colleague, Dr. Kevin Nadal, was a theorist in the field of multiracial microaggressions. The researcher informed Johnston about the study, and he informed the researcher of the Westside University Multiracial Student Union (MSU). Johnston also added the researcher to the Westside University MSU Facebook group page, so that the researcher could correspond with the group's board members.

In November 2010, the researcher contacted the Westside University MSU Group through its Facebook page, and informed the MSU board members of her interest in finding study participants. The board president invited the researcher to attend their next meeting in November 2010, to discuss the researcher's study with the MSU group.

The researcher attended the November 2010 Westside University MSU meeting and discussed the study. The Multiracial Microaggressions Dissertation Study Hand-out (see Appendix N) was distributed, which included the study procedures.

Multiracial Student Union at Bayside University. The president of the Bayside University Multiracial Student Union (MSU) attended the Westside University MSU meeting and introduced herself to the researcher. She invited the researcher to the Bayside University MSU because she felt that the group might have some students who would be interested in participating in the study. The MSU president and the researcher exchanged contact and Facebook information.

The researcher emailed the MSU president a research packet in January 2011. This packet included the Introductory Letter (see Appendix M), Multiracial Microaggressions

Handout (see Appendix N), Focus Group Narrative Vignette (see Appendix C), Written Narrative Prompt (see Appendix H), Informed Consent Form (see Appendix I), and Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights (see Appendix J). The MSU President responded in January 2011, and said that because the students were on winter break, she would contact the board for interested participants. The researcher and the MSU President spoke by telephone on February 5, 2011, to schedule a meeting in the city where Bayside University is located with the MSU president and potential participants on February 26, 2011.

Between February 6 and 24, 2011, various emails were exchanged between the MSU president and the researcher to arrange the logistics of an introductory meeting with the potential participants. Also, the researcher received emails from three potential participants, Peach, Toad, and Yoshi (pseudonyms), who expressed interest in attending the introductory meeting.

The introductory meeting was held on Saturday, February 26, 2011, from 5:00–6:00p.m., at a coffee shop near Bayside University, with the MSU president and four interested participants, Luigi, Yoshi, Peach, and Toad (pseudonyms). At this informal introductory meeting, the participants and the researcher introduced themselves to each other. The researcher told them about her positionality as a multiracial person in the academic system. The researcher also distributed pertinent research materials, such as the Multiracial Microaggressions Hand-out (see Appendix N), Examples of Racial Microaggressions Grid (see Table 4), Informed Consent Form (see Appendix I), and Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights (see Appendix J) to all of these persons. All participants stated interest, so the researcher arranged times to meet and to conduct the focus group. All participants read and signed informed consent forms at that meeting.

In March through mid-April of 2011, the researcher scheduled the focus group via emails with the four participants, to take place on Sunday, May 1, 2011, from 3:00–6:00 p.m. The participants explained that they would secure a location to meet for the group.

Facebook social networking. The researcher created two Facebook pages for this study, both entitled "Multiracial People of Black-White Background Needed for Dissertation Study." The first page was a Facebook Group Page, created on November 22, 2010, where the researcher added people from both scholarly and multiracial communities. The second was a Facebook Community Page, created on December 8, 2010, which enabled people searching for multiracial interests to find the page and request to join the community. The basic description for both groups was that the researcher was looking for people of mixed Black-White racial background who were interested in participating in a dissertation on multiracial microaggressions. This page allowed the researcher to be contacted by two eligible participants: Pip and Sonya (pseudonyms).

Additionally, Facebook was the primary way of keeping in contact with each of the 11 participants; private emails were sent through the Facebook inbox email feature to confirm interview times, or for the researcher to answer questions from the participants. This method of communication took place solely through the inbox feature; no personal communication was posted on the Group or Community Pages Facebook Walls.

Selection of Research Participants

The researcher gained access to these participants through one of three venues: (a) through the researcher's attendance at the CMRS Conference; (2) through the research participant's university and/or university multiracial student organization; or (3) through the social networking site Facebook.

At the onset of the study, data were collected from 11 part-Black multiracial individuals. The 11 individuals were: Amber, Ana, Elyse, John, Luigi, Peach, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, Toad, and Yoshi (see Table 12 below). Not all of these 11 individuals participated in all three data collection parts due to limitations of racial backgrounds, age restrictions, geographic location, or participant availability.

Table 12

Initial Research Participants and the Data Collected

Name	Gender	Age	Location	Racial Background	Focus Group	Interviews	Narrative	Reason for Partial Participation
Amber[a]	F	20	Los Angeles, California	Black-White	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Ana	F	23	Los Angeles, California	Black-Hispanic	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Elyse[a]	F	19	Los Angeles, California	Black-White	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
John	M	30	Los Angeles, California	MGM Black-White	Yes	No	No	Exceeded age limit
Luigi	M	22	Berkeley, California	MGM Black-White	Yes	No	No	Participant's travel schedule
Peach	F	19	Berkeley, California	Black-Asian	Yes	Yes (via Skype)	Yes	N/A
Pip[a]	F	19	Beaumont, Texas	MGM Black-White/Creole	No	Yes (via Skype)	Yes	Could not participate in a focus group because of geographical location
Sonic[a]	M	24	Howell, New Jersey	Black-White	No	Yes (via Skype)	Yes	Could not participate in a focus group because of geographical location
Sonya[a]	F	23	Harrisonburg, Virginia	Black-White	No	Yes (via Skype)	Yes	Could not participate in a focus group because of geographical location
Toad	F	19	Berkeley, California	Black-Hispanic	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Yoshi[a]	M	27	Berkeley, California	Black-White	Yes	Yes (via Skype)	Yes	N/A

Note. [a] Indicates final research participants

Through the method of study, the study was resampled to six individuals, creating a new purposive sampling for the purpose of codification, to include individuals who were Black-White multiracial (see Table 13 below).

Table 13

Final Research Participants and the Data Collected

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Racial Background	Focus Group	Interviews	Written Counter-Narrative
Amber	Female	20	Black-White	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elyse	Female	19	Black-White	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pip	Female	19	MGM Black-White	No	Yes	Yes
Sonic	Male	24	Black-White	No	Yes	Yes
Sonya	Female	24	Black-White	No	Yes	Yes
Yoshi	Male	27	Black-White	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data from individuals who participated in the focus groups, but who were not included in the resampled population (Ana, Luigi, John, Peach, and Toad) were coded; their focus group data will be discussed in this study, as they were a part of a larger group. However any other data collected from these people (i.e., interviews, written counter-narratives) will not be used for this study.

Therefore, the participant data analyzed and discussed in this study include research consisting of data from 11 participants as such; two focus groups with eight participants (Amber, Ana, Elyse, John, Luigi, Peach, Toad, and Yoshi), 22 individualized interview sessions with six participants (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, and Yoshi), and six written narratives from the same six interview participants.

The Hillside University and Bayside University Focus Groups

Participants and Procedures

The purpose of the focus groups was for the researcher to meet with participants in their own environment, to get acquainted with them on a group level, and to hear about their daily experiences as multiracial people dealing with racial microaggressions.

Two focus groups met; one with students at Hillside University and one with students from Bayside University. Each group had four participants. The Hillside Focus Group participants were Amber, Ana, Elyse, and John. The Bayside Focus Group participants were Peach, Luigi, Toad, and Yoshi. As a criterion of this study, all of the participants were multiracial of partial Black ancestry; however, the mixes were varied. In order to have a large enough sample at the onset of the study, the researcher accepted people into the focus groups who were mixed Black, but not necessarily mixed White.

Hillside Focus Group – Description of Participants

Four people participated in the Hillside Focus Group: Amber, Ana, Elyse, and John. Table 14 below details the demographic information (pseudonym, gender, age, racial background) of the participants in the Hillside Focus Group.

Table 14

Hillside Focus Group Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Racial Background
Amber	F	20	Black-White
Ana	F	23	Black-Hispanic
Elyse	F	19	Black-White
John	M	30	MGM Black-White

Amber, female, age 20, was a sophomore with a double major in psychology and Spanish. She was Black-White multiracial. Her father was White and her mother was Black. She wanted to participate in the study as a way of helping other multiracial people and because multiracial research was a topic she was interested in pursuing after graduating college (Amber, Hillside Focus Group).

Ana, female, age 23, was a senior who majored in sociology. Ana graduated in 2011. Ana was Black-Hispanic multiracial. Her father was Black and her mother was Hispanic (Salvadoran). Ana was interested in participating in the study because of personal experiences with microaggressions and wanting to work as a social worker to help multiracial children (Ana, Hillside Focus Group).

Elyse, female, age 19, was a sophomore who majored in entrepreneurship. Elyse was Black-White multiracial. Her father was Black (Caribbean) and her mother was White. She was interested in participating in this study because, while growing up, she "never had any issues with being biracial or having to identify myself or any even real comprehension of what it means to be biracial" (Elyse, Hillside Focus Group). After participating in a college orientation program for African American students at her university, she said it affected her identity development in terms of how she thought about herself as a racial being: "And so, I'm still working through how I personally feel about my biracial identity… I think that this study will just help me have a firmer grasp on how I feel" (Elyse, Hillside Focus Group).

John, male, age 30, was a doctoral student in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. He was multigenerationally mixed (MGM), meaning that his parents were both first generationally mixed, where they were both Black-White multiracial. John, therefore, was not

multiracial from two parents of different races, but from both of his parents already being multiracial themselves. He was interested in the study because he wanted to have an understanding of "why certain people have certain perceptions of race" (John, Hillside Focus Group). John did not participate in the remaining individualized interview and written counter-narrative due exceeding the age limit.

Of the four focus group participants, two of them (Amber and Elyse) completed all three parts of the study (focus group, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives). Of the remaining two people, Ana fell outside of the scope of the study because she was multiracial-Black and Hispanic, not multiracial Black-White, as the others. Although Ana participated in all three aspects of the study, her interview and narrative data will possibly be used in future studies on university students who are multiracial with two non-White racial mixes; only the data collected from her participation in the focus group will be used for this study. As previously mentioned, John did not participate in the remaining individualized interview and written counter-narrative due to being over the age limit of 19-27.

Hillside Focus Group – Description of Procedures

The Hillside Focus Group met on Sunday, March 22, 2011, at the library at Hillside University, in a private group study room. The focus group was scheduled to meet from 12:00 to 2:30 p.m. Three of the four participants (Amber, Ana, and Elyse) arrived by 12:00 p.m.; John arrived a few minutes later due to inclement weather, so we began the focus group at 12:15 p.m.

From 12:15–12:25 p.m., the researcher and participants introduced themselves off-tape with first and last name, and the researcher thanked the participants for participating and for showing up in the inclement weather. The researcher explained the Institutional Review Board

(IRB) Informed Consent Form (see Appendix I) and Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights (see Appendix J), and had the participants read through both documents. Upon completion of reading the form, the participants signed and witnessed the forms. The researcher asked the participants to think of a pseudonym each one wanted to use to protect anonymity.

Then, the researcher distributed the vignette, blank paper, and pencil, and explained the vignette process. The participants were given 15 minutes, from 12:25–12:40 p.m., to read the vignette and take notes.

From 12:40–12:45 p.m., after reading the vignette, the researcher recorded each participant's choice of pseudonym, as well as his or her age, year in university, major, and interest in participating in the study. The researcher offered a disclaimer that if participants did not feel comfortable revealing ages or any other private information, the participants did not have to. Each person proceeded to tell the researcher the requested information.

The whole group discussion lasted approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, from 12:45–2:00 p.m. During the last 15 minutes, 2:00–2:15 p.m., the researcher asked the participants who was interested and available to continue the study with the individualized interviews and written counter-narratives. The researcher asked the participants to provide available days and times they could meet again. The researcher thanked them for participating and informed them that the researcher would contact them to arrange the interviews and counter-narrative collection. The researcher also mentioned that any people who might not continue with the study would receive their $15.00 gift card to either Starbucks or Target at that time.

In total, the focus group lasted for approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes, from 12:00 to 2:15 p.m.

Bayside Focus Group – Description of Participants

The Bayside Focus Group included four participants: Luigi, Peach, Toad, and Yoshi. The participants were all acquainted with one another and were members of the Bayside University Mixed Student Union (MSU). Table 15 below details the demographic information (pseudonym, gender, age, racial background) of the participants in the Bayside Focus Group.

Table 15

Bayside Focus Group Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Racial Background
Luigi	M	22	MGM Black-White
Peach	F	19	Black-Asian
Toad	F	19	Creole-Hispanic
Yoshi	M	27	Black-White

Luigi, male, age 22, was a senior majoring in political science. Luigi graduated in 2011 and planned to attend graduate school to major in international relations. Both of Luigi's parents were multiracial Black-White, so Luigi was considered multigenerationally mixed (MGM). His mother was part-Black, White (German), and Native American (Cherokee), and his father was and half-Black and half-White (German and French). Luigi was interested in participating in the focus group because of having racialized experiences during his childhood (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group). Luigi did not participate beyond the focus group due to completing college and travel plans outside of the United States; his unavailability precluded him from continuing to participate in the remainder of the study.

Peach, female, age 19, was a sophomore who majored in anthropology and minored in music. Peach is Black-Asian multiracial. Her mother was Asian (Chinese) and her father was Black. She spoke of her interest in participating in the study because of dealing with racial microaggressions in her adolescence from classmates and friends, based on stereotypes about both of her races (Peach, Bayside Focus Group).

Toad, female, age 19, was a sophomore who majored in sociology and minored in public policy. Toad was Creole-Hispanic multiracial. Toad described her mother as Mexican American and her father as Creole, which is a multiracial ethnic description referring to people who are mixed-race Black and Spanish or French, from Louisiana. Toad was interested in participating in the study as a way of "adding to any academic discourse about [multiracial experiences] that would be nice to help" (Toad, Bayside Focus Group).

Yoshi, male, age 27, was a senior who majored in rhetoric and minored in philosophy. Yoshi was Black-White multiracial. Yoshi's father was Black and his mother was White (Irish and Italian) and one-eighth Native American. He wanted to participate in the study because of "want[ing] to add to the discussion. I thought it was a worthy cause" (Yoshi, Bayside Focus Group).

Of the four focus group participants, Yoshi participated in all three aspects of the study (focus group, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives). Of the remaining three people, Peach and Toad fell outside the scope of the study because although they were multiracial-Black, they were not multiracial-White; rather, Peach was Black-Asian, and Toad was Black-Hispanic. Although Peach and Toad participated in all three aspects of the study, their interview and narrative data will possibly be used in future studies on university students

who are multiracial with two non-White racial mixes; only the data collected from their participation in the focus group will be used for this study. As previously mentioned, Luigi did not participate beyond the focus group due to his schedule unavailability.

Bayside Focus Group – Description of Procedures

On Sunday, May 1, 2011, the researcher flew to the city where Bayside is located and was met at the subway station by Luigi at 2:15 p.m. Luigi and the researcher took a bus to a local restaurant, where Yoshi met them. The researcher purchased food for the focus group participants. Luigi, Yoshi, and the researcher arrived at the dorm facility at 2:50 p.m. and got situated in the common area in the study rooms. Peach and Toad arrived a few minutes later, and the focus group started promptly at 3:00 p.m. The focus group was scheduled to meet from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

From 3:00–3:15 p.m., the researcher welcomed the participants and thanked them for participating. The researcher invited them to eat and to think about a pseudonym each person would want to use to protect his or her anonymity. Instantly, Yoshi said he wanted to be called "Yoshi." Luigi chuckled and said "Luigi." Toad then chimed in and said she wanted her pseudonym to be "Toad," and Peach quickly selected her name. All four participants laughed, and the researcher inquired as to if this was an inside joke. They said that the names were part of a video game from the Mario Brothers series and each person had selected a character's name.

The participants had met previously on Saturday, February 25, 2011, for an informal discussion about the research topic. At that meeting, the participants read, signed, and witnessed the Informed Consent Forms (see Appendix I), and read the Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights (see Appendix J). For the sake of full understanding, the researcher reviewed that each person

had each signed the consent forms and reminded them of the form's contents; asking whether there were any questions about Informed Consent information. The participants did not have any questions. The researcher then asked the participants to write their mailing addresses down so the researcher could mail their compensation (gift cards) to them when their portion of the research was complete.

The researcher then distributed the vignette, blank papers, and pencils to the group, and explained the vignette process. The participants were given 15 minutes, from 3:15–3:30 p.m., to read the vignette silently and take notes.

From 3:30–3:35 pm, after reading the vignette, the researcher asked each participant on tape to say the pseudonym they had chosen, as well as their ages, year in university, major, and their interest in the study. The researcher made a disclaimer that if participants did not feel comfortable revealing ages or any other private information, they did not have to provide that information. Each person proceeded to tell the researcher the requested information.

The whole group discussion with all four participants lasted one hour and 55 minutes, from 3:35–5:30 p.m. Peach had to leave at 5:30 p.m. The remaining three participants (Toad, Luigi, and Yoshi) and the researcher continued the discussion for 20 more minutes. During the last 10 minutes, 5:50–6:00 p.m., the researcher asked the participants whether they were interested and available to continue the study with the individualized interviews and written counter-narratives. (Before Peach left, she had mentioned her interest in continuing the study.) Yoshi and Peach informed the researcher that they were interested, while Luigi mentioned how, after graduation, he was planning extensive travel and would not be available. I told Toad and Yoshi I would contact them via email to arrange dates and times to conduct their individualized

interviews and written narratives. The researcher mentioned to Luigi that she would mail his $15.00 gift card to his address. The researcher thanked them for participating in the study. In total, the focus group lasted for approximately three hours, from 3:00–6:00 p.m.

Individualized Interviews and Written Counter-Narratives

Six people (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, and Yoshi) participated in the individualized interviews and wrote personal counter-narratives about their experiences with microaggressions. The demographic information is detailed in Table 16 below.

Table 16

Individualized Interview and Narrative Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Location	Racial Background	Year in School
Amber	F	20	Los Angeles, California	Black-White	Sophomore
Elyse	F	19	Los Angeles, California	Black-White	Sophomore
Pip	F	19	Beaumont, Texas	MGM Black-White/Creole	Sophomore
Sonic	M	24	Howell, New Jersey	Black-White	Graduate Student
Sonya	F	23	Harrisonburg, Virginia	Black-White	Graduate Student
Yoshi	M	27	Berkeley, California	Black-White	Senior

Of the six people selected to participate in the individualized interviews and write counter-narratives, four were female (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonya) and two were male (Sonic, Yoshi). Four were at the undergraduate level (Amber, Elyse, Pip, and Yoshi), and two were first-year graduate students (Sonic and Sonya). Five of the six participants were first-generationally mixed-race (meaning that their parents were of two monoracial categories), whereas Pip was multigenerationally mixed (MGM); her parents were both multiracial Black-

White and Creole. Two participants, Amber and Elyse, were interviewed in-person at Hillside University, whereas the other four (Pip, Sonic, Sonya, Yoshi), due to geographic distance, were interviewed via Skype.

Individualized Interview Sessions

Upon completion of the focus group interviews, the participants and the researcher discussed whether the participants were available to continue with the individual interviews. Some participants were able to give the researcher three interview dates and times at the end of the focus groups. For those who were unsure of their schedule availabilities, the researcher contacted the participants via telephone or email to schedule times to conduct their interviews.

All interviews were audiotaped using a hand-held digital recorder with participant permission, and research notes were taken in notebooks. The use of audio-recording facilitated the data collecting process; by recording their voices, the notes the researcher took supplemented what was said by the participants, and the researcher could listen more closely.

During the interviews, the researcher met privately with each person, face-to-face or via Skype, and spent some time listening to their life experiences. Each participant participated in three interviews. Three people participated in four follow-up interviews; Sonic had two follow-up interviews, Amber had one, and Elyse had one. Typically, the interview schedule was:

1. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher welcomed the participant and thanked them for participating in this phase of the project.
2. The researcher explained the details of the interview, what the focus topic would be, and answered any pertinent questions from the participants.

3. The researcher read the opening prompt of the interview, and then asked questions according to the Individual Interview Protocols (see Appendices D, E, and F).
4. As the participant thoughtfully answered questions, sometimes follow-up questions arose and more dialogue ensued between the researcher and the participant.
5. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the participant for participating, and the time, date, and place for the next interview was arranged. In most cases, the interviews were held within one to two weeks of one another.
6. The researcher also reminded the participant of their written counter-narrative due date. Participants wrote the written counter-narratives at the same time as the individualized interviews were scheduled.

Written Counter-Narratives

At the Focus Group meeting, the participants were informed of the written counter-narrative portion of the study and were given the Written Counter-Narrative Prompt (see Appendix H). The participants were asked to write a counter-narrative that focused on an experience of racial discrimination or a specific racial microaggression that the individual may have encountered based on his or her mixed-race status. The Written Counter-Narrative was utilized as a method of Critical Race Methodology story-telling so that the participants could document an experience from their lives. The Written Counter-Narrative Prompt was distributed to the participants at the end of the focus group meeting. The researcher asked the participants to return their written counter-narratives within one month. The participants were also reminded at the end of each individualized interview session of their counter-narrative due date.

After the interviews were completed and the counter-narratives were emailed to the researcher, the researcher sent a thank-you note and gift certificate to the participants, thanking them for participating in the study. This marked the end of the process.

Triangulation of the Data

Merriam (1998) has defined triangulation of the data as "using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings" (p. 204). Creswell (2009) has described the process of triangulation as "examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" (p. 191). This project was a triangulated study in that the multiple data sources utilized were equally valuable in "mak[ing] comparisons" (Hatch, 2002, p. 119) between these data sources, developing the research themes, and ascertaining the findings.

Data were collected from three sources: two focus groups, 22 individualized interviews, and six written counter-narratives. Triangulation of the data is critical to a balanced study, because one or two methods may not represent an adequate amount of data necessary in determining accurate information (Hatch, 2002).

Each component of the data collection carried its own merit in producing the most complete picture of the effects of racial microaggressions in the sample population. Reading a vignette and then discussing it in the focus group served as an introductory activity, creating a sense of trust and commonality amongst the participants (Morgan, 1998). In turn, this activity revealed similarities that the participants might have shared with each other in relation to racial microaggressions.

The individualized interview sessions provided a data strategy not permitted during the focus groups: one-on-one discussion with the researcher and a chance to share more detailed and/or personal information one may not want to share at the group level (Seidman, 2006). These sessions assisted the researcher in understanding the effects of racial microaggressions at an individual level.

Lastly, the written counter-narrative activity illustrated the "autobiographical reflections of the author" (Solórzano & Yosso, 202, p. 32), whereby participants were asked to journal examples of racial microaggressions inflicted upon them, allowing the participants to reflect upon their life stories and recount personal descriptions of racially microaggressive experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This particular CRM method provided the participants "tool[s] for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32).

Together, the three data sources strengthened and informed the coding, analyzing, and reporting processes of the data. Triangulating the data sources meant checking each data source against the other sources; to ensure that the participants consistently were saying the same things across the data sources, and that the descriptions were not single occurrences.

Data Analysis: Typological Analysis Through a Critical Race Theory Lens

Hatch (2002) has explained, "[Data] analysis is the most mysterious and most difficult part of qualitative research" (p. 54). Unlike quantitative research, which may result in quantifiable numbers, measurements, and statistics, qualitative research depends on the researcher as the main instrument for collecting data to observe the participants in their natural settings utilizing multiple strategies for collecting data to decipher and interpret the participants'

meanings (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research, therefore, results in the documentation of the personal experiences of the participants, and through their personal counter-stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

This qualitative study utilized the methods of data collection inherent in a Critical Race Methodology, focusing on data that "plac[es] at the center of analysis the stories that people of colour tell of their experiences" (Duncan, 2005, p. 94). Utilizing the story-telling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) aspects of the participants' experiences, these data collection methods included focus group studies, interview studies, and narrative studies (Hatch, 2002) of the participants.

To understand the stories of the participants, significant attention was given to complete data analysis through a systematic process. Creswell (2009) has defined thorough data analysis as:

> the process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. (p. 183)

Data were analyzed through the lens of Critical Race Methodology, and were supported through the five tenets of CRT: racism is "endemic [and] permanent" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25); the stories of White privilege are challenged; the focus is on stories of populations not often heard; belief in the "experiential knowledge of people of color" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26) which includes the methodology of storytelling; CRT provides an "interdisciplinary knowledge base" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 27). Of most importance in this study was giving as complete a picture as possible of the types of racial microaggressions experienced by the Black-White multiracial participants, as well as documenting the effects of these racial

microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals.

Creswell (2009) delineated a process of six specific steps for analyzing data, which include organizing and preparing the data, reading through the data, coding the data, describe through themes, illustrate the narrative representation (through tables, charts, passages), and interpret the meaning of the data. Hatch (2002) further detailed typological analysis as a form of data analysis that "starts by dividing the overall data set into categories or groups based on predetermined typologies" (p. 152). The two typologies that were central to the coding and analysis process were the Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et al., 2007b) and the Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011). These typologies provided a lens through which the researcher could triangulate the data evidenced through the counter-narratives of the participants. The typologies were visual representations of racial microaggressions and showed the interrelatedness of racial microaggression experiences. The typologies, therefore, were substantial tools of Critical Race Methodology.

The first step in qualitative data analysis is to "organize and prepare the data for analysis. This involves transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes, or sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information" (Hatch, 2002, p. 185). After completing data collection, all individual interviews and focus groups were transcribed by three entities: one professional transcription service and two freelance transcriptionists. The first freelance transcriptionist transcribed three interviews for the participant named Pip and four interviews for the participant named Sonya. The second freelance transcriptionist transcribed two interviews for the participant named Amber. The

remaining 13 interviews and two focus groups were transcribed by a professional transcription service, Verbal Ink, in Santa Monica, California. Once the transcriptions of the interviews and focus groups were received, the researcher checked the transcribed data for accuracy.

The next step in the data analysis required the researcher to "read through all the data… to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning" (Hatch, 2002, p. 185). The researcher read through the two focus groups, 22 individualized interview sessions, and six narratives, as well as the three research notebooks, as a way of preliminary analysis. These readings enabled the research to make connections. During these preliminary readings, the researcher took notes in the margins of the transcribed focus groups, interviews, and counter-narratives. The researcher then read through the three research notebooks, which contained the researcher's field notes from the interviews, and cross-referenced them with the transcribed data for accuracy.

Coding Procedures

Creswell (2009) explained that the third step in qualitative data analysis is to "begin detailed analysis with a coding process… [which] involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term" (p. 186). Once all data were transcribed, the researcher coded the data using HyperResearch Qualitative Software. The data sources of focus groups, interviews, and written counter-narratives were read through and coded in five complete rounds of coding, each round becoming more detailed and narrow than the previous one.

In utilizing Creswell's (2009) Step 4 (coding and describing the data), the researcher found that Hatch's (2002) typological analysis was beneficial in facilitating the coding process.

Hatch (2002) delineated an eight-step process, explaining, "in typological analysis, an early step is to read through the data set and divide it into elements (i.e., disaggregate it from the whole) based on predetermined categories" (p. 152).

Steps in Typological Analysis:

1. Identify typologies to be analyzed.
2. Read the data, marking entries related to your typologies.
3. Read entries by typology, recording the main ideas in entries on a summary sheet.
4. Look for patterns, relationships, themes within typologies.
5. Read data, coding entries according to patterns identified and keeping a record of what entries go with which elements of your patterns.
6. Decide if your patterns are supported by the data, and search the data for nonexamples of your patterns.
7. Look for relationships among the patterns identified.
8. Write your patterns as one-sentence generalizations.
9. Select data excerpts that support your generalizations. (Hatch, 2002, p. 153)

The researcher selected two typologies through which to code and analyze the data collected from the participants. The first typology was Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions Typology, which gives a comprehensive viewpoint of the types of racial microaggressions a Person of Color or other ethnic minority might experience. The second typology used for this study was based on Johnston and Nadal's (2010) Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy. This taxonomy presents the types of racial microaggressions a multiracial person (of any racial combination) might experience. These were generalized listings of microaggressions in five categories. Nadal et al.'s (2011) follow-up research presented a sixth category of racial microaggressions commonly experienced by multiracial people. This category—Category 6—is based on Monoracial Stereotypes, and the researcher found that it related tremendously to the first Typology of Sue et al. (2007b). As the researcher completed the rounds of coding, the researcher developed a "qualitative codebook" (Creswell, 2009, p. 187),

based on the typologies and the codes developed from the literature and the experiences of the research participants.

The researcher completed five rounds of coding, and with each round, conducted a thorough read-through, detailed coding process, and discovery of patterns. HyperResearch Qualitative Data Analysis software was used and facilitated the analysis process. The software enabled the researcher to look at specific code listings on a summary report. The researcher explored the frequency of particular racial microaggressions as coded, which, in turn, assisted the researcher during the coding process, as the researcher kept a record of the types of microaggressions experienced and devised a Mega-Chart (see Appendix P) to keep track of examples of racial microaggressions, as well as any nonexamples of microaggressions. This Mega-Chart was utilized in coding rounds 2, 3, and 4, and was developed as a tally system. Hatch (2002) suggested that the researcher "look for patterns, relationships, [and] themes within typologies" (p. 153). Through the five coding rounds, the researcher saw patterns of racial microaggressions, relationships between microaggressions and the overlapping, multilayered effects, which are represented in large themes, or "broad statements … that meaningfully bring all of these data together" (Hatch, 2002, p. 156).

Rounds of Coding

The coding occurred in a multiphase coding process in which five detailed rounds of coding were conducted. The rounds of coding started from a broad point of reference, representing the larger context areas of microaggressions within families, schools, and societies. With each round of coding, more detailed and specific forms of microaggressions were coded,

based on the two typologies of racial microaggressions found in the literature (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b).

Coding round one – Broad-institutional theme analysis. The first round of coding was a preliminary process of looking at the themes of family, school, and society, derived from the literature review (see Chapter Two). It was a basic and preliminary coding round, in which the researcher focused on data pertaining to these three groups. The researcher looked for any information about family, school, and society as places in which multiracial identity socialization occurs. Using HyperResearch software, the specific code names that the researcher used were "Family/Family Information, School, Society, Privilege."

Within the codes of *Family/Family Information,* the researcher looked for basic information about parents, siblings, extended family, familial upbringing, socioeconomic status, class level, and neighborhood/community demographics. The researcher also coded how the family (a) informed how the multiracial person should racially identify themselves; (b) dealt with instances of racial microaggressions; (c) members interacted with each other; and, finally, (d) how the multiracial individual dealt with instances of racist microaggressions in their families.

Codes concerning *School* centered on how teachers informed the multiracial person about how to complete the race question on forms and instances of racial microaggressions with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other students

Codes regarding *Society* detailed how the multiracial person felt he or she was perceived by society, and how the multiracial person perceived society and his or her place in it. Instances of personal privilege based on being multiracial or instances of White privilege from others affecting the multiracial person's experience were also coded in this round.

Coding round two – Racial microaggressions typological analysis. In the second round of coding, the researcher utilized Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions Typology. These consisted of three forms of racial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007b), and included nine types of racial microaggressions, which served as codes, as follows (Sue, 2010a):

Microinsults:

1. Ascription of Intelligence
2. Assumption of Criminal Status
3. Pathologizing of Cultural Values and Communication Styles
4. Second-Class Citizen

Microinvalidations:

1. Alien in Own Land
2. Color-Blindness
3. Denial of Individual Racism
4. Myth of Meritocracy

Microassaults:

1. Purposeful Discriminatory Acts (Sue, 2010a; Sue et al., 2007b)

Also included in this round of coding were Environmental Microaggressions, which included any grand-scale sociological microaggression that reflected systemic and institutionalized forms of racism (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). The researcher added a code named "Multiracial Historical Perspectives" to this part, which showed how the multiracial person positioned him- or herself within the legal, political, and social contexts of slavery, Hypodescent ideology, and multiraciality in United States history.

This second layer was coded using HyperResearch software. It was more difficult, as the researcher discovered, because the participants had more detailed, complex microaggressions that would probably be better suited to Johnston and Nadal's (2010) Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy. The researcher then coded racial microaggressions that fit the participants' descriptive experiences shared in the focus groups, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives. This round of coding, however, confirmed that these participants were recipients of racial microaggressions based not only on being multiracial, but also on being monoracially categorized and stereotyped as Black, based on One-Drop Rule ideology.

Coding round three – Multiracial microaggressions typological analysis. To start the process of coding in the third round, typologies for categories of multiracial microaggressions were used, rather than monoracial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). The researcher found during this coding round that these categories of microaggressions were far more reflected in the lives of the participants. The use of HyperResearch software facilitated this process in that the researcher saw the relationship between monoracial microaggressions evidenced in Coding Round Two layered upon the multiracial microaggressions documented in Coding Round Three.

Johnston and Nadal (2010), in their research with multiracial people of differing racial combinations, found five specific categories of microaggressions that occur in the lived experiences of multiracial people. Nadal et al. (2011), in follow-up research, detailed a sixth category of racial microaggressions based on monoracial stereotypes. The researcher discovered that the monoracial stereotypes were based in the microaggressive experiences, as detailed in Sue et al.'s (2007b) work.

During the third coding round, the researcher observed an overlap between microaggressions illustrated in the literature in Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions Typology and Johnston and Nadal's (2010) Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy. The taxonomy adapted from Johnston and Nadal's (2010) research and the synthesis of Nadal et al.'s (2011) follow-up study with Sue et al. (2007b) were applied to the study. The third round of coding then employed Johnston and Nadal's (2010) Multiracial Microaggressions Typology with Nadal's (2011) addendum of a sixth category, merged with Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions typology. For simplicity, in Nadal et al.'s (2011) Category 6, the researcher added "tokenism" (Kanter, 1977) from the literature to this category, as well as Sue et al.'s (2007b) Typology (nine racial microaggressions).

Therefore, combined, these typologies included six categories of multiracial microaggressions:

a. Category 1 – Exclusion or Isolation
b. Category 2 – Exoticization and Objectification
c. Category 3 – Assumption of Monoracial or Mistaken Identity
d. Category 4 – Denial of Multiracial Reality
e. Category 5 – Pathologizing of Identity and Experiences (Johnston and Nadal, 2010)
f. Category 6 – Microaggressions Based on Monoracial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011)/Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et al., 2007b)

Coding round four – Within-institutional typological analysis. In the first three rounds of coding, the researcher started with the large general themes of Family, School, and Society, and funneled down to smaller components. For example, the researcher started with the

large idea of society and found microaggressions in the realm of society, then through the process of multiple coding rounds, sought specific examples of multiracial microaggressions within the realm of society. By the fourth round of coding, the researcher went from the smaller components back to a larger scale. In this fourth round, the researcher looked for any instances of categories found in the literature to see how they relate to the two previous typologies from Round Three.

For example, within the overarching theme of School, the researcher looked for specific examples of "academic development" (Herman, 2009). Under the theme of Society, codes such as "comfortable or uncomfortable" and "social development" (Nadal et al., 2011) were coded from the literature and participants' experiences. Other codes included "identity development" (Atkinson et al., 1983; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990; Helms & Cook, 1999; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Phinney, 1989, 1990; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992, 2000), "impact of racial microaggressions" (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b), and specific racial and multiracial microaggressions according to the literature, including "best of both worlds, colorism, hair" – Exoticization (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), "marginalization" – Pathologizing of Multiracial Identity (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), the One-Drop Rule– Denial of Multiracial Reality (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), and "role models" – Environmental Microaggressions (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). The overlapping codes between the first three coding rounds and this fourth level illustrated patterns of similarity among microaggressions and showed relationships among types of microaggressions.

Coding round five – Cross-institutional typological analysis. The researcher used HyperResearch software to code the final round of coding, which was a type of retest in which the researcher utilized specific aspects of the themes of Family, School, and Society. Within the Family, the researcher looked for instances of racial microaggressions; not only that they happened, but how they happened in particular ways and within the immediate and extended family. In School, the researcher looked for instances of racial microaggressions at all levels of schooling; elementary, middle, high school, and college/university. Specifically within the context of Society, the researcher looked at instances of microaggressions within the realms of friendships and dating relationships. Lastly, the researcher explored discussions of the nature of microaggressions; how microaggressions are enacted upon the participants, how microaggressions are determined by the participants, how the participants handled racial microaggressions when they occurred, and the effects of these microaggressions on the participants (such as aspects of racial battle fatigue).

Outcomes of Data Coding Processes

Throughout the entire coding process, a chart was drafted as a tally system to keep track of specific racial microaggressions and to record the details of the data. The researcher titled this chart as the "Mega-Chart" (see Appendix P) and found it was beneficial as a way of visually understanding the data. The researcher organized this chart based on Johnston and Nadal's (2010) and Nadal et al.'s (2011) six categories of multiracial microaggressions, assigning a table to each category. The researcher also added a seventh category and corresponding table for Environmental Microaggressions. The seventh category was created because Environmental

Microaggressions contained a variety of microaggressions that evidenced acts of systemic racism on large societal scales.

In the first column of the "Mega-Chart," the researcher listed examples of specific microaggressive instances multiracial individuals might experience (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). The researcher added similar instances of microaggressions based on the experiences of the participants, according to Johnston and Nadal's (2010) examples. The researcher then merged pertinent racial microaggressive instances according to Sue et al. (2007b), as necessary. Whereas most of Sue et al.'s (2007b) research merged into Nadal et al.'s (2011) Category 6, some specific examples fit more cohesively within other categories. For example, under Category 1 – Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), Johnston and Nadal (2010) stated how the example of Second-Class Status and Treatment resembled Sue et al.'s (2007b) Second-Class Citizen microaggressions. Thus, for the purpose of the data coding and creation of the Mega-Chart, the researcher combined these two areas under Category 1. Similarly, the researcher combined Sue et al.'s (2007b) Pathologizing of Cultural Values under Category 5 – Pathologizing of Identity and Experiences (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Lastly, as the researcher coded, the researcher checked the specific microaggressions under the participant's name in the columns.

Another result of the coding processes was the creation of a Hybrid Microaggressions Typology (see Appendix O) based on the overlapping nature of racial microaggressions in the lived experiences of the participants. The Hybrid Microaggressions Typology merged the previous typologies of Sue et al. (2007b), Johnston and Nadal (2010), and Nadal et al. (2011) to create a synthesized chart. Within the alignment of the Hybrid Microaggressions Typology,

different forms of racial microaggressions were visually represented. Both the Mega-Chart and the Hybrid Microaggressions Typology helped in the task of interpreting the data and making significant meaning of the data collected.

Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the methods the researcher used in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered from the study participants. Eleven study participants took part in at least one aspect of the study, with the study being revamped to include the final six participants who met the criteria of identifying as Black-White multiracial, being between the ages of 18 and 27 years of age, being enrolled in university, and being able to participate in the individualized interview sessions and write a counter-narrative.

Counter-storytelling, as an aspect of Critical Race Methodology in education, was evidenced through the collection of two focus groups, 22 individualized interviews, and six written counter-narratives. Focus groups and individualized interviews utilized protocols from researchers in the field of racial microaggressions (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Milville et al., 2005). The written counter-narrative prompt was created by the researcher.

Through the story-telling aspects of Critical Race Methodology, data were coded and analyzed utilizing typologies based on various types of monoracial and multiracial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2007b). HyperResearch Qualitative Software was used for five rounds of coding for the data obtained through the focus groups, individualized interviews, and written counter-narratives.

Chapter Four will present the data as a result of the coding procedures. The counter-narratives of the participants presented personal experiences with racial microaggressions and

their resulting effects, detailing a system of subtle but disturbing racism based on being a Black-White multiracial university student.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter Overview

In the three previous chapters, I have given extensive background to the problem. In Chapter One, I described the pervasive problem in the United States as an issue of conflicting ideologies: the elements of White privilege as juxtaposed to the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. Microaggressions on Black-White multiracial people stem from this juxtaposition.

In Chapter Two, a literature base detailed the origins of the One-Drop Rule in the historical background and legacy of slavery in the United States. Certain prevalent legal cases reinforced the social context of the One-Drop Rule. I explained the tenets of Critical Race Theory, the theoretical framework for this research. Within Chapter Two, I detailed the various models of multiracial identity development. Lastly, I explained the types of microaggressions and their impact on multiracial identity development.

In Chapter Three, I explained the methods used in conducting this research. I described how I gained access to the 11 study participants, the collection of data, and the triangulation of the data between two focus groups, 22 interviews, and six narratives. I explained the coding process using HyperResearch Qualitative Software and the manner in which I layered the coding through five coding rounds.

In this chapter of the dissertation, the findings from the research will be discussed. I will revisit the two research questions and introduce three overarching research themes developed from the data. I will show how the first two themes relate to Research Question One and the third theme relates to Research Question Two.

Examples of each of these microaggressions will be discussed within each of the three themes, illustrating how these microaggressions have manifested in the participants' lives. In answering these research questions, I will detail the findings of the data, and give examples of participants' excerpts from their written narratives and quotations from their interviews and focus groups to show the relationship of the three themes to the two research questions.

Introduction

The goal of this study was to gather evidence of microaggressions and their effects in the daily lives of multiracial people of Black-White background through the verbal and written counter-narratives and reflections of the participants' experiences. This data should be deployed to inform the field of education about how this population of learners is discriminated against both for being of mixed-race background, as well as for being seen as part of a larger historically and culturally oppressed monoracial group. In researching microaggressions imposed upon multiracial individuals, using Sue et al.'s (2007b) typology, Johnston and Nadal's (2010) taxonomy, and Nadal et al.'s (2011) revised taxonomy as a frame of reference, I identified three overarching research themes arising from the data. Each theme included the finding that Black-White multiracial people experience unique kinds of stereotypical microaggressions based on being mixed-race and are tokenized for being viewed as monoracially Black. How these microaggressions were experienced and, ultimately, how they were navigated by the participants reflect the impact of microaggressions on these students in their multiracial identity development.

Research Questions

This study documents the effects of daily racial microaggressions in the lives of Black-White multiracial university students; asking them to reflect upon their adolescent experiences and how their multiracial identity development and social development were impacted. In embarking upon this research, I asked the following research questions:

1. What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?
2. What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?

To answer my research questions, I conducted research through the theoretical framework lens of Critical Race Theory and utilized the counter-narrative method of Critical Race Methodology.

Research Themes

Three overarching themes that emerged through data aligned with the previous multiracial identity literature discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two. The types of racial microaggressions experienced by the participants and the subsequent effects of racial microaggressions overlap with these three themes, which are:

1. Theme One: “Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation”
2. Theme Two: “The Continued Struggle for Multiracial Identity”
3. Theme Three: “The Effects of Racial Microaggressions in Asserting a Multiracial Identity”

The first theme, “Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation,” refers to the demonstrable societal expectation that participants conform by identifying themselves with one

racial side and claim a monoracial status or designation. This notion is based on One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent ideology (Brunsma, 2006; Korgen, 1999; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005).

The second research theme, “Continued Struggle For Multiracial Identity,” refers to the multiracial participant’s persistence in claiming a multiracial identity when he or she has been forced by other people to claim a monoracial social identity (Atkinson et al., 1983; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992).

The third research theme, “The Effects of Racial Microaggressions in Asserting a Multiracial Identity,” illustrates the impacts that recurring, chronic, and consistent racial microaggressions have on the daily lives of participants, within the contexts of family, schools, and society (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007a). This theme included the how the participants asserted their individual multiracial identities and created racial self-identities amid, in relation to, and in spite of racial microaggressions.

I will present the findings in terms of the two research questions. I will detail the findings that coincide with Research Question One, which asked, “What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?” The first two research themes— “Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation” and “Continued Struggle For Multiracial Identity”—address Research Question One. The findings of Research Question One will be a detailed account of who commits the acts of microaggressions, where or when the microaggression occurs, how the microaggression is delivered, and the responses by the microaggression recipients. I will explain the findings within

Research Question One through the entities of school and society. All categories of racial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2007b) are indicated in charts provided in Appendix P.

Then, I will present the findings that coincide with Research Question Two, which is "What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?" The third research theme of "The Effects of Racial Microaggressions in Asserting a Multiracial Identity" addresses Research Question Two. Regarding Research Question Two, I will explain the findings looking through the lenses of school and society, and the entity of family, as factors that influence multiracial identity development.

Research Question One

The first research question asked was, "What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?" The participants had experienced environmental microaggressions, as well as racial microaggressions on individual and personal levels in schools with school officials and in society with peers and other people. The first two research themes of "Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation" and "Continued Struggle For Multiracial Identity" were not seen in the family. Participants' families tended to be more proactive and positive about multiracial identity. The participants did not say that families pressured the multiracial person to conform to monoracial identification, nor caused the multiracial person to struggle for his or her identity.

The varying forms and degrees of microaggressions will be detailed in this section. This will be followed by a comprehensive explanation of how the types of microaggressions relate to

the first two overarching themes of "Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation" and "Continued Struggle for Multiracial Identity."

Theme One: Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation

Some microaggressions arose from the societal expectation that multiracial people choose a monoracial category (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011). Society stated explicitly or implied implicitly through racial microaggressions that the multiracial person must identify himself or herself monoracially. These actions or behaviors pressured the multiracial person to conform to a societal ideal. These racial microaggressions reinforce White privilege (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988; Trepagnier, 2006), which expects Black-White multiracial people to identify themselves monoracially as Black. Throughout this theme is the social construct of race (Omi & Wynant, 1994) that relies on an externally organized thought process; society seeks to dictate what people want the multiracial person to be and imposes a One-Drop Rule mentality on the multiracial person.

Racial Microaggressions in School

For purposes of clarification, school microaggressions are defined as racial microaggressions that occur on systemic levels and involve school officials; whether directly as when the microaggression is enacted by a school official, or indirectly when the microaggression is enacted by a fellow student but school officials are involved in resolving the microaggressive incident. Any microaggressions that occurred by the participant's fellow students in schools will be considered part of the participants' peer group, and will be categorized under society microaggressions.

Environmental microaggressions. Environmental microaggressions indicated how systemic racism is perpetuated in society. The participants spoke of experiencing environmental microaggressions within the school system in the forms of Eurocentric curriculum, segregated schools and classrooms, and purposeful discriminatory actions such as name-calling and large-scale acts of racism. The One-Drop Rule represents one of the largest environmental microaggressions; participants were socially categorized monoracially as Black, based on One-Drop Rule thinking, and were subjected to racial microaggressions within schools and by school officials based on their Blackness.

White privilege juxtaposed with the One-Drop Rule. All of the participants were aware of the One-Drop Rule and had dealt with its effects on a personal level when asserting a multiracial identity. Pip (female, age 19, Texas) spoke about being forced into the socially constructed monoracial category of Black by a 6th grade teacher:

> I also experienced the One-Drop Rule for the first time at this school. I was talking to a teacher about family and ancestry. I mentioned that I was mixed and she told me that I was Black because any amount of Black ancestry made me Black. I didn't know anything about the One-Drop Rule at that time, but I didn't believe what she said because I had a narrow view of what "Black" was [which meant] brown or dark skin, black/dark brown hair. (Pip, Narrative)

This is an example of a teacher imposing her beliefs about the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent on a student. Pip elaborated with this example when the teacher told Pip, "You know, mixed people are Black because if they have a Black parent than that automatically makes them Black" (Pip, Interview 3). Despite Pip's telling the teacher repeatedly that she identified herself as mixed-race, the teacher insisted that Pip was Black.

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) participated in a precollege activity at her university called TLC. This program was for incoming freshman of African American descent

to participate in activities that advised and informed them of what to expect in college. In TLC Elyse first confronted the One-Drop Rule and was shown that even university professors can impose a monoracial identity based on thinking that denies the multiracial person his or her full identity. In TLC, Elyse was told by a Black professor that partial-Black mixed-race people are considered solely Black. Elyse described this occurrence with sadness, as she recounted:

> And then, one of the girls, who was also mixed in TLC, she said, "Well, what if you're, what does that mean if you're half-Black and half-White?" and he said this thing, and this is where I really wanted to break down and cry. And I really had to, like, hold back tears and I remember crying that night because he said, "Well, what half of you is White? Is your left half White? Or is your right half White?" And for some reason, I just thought about it, and I just imagined this person being half-White on one side and half-Black on the other side… And it was really hard for me to hear that… and he [the professor] basically said like, society says you're Black, so therefore, you're Black. That was something that was really hard for me to hear, it was hard because my mom is present in my life and she's White, so how can I say that I'm just Black?... And I hate that because it put limitations on me because I think society does perceive me as Black, 'cause my view on the way society sees me is, society sees me as Black and maybe individuals might see that I'm mixed, but society as, not as a whole, like not society as people, but the concept of society sees me as Black. (Elyse, Interview 1)

These two examples illustrate how teachers have imposed their own One-Drop Rule beliefs onto their students and how society pressures the multiracial person to identify. These types of racial microaggressions caused the participants to feel anger or sadness that their identity choices were not respected or recognized by people in authority.

Eurocentric teaching in schools. Four of the participants reflected on the effects of Eurocentric teaching, curriculum that focused solely on contributions or experiences of White society, and the disservice they felt it did to them. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) spoke of being the only part-Black person in a predominantly White school, and how Eurocentric teaching affected her: "I felt like when we learned about those things [Black history]

in school maybe I felt like I was singled out because there was nobody else like me that could relate to that history" (Amber, Interview 2).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) talked about how Eurocentric academic content perpetuates White privilege:

> It's a very Eurocentric view that we are taught in schools of the history of the United States, so I feel like when you have this reinforcement that White people did this and this was great that White people did and this and this… and there's this subtle reinforcement that Black people don't go far… But for someone who's Black to never hear about in your class anything substantial that a Black person did is very confusing and I think it sends this message that Black people didn't contribute to America. (Interview 1)

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) thought that the Eurocentric teaching he received in school was "simplistic" (Yoshi, Interview 1) because it operated on a system of Hypodescent, whereby some people presumed to be Black were actually multiracial. But because of the One-Drop Rule, students learned history in monoracial terms and were not informed that many historical figures were of mixed race:

> I think you can take historical figures and recognize that they're, like, mixed and talk about it like they are mixed, that'll be a lot easier for kids to, like, pick up the concept versus, like, here's Barack Obama with his White mother and Black father but he's our first Black President. That's a really – that doesn't even make sense logically, but that's what they're kind of teaching the kids. I don't blame the teachers, I mean, but I think that would kind of be nice if that changed in education. (Yoshi, Interview 1)

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) reflected on an assignment he had in school in which students had to write about their ancestors' country of origin. Because he was multiracial, the assignment left him in a quandary; his mother's ancestry was German, but those ancestors had been in the United States for so long that it was an unfamiliar ethnic heritage in his family. His father's African American ancestry, being "a history that's been so marginalized and deprived for most

of our education" (Sonic, Interview 1), proved to be most difficult, as the actual African country in which his father's ancestors may have originated was unknown due to slavery:

> I talked to the teacher about this, like, "what do I do here," and at one point she was kind of confused because she was concerned, but she didn't really know what to do. The idea of perhaps altering the rules couldn't cross her mind. It was more like, "Let's see what you can do to make it more convenient for us." (Sonic, Interview 1)

As a result, Sonic decided to do his project on Nigeria, since he attended a predominantly White school and nobody else was doing an African country. This experience, while an example of Eurocentric teaching, allowed Sonic to learn beyond what was being taught in school:

> And regardless of how accurate that actually is to my lineage, we were able to take what could have been a traumatic experience and turn it into a positive, because I got to learn a little bit about Nigeria, I got to learn a little bit about Africa. And that's more than I can say for what our textbooks were teaching us. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Eurocentric teaching led participants to question why multiracial people were not recognized by society as mixed race. Eurocentric teaching was an aspect of White privilege (where White history was valued) while the One-Drop Rule was evidenced within Eurocentric teaching in a curriculum that did not allow for multiraciality. The theme of societal pressure and expectation for multiracial people to conform to monoracial identities is evidenced in Eurocentric teaching. Race is "endemic [and] permanent" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25) and One-Drop Rule ideology is perpetuated through teachers who enforce the One-Drop Rule on societal levels and through academic content.

Schools as segregated places. Some participants detailed instances of schools as segregated spaces, whether because of socioeconomic demographics or as a personal social choice. Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) discussed the notion of people self-segregating, and his often being the only mixed-race person within that group: "It's usually most people still

segregate themselves. So many times I'll still be in a group that's mostly Black or mostly White" (Sonic, Interview 1).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned how college was a place in which, on a social level, students tended to self-segregate and socialize primarily with people of the same race, which left her feeling left out as a multiracial person:

> So it's kind of hard for me to self-segregate and I think it's kind of ugly to be segregated. I like seeing people of different colors all together, and of different interests and political preferences and economic backgrounds, and just overall, like, intermixing. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Elyse expanded on the societal systems of White privilege that leave Black people with a fear of not quite measuring up to White society, resulting in the need to self-segregate:

> I think people have a fear of failing in general and I think that contributes to the Black community limiting themselves because I think that out of that fear a lot of the segregation in the Black community come from within the Black community and a lot of limitations I feel like that, that might be perceived that the Black community has is inflicted from Black people. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Elyse reflected upon the magnitude of White privilege in our society:

> Our schooling system is designed to further White privilege. The university system, the housing market, how different races are segregated, church. The most segregated day of the week is Sunday. Everything that's, like, reinforcing White privilege and reinforcing racial divide, and it's really hard to program people out of that. Like the media, there's so many things to combat that it's something that, I'm not really sure if America can move out of it, even in my lifetime, and I'm 19, because it's enforced in and it's so interwoven. (Elyse, Interview 2)

Therefore, Elyse's understanding was that society in general is still quite segregated, so it is not surprising that schools are as well:

> 'Cause I've never been conscious of race outside of [my university], I'm talking about how [my university] is pretty racially segregated, I feel like, especially for… for the year that we're in and to be so racially segregated is kind of sad. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Pip (female, age 19, Texas) and Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) both gave examples of segregated classrooms, where White teachers had purposely segregated the classroom seating arrangement along racial lines. Pip mentioned an experience of a segregated classroom in 9th grade. On the first day of class, the students sat wherever they wanted, but at the next class meeting, the teacher decided to implement a seating arrangement that happened to place the White students in the front of the classroom, the Black students in the back, and the Hispanic students in the middle. Pip, probably perceived as White by the teacher, was placed in the front rows with three White girls, where the teacher allowed the White students to "get away with everything but she would yell at the Black kids for the most random things [and at times for nothing]" (Pip, Interview 3). When Pip's mother, a medium-brown skinned lady, came to the school to pick her up one day, the teacher realized Pip was part-Black. Although the teacher continued to allow Pip to sit in the front, after seeing Pip's mother, the teacher would "yell at me for random things and sometimes [would] make a big deal about stuff" (Pip, Interview 3). Pip continued:

> She sat the White kids in the front, the Blacks in the back, and the Hispanics in the middle. We pointed this out to her and told her it could be seen as racist. She told us she sat us by height despite the fact a six-foot White girl was one of the kids in the first row… She [the teacher] would claim that the Black kids did disrespectful things when they didn't and she would let the White students get away with being flat out disobedient and rude to her. (Pip, Narrative)

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) also cited a particular example of a segregated classroom, where a 7th-grade math instructor purposely placed students according to race:

> [He] thought it would be funny to put all four Black girls in the class all at one table [and] it wasn't randomized. I do not know why he felt the need to do that and he was White. He thought it was really funny because two or three of the girls (out of the four of us) had names [ending in] "isha," so he thought it was really funny to put the 'isha's together and

> then myself and another Black girl. It was just offensive and stupid and insulting. (Sonya, Interview 3)

Sonya mentioned that while she was growing up, her schools were *de facto* segregated due to socioeconomic status of the families in the neighborhood. She attended schools in predominantly White areas and because she was the Black-White multiracial daughter of two White parents (having a White biological mother and White adoptive step-father), she referred to herself as an "honorary White" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3):

> The school was somewhat segregated… and so I was too White in some ways and then I was a little bit too dark and I felt the only way I was really accepted was partially to do with the fact that I had White parents, so I have that again – that honorary stamp of approval that you're White enough. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Sonya mentioned how, in general, she felt that she did not fit in along racial lines, but perhaps because of her "honorary White" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3) status, she might be seen as a safer person through the lens of society than a monoracially Black person:

> I've noticed that because we're still very *de facto* segregated I might be able to float socially better, or a little bit easier, because people who again are not maybe necessarily comfortable with Black people in general might be more comfortable with me… [and] may find features in me that are a little bit safer and what not that they may not go, they may go into more effort getting to know me than maybe somebody who is maybe darker or African American. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Sonya was often the only part-Black person in both academic and social situations, and even in her own family. She spoke of how this fact took its toll on her socially. She did not want to be different and very much desired to fit in with the rest of her social group. She elaborated: "I was often times the only African American in my class and it was frustrating that it was obvious that I wanted something and there was no support, other than maybe my parents" (Sonya, Interview 2).

Sonya spoke of taking basic math and science classes in high school, which tended to have more Black students; but, in her Advanced Placement (AP) classes, she was the only mixed-race person or the only person of African American background; which could be interpreted as a form of Environmental Microaggression (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b):

> I think for a long time I wasn't able to really come to terms with being African-American in a White family, or being the only African-American really in my social circle, or being the only African-American in my little orchestra, or something like that. It was just so hard to come to terms with that that I just didn't really think about it or really deal with it in any real healthy way. (Sonya, Interview 1)

In addition to the *de facto* segregation of neighborhoods and communities, segregated classrooms demonstrate the intention of teachers to view students along monoracial parameters. Participants spoke of experiences when teachers purposely segregated classrooms according to monoracial categories. Schools as segregated places reflect the greater theme of societal pressure for the multiracial person to conform to monoracial identity in that the multiracial individual is expected to conform to a monoracial selection in the self-segregation process.

Purposeful discriminatory actions in school. Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) experienced a macro-microaggression that was a large-scale microassault and a purposeful discriminatory act (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b) by a White, male student at the private Catholic university that she attended. Growing up in a racially diverse community, Elyse did not experience overtly racist acts, or, if one occurred, she claimed to be unaware of it. As such, she referred to herself as "naive to raciality" (Elyse, Interview 1) in terms of recognizing racial incidents. She was raised in a family in which she felt safe, and race was not an issue. Elyse told the story of the first time she was called a "nigger" (Elyse, Interview 1) on her college campus.

Upon returning to begin her sophomore year of college, Elyse was walking across her college campus through a parking lot one night with a group of Black or part-Black mixed-race females, when she encountered a group of intoxicated White males. Elyse said:

> They started yelling at us and one of the guys starts saying something about going to Subway and getting a barbeque chicken sandwich and I guess that's supposed to be… derogatory in the sense of Black people and barbecue and this stereotype of the Black community… so he talked about, like getting a barbecue chicken sandwich and proceeded to call all of us the "N-word."[1] (Elyse, Interview 3)

Elyse shared how her friends wanted to confront the man, but Elyse wanted to get away from the man and the situation, for safety reasons:

> I didn't care what he had to say because he was drunk and he's not going to affect me and I wasn't going to get hurt because of some drunk guy because people are capable of some extreme things when they're intoxicated… He already showed that he has no control over his actions so I'm not going to let him, I'm not going to get into a physical altercation over one word. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Elyse shared her feelings at being called this epithet: "[I]t was offensive and it hurt, but, I mean, and you know there's a lot of other feelings that go into being called the N-word, especially for the first time, so overtly, just straight out like yelled at" (Elyse, Interview 3). She shared that it was an incident she had heard other people talk about, but had not experienced herself until going to college.

Elyse elaborated on how she had left her "racially diverse" (Elyse, Interview 3) community that day, having spent time with friends of all races and ethnicities, explaining:

> [C]oming back to [my university] was a little rough awakening, like, "Oh, this is what I'm coming back to. Great, like, let me prepare myself now for having to be conscious of

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[1] The "N-word" is an abbreviation of the derogatory word "Nigger," which is applied to persons who are Black or part-Black. The inclusion of this word and/or the abbreviation of the word is not meant to propagate a racist term. The actual word or abbreviated term will be used when referencing a direct quote by the participant. When not a direct quotation, the abbreviated term "N-word" will be used by the researcher.

> race." 'Cause I've never been conscious of race outside of [my university]. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Having to go from her family's sanctuary to a place of unsafe and hostile racism caused Elyse to be fearful on her college campus:

> Being a Woman of Color… you're already inclined to be on edge about men and even more when they're intoxicated and it just – being on this campus when I feel it's racially divided, being a man that is not the same race as you, especially one that's not a minority – it becomes that much more scary, and when you break it down like that – man, alcohol, not of your race – it amplifies the amount of un-safety you feel, you know, that fear that becomes a part of you. (Elyse, Interview 3)

This macro-microaggressive experience showed Elyse how she and her friends, all Black or part-Black, are viewed and treated by certain men on her college campus:

> But it was something that was very shocking to me and it was, it was not necessarily a result of being biracial, but it was a result of being mistaken for being, I don't even know if you can say mistaken, but just for being considered Black in society, not that it would have made a difference. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Upon sharing this incident in her Interculturalism class, Elyse was deeply moved when a White man who was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon (which she described as a "very stereotypical social fraternity on campus" – Elyse, Interview 1) reached out to her and apologized to her for having to go through this experience. She explained that he

> personally expressed to me how he was really sorry that I had to go to something like that, and… that's how they [guys] get when they're drunk around their friends. That was something that was really important to me, the fact they he felt sorry… that he acknowledged … that men in general can act like… so it was something that really like, touched me, that he would lend a hand and say I really do apologize on that person's behalf for you and it was something that was really nice to hear. (Elyse, Interview 1)

The incident changed Elyse's perspective on race on her college campus:

> People were talking about how a lot of people who aren't Black will… see a large Black man and become scared, especially on this campus… I know every single Black guy that's in the sophomore class, every single one, and I can tell you there's about 30 of

> them… I know a ton of Black guys on this campus. Like I'm not scared of the big Black guys, I'm scared of the intoxicated White guys. (Elyse, Interview 3)

This purposeful discriminatory act at school reflects the greater societal permanency of racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This macro-microaggression illustrates the pressure of conforming to a monoracial identity for people who are mixed-race Black and how they are subjected to the same racial discrimination as their monoracial Black counterparts.

Racial microaggressions.

Ascription of intelligence (or intellectual inferiority). Sue et al. (2007b) spoke of microaggressions that either ascribe levels of intelligence or intellectual inferiority to people based on racial stereotypes. These acts assume that racial groups can perform certain skills, have specific talents or abilities, or have higher or lower levels of intelligence in relation to the dominant norm based on their racial group. In the case of the Black-White multiracial individuals in this study, this intelligence—or lack thereof—is ascribed to being part-Black.

The majority of microaggressions based on Ascription of Intelligence (or Intellectual Inferiority) in the experiences of the participants took place in schools. For instance, Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) and Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) discussed incidents in which they were assumed to be intellectually inferior because of being part-Black and were discouraged by teachers from taking certain classes. Sonic spoke of a high school counselor who recommended that he take a physical science class rather than biology, which was considered more advanced, despite Sonic's enjoying science and having good grades:

> He [the teacher] suggested that one [a physical science class], and I took that course all through freshman year and it was incredibly easy. I never got anything lower than a 100 percent. And just thinking back on and I remember that class did have more People of Color in it than… slightly disproportionately more People of Color than biology. So that was another thing where perhaps I just know that that happens in general, where people

> kind of assume People of Color are gonna need more help. We're not gonna be able to handle the workload or something of a class. So that was something that made me think, hmm, was race a factor there? (Sonic, Interview 2)

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) mentioned that she felt she was viewed as being intellectually inferior or less academically competent, and was not encouraged to harder work in school:

> The way I was treated by my teachers, the way that I was kind of assumed to not be as intelligent as I knew I could be and discouraged from taking certain more challenging courses to get me into college, discouraged from receiving any sort of assistance that would actually help me, kind of ignored. I never really felt welcomed. (Sonya, Interview 1)

These types of racial microaggressions illustrate how teachers ascribed levels of intelligence or nonintelligence to the participants because of their Blackness. Participants were assumed to be not as intelligent in academic subjects due to being identified by teachers as monoracially Black according to the tenets of the One-Drop Rule. These assumptions were based on cultural stereotypes of the participants' presumed racial category, and not on the participants' individual achievements or abilities. Teachers did not ascribe levels of intelligence or nonintelligence based on the participants' part Whiteness.

Multiracial microaggressions.

Assumption of monoracial identity. Amber detailed an instance in school where she was mistaken to be another student who was monoracially Black. In 6th grade, a teacher constantly called Amber by the other girl's name, based on the fact that both Amber and the other girl were Black or part-Black.

> So the teacher would always call me the girl's name and she would get the girl's name right but then call me… "Oh, Denise." And I'm, like, "Wait. That's not my name. Is it because – what's the chances [SIC] it's the one other Black girl that you're calling me her name? We don't even sit at the same table." (Amber, Interview 2)

The teacher's assuming a monoracial identity for Amber, as well as confusing her name, caused Amber to reflect further:

> And I don't know if it was on purpose or an accident but it happened a lot and only with that teacher, too… It's just one of those things where I was just like, "Seriously? You're gonna call me the one other Black girl's name? It's not that hard. My name's common. Why do you forget it?" And we had name placards on our desk and she would know it's not my name. It just made me feel like people aren't seeing me how I see myself, and that really, really offends me. Because I'm, like, oh, I see myself as this. I know what I look like. I feel like I know how I'm presenting myself, but you see me in this way and you don't see me how I hope you would see me. I hate that, because I can't change it. I would like to, but I feel if it's somebody that's older, they're kind of stuck in their ways. (Amber, Interview 2)

The One-Drop Rule proved prevalent in that people tended to categorize the multiracial participants monoracially. This theme was evidenced by teachers' unwillingness to make conscious efforts to recognize their multiracial students as individuals, instead categorizing the students through single-race designations, calling them by the personal names of monoracial Black students. This environmental microaggression illustrated the insignificance to teachers of genuinely knowing students by name and seeing Students of Color in monoracial terms.

Exclusion or isolation.

Second-class citizen microaggressions. Microaggressions of Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) were experienced by some of the participants within the school setting. These were microaggressions in which the participants were either expected to choose only one racial side or were not accepted as a member of either racial side. Such microaggressions also occurred when the multiracial participants received second-class treatment (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b) in relation to monoracial people, including being treated in inferior ways to their monoracial White peers.

Second-class treatment was experienced in the lives of the participants in school. The participants were most aware of being treated as second-class citizens (Elyse, Pip, Sonic, Sonya) in high school, but Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) recounted an instance in elementary school. Luigi felt neglected by school officials in 5th grade. He described being called the N-word by a fellow White (Italian) classmate, and being cautioned by the school officials, "Don't tell your parents. Everything will be all right" (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) dealt with a high school college counselor whom she felt did not value her academic needs as much as those of her White peers. With this counselor, Elyse said how she felt "looked over" (Elyse, Interview 2) and that he did not give her as much attention as he gave some of her other classmates. Elyse's best friend, who was Spanish, Native American, and Nicaraguan, also had problems with this counselor, indicating to Elyse that it might have been less about her being part-Black and more because she was a Person of Color in general:

> I think he [the counselor] just generally didn't feel as encouraged to help minority students, and I think that it was due to the stereotype that, you know, maybe we wouldn't go to a four-year school or, like, maybe, in his past, he'd seen less "success"' from minority students. (Elyse, Interview 2)

Being treated as a second-class citizen in comparison to the White students caused Elyse to dislike this counselor and rely on her own resources to get college information "because I felt like he just – even if he could help me, I felt like he chose not to" (Elyse, Interview 2).

Elyse elaborated on how she felt "neglected and undermined" (Elyse, Interview 2) despite being "really strong academically" (Elyse, Interview 2). She felt this counselor doubted her abilities and was frustrated that she had to do the college research herself and "figure out things on my own" (Elyse, Interview 2). Elyse also talked about how she was aware of his

behavior as an act of microaggression due to the different treatment other students seemed to receive:

> I still think his microaggressions were pretty obvious to me… especially when you hear other students saying, "Oh, you know, I like Mr. So-and-So,"… and you wonder why you don't have the same experience. And I think that's more of were it came from, it's like the feeling of knowing that he's helping other students but that he wouldn't help me. But when you hear of other counselors, helping their students a lot or you hear of other students of his who are being helped and you wonder like why I didn't I get that help and how come you didn't tell me to look up on this scholarship website or how come you didn't tell me about this college visit or things like that? Almost like not expecting you to do anything special. (Elyse, Interview 2)

Second-class treatment was difficult to deal with in school, as Elyse illustrated, because one had to deal with teachers and administrators on a regular and daily basis. She felt that she had to overlook the counselor's ill treatment to complete school:

> But in school, you can't really avoid your counselor, you can't avoid your teacher who you see every single day. So I feel like it's easier to look over things and brush things off and it's almost like a survivor's mentality because you don't want think that you know your counselor doesn't like you because you're mixed or because you're part-Black, so it's harder like to pull out specific details because you know I'm going to have to deal with it so you just move past it and you figure out a way to get whatever you need to get done. (Elyse, Interview 2)

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) shared feelings of inadequacy within the context of schooling experiences:

> Many times there's always this feeling that… I kind of, I fall just short of meeting the necessary criteria for being fully accepted. So there is always kind of feeling like that, like, I don't want to say "being in second place," but almost like being an alternate or something or being like second string rather than first string on a team." (Sonic, Interview 1)

Sonic's experience of second-class treatment also occurred in his senior year in high school when a teacher seemed to dislike him. He mentioned how he had always had good relationships with his teachers, so for this particular teacher not to like him was odd. Sonic detailed the

narrative of this experience and mentioned that the only other student the teacher seemed to have a problem with was Black:

> She was one of the only ones [who did not like me] and it was clear, like I would do or say things that were exactly the same that other people in the class would do that were, like, class clowns or whatever, and she'd give me much more of a hard time than the other kids. And even the other kids in the class noticed it, too, and they would even talk to – you know they'd kind of talk after. We'd kind of be talking after class and they'd be like, "Yeah, Mrs. So-and-So, you know she really – she's got a problem with you, 'cause you know he did the same thing yesterday and she didn't have a problem with that," and the only other person in the class who she had that same kind of, like, unreasonable conflict with was somebody else who was Black. (Sonic, Interview 2)

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) also talked about feeling disliked by teachers and struggling a lot in school, not necessarily academically or behaviorally, but just in terms of getting a general impression from her teachers that things were not going right for her. When the teachers met Sonya's parents, who are both monoracially White (White mother and White adoptive step-father), their attitude changed:

> So, when I would have parent/teacher conferences, my parents would always get a call like "She's struggling with this" or "We need you to come in and we need to talk to you about this"… I was never a bad student and I never had behavior issues really but there was always something serious and then my parents would… come in, and it was like – and they even noticed this, year after year after year – is the shock of seeing two White parents and then all the sudden things were okay, it was no big deal, it was like, "Well, it's not really that big of a deal" and it was kind of interesting. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Sonya demonstrated examples of feeling that her teachers just did not like her and that she just did not do as well as some of the other students. Similar to Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group), Sonya felt that she accomplished things not because of teacher assistance, but due to her own researching and hard work:

> I felt like my teachers either ignored me or were negative towards me, with those few [teachers who were] exceptions, and I never felt encouraged to do anything academically so everything I accomplished was on me. Which isn't necessarily a negative thing, but when you're discouraged it is a negative thing [laughs]. Or when you feel like you are

> being discouraged there's something negative or some negative atmosphere… I never received any sort of encouragement that I felt my other peers received so I was just very bitter towards them [the teachers]. (Sonya, Interview 2)

Sonya gave an extreme example of second-class citizen treatment in her interviews when she recounted a time in music class when her answers were overlooked. Her narrative below encapsulates her being practically invisible even as she tries to prove her worth as an academic and artistic entity in her classroom:

> I think that for me because I had been able to prove at least in some sense that I could accomplish something [that I] was not a complete idiot. All my friends were academics [and] were accomplishing a lot so I think that for me I interpret that microaggression as feeling neglected. I could see the investment that my teachers were making in the majority of the class but I was received very little. Being ignored; I remember there was a question in the class, [the instructor] played some classical music and I know classical music very well. He said, "What piece is this?" and I said, "It's Grieg" and someone else said, "Oh, it's Wagner" and I said, "No, it's not Wagner. It's Grieg." [And they,] "No, it's Wagner." But that instructor just completely ignored me as if he had not heard me. Maybe he didn't, but the students around me heard me well enough and it wasn't Wagner it turned out he said, "Yeah it's Grieg." I had the answer right but it was like I was invisible in a lot of ways I was either invisible or I was the idiot. Here I am, a classically trained musician [and] there is no way that a classically trained musician is an idiot in any way or form. I was doing my work and I wasn't failing in any sense and it was just a really great example of how I felt ignored and invisible. [At the time] I looked over to the student sitting next to me and I said, "I said that three times! I said Grieg three times!" and she just shook her head. I was [thinking,] "Am I invisible?" [Laughs]. (Sonya, Interview 2)

In the experiences of these participants, the academic needs of the White students were more valued by teachers than those of the multiracial students. Teachers and other school officials neglected or ignored the academic concerns of multiracial students. These racial microaggressions reflect the societal pressure to conform monoracially and then being subjected to unfair treatment because of their Blackness.

Racial Microaggressions in Society

For purposes of clarification, social microaggressions are defined as racial microaggressions that occur on systemic levels and involve friends, acquaintances, and people in general society. In this dissertation, racial microaggressions that occurred in schools and were inflicted by participants' fellow classmates—that is, by participants' peer group—are considered social microaggressions.

Environmental microaggressions.

White privilege juxtaposed with the One-Drop Rule. Society enforces and reinforces White privilege through the One-Drop Rule. Unfortunately, this outdated rule of Hypodescent is still very prevalent in the lives of multiracial Black-White people, as evidenced by Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group), who explained:

> Because even though society may identify [me] as being Black just because [of] the One-Drop Rule, I still do identify as White and sometimes it's hard 'cause even I feel like society wants me to forget that and sometimes society tries so hard to make you forget that you're White or that you have something else in you besides Black that you start to forget yourself. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Elyse shared feelings about the tenacity of the One-Drop Rule in American society, which is due to the legacy of slavery, the legal and political contexts of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, and societal reinforcement of monoracial categories:

> The reason why I have addressed microaggressions centering around my Black heritage is because there is an apparent One-Drop Rule in this country and even if I wanted to escape it, society would still tattoo it across my forehead. Unfortunately, in American society I am not allowed to celebrate either part of my racial background too enthusiastically without being looked at strangely, questioned, or criticized. I am suppressed to this uncomfortable middle ground, a limbo between being Black and White. (Elyse, Narrative)

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) expanded upon how the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent is actually still propagated and is, in fact, a social justice issue:

> I feel like the One-Drop Rule is a very antiquated rule. It's a very racist rule. It's a rule that was done to establish racial boundaries and to – it was done in the sole interest of keeping the power in the hands of the powerful. And for me to support that, even though that might seem to be the rule that everybody's following right now, if I'm supporting that, then I am continuing that process of unequal power. I'm continuing that process. I'm continuing to help facilitate the process that keeps people – that keeps racial inequality alive, and I don't want to be a part of that. (Sonic, Interview 3)

The participants were aware of the historical legacy of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, as juxtaposed with White privilege. The One-Drop Rule represented conforming to a monoracial designation in that the participants felt that society insisted they identify solely as Black, rather than allowing them the freedom to self-select an identity.

Monoracial stereotypes and tokenism. When a person is a token or is tokenized, he or she is assumed to be the only person in an organization to embody the characteristics of his or her larger group (Kanter, 1977). Multiracial people are often tokenized as racial representatives of their multiple racial sides. Being the racial token means one is the sole recipient of monoracial stereotypes, as John (male, age 30, Hillside Group) illustrated:

> The way I experience other people's perceptions is they want to find out [your race] so they figure out where you fit in their construct, their mental construct of how you got to where you are or how are you different than the other people that [they] associate with that race. Or they just want to figure out why you're so cool or why you're not so cool in a way that it fits their stereotype of what you should be. (John, Hillside Focus Group)

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) was tokenized as the Black racial representative in school when it came to reading literature in which the N-word showed up:

> Somebody was reading and they said the word "nigger" and then they just stopped and they said… "Sorry, Sonic." And I was a little – wow, really? Like, call more attention on to me. You know, now – you know, I didn't say anything, but now, you know, just in case nobody was thinking it, thanks for putting the thought in people's heads. And, you

> know – you know, they probably had good intentions, but, yeah, it's – you just made it worse. You just dug the hole deeper. (Sonic, Interview 3)

Sonic demonstrated how people expected him to conform to a monoracially Black identity in alignment with the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, and how he was seen as a representative of Black people, rather than as an individual. He was not seen as multiracial, but rather as the only Black person in the class; thus an apology was directly due to him for the racial slur.

One common microaggression experienced by the participants was being tokenized for behavior and being told "that's your Black side" (Amber, Interview 3). Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) illustrated this experience in dealing with monoracial stereotypes and tokenism from her friends. White people attributed certain aspects or talents she may possess as being the Black characteristics in her. Her ability to do a certain dance step at a nightclub where she performs a move to "pop the bootie out" (Amber, Interview 3) or when a friend mentioned being hungry, and Amber pointed out the local Kentucky Fried Chicken (Amber, Interview 3) is attributed to her Blackness. Both of these examples are based on cultural stereotypes that cast the ability to dance a certain way or the desire to eat a particular type of food as characteristics based on race and not on personal ability or choice.

When friends were impressed that Amber could sing a rap song, she received the comment "'Oh, that must be the Black part of you,' and I'm just like, 'Oh, is it? I guess I can just talk fast. I don't know'" (Amber, Interview 3). When Amber's White friends were surprised that she got sunburned, they said, "'Oh, you can get sunburns?' Like what does that mean? I can get them? Is it because apparently Black people don't burn?" (Amber, Interview 3). And that her White peers asserted that Amber was only able to attend university because of being a Person of Color on financial aid was attributed to her Black side (Amber, Interview 3).

At one time, Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) was upset at her sister's ex-boyfriend, and wrote a rant on Facebook (a social networking Internet website), expressing her anger and frustration at a particular incident. This act resulted in her being seen as the stereotypical Black woman, characterized in society as being angry or belligerent:

> One of my friends posted – he happens to be Black – he was like, "Oh yeah. That's, like, your Black side coming out." He specifically said, like, "It's your Black side." And I was like "No, that's all of me. I am pissed."… So I think with things like that, where if you are, I guess you could say I was a little irate, and I think people attribute that to the strong Black woman who doesn't take any crap. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Elyse continued by mentioning that the stereotype of the angry Black woman is perpetuated in society as normal:

> But no, there can't be any strong White women like that – no, they're just, don't happen. I feel like if anything, a strong White woman like that would be considered a bitch and for a Black woman to be like that, it's normal. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) expressed his frustration when both White people and People of Color used slang terms as a way of communicating with him, but not with other non-Black people. Although this example is not directly tokenism, this racial microaggression assumed that Yoshi knew the vernacular based on a monoracial stereotype; because Yoshi was part-Black, he was presumed to speak a certain way:

> I think a microaggression I might get a lot from other minorities is – you know that old joke about that kind of out-of-touch White guy who just sees a Black person and is like, "What's up, dog?" – 'cause they think that's, like, how you talk. I think that happens a lot with other minorities. You know, they'll be chill, they don't talk, but then they see me and all of a sudden it's like, "Oh hey, what's up?" I'm like, what? [Chuckles.] Heard you a second ago, you weren't talking like that! All of a sudden, we're all hood and you talk ghetto… So I think that's a very common microaggression... they don't do that with their friends, they just see me and it's like what the f---? I don't know, man, it's just stupid. (Yoshi, Interview 3)

Other examples of tokenism and monoracial stereotypes include when Ana (female, age 20, Hillside Group) shared that she is ascribed certain talents because of being part-Black: "Or, you know, you can dance or you could play basketball. Oh, you must be Black." (Ana, Hillside Focus Group). Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) would often receive questions specifically about certain types of foods assumed to be part of Black culture: "What is soul food? What is cornbread? What is grits? What's a grit?" (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group). Peach (female, age 20, Bayside Focus Group) cited an example of being monoracially stereotyped when she misplaced her watermelon keychain: "And I cannot tell you how many comments I got on like, 'Oh, of course you would have a watermelon on your keychain'" (Peach, Bayside Focus Group). Such statements to multiracial people appear innocent and/or amusing to the perpetrator, but are considered microaggressions by the recipient.

Microaggressions in which the participant was tokenized as a cultural representative for their Black side also occurred. Participants spoke of being stereotyped based on being part-Black and being identified by their peers as Black. These types of racial microaggressions reflect the theme of conforming to a monoracial identity in that the participants were expected to understand and explain behaviors and attitudes of their Black side, but not their White side. Society saw the participants through a One-Drop Rule lens.

Racial microaggressions.

Ascription of intelligence (or intellectual inferiority). Examples of racial microagressions of ascription of intelligence (or intellectual inferiority) occurred mostly in schools. One societal example of this racial microaggression occurred with Toad (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) in school by her peer group. Whereas Sonic (male, age 24, New

Jersey) and Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) were placed in school classes by teachers under the assumption that they were *not* as intelligent (Sonic, Interview 2; Sonya, Interview 1), Toad was perceived within her friend group as being smart *and* Black. Such microaggressions are based on offensive forms of preferential treatment. Toad spoke of how, in high school, a White student and an Hispanic student both applied for Stanford. The White student was not accepted into the university but the Hispanic student was put on the waiting list. Toad's White and Asian friends were upset, saying: "[how] this White person does everything well. She should have gotten in. The other one only got in because she was Hispanic." Toad questioned her friends: "So, if I get into this school, what are you going to say to me?" Their response: "No, it's okay. You're really smart. You don't count. We'll be fine if you get in" (Toad, Bayside Focus Group). Because other Students of Color were microaggressed for getting accepted into college presumably because of their skin color (and not their ability), Toad felt she would be viewed the same way. Because her peer group was predominantly White and Asian, they worried about reverse discrimination, by which they would not be accepted into college because of college admissions quota systems, and assuming Toad would be accepted due to being "ethnic":

> And my close group of friends would say stuff like that all the time, talking about, before we found out what schools we got into, they were worrying about, "Oh, I'm White. I'm not going to get in." "Oh, there are too many Asians at this school. I'm not going to get in." "Where are you going to apply, Toad?" "I'm planning to here, here, here." "Oh, that's really ambitious, but you're smart and you do all these things and you're ethnic. So, of course, you're going to get in." (Toad, Bayside Focus Group)

Also regarding college acceptance, Peach (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) was told in high school by peers, "You got in because you're Black," thus judging her, saying she did not deserve it, and degrading her achievements. Yet, these were the same friends who previously ascribed a certain type of intelligence to her because she was half-Black and half-Asian, and

assuming that she should have the stereotypical natural athletic ability from her Black side and extreme intellectual capabilities from her Asian side.

The participants experienced microaggressions that ascribed levels of intelligence or nonintelligence based on their part-Blackness. Peers did not seem them as individuals who may have received college admission because of their intellectual gifts, but due to affirmative action status related to their Blackness. These types of microaggressions reflected the societal expectation to conform to monoracial identity in that peers only saw their friends through a Black racialized lens.

Alien in own land. The microaggressive theme of Alien in Own Land, as delineated by Sue et al. (2007b), refers to instances in which participants were "assumed to be foreign born" (p. 276), even though they were born in the United States. Examples of microaggressive remarks in literature by Sue et al. (2007b) include "You speak good English" (p. 276) and "Where were you born?" (p. 276), which imply that the person in question is not viewed as authentically American, or because of race or ethnicity is assumed to have been born in another country.

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) referred to times when she had been asked "Where are you from?" based on not being phenotypically recognizable as a race or ethnicity that would be considered American:

> It's like the most uncomfortable moment of my life when someone's like "So, where are you from?" and I'm like "Virginia." [Laughs hard]. Because you know what they mean [what they are actually asking]. Then, once they find out that I'm part-Black, they say, "Ohhhh really?" [As if my answer] was kind of boring [for them.] They want to hear some place [like] an island that they've never heard of or something. They really want to satisfy that need to meet someone from some place they've never seen before. They couldn't imagine an American not looking very bread and butter. I don't know – it's just kind of funny. (Sonya, Interview 3)

Toad's (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) example of Alien in Own Land occurred when people would approach her and, assuming a monoracial or mistaken identity, would speak Spanish to her. Although Toad was half-Mexican, such an act can still be viewed as a microaggression, as there is the assumption that based on her racially ambiguous appearance, she was probably foreign-born and therefore, spoke a language other than English. Additionally, the assumption that Toad should speak Spanish because she is half-Mexican is another form of this microaggression.

These types of microaggressions of Alien In Own Land reflected the theme of conforming to monoracial identity in that the participants were not seen as White Americans, but as "exotic" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135) or "foreign-born" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 276) individuals. A societal expectation developed based on the participant's physical appearance or last name, and that the participant should be classified as a Person of Color, not as multiracial.

Multiracial microaggressions.

Assumption of monoracial identity. Several of the participants were assumed to be monoracial because of their physical appearance. They may have been perceived by other people to be all-Black (Amber, Hillside Group), all-White (John, Hillside Focus Group), or another racial or ethnic category (Ana, Elyse, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, Toad, Yoshi).

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned that probably due to her "Black [physical] features" (Amber, Interview 3), people usually assumed she was monoracially Black; she wished they recognized that she was more than solely Black and appreciated her for her full multiracial identity. In her opinion, it was "the discrimination of assuming that I'm just one

[race]" (Amber, Interview 3). People might tend to see her as "just a Black person with light skin" (Amber, Hillside Focus Group).

Amber was also the target of social microaggressions based on her perceived monoracial status. She detailed in her narrative about being mistaken on Facebook for another young woman of Ethiopian descent, simply because "we both look like we are Black – even if partially" (Amber, Narrative). This type of mistaken identity happened twice, indicating to Amber that this reaction was a microaggression:

> I logged into my Facebook account a while ago and noticed I was tagged in a picture. But it wasn't me; it was the Ethiopian girl. I had an issue with this because firstly, they knew I was not at the event so I'm not sure why they would even tag me. Secondly, she and I look nothing alike. I was left to believe that the only reason they thought she was me was because of our racial similarities. (Amber, Narrative)

A couple of weeks after this example, Amber attended an event where the service organization handed out posters with each person's name on them. She was handed the Ethiopian woman's poster by mistake, but the person distributing the posters immediately took the poster back when she realized her mistake. Amber commented, "[S]he was handing them out in a hurry so that could have played a role in the mistake being made, but it was the second time that it happened" (Amber, Narrative).

John (male, age 30, Hillside Focus Group), on the other hand, was often mistaken as monoracially White, and would overhear derogatory comments about Black people:

> But the way I look at it is I've always been once I get in where, like, the Whites are, I can always get into the party, you know? So, I'm not perceived as a threat until they find out, you know? So, I can kind of find out a lot of information. And the things I hear, a lot of times people say, they don't know that I'm Black, so they'll say things like "nigger this, nigger that" and I just listen and just observe, you know?... I'm able to kind of be like a spy for both sides. And once I get kind of unrevealed or whatever, I kind of lose my cover and then I have to try to gain acceptance. (John, Hillside Focus Group)

Some monoracial people are racially curious, and have a strong need to know what one racial category a multiracial person fits into. It is often a subconscious thought process that materializes as microaggressions and stereotypes; when the multiracial person is assumed to be one race, and then the reality is discovered, attitudes change and, at times, multiple identity choices go ignored. Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned how this interaction reflects society's imposition of a monoracial identity on a multiracial person. She gave an example of a multiracial friend who was three-quarters White and one-quarter Asian:

> And you wouldn't think that she is at all mixed, but then when she says, "Oh, I'm a quarter Filipino," White people look at her differently. They're, like, "Oh, you're Filipino." Like, all of a sudden, it's like you're not fully relatable to me and there's this just complete shift and I've seen it happen, like, right before eyes. I'm like, what? Like, how does this happen? How does it all of a sudden change your perspective? Just like one sentence about someone completely changes your perspective on who they are as a person and how you identify them. (Elyse, Hillside Focus Group)

Although not an example of a Black-White multiracial person, this story reflects how society is subconsciously wired to be monoracially centered.

Some of the other study participants (Ana, Elyse, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, Toad, Yoshi) mentioned how other people assumed they were a different racial category, such as Hispanic/Latino(a) or Middle Eastern, due to their olive or tan skin and brown hair. These types of microaggressions reflect how people categorize multiracial individuals based on monoracially determined choices and assumed race.

Dealing with comments from other people based on perceived race: Overhearing racial comments or jokes. Some participants in the study had overheard racial comments and jokes from others because people did not know their racial backgrounds or perceived them to be a

different race. The participants also spoke of receiving comments about their last names based on being perceived to be a monoracial race.

Peach (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) and Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) had been the recipients of microaggressions whereby they heard jokes or racist comments about one or both of their racial sides. Peach, who was multiracial Black and Asian, detailed an occasion while riding home on the school bus in 8th grade, when a White male classmate told a joke:

> There was this kid and he was just being, like, a jerk you know to, like, everyone. He was, like, one of those, like, mean kids. And then I was, like, sitting there minding my own business, just listening to him. And then, at one point, he told a joke and he was, like, "What do you get when you, like, mix a Black and Chinese person? A car thief who can't drive." And I was just, like, sitting there. (Peach, Bayside Focus Group)

Peach spoke of enduring cruel jokes and racist remarks, including her classmates calling her the "N-word" (Peach, Hillside Focus Group). Prior to changing schools in middle school, Peach had not been forced to think of her race or to identify herself racially. But, as a new student to the school, she found that her classmates assumed her to be monoracial and told her she was Black: "It was just the weirdest thing to suddenly be there and to be told what I am." (Peach, Bayside Focus Group).

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) discovered that to his White friends in high school, he was "definitely not White in their eyes" (Sonic, Interview 3). Feeling like the "token Black guy… they knew that I was mixed, but to them, they were One-Dropping me" (Sonic, Interview 3). He often overheard comments or offensive remarks about Black people, and "it was done in a way to make them feel superior to me, or at least that's how it came across… the subtle message that was there" (Sonic, Interview 3). He mentioned how these types of racial comments

would "just kind of get under my skin a little bit or [they would make] just kind of jokes and [I] wouldn't really know what to do or what to say" (Sonic, Interview 2).

Sonic spoke of hearing derogatory comments from White people; despite their knowing he was half-Black. This was not a case where he was assumed to be monoracially White. But he was expected not to take as much offense to the racist comment because of being half-Black. He detailed

> how I can gain access to certain conversations or certain interactions that other people might not have access to, there's a downside to that, also. For example, I've actually had people who… I considered my friends. These are people who were white, they were my age, they were in the same grade as me, and I've literally had some of them say straight to my face "I hate niggers."… those kids probably would never say something like that to somebody who they consider to be fully black. It's almost like they felt like they had the liberty to say that, because I've even had some people say things like that and then they say, "Oh well, we can say it around him because he's only half-Black so he'll only get half offended." (Sonic, Interview 1)

Overhearing racist comments or jokes from people assumed to be friends made Sonic aware of the degree to which subtle racism and microaggressions are still prevalent in society. He continued:

> [These people have] kind of joked about that, but that means that… I might hear a lot of painful things that other people might not hear. People kind of let their guard down around me… I can see just how bad racism can still – I can see just how much racism is still embedded in people's everyday psyche, language and thinking. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Being assumed to be monoracial or of a different race—or viewed as being solely half a member of a race—may expose the multiracial person to the unedited thoughts of people concerning their racial background, showing how stereotypes and microaggressions can be perpetuated through seemingly innocent jokes and comments (Johnston & Nadal, 2010).

Dealing with comments from other people based on perceived race: Comments about last name. When the multiracial person is assumed to be a different race than he or she is, he or she

might receive comments about his or her last name; the assumption being that the last name does not match the assumed phenotype. An example can be seen with Toad (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group), who had an American-sounding last name; however, because of its resemblance to a fairly common Hispanic last name, people often tried to pronounce it in a Spanish way—emphasizing the second syllable more than the first. This microaggression derived from Toad's physical appearance, and the societal assumption that she was of Hispanic background; therefore, her last name should be pronounced a certain way. In reality, Toad's Creole father's Americanized last name was being mispronounced to reflect a Spanish pronunciation.

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) had a Polish last name that was frequently mispronounced; or, due to her phenotype not "matching" her assumed race or ethnicity, she received comments about it. Amber also had teachers who became confused about her last name when they called roll in class and she responded; they were expecting a person who matched her Polish name (i.e., a monoracial White person). She often felt invisible or overlooked in class because of this misperception, as she described:

> Or with saying my last name, that's, like, a microaggression I guess. They're always like, "How do you say that?" And I'm just like, "It's not that hard. It's phonetically pronounced like how it looks." Like, it's not that hard. And they'll not look at me in class because they don't think it's me. And when I raise my hand, they're just like, "Oh, okay." Like, "Oh, wait. Why is this person, who doesn't look like this last name, raising her hand for this last name. Is she adopted?" And it's like no, I'm not. This is my dad's last name. He is of this background… That's one part where I feel like times aren't changing completely with people, because they are still not open to seeing people of different backgrounds, different types of last names. (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

Amber also recounted a White boy in school from Poland who did not acknowledge her Polish roots; this slight was a microaggression of Assumption of Monoracial or Mistaken Identity

(Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Her racial identity was assumed to be monoracially Black, but this boy's comment denied her multiracial reality:

> I heard him talking about being Polish and I was just like, "This is my opportunity to tell him my last name." It's Polish and we have a connection maybe… I was really shy in eighth grade… but then one of my friends that was his close friend was like, "Oh, [Amber's] last name is Polish," and he was like, "No way. Let me see." And I was like, "Yeah, there it is." I had it written on a piece of paper and he was like, "That is Polish but she can't be Polish. She's Black." (Amber, Interview 1)

Microaggressions of Assumption of Monoracial or Mistaken identity evidence the theme of conforming to a monoracial identity. Societal expectations do not allow for a multiracial reality, in which participants may be seen as mixed-race people with different phenotypes and surnames. People have been programmed to think along monoracial lines.

Denial of multiracial reality.

Being told, "You're almost White." The multiracial individual may be told he or she is "almost White," indicating that Whiteness is the preferred identity. Pip (female, age 19, Texas) and Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) spoke of instances with friends and in dating relationships in which their White roots were appreciated, while their Black side was deemed less desirable; or in which they were praised for being "almost White" (Pip, Interview 1).

Pip elaborated on examples in school, particularly with White classmates who felt more comfortable with Pip because she was "almost White." (Pip, Interview 1). These White friends informed Pip that they did not like Black people, or that they did not feel comfortable with Black people, and Pip would remind them that she was part-Black. Pip's narrative illustrated such an occasion with a White classmate:

> She said she also finds it kind of hard to be around a lot of Blacks in class. I told her "but you talk to me a lot and you don't seem to have a problem." She said, "Yeah, but you're

> only part-Black and you don't act Black." I have also had her and a few other students tell me that I'm "almost White." I never asked what that meant.

Sonic felt this notion of "almost" (Sonic, Interview 1) meant his being racially acceptable from both sides as such:

> I mean sometimes when it could come to dating, sometimes I've had people say that I was, or imply that I was, just Black enough or just Person of Color enough, and I've had sometimes other people imply that I was just White enough. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Such microaggressions reflected that the part-Black could be deemed socially acceptable if his or her White side were more prominent. This notion encapsulates the idea that multiracial reality is denied when the society exalts one racial side over the other.

Multiracial reality was ignored. Participants shared instances in which their multiracial reality was ignored or their multiple racial sides were not recognized. This slight occurred when monoracial people did not accept the multiracial person as part of their racial group; specifically, the participants were not seen as being part-White or a part of the White racial group. Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) detailed times when White friends seemed skeptical of his being part-Italian and part-Irish. With one friend in particular:

> Like, he didn't consider me White. That was one of the first times that I realized I'm not – I can't say I ever exclusively thought I was considered White, but it was the first time I was like "Wow! People don't see me as White at all" because growing up in a White family, nobody ever says anything and it's just like you think – you just kind of take it for granted that you're seen as part White and maybe in that situation I was, you know, my family. But in the public I've come to realize it's not the same. (Yoshi, Interview 2)

Microaggressions in which participants' Whiteness was ignored reflected a denial of multiracial reality in the participants' experiences. The theme of "Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation" was evidenced in these microaggressions. In these examples, people

might know that the multiracial person is mixed-race, but will not allow that person to identify himself or herself as mixed-race due to the tenacity of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent.

Exclusion or isolation.

Not accepted into either side. Microaggressions of Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) occurred in the lives of some of the participants when they were separated from a monoracial group because of being multiracial. The participants were expected to conform to being one race or the other. Even if the multiracial person "choose[s]" a racial side, (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, pg. 133), he or she might not be accepted by the people of the chosen racial group. According to the participants, they were excluded from both the White community and the Black community. Exclusion from Black groups seemed to be due to aspects of colorism, or discrimination based on skin color and other physical characteristics (such as having a lighter skin color or unique hair texture) (Byrd & Tharps, 2001; Russell et al., 1992); and also due to personal attitudes and behaviors, as when participants were told they were not acting or being "[Black] enough" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, pg.132). Exclusion from the White community was experienced by the participants due to elements of White privilege; the notion that if one is not recognizable as "White," one is, by default, "Black."

In Elyse's (female, age 19, Hillside Group) experience, she substantiated: "It's funny, 'cause, like, in the White community, I'm just seen as Black and in the Black community, seen as not enough Black. So it leaves you, like, in this limbo in the middle" (Elyse, Interview 1). This middle ground between the White community and the Black community is where a number of Black-White multiracial people find themselves and contributes to feelings of not fitting in or

being accepted into either side. This limbo state best characterizes the endorsement of a monoracial society.

Not accepted into either racial side, Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) spoke of being made fun of by both White children and Black children in school:

> [The White children would] make fun of me, and a lot of times they would make it about race and I wouldn't really know what to say or do. And then they'd use that as an opportunity to make fun of me for any reason under the sun, even if it didn't have to do with race. Eventually, though, I got tired of that and I moved to another table with some other friends of mine who were slightly newer friends, and this table was mostly Black. When I moved there, things got a lot better. I felt more accepted at that table. But then eventually that first table that I kind of ran away from, they came back. Eventually they came back and kind of mingled with this table. So now it's a bunch of White people, a bunch of Black people, and then me in the middle. By that point they all started kind of turning on me, or all kind of picking on me or making fun. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Not being accepted by monoracial peers reflects the theme of conforming to a monoracial identity. Participants' peers rejected the multiracial person from the larger racial group; the multiracial person was thus marginalized for his or her multiraciality. This situation reflects society's expectation that the multiracial person identify monoracially, and yet, excluding that person from being a complete member of that group as well.

Theme One Section Summary

The types of racial microaggressions experienced by the participants show how society pressured the multiracial participants to conform to monoracial self-identities. Due to the tenets of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, the monoracial category expected to be chosen by the participant was Black. Then, negative Black cultural stereotypes and racial microaggressions were enacted on the multiracial participants because of their being socially identified as monoracially Black.

The study participants were victims of microaggressions in both school and society. The participants experienced Environmental Microaggressions in school through Eurocentric teaching, segregated classrooms and campuses, and purposeful discriminatory actions. In both school and society, participants were exposed to One-Drop Rule thinking by being monoracially classified as Black by teachers, school officials, and peers.

In school and society, participants experienced microaggressions of Ascription of Intelligence (Sue et al., 2007b), Assumption of Monoracial Identity (Sue et al., 2007b), and Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Additionally, in society, participants experienced microaggressions based on Monoracial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011) and Tokenism, Alien in Own Land (Sue et al. 2007b), and Denial of Multiracial Reality (Johnston & Nadal, 2010).

Theme Two: The Continued Struggle for Multiracial Identity

Identity literature encompasses varying ways multiracial people can identify themselves (Atkinson et al., 1983; Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Cross, 1971; Helms, 1992; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Phinney, 1989; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990; Wardle, 1989, 1992). Whereas various entities in school and society pressure the multiracial person to conform to a monoracial designation, it should be the choice of the multiracial person to select the way(s) of racial identification. Microaggressions that enforce a monoracial designation, however, are routinely imposed on multiracial people, based on the ideology and legacy of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent ideology (Brunsma, 2006; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005). This theme reflects an internally organized process, whereby the multiracial person negotiates his or her multiracial

identity; while society enforces the One-Drop Rule, the multiracial person navigates multiple racial heritages to discover or create an identity that encompasses his or her total person.

Racial Microaggressions in School

Microaggressions that happen in schools are being defined as racial microaggressions that have occurred on systemic levels and involved school officials; whether directly when the microaggression was enacted by a school official, or indirectly when the microaggression was enacted by a fellow student but school officials were involved in resolving the microaggressive incident. Microaggressions that happened in school by the participant's fellow students will be considered part of the participants' peer group, and will be categorized as social microaggressions.

Multiracial microaggressions.

Assumption of mistaken identity.

Assumptions about the interracial family and family relationships. For Pip (female, age 19, Texas), Microaggressions of Mistaken Identity arose in the school system whenever teachers showed confusion when Pip's mother would attend parent-teacher conferences and would state she was Pip's mother. The teachers questioned Pip's mother with "confused expression[s]" on their faces (Pip, Narrative) and explained, as Pip said, "what I looked like and the backpack I carry, as if my mom was asking about the wrong student. I never would have thought she was your daughter. I thought she was Hispanic" (Pip, Narrative).

Similar to Pip, Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) mentioned having teachers demonstrate bewilderment about her interracial family. Sonya said that although she did not have any "academic issues" (Sonya, Interview 1) in school, she "struggled through school" (Sonya,

Interview 1) and that teachers implied she was having academic problems until they met her White parents. Then, upon discovering Sonya's Whiteness, the teachers' attitudes toward Sonya changed: "and then all of a sudden things were okay, it was no big deal" (Sonya, Interview 1). This type of mistaken identity, in Sonya's case, was also a form of racial microaggression, in which Sonya was treated as a second-class citizen.

Dealing with microaggressions in the school context concerning the interracial family caused the multiracial participants to struggle internally. School officials expressed confusion concerning family relationships when the participants and their families did not physically look alike. This misunderstanding reflects the theme of the continued struggle to assert a multiracial identity in a society that expects the multiracial person to conform to a monoracial identity.

Exclusion or isolation.

Check a box. Exclusionary microaggressions can occur on legal forms when the multiracial person is forced to choose one race. The message is that monoracial society is the norm, and everything must conform to that norm (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Several participants discussed how they were forced to identify monoracially on school forms (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Yoshi). At times, making the monoracial choice was difficult and confusing, as the multiracial person was expected to identify with only one side of his or her racial background, while denying the other side. Such forms present another form of microaggression, showing the multiracial person just how he or she does not fit into monoracial society.

Pip (female, age 19, Texas) queried about why children were expected to fill in their race on forms: "And I think that that [sic] should just be gone in general. Especially, when you have little kids doing it, I don't think it's really needed" (Pip, Interview 1). Pip explained that when

she asked her 5th grade teacher what race to check, the teacher told her to check Black, which was not completely representative of Pip's racial background, and thus, excluding her from being represented as multiracial.

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) also struggled with checking a single race box on school forms. His solution was to check both races and "let them decide which one to put 'cause I couldn't decide" (Yoshi, Interview 1). Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group), as a student in the Gifted and Talented Program (GATE), also was expected to check a racial box in school, and felt that checking Black was tokenizing her as an intelligent Black person and not seeing her as a mixed-race person, "because it wasn't really encompassing who I was as a person in this [GATE] program" (Amber, Follow-up Interview). Amber also explained how the microaggression of checking one race was a disservice to the mixed-race student when she said:

> When it comes to filling out things on tests, like bubbling in, if somebody's mixed, don't – if they have a question, don't tell them just to pick one, or try to find a solution to the problem, because it's not fair… So I think it's just wrong for the education system to force somebody who is multiracial – I don't care if you're black or white, or Hispanic and Asian, or whatever you are, as a multiracial person to choose who you are when it comes to the standardized stuff. (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) wondered why the school system operated in monoracial ways, expecting multiracial children to select only one racial category. She detailed how this confused her as a child and later on as a young adult when helping her younger sister fill out college applications. She said:

> Do you check Black because some people would say you have a better chance of getting in somewhere or (which doesn't apply to the SAT) or you have a better chance of getting scholarships? Or, you know, not even a better chance, but there's maybe more scholarships that are available to you as a Black student or do you check Other and get – like, what are the implications of checking Other? No one's explained that to us. I feel like, what does it mean if you check Other? Do they keep tally on it, do they use it for reports? (Elyse, Interview 1)

Having to check one racial box causes the multiracial individual to struggle about identity choices. This type of microaggression was common in schools, and reflected the theme of continued struggle in that the multiracial person had to choose a monoracial designation.

Pathologization. Microaggressions occurred when the multiracial person was pathologized either for their being multiracial or for being considered by other people to be categorized as Black due to the tenets of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. Pathologization occurred in the lives of the multiracial participants in the forms of cultural values and communication styles (Sue et al., 2007b) and negative social stereotypes that assumed criminal status based on the participants' Blackness (Sue et al., 2007b).

Examples of psychopathology. Microaggressions of pathology included presumed differing communication styles of the two racial groups of the multiracial person, in which the multiracial person may have different ways of socially relating to both sides. In a community college class, Amber's (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) professor made a statement about multiracial people acting differently around both sides of the family. Although it was true in Amber's case (having not spent much time around her father's family but agreeing that her conversational style differed between the two groups), this statement pathologized the multiracial experience. The professor also "volunteered an experience for me" (Amber, Interview 2), substituting his version of her life, rather than hearing her experience or asking for input from her. As a result, Amber felt concerned that people might see her as odd:

> I felt like they probably perceived me like, "Oh, that's a weird situation. She must be either like two-faced or good being a certain way or she must be confused or like a good actress of some sort because if she's two different people with her own family, what is she around us?" (Amber, Interview 2)

Pathologization of cultural values and communication styles. Sue et al. (2007b) have discussed the Pathologization of Cultural Values and Communication Styles as a form of microaggression. Multiracial people of Black-White racial background are pathologized both for being of mixed-race and for being categorized monoracially as Black; in other words, they are stigmatized for stereotypical behaviors or negative cultural traits of their Blackness.

In high school, when Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) was first transferred to a new class, she said she was upset to have to make this change. The new teacher teased Elyse about being so angry, and Elyse felt that this might be attributed to the stereotype of "angry… Black women" (Elyse, Interview 2):

> I just had like a really bad attitude when I first came into her class, and she always used to joke about that, so maybe that was something that could have been seen as a racial microaggression that she maybe saw my bad attitude as me being Black, where it was just me not wanting to be in her class at first. (Interview 2)

Pleasantly enough, Elyse spoke fondly of the relationship that ultimately grew out of the transfer: "I grew to really enjoy her as a person and… really liked her as a teacher" (Elyse, Interview 2).

Assumption of criminal status. Even something as innocent as wearing the same color T-shirt can be seen as a form of pathologization and an act of criminality (Sue et al, 2007b). Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) spoke of a time in middle school when, coincidentally, he and a group of his Black male friends all happened to wear white shirts to school one day. He detailed how teachers seemed to disapprove:

> And certain teachers were kind of looking at us like, what is this, some kind of gang or something? I just – that wasn't said directly to me, but I just remember that even in the… student handbook it said, as far as the dress code it said, you can't wear gang colors and I was like, well what does that mean? Like a gang color could be any color. I was like, how do you define what a gang color is and then I'm kind of thinking back, oh I guess your skin has to be a certain color and then it's a gang color if you're wearing a certain color you know with your shirt or whatever. (Sonic, Interview 2)

Sonic also mentioned times when he and his group of friends would gather and socialize in the school common areas, and teachers or school officials assumed that they were engaging in some sort of criminal behavior: "It's like the fact that we're talking in a group makes them uncomfortable as if we're plotting something against them or getting into trouble" (Sonic, Interview 2).

Pathologizing a multiracial person for part of his or her multiracial experience may cause the person to struggle with identity development. Such microaggressions reflect the theme of the multiracial person's negotiation of his or her multiracial existence and may cause the multiracial person to question where he or she fits in racially.

Racial Microaggressions in Society

Microaggressions that happen in society are being defined as racial microaggressions that occurred on systemic levels and involved friends, acquaintances, and people in general society. Microaggressions that happened in schools by the participant's fellow classmates will be considered part of the participants' peer group, and therefore, will also be categorized under social microaggressions.

Environmental microaggressions.

Media environmental microaggressions. The media perpetuates White privilege, racism, stereotypes, and colorism (Russell et al., 1992). White privilege dictates what is aesthetically beautiful in society. Such environmental microaggressions are concerned with White aspects of beauty, whereby the White standard sets the bar and determines what is attractive. These types of microaggressions were most evident in Sonya's (female, age 24, Virginia) interviews and her written narrative. She explained:

> I still have this obsession with White, upper class, beauty that's dominated by something that isn't even real. Because I wouldn't have thought about beauty or my hair if I hadn't opened a magazine and seen what was supposed to be beautiful and notice that I didn't look like that and then had that reinforced by people who told me, "Your hair…" [or made] comments about my figure, comments about my nose… I wouldn't have even thought about… so I think, there's just no doubt in my mind that my realization about me being different, either what I'm supposed to be or raising questions about these sorts of things, they didn't come internally because I just didn't think of them on my own. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) explained issues of colorism evidenced in the media:

> In movies and TV and stuff, there's, like, nobody who's considered really beautiful who's darker. There's Beyoncé who I think – I don't know if she's mixed or not but she's light, obviously. And we were thinking who's dark? Literally just dark who's considered beautiful… Like there's that scale and you can't really think of many women who are considered beautiful who are darker. (Amber, Interview 3)

Amber also mentioned how darker-skinned Black women display negative cultural behaviors and she referenced the comedian Tyler Perry's character, Madea, who is portrayed as the stereotypical Black grandmother, "who you come to their house and get, like, your butt whooped because you're acting up or something" (Amber, Interview 3). Amber detailed how the dark-skinned woman is pitted against the lighter-skinned multiracial woman, in that "the darker woman is more often than not a negative role that either turns good or just stays the negative role and the light-skinned woman is typically more powerful or more important than the darker person" (Amber, Interview 3). The media in the lives of these multiracial people reflects the ideology of their social world. As Amber reiterated, "I think it's the portrayal in society of the people that fuels stereotypes. Otherwise, they wouldn't exist" (Amber, Interview 3).

Like Amber, Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) spoke of the role of the light-skinned female in the media. He shared his opinion from a male perspective, mentioning how

Black singers endorse this image of heightened beauty for lighter-skinned females. Yoshi felt that whereas Black male singers promulgate the light-skinned female as the ideal of beauty, Black female singers, conversely, promote the dark-skinned Black male as the ideal. Yoshi, being a light-skinned male of part-Black background, felt that these media stereotypes were reflective of his personal dating experience. He mentioned that women had discriminated against him for not being dark enough:

> You listen to any rap song, and it's, like, I don't know, they just love light-skinned Black women… but I don't think the same is true for Black women. If you listen to a lot of the… female rappers or whoever else – R&B singers – they always talk about chocolate men, really dark, African men, so it's, like, they're really, really African. So that's another thing, I think, that's, like, why my experience might be a little different than a woman's experience. It's how the different sexes view light skin. I think they're more into "Let's keep the Black community strong and survive. Let's get chocolate men, dark is beautiful, Black is beautiful." But the guys are like "Oh, this is whatever we want, oh this is so attractive, oh this is money, this is social status. I want money so I'm gonna marry a light-skinned woman." It's interesting dynamics. (Yoshi, Interview 1)

The ways that the White race and Black race are portrayed or viewed in the media created a struggle within for some of the multiracial participants. This internalized struggle is provoked by White standards of beauty that contribute to the multiracial person questioning how his or her physical appearance is different from what is deemed normal. The media either exalts and denigrates skin color, portraying cultural stereotypes that leave the multiracial participant wondering how to negotiate his or her identity in a society that enforces One-Drop Rule thinking.

Lack of multiracial role models. One type of environmental microaggression that perpetuated the struggle for multiracial identity was the lack of multiracial role models in daily life. Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) was raised by her biological White mother and adoptive White stepfather. She mentioned that it was challenging to be multiracial in a White family, as she did not have a Black parent to whom she could relate. This challenge extended into society,

when she spoke of the lack of multiracial role models in general in her life. Therefore, she had to create a multiracial self-identity on her own:

> I have had to deal with things so late in my life because I ignored it and I didn't have any African American parents or any role models… There are people who have had very similar experiences and I wish that I had been exposed to people. I almost wish that I had had people to talk to about that and known people who had gone through that because it just would have been so nice to have somebody to talk to. It would have definitely been beneficial to my overall experience. (Sonya, Interview 2)

Pip (female, age 19, Texas), Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey), and Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned the impact of not having multiracial role models in the media and how the lack of noticeable multiracial people in society presented challenges or perpetuated feelings of difference during their childhood and adolescence. Pip mentioned that she did not grow up with other mixed-race children, and that one thing she did not like was "not having people to relate to. Especially when I was in school, [during] middle school or elementary school" (Pip, Interview 1). Sonic also had neither other mixed-race children to relate to—with the exception of his younger brother—nor any adults of mixed racial background, which presented a challenge for him:

> If I needed some kind of support or, you know, to feel like I wasn't completely alone or just needed something like that, [I] didn't quite have that, and there were definitely teachers that were concerned but just might not have been able to relate. (Sonic, Interview 2)

Because society is programmed to view others in monoracial terms, some people might look at multiracial people as odd or not the norm. In her personal narrative, Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) spoke of lacking multiracial role models in dominant society and how nonmultiracial people may not be accustomed to seeing multiracial people. She explained:

> I feel as though they aren't exposed to enough people like me in their lives, in the media, in society period, therefore leading to them being unable to fully understand that I am of

> more than one ethnicity and that being multiracial isn't peculiar or abnormal. (Amber, Narrative)

The apparent lack of multiracial role models in general society caused the participants to struggle with their identity choices. Not being exposed to other multiracial people, coupled with society's tenacious adherence to the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, conveyed a general impression that multiracial people are abnormal and contributed to the participants feeling that some people could not understand their racial reality.

Multiracial microaggressions.

Assumption of mistaken identity/Assumptions about the interracial family and family relationships. Participants spoke of being questioned by other people about their family members and relationships. The participants were asked, "Are you together?" or "Are you adopted?" when in public, as the family members did not look alike because of different physical features and skin tones.

Being questioned, "Are you together?" Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) and Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) detailed instances of being asked "Are you together?" with their families in a variety of situations and in cases where it was obvious that they were all together. In Amber's case, this microaggression occurred very frequently in public with her family: She mentioned it several times in her individual interviews, as well as in her narrative:

> Recently I went to Whole Foods [an organic market] with my family to return something and the lady asked us if we were together and I am not sure why this bothered me so much but I looked at all of us standing together and wondered "How could we not all be together?" I sometimes wonder how my family looks to other people; apparently to some we don't look like a family. (Amber, Narrative)

Another example of this type of microaggression was offered in one of Amber's interviews:

> Being in the grocery store and saying, "Are you two together?" When we clearly are both holding the same basket. On the basket you see this little, tan-skinned child with a White guy and a Black woman. Why would we not be together? I don't know why people just can't see that we're a family unit. We're all together." (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

To Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey), being a child socialized very early on in racial matters, these types of microaggressions made him very aware of how differently his family was perceived:

> Many times at the supermarket or some kind of store… I'd be a kid… one of my parents is paying for something, and the clerk kind of looks at me and says, "Can I help you?" as if I'm somehow not with that parent. I'm sure that happens to lots of people, but it happened to me fairly frequently, so I would always say in the back of my mind, well, it probably has to do with race… It happens the most often at restaurants when you walk up and the hostess is supposed to ask how many people are in the party, how many people to seat, but sometimes they just assume. Sometimes it would be like all four of us walking together and they say, "Table for two?" It's like there's four people here. Those were little instances, subtle things where I noticed that I was different. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Being questioned, "Are you adopted?" Continuing along the line of such questions as "Are you together?" are questions that inquire about the family relationship. Questions such as "Is that your mother/father?" or "Are you adopted?" send the message that because the multiracial individual and his or her family have different skin colors, they cannot possibly be blood relatives. Family members are assumed to be unrelated, as in Amber's (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) case, where her monoracially Black half-brother was assumed to be her boyfriend (Amber, Interview 3), or in Sonic's (male, age 24, New Jersey) case, where the teacher told him that his monoracially Black half-brother could not possibly be his biological brother (Sonic, Interview 2).

Conversely, Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) recounted first realizing that she did not resemble her mother, and that her best friend was probably assumed to be her mother's offspring:

> In fifth grade, my best friend had, she had red hair and she had a blonde streak in the front… So when my mom would take us out, I realized that people didn't think that I was my mom's daughter; people thought that my friend was my mom's daughter. And I guess that was… an experience where I realized like, wow, I don't look like my mom. (Elyse, Interview 1)

In her written narrative, Pip (female, age 19, Texas) said her earliest moments as a newborn baby were where she was assumed to not be related to her own mother, because of her physical appearance:

> My mom told me even when I was first born the nurses would not bring me back to the room where my mother was at first. With my white/pinkish skin and little strip of straight, red hair, they mistook me for a White baby. My father was later able to assure them they had the right room. (Pip, Narrative)

This example of mistaken identity followed Pip throughout her childhood, as she was assumed to be monoracial or of a different racial background; at times she was treated badly because of her presumed race:

> The Black kids, they thought I was either Hispanic or White, so they wouldn't talk to me. The Hispanic kids knew that I wasn't Hispanic, so they wouldn't talk to me either. The [White] kids kept asking me if I was adopted or why me and my mom [were] different colors [since] my mom is a light brown color. So, I was really wondering [about] that. I'm the same color as everyone in my dad's family but everybody on my mom's family is light brown or really dark. So I was about seven or eight, and I realized it. (Pip, Interview 1)

Sonya's (female, age 24, Virginia) biological father was Black, but he was not a part of her life. Sonya was raised in a household where her mother, her adoptive step-father, and her younger brother were monoracially White. Her stepfather, therefore, was the only father she had ever known and had been a part of her life since she was a baby. She talked about having "honorary

White status" because of being raised in a White family. She also discussed the frustrations her younger brother may have dealt with:

> Everybody else had lots of questions, [laughs] "Why is it that you are half-Black and your parents are both White and are you adopted?"… My brother, I know he came home, especially in elementary school, with frustrations about people asking why he has a Black sister. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) talked about the pain and confusion he experienced out in public with his White mother; it made him feel different to notice how people looked at him, or because of the questions he received. He discussed how "weird" (Yoshi, Interview 1) it was for him to deal with people at school who asked him if he was adopted, or made comments about the skin color differences of his parents. At times he would have preferred to have his father present so he "wouldn't feel so different and people wouldn't question it" (Yoshi, Interview 1). He elaborated on receiving comments such as:

> "Oh, your mom's White," like, surprised or they'd be just like "Why is your dad so much darker than you?" You know, it was things like that. Basically it was like "Why are you guys different?" questions. I just felt like – I can't describe it. I just shrunk inside myself when I heard those type of things. It was like – it was just really just awkward and weird for me. (Yoshi, Interview 1)

These types of racial microaggressions led participants to feel separated from their families and that the make-up of their families was viewed as abnormal or peculiar. Microaggressions that made assumptions about the interracial family and family relationships reflected the theme of the continued struggle for identity.

Denial of multiracial identity.

Accused of "Acting White." Several of the study participants were accused of "acting White" (Christie, 2010, p. 6) in social relationships. Acting White meant the participant was denying his or her Blackness to be perceived as White in society. Acting White was evidenced

in dating relationships, as with Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group), whose Black roommate was reported as saying condescendingly, "You like more European Black guys" (Amber, Interview 1). Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) spoke of times in high school when she was told by Black females that she acted, spoke, and even dressed "White" (Elyse, Interview 3). Pip (female, age 19, Texas) was accused by a Black friend and her friend's mother, that she "acted White" (Pip, Interview 3) because she was intelligent and enjoyed certain musical tastes and clothing choices. Pip also was chastised by her Black friend and her friend's mother for wanting to be White because she had a White Barbie doll and did not apply to an Historically Black College or University (HBCU):

> [My friend's mother] asked me why wasn't I applying to any HBCU's and I told her there was no particular reason, I just wasn't interested. She began telling me that I had a problem with Black people and I didn't want to be Black or be around anything Black. She basically shoved the idea about a HBCU down my throat for the rest of the night. I felt really insulted by this because I had always thought of their house as my second home and she was basically telling me that I had an identity crisis. In my senior year, I ended up applying to Howard University… [and] was accepted into Howard, but had already made the decision to go to a school in New York. When my friend's mom found out, she was very upset. She told me I should have taken that opportunity and continued to tell me how I needed to be proud of my Black roots and "broaden my horizons." This time she came straight out and said "You have a problem." My only problem was her. (Pip, Narrative)

Peach (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) and Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) expanded on occasions when they were told they were acting White. In Peach's case, middle-school classmates made offensive jokes and called her racial slurs: "Peach, you're so White. You're not even White, but you act so White." (Peach, Bayside Focus Group). In Luigi's experience, upon moving to a predominantly Black community in Georgia, he was told he "sounded like a White person" (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group). People disliked him for sounding

"educated and they equate education with White. So they think I'm better and I never expressed any kind of like attitude of being better" (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group).

Not "Acting Black." Similar to "acting White" or being "almost White" is not "acting Black" (Sonya, Interview 1). This idea, like the above-referenced microaggressions, stems from the concept of Blackness as the less preferred identity choice, whereby any characteristics seen as "Black" are stigmatized. Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) and Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) both discussed moments in which their Black roots were denounced as inferior.

Coming from a suburban neighborhood, Elyse was raised in a close-knit family where race was not a big concern. Even in her social circles, she was surrounded by a diverse group of friends of many different races and ethnicities. Feeling that she had not been exposed to as many Black people, she applied for the TLC orientation program at her university, which was designed for students of African American background to go to college one month early to participate in academic and social activities. This group offered her the opportunity to "be around all African-American people for the first time in my life" (Elyse, Narrative). In her narrative, Elyse wrote that although most of her friends were "supportive and happy" (Elyse, Narrative) for her, one friend expressed "concerns" (Elyse, Narrative) that this group would change Elyse—and not for the better. This microaggressive response left an indelible mark on Elyse:

> Many times people will assert, "It is not what you say but how you say it that matters." Well, in this case it was the entire statement that mattered: the words, the phrasing, the tone, the laughter, the disgust. It was as if I would change as a person during TLC from a friend to someone who was so far out of the norm and what is acceptable in society, that I would no longer be a woman of substance and worth. As she said, "Ohhhhhhh!!!!! You're going to come back all Black and ghetto!" followed by laughter at the thought of it. All Black and ghetto. The implication was that I was okay the way I was, but was I to become any more "Black," my personhood would be compromised in addition to my dignity, literacy, and respect. That memory has stuck for so long because it reminded me that even if Black people – no matter what percentage you are – are at a highly

> respectable four-year college institution, will still be subject to unfair racial biases. (Elyse, Narrative)

Similarly, Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) told of a White friend who complimented a Hispanic friend for answering her parents in English whenever they spoke Spanish to her. Sonya's girlfriend also admonished her about her Black characteristics: "As long as you don't act Black… it's okay, I don't care, you know, we can be friends." (Sonya, Interview 1). At age 13, when adolescents are forming their social identities (Erikson, 1968), a statement like this can be hurtful. Sonya continued to relay her response to this type of color-blind denial of her multiracial experience:

> I will never forget that, "as long as you don't act Black"… even though she was more overt about it, there was always this sense of "you're an honorary White person… we will give you an [laughs] honorary metal of sorts [laughs]"… and that was kind of the kind of color blindness that I experienced a lot growing up. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Additionally, a White girlfriend, making a casual and innocent statement, assumed an idea about Sonya's multiracial reality that denied her personal experience: "Well, you don't consider yourself Black, do you?" (Sonya, Interview 3). Due to Sonya's "honorary White status," (Sonya, Interview 1, 2, and 3), this friend believed that Sonya could be socially White:

> I think because there is this idea that if you're mixed and you are light-skinned you can just mold into one or the other as you please. Or, if you speak more White that means you are White, and you are treated like a White person, which isn't always true. Therefore, you can just culturally become part of the White culture and that is an assumption. (Sonya, Interview 3)

Denial of multiracial identity reflects a One-Drop Rule ideology and suggests that the multiracial person is not allowed to be his or her entire racial self. Microaggressions in which participants were told that they were "acting White" or to not "act Black" imply that Whiteness is exalted,

and Blackness is denigrated. Microaggressions such as these contribute to the participant's internal struggle for multiracial identity.

Exoticization and objectification.

Being asked, "What are you?" The study participants explained the frequency of being asked by other people to detail their racial background, often being asked, "What are you?" Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) explained:

> What has been hard about being mixed would have to be… the constant questioning of "what are you," then people just still wanting to find out and asking anyway; like no matter what answer you give them… if you say [to] "what are you," "A human being." "No, like, what's your nationality?" "American." "No, no, that's not what I mean. You know what I mean." This pestering… it's just more irritating. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Ana (female, age 22, Hillside Focus Group) said that being questioned about her racial background is "something that I constantly have to deal with every day." Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) explained, "I experience ["What are you?"] every week and it's irritating."

Ana (female, age 22, Hillside Focus Group), who was Black-Hispanic multiracial and Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group), who was Black-White multiracial, explained that the different ways they answered the "What are you?" question depended on the race of the person inquiring. If it was a Black person, they mentioned they were half Black first; if was a White (in Amber's case) or Hispanic (with Ana) person asking, they would state their non-Black race first (Amber and Ana, Hillside Focus Group). Ana mentioned replying differently at times, giving answers such as, "I'm a human… I'm Ana." Or, sometimes, she would amuse herself by allowing people to make the wrong assumptions, but after a while, informed them that she was, indeed, multiracial (Ana, Hillside Focus Group).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) was Black-White multiracial and had a racially ambiguous appearance; she was sometimes mistaken for being Latina. When asked "What are you?" Elyse elaborated, "Sometimes I don't really feel like answering." She expressed her annoyance that "every time that I go somewhere… it's one of the first questions they ask" (Elyse, Hillside Focus Group). Because of the frequency of questions about her racial background, Elyse tried to find several options for saying what she was; from saying she was monoracially Black, to saying she was West Indian and White, to Black and White, to not answering at all. "I've tried all these different forms of representing who I am and how I like saying it and there's never a way that I feel comfortable saying this is what I am" (Elyse, Hillside Focus Group). Whenever she was asked what she was, she tried to answer in ways that did not exoticize her.

Ana (female, age 22, Hillside Focus Group) and Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) both mentioned that at times they had people guess what their racial backgrounds were, as a way of having some fun in an otherwise annoying situation. Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey), who was Black-White multiracial, said that he entertained himself by answering the question at times by just saying "human" or "a student" or "Hey, my name is Sonic. What's your name?" (Sonic, Interview 1).

Being racially curious, people will often try to find clever ways to ask the multiracial person "What are you?" Pip (female, age 19, Texas), who was multigenerationally mixed Black-White multiracial, had been asked questions such as "What nationality is your last name?" and "Where are you from?" (Pip, Interview 2).

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia), who was Black-White multiracial, mentioned that when asking, "What are you?" people are expecting some sort of exotic mixture, so when they find out she's part-Black, it is disappointing: "Then, once they find out that I'm part-Black, they say, 'Ohhhh really?' [As if my answer] was kind of boring [for them]" (Sonya, Interview 3).

Comments about physical appearance. Several participants mentioned being told that they look or are "exotic" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135) due to being multiracial. The participants spoke of being assigned a heightened level of attractiveness because of their mixed-race genes and often heard statements like "mixed-race people are so good-looking" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135) and "[mixed] children come out beautiful" (Sonic, Interview 3). Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) elaborated on his feelings about statements that idealized his physical appearance:

> Whenever I hear people say, like, "Oh, the mixed kids, they're so beautiful," or mixed people and all that, it's a similar feeling, where it's like a compliment… I appreciate the fact you find me attractive, but I would appreciate it if you don't racialize it, if you don't attribute my attractiveness to my racial background. Can't I just be good looking and it just so happens that I'm mixed? (Sonic, Interview 3)

Some people feel entitled to objectify the multiracial person's physical appearance more so than with monoracial people, which can be harmful, as it places greater emphasis on the multiracial person's phenotype, than on more enduring characteristics or personality traits. Sonic further illustrated this point when he explained that "being seen as exotic can almost place us on this pedestal of, perhaps, aesthetic beauty or something, but I think that can be damaging" (Sonic, Interview 1).

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) spoke of how the term "exotic" carries negative connotations, despite it sounding complimentary:

> I don't like the feeling as if my beauty or my physical form is abnormal, and even though it is meant to be a compliment in a lot of ways, it is also insulting to say that some beauty is normal and other beauty is exotic or foreign or mysterious. You just feel further objectified as a woman, and then also even further objectified as a Woman of Color. (Sonya, Interview 3)

Comments about hair. A microaggression experienced by some of the participants concerned their hair. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) received comments from both White people and Black people about her hair. She mentioned how White people were often surprised at her hair's smooth texture, and she received pseudo-compliments such as "Your hair is nicer than Black people because your dad's White… Oh, it's so soft" (Amber, Follow-up Interview).

Amber also received comments from Black people, who would compliment the quality of her hair due to her part-Whiteness: "Oh, you've good hair because you're mixed" (Amber, Follow-up Interview). The notion of "good hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001, p. 19; Russell et al., 1992, p. 85) stems from the Media Environmental Microaggression of White standards of beauty, which deems hair that is silken or "long and lacking in kink, tight curls, and frizz" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001) as "good." It perpetuates the divide. Conversely, Amber also received comments from Black people who thought her hair was "fake" (Amber, Follow-up Interview). This interpretation was similar to experiences by Ana (female, age 22, Hillside Focus Group), who was frequently expected to explain her hair to Black women; they often inquired if she dyed her light brownish-blonde hair or if she had a "weave" (artificial hair which is woven into the natural hair) (Ana, Hillside Focus Group).

Although Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) received sarcastic comments from Black women about his "pretty boy hair," (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group) Sonya (female, age 24,

Virginia) received the most negative response to her spiral curls. Sonya's hair, rather than being exoticized, was actually pathologized and seen as abnormal by her White peers. Her hair story is detailed later in this dissertation in Microaggressions of Pathologization.

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) was told she had "good hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001, p. 19; Russell et al., 1992, p. 85)—what some people might consider the perfect blend of White and Black hair. She described her hair as:

> I think that you can take someone's ideas of kinky Black hair and straight White hair and you fuse them together racially and my hair would be the product… so I think that's one way you can tell very easily that I'm mixed. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Because of her racially mixed hair texture, Elyse received backhanded compliments from other people—particularly Black women, who praised her hair but were also snide in their praise. Elyse elaborated that some Black women "spend so much money to relax their hair, get it pressed, or put a weave in it" (Elyse, Interview 3) so it will resemble Elyse's natural hair style and texture, which sets up the binary of "good hair" being more manageable whereas hair that is more difficult to manage is less desirable. Elyse added to the conversation by illustrating how this binary "creates envy and jealously from all communities, but majority from the Black community" (Elyse, Interview 3). Hair is a status symbol of self-esteem and physical attractiveness. If the mixed-race woman has what society has deemed "good hair," Black men might be more attracted to women with a "good" hair texture, rather than to women with a coarser texture of hair that may be representative of monoracial Black women, which in turn can fuel resentment that some Black females might have toward mixed-race females. As Elyse explained:

> So I think hair in general is just an issue and especially with women because it's tied so much to like being sexy and attractive and I think that most women want to be considered

> attractive so if your hair, which you can't control, is seen as not attractive, then it like plays into like self-esteem and different things like that that can really affect the way a person lives their life (Elyse, Interview 3)

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group), Pip (female, age 19, Texas), and Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) discussed their responses to when people touched their hair without permission. Such acts show the intrusiveness of being objectified (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Pip mentioned children fellow students telling her she has "good hair" and trying to pull on it (Pip, Interview 3). Amber also articulated feelings of being objectified because of her hair:

> I felt like I was in a petting zoo or something. Am I like a spectacle because of it? Have you not seen this before? I mean, it's hair. And I don't like people really touching my hair… yeah, like I was in a petting zoo. It's just like those circuses back in the 1800s, like the bearded women. I should have been in there. "The mixed child. Look at her hair." I mean, it's not that big of a deal. (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

Sonic talked about strangers grabbing at his "pretty big, tightly curly hair" (Sonic, Interview 1) without even asking. At times, his hair had been the subject of conversation with others before they even had been introduced. Approaching Sonic in a curious manner, one time a stranger said,

> "You're really interesting looking," and kind of cocked her head to the side as she was looking at me like some exotic animal at a zoo or something on display at a museum or something like that… I get that all the time. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Sonic discussed the intrusiveness of people who would touch his hair, especially without asking permission. He detailed several examples of when this occurred:

> People will come up and grab my hair without asking me, like complete strangers will grab my hair or will ask me questions about my hair… I have [had] total strangers come up behind me and grab my hair… One time I was walking out of the exit of the amusement park… and somebody's pulling on my hair. And I looked behind me and I quickly see some young girl giggling and running away… I've had my parents' coworkers grab my hair without me knowing. I've had strangers ask if they could touch my hair, which is I guess a little bit more polite than just straight up grabbing it, but it's

> still kind of like, "Oh yeah, nice to meet you, my name is such and such," and we miss that part. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Despite these hair-pulling instances happening "so often, they just kind of blend together" (Interview 1), Sonic seemed proud of his hair and described his hair as a symbol of his multiraciality. He said:

> One way that I express [multiracial culture] I think is with my hair. I feel like it's almost the way of wearing my multiracial appreciation on my sleeve and it's not like I'm trying to put it in people's face, but my hair is, it's somewhat, I mean it's not very common… It's tightly curled and it's soft and… I think that that's just cool hair, in general… It's just like a little hint about my ethnic background. (Interview 1)

Comments about skin color. Skin color issues manifested in the lives of the participants in one of two ways: being exoticized and objectified or being pathologized. Participants said that skin color was exoticized based on their part-Whiteness (Russell et al., 1992). Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) briefly delineated aspects of colorism within the Black community, where skin color is demarcated according to how light, or near White, one is (Russell et al., 1992). During the Bayside Focus Group, the following conversation took place:

Luigi:	Oh, in Georgia, that's how they call it. In the South, that's how they call it: yellow, red and blue. Blue is –
Yoshi:	Black.
Luigi:	You're so Black that you look blue.
Yoshi:	[Laughs]. Yeah, it's like purple or –
Luigi:	And then there's red. Red is you're Black, but it's like a brown so it kind of looks red in a certain tint if you get like – and then there's yellow. [Laughter]
Moderator:	He pointed to me. [Laughter]
Luigi:	I'm red. Yeah.
Moderator:	Okay. So you would be more red… Okay. And then like someone like Bernie Mac would be…
Luigi:	Purple.
Moderator:	Blue or –
Luigi:	Black… Yeah. Blue. *[Laughter]*

Toad:	Flavor Flav.
Luigi:	Flavor Flav blue. And it's just I don't know how they fully distinguish, but you would clearly be –
Peach:	Where am I?
Luigi:	You're red… Yeah. You know why? But it also coincides with features.
Moderator:	And this is within the Black community?
Luigi:	Yeah… Like, oh, the lighter you are, the better you are.

(Dialogue from the Bayside Focus Group)

The above dialogue demonstrates that skin color reflects how people who are monoracially Black, as well as multiracial, are subjected to privilege or oppression based on the hue of their skin. Lighter-skinned people of Black background typically have more access to White privilege, based on having a more fair complexion (Byrd & Tharps, 2001; Russell et al., 1992).

Some of the multiracial participants talked about the sense of entitlement people had in talking about aspects of their skin coloring. It was a form of exoticization and objectification, in that the multiracial person was objectified due to his or her skin color. In her personal narrative, Pip (female, age 19, Texas) told of a time she was shopping at an upscale clothing store where her mother worked. A White employee was assisting Pip in selecting outfits. When Pip's mother introduced the employee and Pip, "the lady's eyes widened. She said, 'This is your daughter? My goodness, I didn't realize you'd be so fair. You're practically white'" (Pip, Narrative).

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) recounted the mother of a friend in elementary school who referred to Sonya's skin color as "lightly toasted" (Sonya, Interview 2). Although the woman might have meant it as a compliment, the characterization left a negative imprint on Sonya:

> Her daughter was one of my closest friends… somehow the topic of race or skin color came up and she said, "You know, you're lightly toasted" is how she described me.

> Saying that my skin color was “lightly toasted.” I thought that’s so strange to call someone “lightly toasted.” It’s just kind of weird; it’s like white bread, you stick it in the toaster, you toast it and it’s “lightly toasted.” I don’t know why I thought that was so weird of describing somebody’s skin color. I mean there’s like a hundred things she could have said like, “You have a pretty caramel color,” there’s so many other ways she could have said it. Her opportunity to comment on my skin color was that it was “lightly toasted” and I thought that was so strange. I guess because I have White parents [I thought] so I’m White and you stick me in the toaster and that’s how…I don’t know, it just weirded [*sic*] me out the way that she said that and that she even thought about it that way. It made me feel icky. (Sonya, Interview 2)

Many microaggressions were related to exoticization and objectification, whereby people privileged participants for having lighter skin tones than their monoracial Black counterparts, or for having a unique hair texture, which resulted in the participant feeling “on display” (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135). Such microaggressions contributed to the internalized struggle for identity of the participants.

Exoticized in societal interactions – Objectified sexually. Some of the female participants felt exoticized because of being multiracial (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Only one of the male participants spoke of feeling sexually exoticized. Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) shared an instance when he felt exoticized as a sexual ideal, when a female showed interest in him because she “date(s) only Black guys” (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group). After they spoke on the telephone for a while, she realized that he was “kind of White” (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group) and was not Black enough for her tastes. Luigi explained:

> This annoys me because you’re projecting some kind of sick ideals of what you think what a Black person is ‘cause what I think a Black person is may not be the same as what you think a Black person is. (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group)

Female participants said they were exoticized by Black males, idealized as racial sexual tokens due to their part-White, or their non-Black ancestry, as in Ana’s (female, age 22, Hillside Focus Group) example. Being half-Hispanic (Salvadoran) and half-Black, Ana mentioned that

she was exoticized for speaking Spanish when Black men would respond to that fact by saying to her "That's sexy" (Ana, Hillside Focus Group).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) felt exoticized by Black males whenever they asked her "What are you?" and when she told them of her mixed-White background. She spoke of a type of reverence for mixed-race females by some Black men and mentioned how she had met Black men who liked particular mixtures of multiracial women. Consequently, this response caused Elyse to identify herself as monoracially Black when identifying her racial background to Black males to avoid being exoticized sexually (Elyse, Interview 1).

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) encountered exoticization by Black males in her daily life as well as on dating websites (Amber, Interview 1). Additionally, she mentioned how her monoracially Black half-brother also seemed to exoticize lighter-skinned women (Amber, Interview 1). This form of exoticization is even perpetuated in contemporary Hip-Hop music and videos, and shows how this notion is promoted through the media. Amber described: "Hollywood's perception of beauty is never really a darker-skinned female" (Amber, Interview 3). This reality is part of Media Environment Microaggressions concerning White standards of beauty and microaggressions of Exclusion from Black females. Amber elaborated: "And I noticed, like, a lot of, like, Black guys will want light-skinned girls and [Black] girls will hate light-skinned – other, darker girls will hate light-skinned girls, because Black guys want them" (Amber, Interview 1).

Pip (female, age 19, Texas) substantiated this form of exoticization: "With Black boys, a lot of them, or the ones I've come in contact with, do prefer lighter women" (Pip, Interview 1). This is not to say that all Black males are attracted to lighter women, but the women in this study

felt that the males they have met tended to exoticize them for being part-White and saw how this notion was promoted and perpetuated through the media.

Forms of media, such as television programs, movies, magazines, and contemporary music promote the microaggression of exoticization of the multiracial Black female by Black males. The lack of multiracial role models and issues of colorism and exclusion from the Black community also contribute to this microaggression.

When the participants were exoticized sexually, they felt objectified rather than appreciated completely for their entire human existence. These types of microaggressions illustrated the theme of the individual's internal struggle to fit in within the racial construct of society.

Exclusion or isolation.

Choose a side. The participants in the study experienced having to choose a racial side, both in terms of school forms and by society in general. Several participants experienced such exclusionary microaggressions. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) spoke of how her being multiracial was confusing for some people, who just couldn't understand the multiplicity of the multiracial person's experience:

> With being multiracial, the biggest problem I face is the choosing the side thing because… people don't understand that you can be multiple things. They can't see two things at once within one person. It's the duality of somebody they just don't see how that works out. (Amber, Interview 3)

Yoshi's (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) experience paralleled those of other participants who did not feel a part of either racial group. He mentioned how he might receive more acceptance from Black people on certain levels:

> But when I'm hanging out in big groups of White people, I definitely feel like an oddball. Or even in, like, groups of Black people, it's the same thing. I just feel like the odd man out. I mean, in a lot of ways I feel like I can blend in more with other African Americans, but they definitely point out the light skin and the difference and it's just – I don't know, but I definitely – I don't know, it's just so hard. I can't explain it. They're just different. (Yoshi, Interview 2)

When helping her sister register for the SAT, Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) questioned the point of checking a race box if it makes a difference in terms of any privileges afforded. She wondered about the chances of getting college scholarships if one were to check "other," and what purpose that category serves. Elyse asked, "What are the implications for checking 'other?' No one's explained that to us. I feel like, what does it mean if you check 'other?' Do they keep tally on it, do they use it for reports?" (Elyse, Interview 1).

Being forced to choose only one racial side contributed to the participants' struggle for racial. Having to select one race with which to align made the multiracial participants question how they might fit into the monoracial societal structure.

Exclusion within the family, with peers in school, and in society. Exclusion or isolation within the Black community or the White community was present in all three social contexts of family, school, and society. Participants spoke of particular incidents of exclusion or isolation from family members (Amber, Pip), within dating relationships (Amber, Sonic, Sonya, Yoshi), and from classmates (Amber, Elyse, Luigi, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, Yoshi). There was an overlap between microaggressions by peers and classmates within the schooling context, as school was both an academic and social space. Any instances of microaggressions by classmates will be detailed under the realm of Society. Consequently, microaggressions by teachers and administration will be detailed under the realm of School. These microaggressions were examples of exclusionary or isolatory acts because, whereas dealing with friends was optional

(and, therefore, a social activity), attending school (and ultimately encountering racially biased actions from teachers and school officials) was mandated.

Exclusion from the White community. Second-class treatment occurred when the multiracial participants felt that they received inferior treatment to their White counterparts (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). This type of microaggression was evidenced in Pip's (female, age 19, Texas) narrative when she spoke of the effects of "hidden racism… [where] the White residents may not call you the N-word or some other slur, but they would attempt to inconspicuously follow you around a store or give Blacks a longer waiting period in a restaurant" (Pip, Narrative).

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) told a story of being with some White friends who talked about their experiences as White males, but did not include Yoshi in the conversation. He realized that these friends did not see him as White or part-White:

> And it was like they were talking about being White or what it's like to be White and I don't know, it was just – it was kind of exclusionary. I guess they couldn't see me as White and it was just another example… They don't always see me the way I see myself. (Yoshi, Interview 2)

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) referred to herself as an "honorary White person" (Interviews 1, 2, and 3) because of having two monoracially White parents (a White mother who remarried a White man) and a White younger half-brother. While growing up, she tried to fit into whatever norms were dictated by White society, but because of her different looks, she was not fully accepted. In elementary school, a White male friend of hers was teased for having a "Black girlfriend" (Sonya, Interview 1), and her White brother was asked questions about what it was like to have a "Black sister" (Sonya, Interview 1).

Exclusion from the Black community. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) felt that exclusion came more from Black people and wished they were more accepting of her. She was raised mostly by her mother (multiracial herself, but considered phenotypically monoracially Black), so Amber felt that Black people should accept her more than they do. She explained: "I'd rather be accepted by them [Black people], because there's more tension between us than if I was accepted by White people" (Amber, Follow-up Interview). Amber attributed uncomfortable feelings from both sides because of being mixed part-White. She said, "It is sometimes uncomfortable to be who I am around them [Black people] because I am mixed with 'the enemy' or something like that" (Amber, Narrative).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) grew up in the suburbs, and felt excluded by the Black community in general, as with, "[Y]ou wouldn't understand or you don't know because you're half-White so it negates the fact that you can relate to what we're talking about" (Elyse, Interview 3). Elyse saw herself as "an outsider in the Black community, not necessarily White" (Elyse, Interview 1). She also experienced being told that she "speak[s] White" or she "act[s] White" by Black people (Elyse, Interview 1); and that she does not demonstrate "typical Black stereotypes" (Elyse, Hillside Focus Group). Also, Elyse's lighter skin color, from the Black community's perspective, further prevented her from being seen as part of the Black community:

> So it's, I guess, hard for people, certain people in the Black community to relate to that because if this overwhelming majority of things they are sensing from me feel White and the only thing they see is that I'm part-Black, I feel like maybe it's hard for people in the Black community to connect to me in that way." (Elyse, Interview 1)

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) and Pip (female, age 19, Texas) were both told that they were not "fully Black" (Amber, Interview 3) and therefore, could not relate completely

to the Black experience. Amber was told by both her mother and her older half-brother (who are both considered monoracially Black) that she did not know the complete experience of being Black. Concerning her brother, she said, "I'll try to agree with him in certain things and he'll kind of like shuns me from doing that because he'll refer to the fact that I'm not fully Black so I don't know" (Amber, Interview 3). Regarding her mother, she said:

> And my mom even told me "Yeah, but even you can't fully relate to a Black person," and I'm like, "Maybe I can't completely say I know what it's like to look a certain way or to feel like my great grandmother was a slave or something." (Amber, Interview 3)

At the same time, she cannot fully relate to the White experience, being a person of part-Black background with some Black phenotypic features: "It's kind of like I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place where there's no way I can relate to either completely although I wish to" (Amber, Interview 3). Despite being excluded by members of her own family, Amber thought of it is a covert a "form of privilege because even… my own mother can tell me I can't relate to her" (Amber, Interview 3). By telling Amber she could not relate to her, Amber's mother reinscibed difference and assumed a problematic form of superiotity on the part of her own daughter.

Similarly to Amber, Pip (female, age 19, Texas) felt discriminated against by a Black classmate, who said Pip was not Black and therefore, could not understand racism:

> It was in high school, [when I was] in the eleventh or twelfth grade. There was this one other Black girl. It wasn't to [that] extent, but she was messing with me and [also] one of my friends who was biracial. We were talking about race in our history class, and [about] experiencing prejudice [when] she said that we didn't know how it felt to experience prejudice or racism because we weren't Black. She just thought everybody else hated Black people so she didn't like us because we were mixed. She didn't like anybody who wasn't Black. (Pip, Interview 2)

Pip was excluded from the Black community, explaining that Black people tended "One-Drop" her or categorize her as monoracially Black.

Like Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group), Pip mentioned that her lighter skin color led people in the Black and other monoracial communities to discriminate against her:

> Since I was not brown or dark-skinned like the other Blacks, some of the Blacks assumed I was White and some though I was Hispanic. The Hispanics didn't know what race I was, but they knew I wasn't Hispanic and that was enough for them. The Hispanics excluded me from games and ignored me if I tried to start a conversation with them. The Black girls would pull my ponytail. (Pip, Narrative)

When Pip was asked who "One-Drop Ruled" her the most, she responded that it was more common for Black people to remind her that society sees her as Black, although she maintains a multiracial Creole identity (Pip, Interview 1).

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) mentioned that Black people told him, "Well, you're only half-Black, you're not really Black" (Sonic, Interview 1). This statement was often said with a negative connotation and belittled his multifaceted experience as a multiracial individual. He spoke of how these types of statements were "kind of alienating (to) me… making me feel like I'm different or like my opinion doesn't matter" (Sonic, Interview 1). As a result of exclusion by Black people, Sonic felt like he had to try to emulate more "Black" attributes and minimize his more "White" characteristics to gain social acceptance:

> Sometimes I would get that sense too, that I'd have to try even harder just – or almost have to wear my blackness on my sleeve a little bit more when I'm around them. But – or almost downplay my whiteness, and it's – you know, I'm saying blackness and whiteness like you can just turn it off or on. Like it's, you know, just a thing that you wear. So I know that's problematic, but, you know, if there was any kind of signifier that I felt that this might be read as, you know, an endearing thing, that, you know, as far as an endearing Black characteristic, I might try to emphasize that or I might try to downplay any kind of signifier that might, you know, be an – you know, seen as something that's quote/unquote, "White." (Sonic, Interview 3)

In middle school, Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) was a victim of colorism in the Black community due to his lighter skin color; and he was the recipient of hostile racism. Living in a predominantly Black community in East Oakland, California, he heard overtly racist comments about White people and, because of his own part-Whiteness, was called hurtful names, like "piss-colored" (Yoshi, Interviews 1 and 2), "White boy" (Yoshi, Interview 2), and "high-yellow-ass nigger" (Yoshi, Interview 2). He detailed:

> And then you hear things about White people like, "They're the devil," and "There's no White kids in that school," and the one that was [at the school] was harassed and beaten until he left the school… It was just really weird for me knowing that there's a lot of animosity towards White people and I was half-White and they didn't like me because I was like so light-skinned and they often made some kind of racial jokes about my complexion and stuff like that. (Yoshi, Interview 1)

Being called these racist names because of his light skin and seeing the effects of this harsh racism on White people made Yoshi ignore the one White boy at his middle school and want to disassociate from White people in general. In other words, to be White was to be a victim of hate:

> So it was eighth grade, this kid named Aaron… he said hi to me, but I… I just ignored him because he was, like, a target. Like, I had been there for awhile and I knew how these kids were and I just – I didn't want to be associated with White people when I was there. (Yoshi, Interview 1)

Some participants felt a particular exclusion from Black classmates. Five of the female participants (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonya, and Ana, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned experiencing microaggressions of exclusion from Black females. Each of these women had instances of Black girls in middle school being mean and rude, saying insulting remarks, or even starting physical fights. An example from Elyse's experience was:

> And then, back to the incident in middle school with the girls who were very nasty to me, it made me really uncomfortable… I told [my mom] the things they said like "Why does

she wear Converse?" and "Why does she wear Hollister?" and "Who does she think she is?" and "Doesn't she look in the mirror, doesn't she know she's Black?" or something like that. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) was quite aware of Black female resentment of White privilege:

> I think that Black girls have a thing against mixed White-skinned pretty, like, "good hair" type girls because I think if I go really deep into it, like the whole Black and White slavery issue. Like a lot of Black people, even my own suite mates, they hold onto the fact that White people did this to our people, I guess. It feels weird to even say that. (Amber, Interview 1)

Each of the five female participants who told of stories about exclusion from Black females shared a similar pattern. Remarkably, all five participants mentioned that their problems with Black females began in middle school. The Black female would make some remark to instigate or incite a confrontation—a statement suggesting that the multiracial female was "better than" (Elyse, Interview 1), "superior" (Amber, Interview 1; Amber, Narrative), "all that" (Pip, Interview 1), "cute" (Amber, Interviews 1 and 2; Amber, Hillside Focus Group), or "arrogant" (Pip, Interview 3) to the Black females. This gambit was followed by the Black female making fun of some personal characteristic of the multiracial female—usually not being Black enough or not identifying herself as being Black. The multiracial female has to negotiate her identity in the face of being excluded, which requires reshaping her personal attributes to be more Black, while other people denigrate her White aspects. These exclusionary acts happened with classmates, peers, and even family; like in Pip's (female, age 19, Texas) case where her Black cousin told Pip she was "stuck up" (Pip, Interview 1).

In some cases, Black females heavily criticized some aspect of the multiracial female's appearance, such as her clothing, or the way she walks or does certain activities. The Black

female, at that time, might offer to teach the multiracial person how to act and exhibit more stereotypical Black behaviors. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned that her Black roommate told her, "We have to teach you some Black words" (Amber, Hillside Focus Group). Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) also had a group of Black girls in middle school attempt to show her how to:

> be more Black, or what they perceived as being Black which they probably got off the television anyways [laughs]. They tried to teach me how to walk [and to] have a certain attitude and to do these certain things. I tried [but], it didn't come naturally… to me because I did not watch the same television and I was not brought up in the same culture. So it was a little foreign to me, and then after a day they dropped me [laughs] because I could not do it. Now that I am in college it has changed [and] some of my closest friends are African American. (Sonya, Interview 3)

Sonya was excluded by the Black females through their very effort to train her to be included. The Black females excluded Sonya for not being Black enough, but tried to educate her so she could be Black enough, reinforcing a racialized role that needs to be co-opted by the multiracial female, rather than integrated. This form of microaggression occurs when Black females do not accept the multiracial person for who she is.

In other cases, the Black female turned to racist name-calling, which escalated into physical violence. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) was careful to always have friends with her at school, to avoid being physically assaulted: "I always had friends around me to walk around to keep just in case the girls want to come over and fight or something. I don't know because I don't fight. I have never physically hurt anybody" (Amber, Interview 1). Pip (female, age 19, Texas), however, told of an incident that occurred when she was in 6th grade, when a Black girl harassed her at school, followed her around, and bullied her for weeks. The following example reflects a double racial microaggression: When a Black schoolmate excluded

Pip, the school administrator dismissed the racial incident, thus representing a Second-Class Citizen microaggression. Pip explained:

> Then she called me a "White ass bitch" and we got into a fight… She called me that [name] and then I hit her or I slapped her, actually, in the face. We started hitting each other, and I threw rocks at her. Then, one of the teachers broke us up and we got sent to the office… The principal asked us what happened [and asked us] to tell our sides [of the story]. She went first and she lied. [She] said I had been messing with her and that I randomly came up [to her] and pushed her down. [However, physically] I couldn't have [done that] because she was a lot bigger than me. Then I told my story and he just sent us back to class. [He] told us not to let it happen again. (Pip, Interview 2)

In all cases, the resentment the Black female seems to have toward the multiracial female centers around the attraction some Black men might have toward the multiracial female.

Exclusion in dating relationships. Some participants described how they were excluded from dating relationships. For instance, Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) mentioned feeling excluded in dating because of "fall[ing] short of an ideal… I was too Black for White women, I was too White for Black women, and I was just too different in general for anybody that wasn't Black or White" (Sonic, Interviews 1 and 3). Because of this exclusionary status, Sonic felt that at times he could probably be seen as a novelty in dating relationships, but not as a serious romantic interest or one that could be taken home to parents (Sonic, Interview 3).

Sonic, Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group), and Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) explained not having a particular racial preference in women, but they were all told that they were not Black enough by Black women. Yoshi, in particular, was very sensitive about his dating experiences, having felt excluded by Black women for having too light skin, or excluded by White and other types of women for him not being whatever race to which they might have been attracted. He referred to one time when a Black girlfriend called him "little White boy" (Yoshi, Interview 1; Yoshi, Bayside Focus Group). And he felt that women, far

more than men, tended to discriminate against men racially, and that nothing was being said in society to rectify it. He identified this situation as one area in which people openly discriminated against people and were not criticized for it. He mentioned how "it's just disheartening when you hear… Women of Color talk about how they have a certain preference for certain ethnicities" (Yoshi, Bayside Focus Group).

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) also talked about how dating can be difficult as a multiracial person. She detailed the tendency of some Black men to exoticize lighter skinned women, whereas some White men do not want to date darker women and tend to "One-Drop" (Elyse, Interview 1) mixed-race women as monoracially Black.

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) described how she was more physically attracted to White men; yet, as Elyse also mentioned, Amber found that more Black men seemed to be attracted to her, thereby limiting her dating choices. She did not feel completely accepted by either racial side in terms of dating men:

> And the one thing I don't like is the whole acceptance within different racial groups, especially Black and the White male group, because that's – to not be accepted is already a problem within itself a lot of people face. But I think being mixed makes me want it even more, because I feel like I kind of deserve a place within both, not having to choose. But that's probably the biggest hurdle, I would say, or issue of being who I am and how it affects me the most. (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

Microaggressions of Exclusion or Isolation demonstrated the theme of the participant's struggle to forge a racial identity. These types of microaggressions made the participant feel excluded from both the Black and White communities, as well as from relationships and friendships. Being excluded or isolated from a group provoked an internal struggle about where he or she might fit in socially.

Pathologization.

Examples of psychopathology. A common microaggression that pathologized the mixed-race experience included a multiracial individual being told that he or she was confused. Pip (female, age 19, Texas), Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group), and Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) mentioned other people telling them that they were confused because they were multiracial; confusion centered on "not knowing what I am or who I'm trying to be" (Amber, Interview 3). Amber (Interview 3) and Pip (Interview 1) agreed that this particular microaggression tended to come more from Black people. Black females, in particular, were the leading group to microaggress multiracial female participants, calling them arrogant or conceited. Pip illustrated:

> That was my first experience with a bunch of Black girls. They would say to me, "I think I'm stuck up" or "I think I'm 'all that.'" Whether it was because of my mixture, or just because of my skin color. A lot of them were darker, and they had issues with lighter people. That was the biggest group I've heard it from. I've never come into contact with a lot more Black girls." (Pip, Interview 1)

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) talked about the implication from Black females that she had a "superior mentality towards myself over [Black females] because of my appearance" (Amber, Narrative) and because of being exoticized by Black males. This characterization related to Pip's (female, age 19, Texas) example of Denial of Multiracial Identity discussed previously, when Pip was told by a Black friend and her friend's mother that she did not relate to being Black, and did not want to be Black, because Pip was not interested in applying to a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) also spoke of a Black friend who would joke about mixed-race people, saying how mixed-race people are confused (Yoshi, Interview 2).

Examples of family pathology. Research by Johnston and Nadal (2010) has shown how the interracial family receives microaggressions that pathologize the familial experience as abnormal. In public, the interracial family may be subjected to microaggressions such as stares, hostile glances, or purposefully avoidant behavior. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group), Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey), and Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) mentioned being stared at while in public places with their interracial parents and siblings. Yoshi cited that the first time he felt different was at the mall with his mother, who was White, and "this Black lady star[ed] at us really intensely, and it made me feel really, really, awkward, and I just – I didn't understand it" (Yoshi, Interview 1). Amber talked about being out in public with her mother, who was Black, and how she felt she was probably seen by others as the "light-skinned girl with the Black lady" (Amber, Interview 3). Verbal or visual clues by on-lookers demonstrated disapproval; Amber continued, "Yeah, it's the vibes that people kind of – their looks and just being standoffish or just like side-eyeing you. It's a clear indicator that there's something up with my presence for them" (Amber, Interview 3).

In being pathologized, Amber mentioned hearing remarks from others that disparaged and pathologized the experiences of interracial families and their mixed-race offspring. Amber's feelings were hurt when her roommate, who was Black, made the pathologizing remark of "White people were made in test tubes" (Amber, Interview 1). Amber confronted her roommate in telling her that her father was White, when she said, "You realize that's half of me, right?" (Amber, Interview 1). This example was similar to a remark that Peach (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) encountered in middle school. Wearing a tank top, commonly called a "wife-

beater," she was excited to show it to a White male friend of hers, because it was in her favorite shade of orange:

> [I said,] "Hey, Tom, what do you think of my new tank top?" And he was like, "That's not a tank top. It's a wife-beater." And I was like, "Wife beater? I never understood why it's called a wife-beater." And he's like, "It's called a wife-beater because of all the Black guys that beat their wives." (Peach, Bayside Focus Group)

When Peach reminded her friend that her father was Black and asked if he was implying that her father was abusive, he replied that he was not racist. Peach was the only part-Black person in the class, and the other students in the class chimed in with dismissive remarks, which further alienated her, such as "I don't get it, Peach, like why are you so upset?" (Peach, Bayside Focus Group).

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) referenced the stigma in society on interracial relationships; that they are seen as "taboo" and that negative feelings from the outside are transferred to the multiracial offspring. He discussed this phenomenon in his interviews as well as his personal narrative:

> I feel like there is a very big stigma on interracial relationships and interracial families, especially certain kinds of racial combinations… Definitely it's kind of seen as a taboo or something that is not normal or, you know, risky or kind of looked down upon. And we are the products of interracial relationships, so sometimes those feelings can kind of filter into – or they can kind of trickle down to us, multiracial people. (Sonic, Interview 3)

In sharing microaggressions that he felt pathologized his mixed-race status, Sonic recalled a time in college when a White male friend said he had found out his ex-girlfriend had dated a Black man, and how that bothered him. The other White males in the group agreed that they would also be angry if they discovered that their girlfriends, past and current, had dated a Black man. Sonic felt this was a microaggression of pathology, and said it came across to him as:

> Like she [the girlfriend], you know, tarnished herself, she soiled herself, she dirtied herself, and… I [the white man] cannot touch that anymore. I can't be with that anymore because she stooped so low. That's a very, you know, condescending… dehumanizing way of looking at another people, another group of people. (Sonic, Interview 2)

Sonic continued to detail this pathology of interracial relationships in his personal narrative, sharing an experience of overhearing two Black females talking about a Black male acquaintance, and being happy to know that he had a Black wife; the connotation being that there is "widespread fragmentation of the African-American family" (Sonic, Narrative). The women, seeing that Sonic had heard this remark, quickly apologized before he could react. Sonic felt that had he been a "Black-identified person" (Sonic, Narrative), they would not have apologized. But the implication from this exchange was that because he was multiracial, he was the product of an interracial relationship, which meant that his parents' marriage may be seen as, in his words, a "'betrayal' of my father's Blackness… send[ing] the message that relationships are only authentic when they're monoracial (or at least take more seriously)" (Sonic, Narrative).

Pathologization of cultural values and communication styles. Because monoracial people marginalize multiracial people as monoracial, sometimes dismissive remarks are made about one of the racial groups to which the multiracial person is related. An example came from Sonic's (male, age 24, New Jersey) experience in high school when a White girlfriend remarked about the school they attended combining with a predominantly Black neighboring school. The girlfriend asked Sonic with a negative connotation, "Do you know how weird that's going to be?" (Sonic, Interview 3). When Sonic questioned her about this apparent weirdness, she continued with "[The Black students are] different" in a way that was "just kind of casting aspersion on the whole thing" (Sonic, Interview 3).

This "difference" attributed by the dominant racial group to a less privileged group perpetuates the divide between White culture and Black culture—as evidenced in an incident Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) recalled occurring in college at an event attended by a large group of Black people. A White girlfriend who frequently tokenized Amber, for example asking her to explain the behavior of "delinquent Black people" (Amber, Interview 3), once again was microaggressive when she said—in reference to the large quantity of Black people—"There's going to be madness outside!" (Amber, Interview 3). This term of "madness," in Amber's opinion, described these people as rowdy; yet she remarked that "[I]f it was White people who were drunk, the majority of people who get drunk here [at the university], it would have been worse" (Amber, Interview 3). To make matters worse, later that evening, a chain-letter type of text message was sent to a number of the college students, saying, "If you don't send this [text message], a big Black man is going to come and creep over your bed at night" (Amber, Interview 3).

Another example of Pathologizing of Cultural Values came from Amber when she was dating a boyfriend. In the two years they were involved, whenever they would argue, he would refer to Amber's being angry as her "Black girl attitude" (Amber, Interview 2). This young Hispanic man would pathologize Amber's anger as a Black cultural value rather than as a warranted expression or emotion. The boyfriend also pathologized Amber's Black mother when her mother would set boundaries as to how much time Amber could spend with him, causing the boyfriend to freely share how much more he preferred Amber's White father, who was more lenient. His preference for Amber's father over her mother seemed like a form of microaggression to Amber, where her father was at times absent from her life while her mother

was the main person who raised her. This young man also admired Amber's Irish roots, but he never mentioned how he appreciated her multiracial experience or her Black heritage. Only when she had shown a negative emotion was she pathologized as having a "Black girl attitude" (Amber, Interview 2) by her boyfriend:

> I would have an attitude with him sometimes and, trust me, it was a warranted attitude. It wasn't like out of nowhere. Like I had a reason to be upset. And he would tell me, "I don't like how you're acting. You're acting like you're getting a Black girl attitude." And I don't know if I mentioned this before but this is what he would tell me and I'd be like, "What are you talking about? Just because I like to hold my ground and I'm pointing out that you're doing something wrong, it's my "Black girl attitude." I mean, is it when I'm not mad like my White girl attitude? (Amber, Interview 2)

Pathologization – Assumption of Criminal Status. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) and Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) both spoke of times they were assumed to be of criminal status because of being part-Black (Sue et al., 2007b). Amber was not necessarily herself viewed as engaging in illegal acts, but was expected to explain presumed criminal activity for a White girlfriend. This White friend would often say things like "There's a Black guy – duck!" (Amber, Interview 3) while in Amber's presence, indicating that she saw Black people as criminal or deviant (Sue et al., 2007b). Amber cited many such instances with this White girlfriend, who frequently tokenized her and expected Amber to be her "gateway to the Black world" (Amber, Interview 3) and any possible illegal activities. Yet, this friend did not ask their third friend—of Salvadorian background—the same questions. It was to Amber that she posed questions such as "Am I going to get shot?" (Amber, Interview 3) when they visited unfamiliar parts of the city. Feeling exasperated, but using humor to soften the impact, Amber reflected:

> 'Cause it's funny she never asks our Hispanic friend. It's just us three that are very, very close and we went to visit my Hispanic friend once and she was doing the same I'm

gonna get shot thing. I'm just like, "Can you just get shot to get it over with? Do you want that to happen because you're not going to unless we're walking deep in Compton wearing like red flags or something saying, 'Look at me.' There's no reason why we would get shot. There's just none whatsoever. You don't hear of a Black guy pulling a gun on a random White girl in a Jetta." (Amber, Interview 3)

The pathology of phenotype. Due to the Media Environmental Microaggression of White standards of beauty, whereby White physical features are exalted over the features of non-White women (Byrd & Tharps, 2001; Russell et al., 1992), some multiracial people might feel pathologized or that their physical appearance is seen as abnormal. Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) wrote in her narrative about this notion:

> The most difficult facet of my many realizations about my own "race" was accepting that what my White peers had reduced me to, was entirely superficial. This was difficult because I had to acknowledge that years of my self-hatred and feelings of inferiority were baseless and in the long term pointless. I allowed myself to fall into a circular trap of seemingly inexorable thoughts about what it must be like to look Whiter. (Sonya, Narrative)

Several participants spoke of receiving negative comments about their hair, in which their hair textures or characteristics were not exoticized as being "good hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001, p. 19; Russell et al., 1992, p. 85), but pathologized as a barrier to personal beauty in terms of White standards. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Group) was first made aware of her hair's condition in elementary school: "There is this boy I liked, a White boy, and he said my hair was, like, 'so poofy' and I was just, like, 'Oh, is it?' I know it's hard to manage but I didn't realize it wasn't something that he thought was normal" (Amber, Interview 1).

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) was the recipient of jokes from friends about his racial mixture, seen as abnormal:

> I've had people make jokes, to almost, like, just turn the experience of mixed-race just kind of into a cartoon, or kind of this recurring joke. Yeah, just all different kinds of, like, teasing kind of jokes. [For example] in middle school, I had somebody tell me once,

> "Well, it's a good thing that your dad is Black and your mom is White, 'cause I heard that when the mom is Black and the dad is White, the kids come out with stripes, like zebras or something." (Sonic, Interview 3)

Colorism was also evidenced in Yoshi's (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) experience. While growing up, Yoshi received a lot of negative comments about his lighter skin-tone from the Black perspective. Living in an impoverished area of East Oakland, California, and attending predominantly Black schools, Yoshi was frequently stigmatized when peers called him names, pathologizing his skin color. He was frequently called derogatory names like "piss-colored" (Yoshi, Interviews 1 and 2; Yoshi, Bayside Focus Group) and "high yellow" (Yoshi, Interview 1; Yoshi, Bayside Focus Group), which made him very aware of being different, and that difference was not appreciated or respected. Skin color no longer was a distinctive mark, but a type of disfigurement. Being called "piss-colored," Yoshi was compared to the color of urine, pathologized by his monoracially Black classmates as if something was wrong with him. "I just felt, like, hated. I felt like people didn't like me. I felt like, I'm just, like, White because for all intents and purposes, I was White. That's just how I – that's how I felt" (Yoshi, Interview 2).

These examples of racial microaggressions from Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) and Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) could be deemed as typical child or adolescent behavior—people simply making fun of someone who looks different than the "norm." Likewise, Yoshi's (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) example of microaggression could be attributed to race and class intersectionality, dealing with levels of extreme poverty and thus, racial hostility. Yet it was Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) who voiced the most hurt and frustration when it came to being pathologized because of physical appearance. She had the

most to say about her phenotypical characteristics as a multiracial person—her racial ambiguity, her facial and body features, and society's perceptions of her physical appearance—and felt that it was the greatest source of pathologization, to the point of affected her self-esteem and her social interactions with others.

With Sonya, pathology centered around her hair. She discussed her hair at length in her individualized interviews, as well as in her personal narrative. In fact, she began her narrative as such: "The most pressing and important issue of microaggression within my personal 'multiracial experience' was the constant fight with my hair" (Sonya, Narrative). Sonya was raised in a monoracially White family, with her biological White mother and White adoptive step-father, so she did not grow up, as some of the other participants, with a Black parent. Sonya mentioned without any hostility, just matter-of-factly, that she was raised by a White mother who did not know how to care for Sonya's "crazy curly" (Sonya, Interview 2) hair; she received no support about how to care for her hair and this harmed her in a psychological way. Her hair, in its natural state of curls—coupled with growing up with two White parents in a predominantly White community—contributed to her feeling different. In feeling different, though living as an "honorary White" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3), she was ridiculed for her physical appearance in school. Being ridiculed made her "feel like a freak" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3), which caused her to feel ashamed of herself for being mixed-race and not able to fit White societal norms. Sonya's hair was seen as abnormal and, therefore, her features were questioned. Ultimately, being pathologized by her White peers because of her multiracial physical appearance made her want to hide:

> When somebody points you out and says, "you are different" and it becomes either a sense of ridicule or a sense of, there's some sort of something behind it that is not okay about it, then it doesn't become okay, and then all the sudden you realize it's not okay. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Sonya spoke of an experience in school of another student criticizing her hair, denigrating her hair as unkempt, and

> pulling my hair and telling me that I had dreadlocks like as if I, you know, just stopped washing my hair…it was just kind of like, you know, "I'm gonna pull your hair and tell you that it's ugly." I don't, I don't know, it was just so bothersome. I, I hated my hair, fought with my hair… and then eventually when I was about seventeen or eighteen, I kind of gave up and I wore it down for awhile. (Sonya, Interview 1)

In wearing her hair in its natural state, Sonya shared how White society frowned upon her hair and illustrated her hurt feelings:

> The pulling, the touching without asking, the mockery and in return wishing White people would just shut up about it, while I was going to school still at times makes me feel as if I could just put my head down and cry. (Sonya, Narrative)

She was subjected to disparaging remarks from White girls in school:

> I had people tell me, "You're so pretty, if you would just do something with your hair", i.e. "straighten your hair." And it was SO hurtful and these were, like, the really pretty White girls in my class… I will never forget that… I don't know why the hair thing was such a big deal but when you're told that you would be pretty if not for your hair! It was nothing to do with my hair in general, it was my ethnicity really, it was a staple of my ethnicity. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Such criticism from her White classmates contributed to her self-esteem issues during adolescence and affected her potential to be sought after in dating relationships:

> [I felt like] "I will never be asked out on a date as long as I have this curly hair" and that was, you know, my mind… I was like, "I will never be beautiful as long as this thing is on my head." It was terrible [laughs], it was really atrocious. It was awful." (Sonya, Interview 1)

This fear was substantiated for Sonya when she went to college, leaving her hair naturally curly at first, then straightening her curls through the chemical process of a relaxer. When her hair was straightened, she received more male attention:

> What was interesting was that when I had curly hair none of the guys seemed all that interested in me but then… I straightened my hair and all of a sudden I was getting asked out by White guys… It was like, "Wow! You're so pretty!" I was like, "'Really? Because my face hasn't changed and you've known me since the beginning of the year." [laughs]. (Sonya, Interview 1)

In conclusion, Sonya explained that being pathologized for her physical appearance by her peers caused her to feel excluded from both sides of her racial heritage:

> I do not think that I have ever been ashamed of having an African American background but I have been ashamed of being mixed and not really fitting into one or the other. That is really more [of] where the shame comes from; is not being able to fit in. I could not fit into the Black [community] and I could not fit into the White [community] because those ideas that we perpetuate about one or the other are still very narrow. I felt ashamed that I could not fit into one or the other. (Sonya, Interview 3)

The participants were pathologized in several ways. Some participants were pathologized by their peers as being arrogant or confused about their racial identity. Assumptions were made about the interracial family, where family relationships were viewed as abnormal or unusual. Microaggressions occurred around differences in cultural styles, by which participants' Blackness was stigmatized. Participants were also pathologized as criminals because of assumed cultural stereotypes based on their Blackness. Lastly, participants were pathologized for their physical appearance, especially skin color and hair texture, or were subjected to jokes about being multiracial. All of these microaggressions, which pathologized some part of the multiracial experience, connected to the participants' internal struggle for racial identity, making them question how and where they might fit in a society that deems some part of their multiracial experience as wrong.

Specialized societal microaggressions. Participants dealt with racialized instances of societal nonresponses as forms of microaggression. These were examples of microaggressions in which the perpetrator of the microaggression "[did] not want to acknowledge race" (Sue et al., 2007b) or his or her own thoughts about race and racism. Nonresponses included microaggressions of Color-Blindness, Denial of Individual Racism, and Denial of Multiracial Reality.

The multiracial participants also spoke of experiencing racialized instances that reflected societal responses to microaggressions. These responses reflected microaggressions of exoticization and objectification (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), whereby the victim of the microaggressions felt that the perpetrator was deliberately trying to understand their multiracial experience for them.

The participants encounters with racial microaggression affected their multiracial identity development. As an outcome of dealing with recurring microaggressions, the participants asserted individual multiracial self-identities based on their own personal experiences, and through family socialization and racialized encounters in schools and society. The effects of racial microaggressions on the participants in this study will also be detailed.

Societal nonresponses to specific microaggressions. This section will focus on microaggressions in family, school, and society, which reflect the nonresponsive reactions of some monoracial people faced with the possibility of their own racial biases. These examples show monoracial people adopting a color-blind (Sue et al., 2007b) mentality, denying their own individual racism (Sue et al., 2007b), or denying multiracial experiential reality (Johnston &

Nadal, 2010) through behaviors or actions that dismissed or minimized the racial reality of multiracial people.

*Racial microaggressions/Color-blindness***.** Sue et al. (2007b) have discussed color-blindness as a theme of microaggression in which the perpetrator "does not want to acknowledge race" (p. 276). Statements such as "When I look at you, I don't see color" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 276), or "There is only one race, the human race" (p. 276) constitute this microaggression. Such remarks minimize race as unimportant or act as if discrimination does not exist, usually from the White perspective. This microaggression is also exhibited when a White person tells a Person of Color how to feel about racial incidents or to not take racist remarks so personally (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b).

Peach (female, age 19, Bayside Focus Group) mentioned this type of color-blindness during the discussion of the Focus Group Vignette (See Appendix C). In the vignette, the two characters, Christopher (a White male university student) and Elizabeth (a Black-White multiracial female university student) are having a conversation in which Christopher makes numerous microaggressive remarks to Elizabeth. At one point in the vignette, Christopher indicates that Elizabeth is "just so sensitive" about her racial experiences. Peach, in the Bayside Focus Group, spoke of how she had often overheard similar comments from White students in her university classes:

> Like when I'm sitting in class, I hear them talking and, like, this is just bullshit. Like, you know, "Racism doesn't exist anymore" and "They're being too sensitive," which is exactly what he [Christopher] says at the end [of the vignette]. (Peach, Bayside Focus Group)

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) perceived the "I don't see color" (Sonya, Interview 3) comment as allowing White people not to deal with racial discrimination:

> The "I do not see color" comment. I hate that! I hate it! "I don't see color" or "We don't see color; we don't teach color in our family." Well, I say you are doing your kids a disservice because they are going to grow up and not see the discrimination around them, or they are not going to care and that is really sad. It is really sad. It is like a taboo subject. It is like, "Well, we experience all this wonderful privilege and we come from a background of slave owners but we are not going to talk about it because we don't know how" and I think that is just so offensive. It is [about how White people] come from a really horrible legacy in a lot of ways and you are riding on a privilege that comes from a horrible legacy and you are not even going to have a discussion about it. That just drives me crazy. (Sonya, Interview 3)

The microaggressions of alleged color-blindness are interconnected; these statements dramatize how White dominant society tries to remain neutral with regard to its historical contribution to racial discrimination. These statements allow privileged groups to feel comfortable that "America is a melting pot" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 276); that there is no racism; or that racist events are not important. Sonya shared her feelings about this stance:

> So I love, and when I say I love, I mean it very sarcastically [laughs]. I know they do not do it on purpose but I REALLY love it when White people try to tell me how I should feel about something or how I should interpret something. When I am in a situation where I have obviously been discriminated against there is almost this [feeling of] I have to justify it [coming from the White person.] So, [when I say], "Wow, I felt discriminated against" and the White person says, "Wow, I did not see it that way, but I'm sorry you felt that way." [The person can either] leave it at that or ask further questions if they do not understand but instead [they reply], "Well, I don't think it was this," or "Well..." Why don't you just let me feel how I feel or have a discussion with me about it? But when you deny that person their self-experience, I think that that is bothersome. (Sonya, Interview 3)

These types of racial microaggressions affected the participants in that they felt race and racism were minimized as an experience to be understood only by People of Color. Such racial microaggressions reflect a societal nonresponse because those making the color-blind statement do not have to be cognizant of their racial biases—because they simply "don't see color" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 276).

Racial microaggressions/Denial of individual racism. One microaggressive theme that White people and other privileged groups engage in is denying individual racism with such statements as "I'm not racist, I have several Black friends" (Sue, 2007b, p. 276), or "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority" (Sue, 2007b, p. 276). Luigi (male, age 22, Bayside Focus Group) gave the example of "I love those things like, 'I hope this doesn't sound racist, but…'" (Luigi, Bayside Focus Group). These statements appear innocent, but try to claim that the speaker is not racist simply because he or she has friends of a racial or ethnic minority or is of another nonracial oppressed group; as if having "Black friends" or being oppressed in other ways makes them immune from racism, like a badge of nondiscrimination.

Two examples of Denial of Individual Racism came from interviews with Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) and Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group), both from "well-meaning" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 1) White people. In Amber's case, this microaggression was from her White father concerning his White privilege. Though he was not from an affluent background, he was a White male in the United States and, according to Amber, he used his White privilege to sound "hip" (Amber, Follow-up Interview) on Facebook and to show how he was not racist. Amber's father used an aspect of White privilege in which he designated the language or conversational style of a particular racial group to show his acceptance, which may be perceived as a demonstration of not being racist. Amber's father's speaking what he perceived as Black slang demonstrates White privilege because Black people who might communicate in similar ways often do not have the same ability to succeed in life. Amber illuminated:

> My dad tries to be hip. And he'll put things [on Facebook] like, "I stays fly"… "I bring da funk"…And I'm like, "Dad, you know how to spell. You got your associates degree

> in college." I mean, that's two years. It doesn't really matter. But he's partially educated, and so for him to be this way – are you saying that people who talk that way are uneducated?… And as a person who has a Black background, to see somebody who is White doing things like that, it's like, don't do that… And it's like, as a White person you shouldn't, because you are White and you have the ability to get somewhere in life, whereas Black people who speak that way, they don't really have the opportunities that White people would have. And for him to try to be Black, it's dumb, because he – it's like he's taking a step back in our country, I think… And it probably makes no sense at all. But I'm thinking about it now for one of the first times, and it's kind of – he doesn't know that he's being offensive, but he's being offensive. I should tell him. (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

It is difficult to receive microaggressions from "well-meaning" (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 1) White people, as in Amber's case with her father on Facebook. Similarly, Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Group) offered an example that involved an admired high school teacher. A White teacher denied her individual racism by making statements to emphasize her open-mindedness, and jokes and sarcastic remarks as a way to demonstrate she was not racist. Elyse said:

> She would always emphasize that she wasn't racist and she wasn't biased and I don't feel like she was, but I feel, like, with the sarcasm and the jokes and then saying it, it almost made it seem like she could be [racist] and you could question it and I personally came to find that she wasn't [racist] and she really is an accepting person, but just the way that I feel like she presented some things, were a little sticky in the sense that they could have been perceived in a negative way. (Elyse, Interview 2)

This teacher referred to her own Jewish heritage to show empathy for the difficulties that People of Color may face—despite the fact that being Jewish is a religious tradition and an ethnic description (not a racial category), whereas being of a certain racial group is a permanent state of being. Elyse continued:

> She was Jewish so she would say like... she would try to relate like being Jewish to understanding different plights of different racial groups or struggles that minorities might go through… but I just felt like it was kind of a like trying too hard to identify with like other minorities who might have faced greater challenges in society today… and she would, relate her being Jewish to like trying to write off that she wasn't racist because she understood what it was like to be not a minority, but I guess, discriminated against… like

> she would make it known that she wasn't racist, I think that it was her attempt to connect to students… she just wanted the students to enjoy her class. (Elyse, Interview 2)

Such racial microaggressions reflect White privilege. In denying individual racism, the person making the microaggressive statement denies having any personal racial responsibility. It is a form of nonresponse in that the perpetrator deliberately avoids his or her own racial biases by attempting to identify with the circumstances of People of Color.

Multiracial microaggressions/Denial of multiracial reality: Other people avoiding asking questions. Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) asserted that people not asking her any questions at all about her multiraciality was a microaggression. She felt that her experience was being invalidated when they purposely evaded the topic. This type of behavior denies the multiracial person's experiential reality (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). This microaggression was generally accompanied by nonverbal clues such as avoiding eye contact or changing the subject quickly through various *non sequiturs.* Sonya illustrated:

> [But] when they do not ask questions then you think they do not care or [that] they do not notice [you] or [that] it is a microaggression. [When someone does not ask questions it [feels] like [they] do not want to validate your experience, but when they do ask, it has got to be in a way that is very sensitive and empathetic. There cannot be an agenda behind it that is not genuine, so it is a difficult line [laughs]. It is a difficult tightrope to walk when you have struggled so much to be validated and those moments when you are validated are really, really important. (Sonya, Interview 1)

This example of racial microaggression reflects a societal nonresponse similar to color-blindness. Avoiding asking questions of the multiracial person suggests that the experiences of the multiracial person are being intentionally or deliberately avoided—although the perpetrator aims to appear as though he or she does not hold racial biases.

The effect of receiving racial microaggressions of Color-Blindness, Denial of Individual Racism, and Denial of Multiracial Reality is that participants felt that others dismissed or ignored

that race and racial experiences exist. White people who espoused a color-blind mentality utilized their own privilege to show the multiracial person how to interpret racialized incidents. Similar microaggressions may have allowed that White person to deny his or her own racism as a way of showing empathy for the racial plight of People of Color or to avoid asking questions about the multiracial experience. These types of racial microaggressions, however, made the multiracial person feel that his or her racial existence was minimized and misunderstood.

Societal responses to specific microaggressions/Multiracial microaggressions. This section will focus on examples of societal microaggressions that reflect how some monoracial people may respond to multiracial people concerning multiraciality. These are examples of monoracial people implying that they understand the experience of being multiracial by making seemingly complimentary statements about the multiracial person's presumed racial experience.

Exoticization and objectification: Multiracial people as the "racialized ideal." Johnston and Nadal (2010) have spoken of microaggressions that refer to the multiracial person as the "racialized ideal" (p. 135). These microaggressions occur when people expect the multiracial individual to represent the solution to societal race problems; because the multiracial person is a product of an interracial union, he or she represents the human embodiment that racial conflicts are becoming a thing of the past. In other words, these microaggressions "objectif[y] multiracial people as the poster children of a post-racial society" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135).

Exoticization and Objectification: The best of both worlds. The participants in this study mentioned that monoracial people have attempted to show an understanding of their mixed-race experience when these people would say, "You have the best of both worlds" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135; Elyse, Interviews 1 and 3; Peach, Bayside Focus Group; Sonic, Interviews 1

and 3; Toad, Bayside Focus Group). Representing the multiracial experience as a "racialized ideal" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135) was seen as a microaggression by some of the participants—"as an attempt for people to paint a prettier picture than really exists. It is people's attempts to kind of cling on to us as this hope, and perhaps symbolically, race-mixing, as a sign… for good things to come" (Sonic, Interview 3).

At the same time, some mixed-race people themselves make such statements to honor themselves and their experience, as Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) said, to send a message to people who are not multiracial, that "I get to experience everything that's good about being White or everything that's good about being Black and I don't have any of the negative things so, it's so great" (Elyse, Interview 1). Elyse referred to this notion as "the best… and the worst of both worlds" (Elyse, Interview 3), and has contributed to her experiencing cultural stereotypes with both White people and Black people; as she explained:

> I think people do forget that there are negatives and every time you do something negative, someone's going to attribute it to one of your races. And since, you know, we're multiracial, there are more negatives that come in to play. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Elyse continued to discuss the connotation of "the best of both worlds" as a defense mechanism used by monoracial people to generalize the mixed-race experience—and as a way to further the racial divide between White people and Black people: "So I think people forget today that there's not really such thing as being the best of both worlds because that's segregating that there's two different worlds and really, I can't separate my Blackness from my Whiteness" (Elyse, Interview 3). The blending of the two "worlds" of Black and White, whereby the two races are represented in one body, and no separation exists between the two, is where I have

discovered that multiracial people live a tie-dyed existence in a world that sees monochromatically.

Exoticization and Objectification: "You're cool because you're black." Participants in the Bayside Focus group shared instances of gaining social acceptability by peers because of being part-Black. This is another form of exoticization and objectification. These were occasions in which they were subjected microaggressions that seemed complimentary and where characteristics such as "coolness" (Toad, Bayside Focus Group) were ascribed to them because of their being part-Black. Again, although coming across as a positive statement, such remarks still might foster separation and racial division, as the inference is that the characterization is made solely because the person is part of a racial group, and not because of the person's individual qualities. During the Bayside Focus Group, the following conversation illustrated this type of microaggression:

Toad: I get a lot of, "Oh, you're cool because you're half Black."
Yoshi: I get that a lot.
Toad: Yeah. My friends, going shopping, "Hey, you can pull this off. You're half Black."
[Laughter]
"Hey, that nose ring looks okay on you 'cause you're tan, but it doesn't look good on White people because they're not cool enough."
Peach: You're kidding of course.
Toad: Yeah. So that's like a typical stereotype.
Luigi: I know exactly – you're cool because you're Black and I'm like, "I'm a dork." I don't know why. I'm a total dork.
Yoshi: I mean this is so shocking because I never get anything like these type of things. I never hear this stuff. People would never tell me this. Maybe it's because –
Luigi: Maybe you're hanging around with the right people?
Peach: Yeah.
Yoshi: That didn't sound like the right people. My friends are telling me – well I hear it from my one friend who's like Black and we talk actually about

> everybody. But even he's like, he says, "Like I try to be cool with you 'cause, you know, you're half Black." [Laughter]

(Dialogue from the Bayside Focus Group)

The above examples of racial microaggressions assign preferable qualities to the multiracial participants based on their part-Blackness. Such racial microaggressions demonstrate how people in society project "positive" attributes onto multiracial people because of being mixed-race. Such racial microaggressions, however, perpetuate stereotypes about the multiracial experience, whereby monoracial people categorize multiracial individuals according to the tenets of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent, ignoring the individual's personal experiences.

Theme Two Section Summary

The multiracial participants were subjected to racial microaggressions within the contexts of school and society, which contributed to their struggle to assert a multiracial identity amid. Participants were exoticized (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) at best for having unique phenotypes and pathologized (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) at worst for negative attributes due to being identified by people as monoracially Black according to the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent.

The participants experienced Environmental Microaggressions through Media Environmental Microaggressions, whereby White standards of beauty were exalted, as well as through the conspicuous lack of multiracial role models in society. Also experienced by participants were microaggressions of Denial of Multiracial Reality (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), which made them feel that their multiracial reality was denied, and of exoticization and objectification (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), whereby participants were exoticized for their physical appearances or objectified sexually.

In both school and society, participants experienced microaggressions of Assumption of Mistaken Identity (Sue et al., 2007b) concerning family relationships, exclusion or isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) when having to check one racial box on school forms or when interacting with peers in both the White and Black communities, and pathologization (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Sue et al., 2007b).

Lastly, the participants experienced specialized forms of racial microaggression that consisted of societal responses and nonresponses to specific racial microaggressions. These microaggressions contributed to the participants' struggle for multiracial identity in that the responses and nonresponses represented how people misunderstand the multiracial reality of the mixed-race person.

Types of societal nonresponses included microaggressions in which other people made claims of color-Blindness or denied their own racism (Sue et al., 2007b) by not responding to issues of race. A similar microaggression included a form of Denial of Multiracial Reality (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), in which other people intentionally avoided asking questions of the multiracial person about his or her mixed-race experience or purposely evaded the subject.

Participants experienced societal responses to microaggressions in the form of exoticization and objectification that idealized multiracial people as unique entities in society. Statements such as "You've got the best of both worlds," and "You're cool because you're Black" assumed an experience that may or may not have been true for the multiracial person. Statements such as these also presumed that the person making the statement instinctively knew how the multiracial person felt about his or her racialized experiences and projected a racial ideal onto the multiracial person.

Research Question One Summary

Research Question One asked, "What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?" The participants experienced environmental microaggressions, as well as multiracial microaggressions (due to being mixed-race) and racial microaggressions (due to being categorized as monoracially Black) within the realms of school and society.

Theme One, "Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation," showed an externally organized thought process; elements of this theme reflect what society wants the multiracial to be, based on the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. As an environmental microaggression, the notion of White privilege juxtaposed with the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent illustrated that the One-Drop Rule is firmly entrenched in the school system. The tenacity of White privilege as a system that enforces the One-Drop rule for Black-White multiracial people is demonstrated through Eurocentric teaching, whereby curriculum perpetuates the mentality that people of partial Black background are seen as solely Black through academic content.

The One-Drop Rule is also promoted through segregated schools, neighborhood demographics, and/or segregated classrooms, which demonstrate the intentionality of the teachers, and reflects school as a microcosm of general society (de facto segregation). School officials not addressing purposeful discriminatory acts among students also supported a One-Drop Rule mentality, when racialized incidents between Black and part-Black students were ignored or not addressed. This type of environmental microaggression shows externally driven

societal pressure for the multiracial person to conform to a monoracially Black designation, because of what is being expected and accepted in the school system.

Racial and multiracial microaggressions were enacted on the multiracial person because he or she was viewed as being socially Black. Some of these instances included the participant experiencing monoracial stereotypes and tokenism, being ascribed levels of intelligence or intellectual inferiority, having his or her Whiteness ignored or his or her multiracial experiences denied, and being excluded by members of various racial communities because he or she is not monoracial. All of these microaggressions demonstrated the pressure of society to insist that multiracial people conform to a monoracial identity.

Theme Two, “The Continued Struggle for Multiracial Identity,” illustrates the internal process of the multiracial person developing his or her identity. This theme indicates the individual construct of identity, whereby the multiracial person, while dealing with the externally driven microaggressions inherent in Theme One, makes a decision about which way or ways he or she will identify. This theme demonstrates the participant’s struggle with his or her identity amid societal pressure to claim a monoracial identity.

Environmental microaggressions found in Theme Two were found with the prominence of White beauty as the standard in society and the lack of multiracial role models in the media. Both of these microaggressions left the multiracial participants reflecting on where they fit into the societal landscape. Their physical appearances may have been exoticized or pathologized (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), but phenotype was viewed as atypical to monoracial features. This experience caused the participant to struggle as he or she negotiated a multiracial identity in a monoracial society.

In school, having to select a single race category on official forms caused the participants to struggle with identity decisions, making the multiracial individual feel excluded or isolated from one racial side. In society, the participants were excluded when told by friends to choose one racial side, or in dating relationships when they were not accepted because they were not viewed as a member of the race of their dating partner.

All of these types of microaggressions inherent in Theme Two contributed to the internally motivated process of negotiating a multiracial identity for the participants. Whereas Theme One microaggressions reflected resistance on the part of the multiracial individual to be what society expected, Theme Two microaggressions lead the individual to discover how he or she may, or may not, integrate all parts of his or her racial background.

Research Question Two

The second research question addressed the following: "What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?" For the study participants, racial microaggressions happened in different contexts and often were unexpected and subtle (Sue et al., 2007b). The participants experienced racial microaggressions on macro-levels in the form of environmental microaggressions, as well as on individual and personal levels in school with school officials and in general society with peers and from other people. This section discusses how the findings relate to the remaining overarching theme found in the research, "The Effects of Racial Microaggressions."

Theme Three: The Effects of Racial Microaggressions in Asserting a Multiracial Identity

In Themes One and Two, the participants cited that the majority of microaggressions occurred in schools, by school officials, and by classmates as a smaller segment of general

society. Theme Three, entitled "The Effects of Racial Microaggressions," will discuss how the participants asserted multiracial identities, and explain the effects of racial microaggressions on these Black-White multiracial individuals.

Asserting a Multiracial Identity

At the center of this research is the assertion of a multiracial identity by the multiracial participants. Their experiences with racial microaggressions and the entities that have fostered or hindered that racial development contributed either positively or negatively to their multiracial identities. The effects of dealing with racial microaggressions in frequent and constant ways, within the contexts of family, school, and society, highlight how the multiracial person created a cohesive racial self-identity despite dealing with racial microaggressions.

Family and multiracial identity development. One of the questions asked of the study participants was "Who have been important people to help you to identify as you do?" (See Appendix E, Individual Interview #1 Protocol). The majority of responses revealed that a family member bore tremendous influence on the multiracial person's racial socialization process. Parents, grandparents, and siblings were frequently mentioned. In some instances, a close friend was included. Only one person, Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group), mentioned, "I want to say nobody" (Yoshi, Interview 1) and continued with how race was "never really talked about… in my household… [or] in my extended family either" (Yoshi, Interview 1), nor in his friend group.

The participants did not give many details about family, either in individual interviews and narratives, or in the focus groups. For the most part, family was safe for the participants, a place of refuge from racial strife. Parents were identified as supportive of their multiracial

children, and regardless of how parents socialized their offspring to racially identify or not, they were identified as caring and nurturing.

Factors that influenced multiracial identity development included ways that parents socialized their multiracial children to racially identify themselves (McHale et al., 2006) as well as the degree of closeness within relationships with parents, siblings, and extended family members. The level of the family's social class contributed to racial identity development in that the families supported the multiracial participants' academic careers and encouraged their mixed-race offspring to attend university, indicating higher levels of social capital. Lastly, specific racial microaggressions experienced within the family also affected multiracial identity development.

Parental racial socialization – Monoracial (Black) identity. Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) and Pip (female, age 19, Texas) were socialized by their mothers to racially identify solely as Black due to One-Drop Rule ideology. In both cases, their mothers (who were both multiracial themselves, but identified monoracially as Black) told their daughters that because the mothers are considered Black by society, then Amber and Pip would be considered Black. In Amber's case, in particular, her mother pressured her to say she was only Black because of the "whole you-are-what-your-mother-is [rule]" (Amber, Follow-up Interview). This directive affected Amber socially because when she experienced racial microaggressions of exclusion from Black people, particularly Black females, she expressed how she wished she could be more accepted by Black people because of her close relationship with her mother (Amber, Interview 1; Follow-up Interview). Also, because of her phenotype, Amber was often classified as monoracially Black, yet she wanted to be recognized as mixed-race, presenting

confusion about being classified as a race that she felt did not socially accept her (Amber, Narrative). Although Amber's mother socialized a monoracial Black identity choice, Amber's White father did not pressure her to choose either side; both parents, however, encouraged her to just be happy about who she is (Amber, Follow-up Interview).

In Pip's case, at age 12, when her mother told her to identify as only Black, she mentioned how she was upset: "[T]hat was before I started identifying as mixed so I was still pretty confused" (Pip, Interview 1). Pip said that although she tried to avoid the justification of her racial background in middle school, her paternal grandfather told her she did not have to choose and suggested that she identify as mixed-race "since that's what [she] was, and that's also how [her grandfather] identifies [himself]" (Pip, Interview 1).

Similar to Pip, Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) wanted to avoid justifying her racial background; she further mentioned how she merely wanted to fit in with White society (Sonya, Interview 1). At approximately age two or three (Sonya, Interview 1) Sonya's White mother informed her that she was Black. When Sonya asked her mother about her skin color, her mother told her that she and Sonya's adoptive father were both White, while Sonya was Black, and her mother stretched out her arm to illustrate the difference in their two skin tones. This gesture was not done in a hostile way or seen as a negative experience by Sonia; it was perceived as matter-of-fact. Sonya spoke of the close relationship she had with her mother, and how she felt comfortable to talk about experiences of racism with her:

> The best person has been my mom. She always wanted so badly for me to embrace my hair because she loves it [and] thinks it is beautiful. Both my parents think that I am beautiful. I think that my mom has always been good about always listening to me when I am frustrated and has never felt threatened or weird about me complaining about my experiences with White people [laughs]. She just is awesome about listening to me and talking to me. (Sonya, Interview 1)

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) had a unique situation; although her parents encouraged her to acknowledge both sides of her racial heritage (a multiracial identity choice), her White mother also told her to check Black on school forms as a way of "improving the test scores for the Black children" (Elyse, Interview 1). Elyse said that her mother's suggestion to check Black was not done maliciously, and she would check Black on forms at times if there was no biracial or multiracial option. She preferred not to have to check "Other," because it is

> so vague and it seems so almost demeaning, because "other" is just such a write-off word. Like, this is what everyone else is, and if you put "other," you're in this outcast category and I just never felt comfortable putting 'other' because I wasn't "other," I was me. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Elyse mentioned that she could not understand at the time why her mother pushed her to only check "Black" on school forms, when she felt equally White. She explained, "I didn't feel comfortable with that because, especially at the time, I didn't see myself as just Black" (Elyse, Interview 1). Elyse continued to explain that she did not feel like she had to justify her racial background or identity choice(s) until she went to university. At that time, she went from living in a racially diverse community, growing up with friends of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, to dealing with hostile racism in being called the "N-word" by an intoxicated White male at her college. Elyse also described having to cope with "one of the most emotional times that I've had in my life dealing with race" (Elyse, Interview 1) when a professor trivialized her multiracial experience by asking, "Well, what half of you is White? Is your left half White? Or is your right half White?" (Elyse, Interview 1).

Parental racial socialization – Multiracial identity. Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) mentioned that he was aware of racial inequalities from a very young age, and that he was very

mature when it came to racial matters, which might be because Sonic's parents taught him to embrace both sides, to fully identify with each side, and not to deny either side:

> My parents always just said to embrace all parts of my heritage and not just pick one side or another and it was generally understood very early on. So I don't even think I remember any conversations with them actually instructing me or telling me how to identify. I just know that that was how it was, so they're obviously the foundation… They're very important to instilling this kind of identity, this kind of identification that I have. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Parental racial socialization – No racial identity discussion within the family. Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) was the only participant who said that his parents did not talk about how he should identify. "My parents did not at all socialize me about how I identify racially… Yeah, I never got anything about race" (Yoshi, Interview 1). Yoshi, also, seemed angry—at Black people, at White people, at women—from being excluded from friendships and dating relationships because of skin color (Yoshi, Interview 1). He mentioned how he was not close with his family (Yoshi, Interview 1).

Summary. Parents racially socialized their multiracial children in one of two ways: to either identify themselves monoracially as Black (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonya) or to identify themselves as multiracial (Sonic). Parents did not socialize their children to identify themselves as monoracially White. In Yoshi's case, he was not socialized in either way, having had no discussion from parents as to how to identify himself.

In the case of monoracial socialization by parents, Amber and Pip's Black mothers informed their daughters to identify themselves as Black according to the tenets of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent; claiming that because the mothers are perceived as Black, the daughters would be as well. In the case of Elyse and Sonya, whose mothers were both White, their mothers advised their daughters to identify themselves as Black according to elements of White

privilege. In Sonya's case, White privilege was evidenced in the ideology that if one is not all-White, one is by default a Person of Color, based on One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent ideology (Brunsma, 2006; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005). White privilege was also evidenced in Elyse's case, when her White mother told her to check Black on school forms because it would improve the test scores of the Black children (Elyse, Interview 1). This act could be seen as an element of White privilege (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988; Trepagnier, 2006) in that although it was higher than some of the other students, Elyse's intelligence level could be used to the advantage of Black children to raise their scores, rather than to the advantage of the White children (whose scores were already probably seen as superior to others).

Despite being encouraged to identify themselves as monoracially Black, whether for school forms or for cultural advantage, all four of these participants questioned why they could not identify as both races. Within this questioning is what made these participants, as college students, claim both sides. Sonic (whose parents socialized him to identify himself as multiracial) and Yoshi (whose parents did not racially socialize him) also claimed a multiracial identity.

Relationships with parents and siblings. Another factor that influences racial identity development is relationships with parents and siblings (Herman, 2004). The degree of closeness the participants had with family members affected the ways they chose to identify themselves either in multiracial or monoracial terms. Although most of the participants spoke about their parents, they did not talk much about their siblings, perhaps due to the interview questions,

which had to do with participants' personal experiences. Yet, the participants did not naturally bring up their siblings in a deeper way other than incidentally.

Amber's (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) parents were divorced, and her mother who was Black was remarried to a White man. Amber seemed to have a close relationship with her mother and younger sister. Issues in the extended family on her mother's side caused Amber to overcompensate for what she referred to as "delinquent Black" (Amber, Interview 3) behavior: Amber did not want to be seen as a cultural Black stereotype. Amber also spoke of having a sister who was 3 years younger than she was and that they had similar issues about multiracial identity.

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) told of how close she was to her immediate family of her mother, father, and younger sister. Elyse, like Amber, had a sister who was 3 years younger than she was, and that their similar experiences in being multiracial made them very close. Due to geographic distance, she did not know her White mother's side of the family well, but had the opportunity to know her father's Black Caribbean relatives (Elyse, Interview 1). Also, because Elyse was very close to her family, race was not an issue until Elyse attended college, where she was expected to explain her racial identity and create ways to make her identity make sense to her:

> Some days I feel like saying I'm White and Black, and some days I feel like I'm saying I'm West Indian and White, and some days I might say… I'm Black and White, but my dad's from the Caribbean and whatever variation I might feel like, depending on who's asking me and my mood for the day. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) and Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) also referred to having good relationships with their parents. Sonic's parents encouraged him to identify himself as multiracial: "[My parents] made it a point to just make sure that I was comfortable with who I

am and to not deny or suppress any part of my heritage or identity" (Sonic, Interview 1). He was made aware of racial issues from a very early age, and taught how to deal with them reasonably and responsibly. His parents were loving and concerned, discussing racial issues with him, and having conversations to educate him. Sonic had a Black older half-brother and Black-White multiracial younger adopted brother, who was actually a cousin adopted into the family when Sonic was 3 years old. Sonic spoke of his older brother being 19 years older, and that they did not know each other very well. With his younger brother, although they were both Black-White multiracial, they did not have a close relationship, and had quite different views about being multiracial (Sonic, Interview 1). This brother identified himself as monoracially Black.

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) had a good relationship with her White mother and White adoptive father. Because of being raised in a household with two White parents and one White half-brother, she mentioned feeling like an "honorary White person" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3). Sonya spoke of her younger White half-brother experiencing microaggressions during their childhood due to his sister being considered Black (Sonya, Interview 1), but not much more was said about their relationship.

The two participants who said the least about their families were Pip (female, age 19, Texas) and Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group). Pip was an only child, and said that her parents (both multigenerational mixed Black-White) were divorced, but did not say much about her relationships with either parent. Yoshi, in a rather nonchalant way, mentioned that he was not close to either of his parents or his siblings (Yoshi, Interview 1).

Summary. The degree of closeness within the family, between participants and their parents and siblings, allowed positive communication about multiraciality. If the participants

had siblings who were also multiracial, they could discuss how they dealt with similar cultural issues (Amber, Elyse). Although Sonic had a multiracial adopted brother, they were not close; but Sonic's relationship with his parents was close, and he was encouraged by his parents to talk about his multiraciality and to claim a multiracial identity.

Sonya had a White half-brother who dealt with microaggressions from other people because of his sister's half-Blackness. She discussed having a good relationship with her mother but at the same time had struggled with racial identity development throughout her adolescence because of being multiracial in a White family and in a predominately White community.

Pip and Yoshi said the least about their family dynamics. Pip mentioned how despite her Black mother informing her to identify herself monoracially as Black, her grandfather encouraged her to identify as multiracial. Yoshi mentioned in his interviews that he was not close with his parents or siblings, and had not had any discussions about racial socialization with his parents.

Intersectionality of race and class. Almost all of the participants came from what they described as middle to upper-middle class environments and from demographic backgrounds that were representative of various levels of social capital. Participants also described growing up in predominantly White suburban neighborhoods (Amber, Sonic, Sonya) or in diverse, racially mixed, suburban neighborhoods (Elyse, Pip). Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) lived in a variety of communities, from poorer urban areas to more affluent suburban neighborhoods, depending on his parents' jobs. The participants' parents were in mostly white-collar professions and expected that their children would attend college.

Brunsma (2005) has discussed the predisposition of class in how parents socialize their multiracial children to identify. Parents from the middle to upper-middle classes tended to identify their mixed-race children more readily as multiracial, whereas families from lower socioeconomic designations tended to encourage the monoracial identification of Black.

Summary. Participants came from families in which both parents were white-collar professionals and/or academics. Even if their parents socialized their multiracial offspring to identify themselves culturally as Black, within the family structure, the participants had beneficial relationships with their parents and siblings (Herman, 2004). The family social structure meant that the multiracial participants would eventually identify themselves as multiracial because their class level and upbringing ensured that they would have access to more social opportunities and advantages—such as living in certain neighborhoods, attending university, and other social experiences indicative of a higher level of wealth (Brunsma, 2005).

Specific racial microaggressions within the family. Some examples of racial microaggressions were apparent within the family structure. For instance, Pip (female, age 19, Texas) and Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) both talked about feeling excluded by family members for not being "Black enough" (Amber, Interview 3; Pip, Interview 3). Pip discussed how Black cousins would tease her because of her lighter skin color and would make comments about her being "stuck up" due to being mixed (Pip, Interviews 1, 2, and 3). Pip spoke of how she merely ignored statements like that.

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) discussed how both her Black mother and Black half-brother mentioned to her that she could not fully understand the racism they experienced as Black people, due to her part-Whiteness (Amber, Interview 3). These remarks

affected her, making her feel separate from both sides; indeed, Amber voiced her desire to have closer relationships with Black people because of her good relationship with her mother (Amber, Interview 1). Amber's feeling excluded also affected her friendships with Black people, as she did not have many close Black friends (Amber, Interview 1; Follow-up Interview).

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) mentioned a few occasions when both of his parents made racist comments in a moment of anger. He detailed two times he could recall when his Black father displayed racism toward White people and mentioned how the Whites in Northern California—where he and his family resided—were just as racist as the ones his father grew up with in the South. Yoshi explained:

> It wasn't like anything deep or philosophical, it's just pretty much straight up like White people… they'll screw you over. At the time he got fired from his job and he was upset with that and I don't remember, we were just on the porch and he mentioned it. (Yoshi, Interview 1)

Also, Yoshi mentioned hearing his White mother use the "N-word" when she was very angry, and how it made him feel hurt even though it was not directed at him:

> I mean I've heard her say some pretty overly racist things, so that's as far as that goes. Well, I heard her say "nigger" and "stupid nigger" and things like that, so. I don't know, I was – I mean I was a little taken aback. It was – I mean it's hard to get a grasp of it out of context, but I felt it was something that she said out of anger versus something she felt, you know? Because I don't think she obviously feels that way about her kids and her husband. I think she was pretty damn mad at the time, so I think it was just said more out of anger. So I don't know, that's just – that's how I visualize it, but still I was kinda [*sic*] like wow. I don't know, how do you feel when somebody like that says something so like disparaging, even if it's not directly to you, but it applies to you? (Yoshi, Interview 1)

These derogatory acts affected Yoshi. Coupled with his distant relationships with his parents and siblings, as well as moving around a lot and attending many different schools during his childhood, Yoshi did not seem to form very close relationships when he dealt with racism from

his middle school peers (Yoshi, Interviews 1 and 2). The opinions he formed of Black people came from hostile racism in East Oakland (Yoshi, Interviews 1 and 2, Focus Group); the opinions he formed of White people seems to have come from observing his White relatives, with whom he was not impressed (Yoshi, Focus Group). Yoshi said, "I never looked up to White people. I never thought there was anything great about them" (Yoshi, Bayside Focus Group). No other participants mentioned parental racism.

Summary. Amber and Pip were excluded by Black family members, despite wanting to have closer relationships with Black people. Being excluded may have contributed to these participants identifying themselves as multiracial, rather than as monoracially Black. Because they were excluded on some levels from being Black, they could identify as being a part of both races instead.

Yoshi experienced specific microaggressions from both his White parent and Black parent, who made derogatory remarks about people in the other parent's race. He went to schools with monoracially Black children who also made discriminatory remarks about his lighter skin color and dealt with hostile racism toward White people during his schooling experience. Microaggressions of exclusion contributed to his identifying himself as multiracial because although he should be considered a part of both races, his experiences demonstrate how each racial group rejected the other.

The Effects of Racial Microaggressions

Sue (2010a, 2010b) explained that chronic exposure to racial microaggressions has physical, psychological, and emotional effects on the recipient. Frequent exposure to racial microaggressions has a psychologically and physically detrimental impact on the well-being and

self-esteem of the target, as well as on social interaction with peers (Sue, 2010a, 2010b). The long-term effects of chronic exposure to racial microaggressions were evidenced in the experiences of the participants and led to Racial Battle Fatigue (Smith et al., 2007; Sue, 2010a, 2010b). Racial Battle Fatigue (Smith et al., 2007) provides a theoretical framework for understanding the physical and psychological stressors in the lives of People of Color. The multiracial participants exhibited symptoms of racial battle fatigue, which includes physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions (Sue, 2010a, 2010b) to dealing continually with racial microaggressions.

The participants did not detail experiencing any of the physical symptoms of Racial Battle Fatigue, such as "tension headaches and backaches, elevated heart beat, rapid breathing in anticipation of racial conflict… ulcers, loss of appetite [or] elevated blood pressure" (Smith, 2007, p. 556). They, however, did describe a number of psychological or emotional symptoms of Racial Battle Fatigue that they experienced as a result of constant exposure to racial microaggressions. These symptoms include: "constant anxiety and worrying… loss of self-confidence… hypervigilance, frustration… *John Henryism*, or prolonged, high-effort coping with difficult psychological stressors, emotional and social withdrawal, anger, denial, keeping quiet and resentment" (Smith et al., 2007, p. 556).

Hypervigilance to avoid stereotypes. As a result of being pathologized, Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) was cognizant of how other people may perceive her as a mixed-race person. She explained:

> I'm very, very conscious of people around me, what they might be thinking… And I don't know. I just feel like what they perceive me as keeps me from being as open and out with certain people not only because of being mixed but with a lot of different things. But it just adds to it. (Amber, Interview 2)

Specifically, Amber was concerned about how others perceived her as a part-Black multiracial person:

> Then I'll go to class with my hair not straight and I'll be like, "Oh, they're probably thinking that this girl is just some sloppy Black girl who doesn't care about the way she looks. Or when it is straight, the people in class probably are like, 'Oh, that's not her real hair.'" Or if there is anybody Black in my class, "Oh, she thinks she's cute because she's combing through [her hair] with her fingers." "No. It's tangly. I'm trying to fix it." You know, that kind of thing? (Amber, Interview 2)

This interpretation affected Amber's multiracial identity development because she dealt with not feeling accepted by Black people, yet wanted to make more friendships with Black people (Amber, Follow-up Interview). Despite her openness to making friends of all races, feelings of exclusion prevented her from being as open to Black females (Amber, Interview 1; Follow-up Interview; Narrative).

On the other hand, as a result of microaggressions of Assumption of Criminal Status and being pathologized, Amber was tokenized by her White peers and expected to explain aberrant stereotypical Black behavior (Amber, Interview 3). Consequently, she felt she had to overcompensate as a person who is part-Black because of societal viewpoints of Black stereotypes: "In life, I feel like I have to overcompensate for delinquent Black people because it's like, 'Oh, if she's Black, she's not gonna go to college, she's not gonna graduate, she's gonna be a teen mother'" (Amber, Interview 3). This feeling affected Amber's multiracial identity development because she did not feel completely accepted by Black peers, but was also not completely accepted by White peers, having to act as racial spokesperson for her Black side but overcompensating to avoid racial stereotypes (Amber, Interview 3).

This scenario resembled Elyse's (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) situation. Elyse's Black father was from the Caribbean. She strived to avoid negative cultural stereotypes

of American Black people and for a while did not want to identify as Black but rather as West Indian and White, or simply Black and White, with the explanation that her roots were from the Caribbean, not from the legacy of slavery from Africa. As a result of microaggressions from other people about Black stereotypes, she disassociated from wanting to be called Black (and having to fit those cultural stereotypes) for a while when growing up:

> I used to have a really, almost resentment to being called African-American, even being called half-White, half-African-American… identifying as African-American in America, there's this notion that your ancestry is you came from Africa to America, your family was slaves, and then they were freed in America, where none of my African heritage is within the context of United States so it's hard for me to identify with African-American because I think that's the notion that's implied and I don't feel like I fit that so a lot of the times I didn't feel comfortable in being called African-American so I would call myself Black before African-American. And I still do. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Elyse's multiracial identity development was affected at college, where she was expected to choose a racial identity, to be able to justify that choice, and fit neatly into that selected identity. She spoke of coming from a family upbringing of racial acceptance and love to college, where she was expected to make a monoracial choice, which was an anxiety-ridden process for her. She experienced being "One-Dropped" (Elyse, Interview 1) as Black by professors who did not allow the multiracial experience, minimizing or denying a multiracial reality. She also dealt with hostile racism when she and a group of Black female friends were called the "N-word" (Elyse, Interviews 1 and 3) by an intoxicated White male student, which caused her to feel frustrated and unsafe. These instances affected her identity, as she did not identify with the stereotypical Black cultural experience, but with the Black Caribbean and multiracial roots (Elyse, Interviews 1, 2, and 3) from her family.

Apathy, anger, or frustration. Pip (female, age 19, Texas) exhibited apathy when describing examples of racial microaggression. She experienced exclusion from Black females

while growing up and detailed particular occasions when Black female cousins made hurtful remarks about her being multiracial. Dealing with racial microaggressions affected her multiracial identity development, contributed to a sense of mistrust, and provoked changes in family relationships.

Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) exhibited apathy and frustration when speaking of interpersonal relationships, particularly in the realm of dating relationships. In his interviews and narrative, he spoke of the resentment he had toward some women when it came to dating. He also mentioned a number of times in the focus group how some women discriminated against him due to his being multiracial. He described his hurt feelings and anger, citing instances of racial discrimination and microaggressions from women in dating relationships, and described a lack of closeness in his family. These experiences affected his multiracial identity development in that he seemed to struggle for acceptance in his personal and intimate relationships with women.

Constant racial awareness. Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) was socialized by his family to identify himself as both White and Black. He seemed to have a healthy sense of his multiracial identity, despite living in a society fraught with racial separation. He became aware at an early age that racial injustice was prevalent in society, and experienced microaggressions in school and while growing up. Being microaggressed caused him to be more cognizant of racial inequalities and to be a social justice advocate (Sonic, Interview 1). In middle school, he did not feel accepted by a lot of his peers. He said:

> I used that opportunity to really get to know who I was, to become more comfortable with my own thoughts and passions and goals and inspirations. That's when I really started to develop my artwork… I just really gained a lot of that confidence and appreciation for myself. So even though it was a shame that it had to be like that, I'm

> very grateful for the fact that I used what could have been a negative and turned it into a positive and it was that experience that not only shaped my own personal development but it's almost maybe a milestone or just a very clear marker in terms of how I started thinking of race and racial identity in my life. (Sonic, Interview 1)

Although this awareness may represent a positive example of the effects of racial microaggressions, his experiences with racial issues affected his multiracial identity development in that he saw how race and racism were ever-present in daily life and, as a multiracial person, knew he must constantly be vigilant.

Lowered self-esteem. Sonya's (female, age 24, Virginia) multiracial identity development was affected by microaggressions on a number of levels. Sonya was categorized as Black in her monoracially White family (Sonya, Interview 1) and struggled with being accepted in White society as an "honorary White" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3), which caused her to see herself as the "black sheep" (Sonya, Interview 1). She mentioned feelings of not fitting in with her social circles in middle and high school, and feeling awkward because of her unique phenotype (particularly her hair), which affected her self-esteem (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3, Narrative).

Consequently, because of Media Environmental Microaggressions concerning White standards of beauty, Sonya felt physically awkward, referring to herself as a "freak" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3), and was ridiculed for her unique hair texture and physical features. It was also difficult for her to be a multiracial child in a monoracially White family (Sonya, Interview 1) living in a predominantly White community; with her racially ambiguous and "exotic" looks, she was also pathologized by her peer group, which compounded feelings of low self-worth in seeing her differentness as abnormal and not valued by her peers. In college, she worked through self-esteem issues and developed a deeper understanding of being part-Black.

As an adult, Sonya had taken a long time to work through these negative feelings about herself, and was still struggling at times:

> I’m really just now coming into a sort of appreciation for my ethnic background and I think for a long time I wasn’t able to really come to terms with being African American in a White family, or being the only African American really in my social circle, or being the only African American in my little orchestra, or something like that, it was just so hard to come to terms with that that I just didn’t really think about it or really deal with it in any real healthy way. It’s not that I think that it’s all negative but my focus has been a lot on the negative and so right now I’m working on appreciating life and appreciating the possibilities of really enjoying the fullness of who I am, but I am still experimenting [laughs] with how I want to feel about who I am so I would say I guess the things that I like about it I’m still discovering. (Sonya, Interview 1)

The effects of racial microaggressions on academic development. Participants discussed how the racial microaggressions in schools were cruel and offensive, but microaggressions did not negatively affect the participants’ academic development. Academic development was impacted by microaggressions in compelling participants to want to succeed more. The participants, coming from families in which attending college was expected, worked to exceed teacher expectations or found other ways to not allow microaggressions impede their academic identities.

Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) and Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) discussed how microaggressions bothered them in school; yet microaggressions did not dissuade them from achieving academically. Yoshi explained:

> It's strictly business, it's really not that kind of, maybe it's not that time or that space to have those kind of interactions, where microaggressions more likely appear, you know, 'cause they tend to happen in more personal settings and school is not very personal. (Yoshi, Interview 3)

Elyse agreed that microaggressions neither affected her academic work, nor prevented her from achieving her career goals:

> There definitely is, like, overt racism towards people that are mixed but the microaggressions aren't going to stop me from getting a job, they might make me uncomfortable, they might piss me off, they might be politically incorrect, but you know… the microaggressions I feel, like, never really impacted my academic work. (Elyse, Interview 3)

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) spoke of the ways that microaggressions impacted her academic development, causing her to overcompensate and strive to work harder, so as not to fall victim to the stereotype that Black people are intellectually inferior. She said:

> I just try to – maybe it's just me as a person in general, but to be – people say, "Oh, that's the Black girl and she's really smart." Well, I try to overcompensate as well, with my schoolwork all the time. (Amber, Follow-up Interview)

However, Sonya's (female, age 24, Virginia) experiences with second-class treatment by high school teachers affected her academic development, making her feel she was not seen as intelligent; when teachers neglected her, she felt unsuccessful:

> I really desired to be a part of the academic crowd. I wanted to be [a good student] and it probably has to do with [the fact that] I have two parents that are academics. I really valued education and I really wanted to be that student that the lead instructor thought, and would hope, would do well and I was never that student until I got to college. That was painful – it was really painful because I never desired anything more. (Sonya, Interview 2)

Fortunately, according to Sonya, in college, she found her niche, selecting a major that pleased her, and she was quite successful (Sonya, Interview 3). At the time of her interviews, she had recently graduated from university, and was entering her first year in graduate school.

Summary. Racial microaggressions did not negatively affect the academic development of these participants. In some cases, participants strove to overcome hurtful stereotypes about Black people, particularly in the face of racial microaggressions that ascribed levels of intelligence or intellectual inferiority based on their part-Blackness (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). Dealing with microaggressions in schools made some of the participants work

harder to academically succeed, and to choose academic majors and programs in college that they liked and found rewarding.

The effects of racial microaggressions on social development. The four female individual interviewees (Amber, Elyse, Pip, and Sonya) spoke of how being excluded by Black girls in school impacted their social development. For Pip (female, age 19, Texas), hurtful remarks and microaggressions by Black girls in elementary and middle school caused her to not like Black people for a while. She explained: "The impact was [that] for a while I didn't try to talk to any Black people, period" (Pip, Interview 2). Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) felt Black people did not accept her, which caused her to shy away from developing friendships (Amber, Interview 1, Follow-Up Interview, Narrative). In college, Amber had a Black roommate and other Black women with whom she developed relationships. Amber believed that feeling excluded caused her to be positive and more open-minded in reaching out to others, as well as more aware of microaggressions when they occurred (Amber, Follow-up Interview).

Not being exposed to many People of Color in her community while growing up, Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) felt excluded by a group of Black girls in high school when she "talked too White, dressed too White, and was perceived as being White" (Sonya, Interview 3) by a group of Black girls. This feeling was coupled with not being raised by a Black parent, but by two White parents. Sonya mentioned that it was not until she went to college that she got "to know what being African American really meant" (Sonya, Interview 3) and could pave her way, both academically and socially.

Elyse's (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group) being unaccepted by Black people caused her to be more open to other races in choosing her circle of friends (Elyse, Interviews 1, 2, and 3). Similar to Amber, who overcompensated academically not to fulfill the "Black stereotype" (Amber, Interview 3), Elyse spoke of how these microaggressions impacted how she chose to racially identify herself:

> Personally, like, the microaggressions from other students made me dissociate [sic] with being Black and wanting to be called, or wanting to identify as being White and West Indian... like that was, I guess, my reaction to the microaggressions of… the stereotypes of Black people, you know, like Black people being loud or not being as smart maybe. And you know, I wanted to be seen as something other than Black and I think that's why I did personally identify with my peers as White and West Indian for a while. So those microaggressions definitely affected the way that I identified as a multiracial person. (Elyse, Interview 2)

Many of the participants spoke of racial diversity in their groups of friends due to microaggressions of exclusion and isolation by monoracial peers, whereby they felt that not fitting into either side negatively affected their social relationships. Elyse (female, age 19, Hillside Focus Group), like a number of the participants, felt that she did not fit completely into either racial side. Her solution was to make friends of all different racial groups and ethnicities as a way of creating relationships with others not based on race but on common interests and goals, and not on having to justify her racial identity or prove she was racially authentic to one racial side or the other (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). She explained:

> I think the reason why I do like being around so many different cultures and races is because I felt other in situations of you're not White, you're not Black. So it's like, well, then what am I and I feel like if everyone is around, then it's not an issue and it kind of becomes something that doesn't even need to be addressed. So I definitely feel like that in between of not being able to connect to either one side. (Elyse, Interview 1)

Similar to openness in friendships were dating relationships. Most participants did not specify a particular racial preference in terms of a dating partner, but most did mention being open to

various racial possibilities. Sonic (male, age 24, New Jersey) and Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) in particular mentioned dating women of all different races. Especially salient in Yoshi's case was his striving to remain open to women of various ethnicities and races, because he had felt so discriminated against for being too light-skinned or not Black enough for the women he encountered (Yoshi, Interviews 1, 2, and 3, Narrative). Yoshi spoke of his "cynical" (Interview 2) attitude toward dating women, and how these dating experiences "impacted [my] social development [and his] attitudes about dating [and] people" (Yoshi, Interview 3).

Racial microaggressions did affect multiracial identity development and social development. As Yoshi (male, age 27, Bayside Focus Group) mentioned, these types of microaggressions tended to occur in more "personal settings" (Yoshi, Interview 3), and multiracial identity development and social development were more negatively impacted by microaggressions. In his particular case, he felt that the most impacted area was in dating. During romantic relationships in which Yoshi had been the most microaggressed, he felt "just really cynical when it comes to women" (Yoshi, Interview 2) and thought that women were more racially discriminating in choosing a partner based on race. This opinion made him more open to dating women of all races (Yoshi, Interviews 1, 2, and 3).

Amber (female, age 20, Hillside Focus Group) dated a man who spoke in derogatory ways about her Blackness, making comments such as "Black girl attitude" (Amber, Interview 2). This experience made Amber feel open to choosing friends and dating partners who were more empathic and understanding of her mixed-race experience and identity choices.

Sonya (female, age 24, Virginia) spoke of not dating very much until she attended college, and indicated that anyone she would date in the future must understand her experience as a multiracial woman (as well as friends, in general):

> If I have a White boyfriend he has to understand, he has to be comfortable enough to hear me talk about how I feel about my race and what my experience was. I have got to find a guy who is comfortable enough with that, so I do not have to deny any piece of myself or feel like, he doesn't understand race… If he does not understand, or my friends do not understand then that could possibly be a barrier in our friendship. I am not responsible for healing the racism in the world [and] I can only do so much. [I like] not feeling all the weight is on my shoulders to try to change their opinions about race. I cannot do that on my own [laughs]. So [I] look for the right people that I feel safe with. (Sonya, Interview 3)

Summary. Experiencing racial microaggressions affected the social relationships that the participants had with monoracial Black people. In some cases, participants tended to shy away from forming relationships with Black people. Yet being excluded from one or both racial sides caused some of the participants to make and develop friendships with people of all races and ethnicities, creating an openness to a diverse friend group.

Participants described being excluded from both racial sides. In not being included by either the White community or Black community on some levels caused the participants to be open to making friendships and dating relationships with people of all races. Participants also spoke of how they hoped that their future partners in dating relationships would demonstrate an understanding of the participants' mixed-race experience.

Theme Three Section Summary

Families, schools, and society influenced the racial identity development of the multiracial participants. Whether parents socialized their children to identify themselves monoracially as Black or multiracial, or if there was no discussion in the family about racial

identity or participants experienced racial microaggressions within the family, the participants identified themselves as multiracial or, by college, claimed a multiracial identity. Close relationships with parents and siblings as well as the class levels of the families contributed to the racial identity decisions of the participants. Most families provided open and positive communication about multiraciality. Family social structures provided social advantages that ensured the multiracial participants could identify themselves as multiracial.

Racial microaggressions did not affect the academic development of the participants. Social development, however, was affected, particularly in the area of friendships and dating relationships. Participants were excluded at times from both racial sides, which caused some of the participants to create friendships with a racially and ethnically diverse group of people.

Participants experienced the long-term effects of racial microaggressions. Some of the participants were excluded from the Black community, and did not feel accepted in certain social circles due to being multiracial. These participants struggled for acceptance in relationships and spoke of not feeling as open to making friendships with certain groups of people. Self-esteem issues centered on being excluded from certain communities or being pathologized because of phenotype.

Other participants described feelings of overcompensating to avoid negative racial stereotypes abut Black people or exhibited awareness of race and social injustice as an ever-present issue. Participants experienced apathy, mistrust, resentment, or anxiety in feeling pressured to make monoracial racial identity choices that were not representative of their multiracial reality.

Chapter Summary

The data obtained from the participants revealed three themes that explained how racial microaggressions affected the multiracial identity development of the participants. The first two research themes answered Research Question One, which asked, "What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?" Theme One, entitled "Societal Pressure to Conform to a Monoracial Designation," reflected the One-Drop Rule mentality prevalent in society. Theme Two detailed the "The Continued Struggle for Multiracial Identity," and exhibited the internalized struggle of the multiracial participant to identify him- or herself monoracially or to question his or her multiracial identity choices. Various types of racial microaggressions either presented a societal expectation for the multiracial individual to conform to a monoracial identity choice, or contributed to the multiracial individual's personal internalized struggle.

A third research theme addressed "The Effects of Racial Microaggressions in Asserting a Multiracial Identity" and answered the second research question: "What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?" Various entities impacted the multiracial identity development of the participants. Parents were the primary entities to affect racial identity and to socialize their children either to identify themselves monoracially as Black or as multiracial. Relationships with siblings and family socioeconomic status contributed to multiracial identity development.

The participants experienced racial microaggressions in schools by school officials and from peers in schools. Examples included being treated as second-class citizens by teachers and administrators, or excluded from racialized social groups by peers. Racial microaggressions in

general society also contributed to the racial identity development of the participants. Examples included being exoticized as a racialized ideal or sexual token or being pathologized as abnormal for being mixed-race or coming from an interracial family.

Consequently, the participants experienced numerous effects of racial microaggressions that impacted multiracial identity development. Participants spoke of feeling extremely sensitive to microaggressions, experiencing apathy or frustration with daily acts of subtle racism, having issues in interpersonal relationships, and feeling pressure to identify monoracially as Black.

These multiracial participants live in a world that monoracializes and microaggresses people based on negative racial stereotypes. The effects of these racial microaggressions in terms of friendships, dating relationships, and dealing with society in general, impacted multiracial identity development. Chapter Five will present an analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study documented the types of racial microaggressions experienced in the daily lives of Black-White multiracial university students and examined the effects of these microaggressions on the participants' multiracial identity development. Microaggressions are chronic reminders of subtle racism in society (Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). Microaggressions categorize people into monoracial stereotypes, keeping the multiracial person marginalized, and perpetuating racial division (Nadal et al., 2011).

Multiracial people experience racial microaggressions from both sides, as well as from other People of Color (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Multiracial people are the targets of racial microaggressions based on being mixed-race and socially considered a Person of Color (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011). The ways that multiracial people form a cohesive racial identity are challenged and impacted because of racial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Racial identity development is not a simple formula with stages that a multiracial person can swiftly go through until he or she finds the right fit; microaggressions challenge how the multiracial person develops his or her racial identity (Johnston & Nadal, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The research indicated that the Black-White multiracial participants experienced a multitude of microaggressions—racial, multiracial, and environmental. A detailed analysis of the data as presented in Chapter Four showed how these microaggressions impacted the

multiracial identity development of Black-White multiracial individuals throughout their schooling experiences.

Review of the Methodology

This qualitative study consisted of data collection through two focus groups, 22 individualized interviews, and six written narratives. In the focus groups, participants read a vignette example of a microaggressive situation and then engaged in a group discussion about the impact of racial microaggressions in their own lives. Three individualized interviews were held with each of the six participants (including four follow-up interviews with three participants). During the interviews, participants told their personal stories of experiencing microaggressions. Lastly, those six participants wrote brief counter-narratives about a microaggressive experience they had had.

Focus groups and interviews were transcribed. All three data sources were coded and analyzed through the Racial Microaggression Typology (Sue et al., 2007b) and Multiracial Microaggressions Taxonomy (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). The coding and analyzing process allowed patterns in the findings to emerge.

Summary of the Results

This study researched two issues: (a) the types of racial microaggressions experienced in the daily lives of Black-White multiracial university students; and (b) the effects these racial microaggressions had on those participants and their multiracial identity development. The data indicated that racial microaggressions affected the racial identity development of the participants in many ways. Three themes emerged from the data: (a) societal pressure to conform to a monoracial designation; (b) the continued struggle of the multiracial individual for multiracial

identity; and (c) the effects of racial microaggressions in asserting a multiracial identity. This study answered two guiding research questions. Research Question One asked, “What types of racial microaggressions are experienced by Black-White multiracial university students in their daily lives?” This first research question was answered through a detailed look at the abundance of racial microaggressions the participants encountered. Charts of the categories of racial microaggressions show the participants and the racial microaggressions they experienced (See Appendix P).

The literature on racial microaggressions established six categories of racial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b). Sue et al. (2007b) listed a typology of racial microaggressions encapsulated as microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations that occur in the lives of monoracial People of Color. Johnston and Nadal (2010) developed a taxonomy of five categories of specific racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial people; Nadal et al. (2011) added a sixth category of racial microaggressions based on monoracial stereotypes. Sue et al.’s (2007b) taxonomy and Nadal et al.’s (2011) Category 6 were combined for purposes of analysis in this dissertation because these microaggressions are based on racial stereotypes.[2]

Although Environmental Microaggressions are included under the three headings of microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults in the Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et al., 2007b), for the purpose of this dissertation, they were detailed within their ownspecific category, which the researcher named Category 7 – Environmental

[2] Because Sue et al.’s (2007b) Taxonomy and Nadal’s (2011) Category 6 have similar traits, they have been conflated into a single category for the sake of argument in this taxonomy.

Microaggressions.[3] Therefore, the seven categories of Racial Microaggressions detailed in this dissertation are:

1. Category 1: Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
    a. Including Second-Class Citizen Microaggressions (Sue et al., 200b7)
2. Category 2: Exoticization and Objectification (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
3. Category 3: Assumption of Monoracial or Mistaken Identity (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
4. Category 4: Denial of Multiracial Identity (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
5. Category 5: Pathologization of Identity and Experiences (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)/Pathologizing of Multiracial Identity or Cultural Values Microaggressions
    a. Including Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles (Sue et al., 2007b)
    b. Including Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status (Sue et al., 2007b)
6. Category 6: Racial Microaggressions Based on Monoracial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011); Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et al., 2007b):
    a. Microinsults (Sue et al., 2007b)
        i. Ascription of intelligence (or intellectual inferiority)
    b. Microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007b)
        i. Alien in Own Land
        ii. Color-Blindness

[3] Category 7 – Environmental Microaggressions is a category of racial microaggressions from Sue et al.'s (2007b) taxonomy for the purpose of clarification.

iii. Denial of Individual Racism

7. Category 7 – Environmental Microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007b)

The second research question ("What were the effects of these racial microaggressions on the multiracial identity development of these Black-White multiracial individuals?") required analyzing the effects of these racial microaggressions (Smith et al., 2007; Sue, 2010b) on multiracial identity development for these participants. Families played a significant role in the racial socialization and identity process. The findings of the effects of racial microaggressions showed that the participants experienced symptoms of Racial Battle Fatigue (Smith et al., 2007). Effects of racial microaggressions included apathy, anger, frustration, lower self-esteem, and "hypervigilance" (Smith et al., 2007, p. 556) to avoid negative cultural stereotypes.

This research was approached through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT), relying on the work of Solórzano and Yosso (2002), which detailed six tenets of this framework. In this study, the findings showed that the first five of these tenets applied in the experiences of the participants:

1. Race is central.
2. CRT challenges the stories of White privilege.
3. CRT focuses on the stories of those whose voices are not often heard.
4. CRT believes in the "experiential knowledge of people of color" (p. 26).
5. CRT contains methods of collecting data such as "storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonies, chronicles, and narratives" (p. 26).
6. CRT provides an "interdisciplinary knowledge base" (p. 27).

Race was central in the lives of these participants (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Although racial issues may not have been something the participants thought about daily, racial microaggressions were experienced frequently. Sometimes the participants were exoticized (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) when people asked, "What are you?" (Amber, Ana, Elyse, Pip, Sonic, Sonya, Toad) or excluded (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) when they were expected to select a single race on school or government forms (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Yoshi). The participants were reminded of the centrality of race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005) when they were pathologized (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) as being "confused" (Amber, Pip, Yoshi) or told they were "acting White" (Christie, 2010, p. 6) by friends (Amber, Elyse, Luigi, Peach, Pip).

The participants' verbal and written counter-narratives confronted issues of White privilege by presenting stories often unheard in society (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). The methods for data collecting in this qualitative ethnographic study ensured that the voices of these participants could be heard. Their words hold power, and the messages they imparted are important to hear.

The "experiential knowledge" (Yosso, 2005, p. 26) of these Black-White multiracial people is an important facet of this dissertation. Monoracial expectations tend to stereotype, tokenize, and microaggress multiracial people. Microaggressions that deny the multiracial person's reality—such as being "One-Dropped" into a socially constructed monoracial category based on cultural stereotypes—deem the "experiential knowledge" (Yosso, 2005, p. 26) of these participants unimportant. These findings illustrate the importance of this knowledge and that the

voices of these young people carry valuable lessons in how a monoracially inclined society can learn from this knowledge.

Discussion of the Results

The findings of this study show that perpetrators of racial microaggressions perpetuate the opposition between White privilege and the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent for Black-White multiracial people. Individuals in families, schools, and society should be made aware of the meanings of these racist acts. This information will help both perpetrators and targets of racial microaggressions find means and methods to handle situations of subtle discrimination.

Family Impact on Multiracial Identity Development

Family Promotion of Multiracial Identity

Family racial socialization (McHale et al., 2006)—that is, the ways that parents socialize their multiracial children in racial identification—effects multiracial identity development. Parents who socialize their children to identify as multiracial identity (Renn, 2004) or border identity (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008) support them in creating a more cohesive multiracial identity for them. In this study, an example of a participant who was socialized by parents to claim a multiracial or border identity was Sonic. He described his parents socializing him to identify and recognize himself as being both "fully Black and fully White at the same time" (Interview 1). His understanding himself as a multiracial being contributed to his secure sense of self; he was aware that he was a part of both racial sides, despite society's effort to enforce a monoracially Black identity choice.

Participants socialized by parents to identify as one monoracial category (i.e., Black) tended to have some confusion and even questioned the reasoning—as evidenced when Pip's

mother told her to identify as Black, while her grandfather helped her work through the confusion, and she decided to identify as mixed or Creole.

Participants whose parents did not socialize their children at all in how to identify demonstrated a type of emotional distance. Yoshi's parents did not socialize him as to how he should identify, and sometimes he felt excluded along racial lines in social and dating relationships, so he had to find his own ways of identifying himself as a racial being.

Family Bonding

It is within the family that parents socialize their child to understand general society and to help form the child's racial identity (McHale et al., 2006). The degree of closeness the participants had with their parents, siblings, and extended family members affected multiracial identity development and the ways the participants chose to identify themselves racially (Brunsma, 2005). When participants felt close to family members and had nurturing relationships, multiracial identity was affected; particularly concerning interactions between parents and children (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008). Being close to a parent, sibling, or other family member, and feeling open to share feelings about multiraciality helped participants create a greater sense of cohesive identity.

Most of the participants spoke of having close, nurturing family relationships with parents and siblings. Amber and Elyse both talked about the relationships they had with their younger sisters, with whom they shared stories of similar microaggressive experiences and issues concerning multiracial identity. Sonic and Sonya both detailed the close relationships they had with their parents. Sonic's parents encouraged him to relate to both racial sides of his background. Sonya, whose biological mother and adoptive step-father were White, told of how

close she felt with her mother, who wanted to make Sonya feel comfortable with her unique hair and phenotype. Yoshi was the only participant who mentioned not feeling close with his parents or siblings, and he exhibited apathy when answering questions about them (Interview 1).

Familial Intersectionality of Race and Class

Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) illustrated that cultural and demographic experiences based on "neighborhoods… schools… [and] religious participation" (pp. 59-60) contributed to the socialization process in interracial families. The participants' familial social class was also a contributing factor to how they racially identified themselves (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008). Most participants came from what they described as middle to upper-middle class backgrounds. Most parents were in white-collar professions and were supportive of the academic careers of their multiracial children. These families were from socioeconomic levels that indicated a higher level of social capital, whereby college was a natural extension of the academic track expected for their children. Brunsma (2005) has substantiated this notion, contending that parents' socioeconomic class contributes to how parents socialize their multiracial children. Families in higher socioeconomic levels tended to identify their children as multiracial, whereas parents of lower socioeconomic levels tended to designate their offspring as their monoracial race of color (i.e., as Black) (Brunsma, 2005). Within this study, participants identified themselves as a multiracial, based on their cultural experiences within their families as well as their family socioeconomic status (Townsend, Fryberg, Wilkins, & Markus, 2012). The participants had access to forms of White privilege based on their family's economic and social standing.

Families Provided a Safe Harbor from Societal Racial Microaggressions

Rockquemore et al. (2005) have discussed that families should provide comfort, support, and protection for their multiracial children in dealing with a racially stratified society. Participants discussed how family was a place of refuge from the racially microaggressive world. There was an element of safety within the family structure, representing love and nurturing through familial bonds.

For most of the participants, race was not an issue in the household. Elyse, especially, spoke of the degree of closeness she felt to her parents and younger sister. She mentioned that she grew up with a sense of racial innocence within her family, and that it was a shock for her to go to college and have to explain herself racially and deal with purposeful discriminatory acts (Sue et al., 2007b) that caused her to feel anxious and fearful (Elyse, Interview 1).

Racial Microaggressions also Occurred within Families

Microaggressions that occurred within the family structure had an impact on multiracial identity development. Even if family relationships were strong, at times, racial microaggressions occurred within the family. Participants who reflected upon times they were excluded by family members spoke of feeling confused or "not enough" of the race from which they were excluded. For example, Amber spoke of being excluded by Black relatives (Amber, Interview 3), which led to feelings of insecurity around Black people and a reluctance to make friends with Black women (Interview 1, Follow-up Interview). Amber also mentioned how her Black mother informed Amber that Amber could not fully understand her mother's experience as a Black woman because of Amber's being half-White (Interview 3). Amber spoke of negative issues in her mother's extended family, such as "drug addict[ion]… juvenile hall… welfare… food

stamps" (Interview 3). These issues caused her to overcompensate both personally and academically for the "delinquent" (Interview 3) behavior of Black people in order to avoid being subjected to negative cultural stereotypes.

Seltzer and Johnson (2009) discussed that there is "limited research… regarding how individuals cope with racism and prejudice within their family" (p. 11). Even in the most ideal family circumstances, strong emotions can cause a person to perpetrate racial microaggressions or make "racially offensive comments" (Seltzer & Johnson, 2009, pg. xi). For instance, Yoshi told of two instances when each of his parents made derogatory comments about the other parent's race. One such instance included Yoshi's White mother, in the heat of anger, referring to a person as a "stupid nigger" (Interview 1). These microaggressive experiences made him question how he was being viewed as a multiracial person within the confines of family.

Participants also discussed times that they were monoracially categorized as Black by a parent or family member. Amber, Elyse, Pip, and Sonya were advised by a parent to identify themselves monoracially as Black. In Amber and Pip's cases, designation was according to a maternal rule of racial identification—the assumption that "you are what your mother is" (Amber, Follow-up Interview). In Elyse and Sonya's experiences with their White mothers, monoracially identifying as Black was due to social reasoning (to "improve the test scores of Black kids" – Elyse, Interview 1) or to making the default choice of Black when one is not monoracially White (Sonya). These three ways in which parents identified their multiracial child indicate adherence to a One-Drop Rule ideology.

School Impact on Multiracial Identity Development

Racial microaggressions occurred in school and were uncomfortable when experienced, but the participants' families supported the participants' academic success. Participants experienced racial microaggressions in schools on academic levels by teachers and administrators, as well as within a social realm by classmates and peers. The K–12 schooling levels were legally mandated spaces and racial microaggressions within that context, however hurtful, had to be endured and tolerated by the participants.

A major finding is that racial microaggressions in schools did not negatively affect academic development, but did affect multiracial identity development and social development. Most microaggressions came from children and peers, although some were from teachers and administrators, as when purposefully discriminatory acts (i.e., being called racial slurs by classmates) were either overlooked, or the administration asked the child not to tell the parents. In general, participants spoke of working hard to excel academically, even as microaggressions were evidenced in personal and social relationships within schools.

Individuals Were High Achievers

These participants desired to succeed academically, so racial microaggressions did not affect their academic identities (Amber, Elyse, Yoshi). The participants' desire for academic success, therefore, cannot be attributed to encountering racial microaggressions but to factors not related to schooling. This finding aligns with the work of Herman (2009), who has asserted that

> ethnic identity and experiences of ethnic discrimination are not strong factors in explaining academic performance among multiracial or monoracial students. Instead, the grades of multiracial students are related to their concrete beliefs about the consequences of school failure, the educational values of their peers, and the racial composition of their neighborhoods and schools. (p. 20)

The exception to Herman's (2009) claim that discrimination by teachers does not impact academic performance was substantiated by Sonya's schooling experiences. Sonya was raised in a predominantly White neighborhood with two monoracial White parents. Both of her parents were professors; yet in high school, Sonya seemed to struggle academically. For example, she described how her teachers treated her like a second-class citizen (Interview 2), finding problems with her school work and requiring an appointment with her parents. Upon seeing that both of her parents were White, the teachers claimed that everything was "okay… it was no big deal" (Sonya, Interview 1). Although Sonya desired to be on a successful academic track, she was discouraged by teachers from taking higher-level classes in high school. Sonya was academically neglected by teachers who assumed she would not be as successful as her White peers. Once Sonya went to college, however, she was no longer limited to basic level courses, and selected a major in Russian Studies in which she enjoyed personal and academic success.

School de facto Segregation Experiences

Seltzer and Johnson (2009) discussed the impact of painful racial experiences on Students of Color when experiencing environmental racial microaggressions in schools. These types of grand-scale microaggressions in schools marginalized and tokenized multiracial students. Marginalization, as explained by Stonequist (1928), occur when the multiracial person is not considered a part of either side, and is forced to live between the two worlds. Similarly, when tokenized (Kanter, 1977), the Black-White multiracial person is assumed to be the racial representative of his or her half-Black side and to be able to speak for all Black people.

Participants described ways that their schools promoted a racial divide through environmental microaggressions with de facto segregated schools and classrooms (Pip, Sonya).

Schools were segregated either because of neighborhood demographics or within the actual school site in classrooms divided along racial lines. At times, participants were the only part-Black student in the classroom (Amber, Sonic).

Some participants also described how teachers intentionally segregated classrooms (Pip, Sonya). These types of racial microaggressions demonstrated the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent ideology by how teachers subtly promoted a monoracial agenda. When teachers de facto segregated the classroom based on race, the multiracial students were excluded from the selection process by having to choose one racial group.

Schooling Experiences Contribute to the Promotion of the "One-Drop Rule"

Environmental microaggressions were also evidenced by the participants through Eurocentric teaching in schools (Amber, Elyse, Sonic, Sonya, and Yoshi). For instance, participants described the ways that educational structures reinforced the monoracial status in historic figures of mixed racial backgrounds. Teachers neglected multiracial students by not educating themselves about multiple racial choices. Consequently, multiraciality had not been offered as an option for racial identity and monoracial designation was enforced. Additionally, a Eurocentric curriculum reinforces extreme prejudices embodied in the One-Drop Rule, which assumes that people who are part-Black exist on the racial margins (Stonequist, 1937), or are told to adopt a tokenized identity (Kanter, 1977).

Microaggressions of exclusion or isolation occurred in the lives of some of the participants when they were told to select one race on school forms; having to make a racial choice reflected the promotion of the One-Drop Rule ideology with mandated forms that demanded a monoracial choice. Official forms that allowed only one racial option were not only

viewed as a microaggression of exclusion or isolation, but also reflected environmental microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). The societal expectation was that these multiracial people, being part-Black—and based on the tenets of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent—would select a monoracial Black identity. The microaggression reflecting the One Drop rule mentality was enforced by parents who urged their child to select the monoracial category of Black for the sake of "improv[ing] the test scores for Black children," or by default reasoning that being part-Black means one can never be socially considered White.

Messages Based on Ontological Blackness

A form of exclusion or isolation microaggressions occurred whenever the multiracial participants received second-class treatment (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Sue et al., 2007b) and were made to feel that monoracial people received benefits that were not offered to the multiracial person. Some participants spoke of experiencing second-class treatment from teachers when they observed that monoracial students were given preferential treatment for accessing higher-level classes or whenever the racialized experiences of the multiracial student were ignored or overlooked by administrators (Luigi, Pip, Sonya).

Faculty and staff also made flagrant assumptions that the participants were engaged in delinquent behavior; they were assumed to be criminal or engaging in some illegal activity based on stereotypes attributed to their part-Blackness (Sue et al., 2007b). Some of the participants encountered Purposeful Discriminatory Acts (Sue et al., 2007b) at their schools in being called racial slurs and other hurtful names (Elyse, Luigi, Peach, Pip, and Yoshi). Such racial microaggressions demonstrated the "ontological blackness" (Duncan, 2005, p. 95), which is stigmatized and pathologized in the United States—and systemically enforced in both the lives

of monoracial Black people and multiracial part-Black individuals. Microaggressors, aligned with the tenets of White privilege, still see things in Black-or-White, not Black-and-White. Within a CRT framework, where race is central, society cannot transcend name-calling and derogatory racial labeling based on the legacy of slavery and socially constructed skin-color categories.

Society Impact on Multiracial Identity Development

While microaggressions were prevalent in schools, racial microaggressions in society represented the broader canvas where acts of subtle racism occurred on all levels. Racial microaggressions in general society affected the participants' racial identity development in terms of peer relationships.

Social Relationships with Peers

Seltzer and Johnson (2009) discussed discrimination in friendships. The participants in this study encountered microaggressions in friendships and social relationships; and found that the impact of racial microaggressions affected how they related socially with other people. For example, when excluded by both White people and Black people at times, some participants spoke of being open to making friendships with people of all races. Yet, some of the participants were told that they were "not Black enough" or were deemed inferior as being "white-washed" (Amber, Interview 3). These types of microaggressions demonstrate how the multiracial person is socially expected to choose a racial side, and yet condemned for not being "enough" of one of his or her races to be socially accepted into either racial side. These exclusionary microaggressions place societal pressure on the multiracial person to identify himself or herself monoracially and challenge the multiracial person's continued struggle for identity.

Boundaries in peer relationships were negotiated. Some participants felt they had to tolerate racial microaggressions to preserve friendships. One example was in the relationship between Amber and a White girlfriend, who expected Amber to explain criminal activities due to her part-Blackness (Assumption of Criminal Status). This friend did not recognize Amber's multiraciality, and as she attributed illegal behavior to Black people, expected Amber to provide answers to potential criminal behavior. Yet, Amber enjoyed being friends with this woman, so she had to tolerate the racial microaggressions to maintain the friendship.

Dating Relationships

Racial microaggressions in general society affected racial identity development and peer relationships as well as how the participants related to the world at large. For example, dating relationships affected identity development. Amber's Hispanic ex-boyfriend pathologized her for demonstrating a "Black girl attitude" (Interview 2) whenever she was angry, causing her to feel she needed to overcompensate to avoid negative stereotypes and be tokenized as monoracially and stereotypically Black (Interview 3).

Monoracial people may have a mental construct as to what their ideal partner should look like, and multiracial people might not always fit that ideal (Korgen, 1999). For example, Yoshi had dating experiences with women of all races who discriminated against him because of his being multiracial; Black women dismissed Yoshi because of his lighter skin color, and women of other races rejected him for not being a full member of the monoracial category they preferred to date (Yoshi, Interviews 1, 2 and 3; Narrative). Yoshi had to negotiate his relationships with women based on his racial background, a type of discrimination he found very frustrating. Being excluded based on race raised feelings of anger and resentment. Microaggressions that suggest

the multiracial person cannot be him- or herself or is pathologized as abnormal affects how the multiracial person relates to others.

Social Relationships in General Society

The participants were exoticized in general society because of their physical appearances. Both the male and female participants in this study spoke of being considered more attractive because of being multiracial. Positive characteristics were ascribed to some of these participants because of their being mixed-race, rather than because of their personalities.

The first way that participants felt exoticized was when people questioned the multiracial person about his or her race (i.e., “What are you?”) and made comments about his or her physical appearance—a direct question unlikely to be asked of monoracial people (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Such questioning serves as an example of “putting race on display,” whereby monoracial people “[felt] entitled to ask multiracial people questions about their background that would normally not be asked of nonmultiracial people” (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135). Not being recognizable as a specific phenotypical racial category, the participants explained that being asked, “What are you?” was a part of their daily existence. This query demanded that the multiracial person explain his or her multiple racial sides, due to a racially or ethnically ambiguous appearance.

Secondly, the multiracial participants were objectified sexually (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) when they may be told that they are physically attractive because of being mixed-race and for having a unique phenotype. Some of the participants in this study mentioned being told of having heightened attractiveness because of being multiracial. Other people told them they were

"exotic" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, pg. 135) because they did not fit into what dominant society deems as the norm.

Participants' racial mixtures were also exoticized as being something "cool" (Bayside Focus Group Dialogue) in relation to the presumably uninteresting physical qualities of being White. This notion presents a dilemma in that while White privilege dictates that White standards of beauty are coveted in American society, but being exotic is something abnormal and objectified as an unusual type of beauty (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). One is, therefore, seen as physically attractive *because* of being part-Black. The participants were particularly exoticized because of their physical appearances, receiving comments about their "good hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001, p. 19; Russell et al., 1992, p. 85) or skin coloring. This assessment employs a racialized lens for physical beauty, and sets multiracial beauty apart from the standard, viewing it as something extraordinary—but attributed to race nonetheless.

Gendered racial microaggressions. Some of the female participants especially felt that their social development had been impacted in not being socially accepted by Black females (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonya). Black feminist scholarship has addressed how microaggressions from Black women exclude multiracial women. Hill-Collins (1991) provided an interpretative framework to understand the Black feminist perspective: Black women are victims of race, gender, *and* class oppression. The "controlling images" (Hill-Collins, 1991, p. 7) of the historic roles of White women and Black women have ensured that physical appearance is the barometer for aesthetic appeal in society (Hill-Collins, 1991; Reuter, 1918). White beauty has been traditionally praised, and Black beauty has been disparaged. It follows, then, that the physical appearance of the multiracial Black-White female has come under scrutiny.

The female participants described how some Black males exoticized them as multiracial females because of their unique phenotype, because of being part-White. Russell et al. (1992) have discussed aspects of colorism within the Black community. This discrimination extends the legacy of slavery, where the lighter-skinned Mulatta slave was offered preferential treatment by the White slave-owner, and afforded aspects of White privilege not typically given to the darker monoracial Black female slave.

The female participants also detailed being excluded by Black females. A correlation exists between the microaggressions of exclusion or isolation by Black females and the exoticization and objectification by Black males in the experiences of the multiracial female participants. The female participants (Amber, Elyse, Pip, Sonya) detailed being excluded socially by Black females due to their assumption that some Black men are attracted to mixed-race females. Black females thus excluded Black-White multiracial females based on their "White" physical features such as "good hair" (Byrd & Tharps, 2001, p. 19; Russell et al., 1992, p. 85) and/or lighter skin tones. Black males exoticized Black-White multiracial females for the same reasons. These findings concur with Russell et al. (1992), who explained that "most Black men prefer their women to be 'light, bright, and sometimes White'" (p. 107).

Issues of colorism related to the multiracial person for possibly having more European physical features, such as "good hair" or lighter skin color reflect White standards of beauty (Hill-Collins, 1991; Reuter, 1918). Having the coveted physical appearance of White beauty standards contributes to multiracial women being exoticized as the ideal of mixed-race beauty (Russell et al., 1992)—and therefore favored by the opposite sex. Favoring the multiracial part-Black woman over the monoracial Black woman because of her physical attributes affects the

self-esteem of the monoracial woman, potentially leading her to exclude the multiracial female via racial microaggression of resentment and hostility (Hill-Collins, 1991).

Although these links may not be the norm, the participants indicated a high frequency of such dynamics in their daily lives; whereas monoracial Black women exclude, monoracial Black men exoticize. Conversely, due to aspects of White standards of beauty, the multiracial female might not be as desired or exoticized by White males as by Black males.

White Privilege Juxtaposed with the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent

Racialized systems within schools and in general society perpetuated environmental microaggressions based on the tenets of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. The participants encountered the juxtaposition of White privilege in relation to the One-Drop Rule. All environmental microaggressions developed from this juxtaposition.

The multiracial participants had access to some forms of White privilege based on their part-Whiteness; for instance, they may have received some benefits of White privilege due to family socioeconomic backgrounds or educational levels (Brunsma, 2005), or due to physical appearance (i.e., having lighter skin or "good" hair) (Russell et al., 1992). Yet, they were subjected to the scrutiny of the One-Drop Rule and expected to classify themselves as Black (Brunsma, 2006; Kottak, 2009; Reuter, 1918, 1931; Stonequist, 1937; Sweet, 2005). Therefore, the participants remained aware of the effects of the One-Drop Rule and experienced microaggressions based on their part-Blackness. Consequently, the participants were victims of microaggressions because of being mixed-race *and* because of being considered Black.

This overarching theme of the relationship between White privilege and the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent was perpetuated in the daily lives of the Black-White multiracial

participants through Media Environmental Microaggressions and Lack of Multiracial Role Models. According to the participants, White privilege was evidenced through images in the media that promoted White aspects of beauty (i.e., having White physical features) (Joseph & Lewis, 1981). Sonya's desire to be accepted in White society was determined by her struggle with her multiracial hair. She was aware of her differentness (and consequently, not being completely accepted by her White peers) because her type of physical appearance was not coveted like the White women on the cover of the fashion magazines.

Shih and Sanchez (2005) described how "multiracial individuals… face the challenge of finding racially similar role models to guide them in understanding their racial identity" (p. 572). The participants discussed the lack of multiracial role models in society; mixed-race people are not readily "represented in their immediate environment" (Shih & Sanchez, 2005, p. 572). And, indeed, notable people who are multiracial are often monoracially categorized (Shih & Sanchez, 2005), which made the participants cognizant of the "perpetual invisibility of the multiracial community" (Shih & Sanchez, 2005, p. 572). Monoracial categorization of multiracial historical figures or celebrities demonstrates that White privilege and the reinforcement of the One-Drop Rule enforces monoracial labels on multiracial people, and reinforces the lack of multiracial role models.

The participants in this study experienced both multiracial microaggressions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2011) due to being mixed-race and monoracial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007b; Nadal et al., 2011) due to being considered part of an oppressed monoracial group. They were subjected to racial microaggressions referred to by Nadal et al. (2011) as Monoracial Stereotypes (Category 6) and to tokenization (Kanter, 1977) as being culturally Black.

These findings show these individuals being tokenized (Kanter, 1977), and expected to represent racially their Black sides. Due to One-Drop Rule ideology, the multiracial part-Black person was tokenized as monoracially Black and expected to explain stereotypical behaviors of Black people to non-Black people (Amber, Interview 3; Luigi, Bayside Focus Group, Dialogue). This idea enforced the expectation that the multiracial person could answer for all Black people because that person is viewed through a monoracially Black lens by other people. The perpetrator of the microaggression does not see the multiracial person as mixed-race, or as an individual who can only share his or her own personal experience. These assumptions are a form of microaggressing people based on monoracial stereotypes and tokenism, and expecting the multiracial person to fit into the monoracial box to explain monoracial behaviors (Kanter, 1977). Tokenizing the multiracial person is very limiting because not every Black person has similar characteristics; just as every multiracial person does not have similar characteristics.

Positive Effects of Racial Microaggressions

Being multiracial should ideally be the experience of "the best of both worlds" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 135; Elyse, Interviews 1 and 3; Peach, Bayside Focus Group; Sonic, Interviews 1 and 3; Toad, Bayside Focus Group), where the mixed-race person is an equal member of both racial groups, and free to express qualities of both racial sides. Despite the chronic nature of racial microaggressions in their lives, the participants in this study were positive about their multiracial experience and identity development. Some of the participants spoke of enjoying being of multiple and diverse backgrounds. Ana (Hillside Focus Group) articulated a sense of multiracial pride in her written narrative:

> I have learned to love myself for who I am. Being multiracial is not easy… but being able to embrace both cultures and still become a part of both ethnic backgrounds is the true

> beauty of it. Being proud of who I am and what I am has made me overcome the many obstacles I have faced because of being multiracial. That is why I am the beautiful and strong African-American/ Latina woman I am today. (Ana, Written Narrative)

Sonya discussed times when her multiracial experience had been validated by friends and others in society, and recognized as valuable and important within a societal structure that often does not value that experience. She told of a White friend, whom she had known for over 20 years, who had gone through a traumatic and debilitating illness with anorexia. This friend had shared some of her recovery experience through a book she was reading on body image. Sonya's friend mentioned how some White women might have issues with their bodies, while some Black women might be obsessed with obtaining what society deemed as "good hair" (Sonya, Interview 1). Sonya described:

> And she said "You know, reading this book made me think of you because I thought, you know, what would it be like what would it be like for me if I were biracial and I had the pressures of… both expectations, to have perfect hair and to have a perfect body." And I felt in that moment, that it wasn't really microaggression because it was genuine. [It was my friend's way of saying] "I'm trying to empathize with you and understand you and what your experience must be like." That meant more to me than almost any other experience I've ever had with a friend because I felt validated [laughs]… And that, that meant a lot to me… (Sonya, Interview 1)

This example demonstrates a positive effect of being multiracial. Despite the negative repercussions of racial microaggressions, the experience that Sonya described reflects her friend's awareness and understanding of Sonya's multiraciality. Sonya's multiracial reality was not denied (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), ignored, or devalued in this instance. Sonya was viewed by her friend as a multiracial person, with advantages and disadvantages from both of her racial sides.

This dissertation researched Black-White multiracial people who were college age (19-27 years of age). Attending college is a time when multiracial identity choices are explored in

greater depth (King, 2008). Elyse and Sonya both spoke of how they found that college was a time for them to discover their racial identities. Elyse described the complexities of coming from an upbringing where race was not an ever-present issue to going to university and being called a racial slur, and forced to deal with her own racial identity. She valued being a participant in this study, as it afforded her the opportunity to sort through her feelings on her own multiracial identity.

Sonya also detailed how she appreciated the opportunity in college to associate with Black females and to discover a racial identity that depicted her experience. During her adolescence, she felt stigmatized and pathologized for being mixed-race. She dealt with lower self-esteem issues related to her physical appearance and to being considered an "honorary White" (Sonya, Interviews 1, 2, and 3) in her peer group. In university, she discovered an academic major that she enjoyed and achieved a solid racial identity because of her experiences. Sonya learned to appreciate the struggle of being multiracial in a monoracially White family and how to embrace both sides of her background.

Several of the participants in this study were involved in some level of social justice advocacy for multiracial people. In high school, Sonic became involved in organizations that educated people about race and social justice issues, and continued this effort in college, choosing extracurricular classes on race and multiracial understanding. He started the multiracial student organization at his university (which has gained national recognition in conferences on multiraciality) in response to the challenge of the "lack of awareness amongst the faculty and administration or lack of actual people that could relate to this [mixed experience]"

(Sonic, Interview 2). At the time of his interviews, Sonic had recently graduated from college and was beginning a graduate program in sociology, with an emphasis in multiracial identity.

Multiracial identity was impacted by racial microaggression experiences in college and by membership in university multiracial student union (MSU) organizations. Garbarini-Philippe (2010) has illustrated:

> because identity development occurs in dynamic environments through interaction with others, colleges and universities should offer physical, social, and psychological spaces where multiracial students can feel comfortable, explore who they are, and educate others about an identity that may not always reflect social norms. (p. 5)

MSU groups, therefore, were vital for the participants because they created "a space [for the multiracial participants] to express and explore their multiracial identity' (Ozaki & Johnston, 2008, p. 54).

Participants in the Bayside Focus Group were all members of the Mixed Student Union (MSU) at their university. They also were friends with each other outside of the MSU. Because of their social relationships with each other, there was an ease among the participants. They socialized with each other and knew about each other's lives, so there was a sense of trust and compassion among them.

College multiracial student groups contributed to multiracial identity development; these organizations enabled the multiracial person to interact with other mixed-race people. The members of the Bayside Focus Group, Toad, Peach, Luigi, and Yoshi, were all active members of their university's multiracial student organization; in fact, at the time of the study, Toad was the MSU copresident. Amber, as well, was a member of her university's Multi-Ethnic Student Union (MESU, Hillside University). Elyse and Ana (Hillside Focus Group) belonged to various

campus groups at their university, and attended and participated in roundtable panels on diversity and multiracial issues.

More positive results from dealing with racial microaggression included resilience, openness, and tolerance. Participants were more resilient in dealing with society and all of its prejudice. Several participants spoke of being more open in dealing with people of all races and ethnicities in social relationships. Participants also demonstrated more tolerance of people who enact microaggressions. For example, being microaggressed by other people made Elyse a stronger and more self-reliant person. She did not like to be subjected to microaggressions, so she strove to not be microaggressive toward other people (Elyse, Interview 3). Sonic especially spoke of opportunities to have conversations that monoracial people might not be able to. These types of opportunities exemplify how being multiracial and receiving microaggressions can be seen as an opportunity to educate other people.

Unanticipated Findings

Many of the racial microaggressions exemplified in the personal experiences of the participants overlapped with other categories of microaggressions. For example, a racial microaggression as described by Sue et al. (2007b) would overlap with a multiracial microaggression as described by Johnston and Nadal (2010), and vice versa. An instance of an overlapping microaggressions was when Pip was treated as a second-class citizen (Johnston & Nadal, 2010) when school administration minimized a purposefully discriminatory action (Sue et al., 2007b) by a classmate.

Also, some microaggressions discussed in the work of Sue et al. (2007b) and Johnston and Nadal (2010) were combined. The racial microaggression theme of Second-Class Citizen

(Sue et al., 2007b) overlapped with the similar multiracial microaggression theme of second-class treatment and status within the category of Exclusion or Isolation (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Thus, for the purpose of analysis and discussion, these microaggressions were combined into one category (Category 1: Exclusion or Isolation).

Similarities were found in the racial microaggressions theme of Pathologization of Cultural Values/Communication Styles (Sue et al., 2007b) and Pathologization of the Multiracial Experience (Johnston and Nadal, 2010). Added into this combined Pathologization category were racial microaggressions of Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status (Sue et al., 2007b), as these types of microaggressions projected a deviance onto the multiracial experience. These microaggressions were detailed collectively in Category 5: Pathologization of Identity and Experiences (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)/Pathologizing of Multiracial Identity or Cultural Values Microaggressions.

As previously detailed, the additional Category 6 of "Racial Microaggressions Based on Monoracial Stereotypes" (Nadal et al., 2011) reflected how the multiracial participants were tokenized for their part-Blackness. Therefore, the researcher combined this category of multiracial microaggression with tokenism. Additionally, the racial microaggressions evidenced in Sue et al.'s (2007b) Racial Microaggressions Typology shared similarities with Nadal's (2011) Category 6 microaggressions of Monoracial Stereotypes; thus these microaggressions were combined into one category for analysis and discussion; entitled Category 6: Racial Microaggressions Based on Monoracial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011)/Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et al., 2007b).

Combining themes of microaggressions within categories demonstrates how microaggressions cannot simply be placed into a single category, but move across many different categories. This elasticity became apparent during the coding process, when several layers of coding occurred because of cross-references among categories of microaggressions (see Appendix P for Category Charts). Hence, analyzing the findings was not simply a matter of determining in which category a microaggression occurred, but also in how many other categories the microaggression might be represented. This mobility represents the multiplicity and complexity of being multiracial in general and reflects the nature of microaggressions on Black-White multiracial people: they can be microaggressed for being multiracial, as well as "One-Dropped" as monoracially Black.

Implications to the Study

The recommendations are a combination of the research findings of this study and the insights articulated by the participants. The "experiential knowledge" (Yosso, 2005, p. 26) of the participants serves as the greatest tool for understanding the mixed-race experience. Implications to the study are recommended for families, schools, and society.

Recommendations for Families

Encourage a multiracial identity. Parents should not expect their child to choose a racial side. Amber suggested to parents; "[E]mbrace your child, instead of making them feel like they have to be one thing or the other" (Interview, Follow-up Interview). Parents should teach their children about both heritages early; tell children about their ancestry, but not pressure them to choose one race or the other. Parents should avoid creating a polarization, illustrating the dichotomous social order of Black on one side of the spectrum and White on the other; they

should raise the multiracial child as “multiracial,” a mixture of both cultures. By loving their children, and letting them know that they are beautiful multiracial beings—that “being multiracial is a good thing” (Ana, Hillside Focus Group, Dialogue)—parents will help the multiracial child feel his or her experience is valued. Parents should prepare themselves for the racial microaggressions that their child might experience, and be ready to offer solutions for dealing with them.

Teach children about their heritages. A child’s racial background should celebrated and appreciated because it will assist parents in explaining their child’s multiple backgrounds, without compelling the child to identify one way or the other. Amber said: “It makes them feel that they’re not accepted or appreciated for who they are, which is wrong and it will lead to a lot of mental issues later on in life, clearly” (Amber, Follow-up Interview).

Ask and answer questions. Parents should encourage continuous dialogue between themselves and children. Asking questions of multiracial children and answering their questions is beneficial to multiracial identity development. Parents should be open to answering a child’s questions about their multiracial background. Amber advised parents: “And, obviously, don’t lie to your kids and say, ‘Well, you’re just Black because that’s what society will think you are.’ It’s not true. I mean, being mixed nowadays is more common, so it’s more accepted, I feel” (Amber, Follow-up Interview). Parents may feel free to ask their child questions, to elicit their opinions on their life experiences, and to appreciate their multiracial reality.

Teach children to embrace all cultures. Parents and families can work together to encourage multiracial children to spend time with people from both races, and especially stay involved with both sides of the family. Parents ought to value their own cultures, so that they

can instill an appreciation in their child for both races. Sonic related that by appreciating multiracial children and teaching them to appreciate themselves

> then I think that will be the foundation for establishing a solid racial identity when race becomes more salient in their lives, and it'll give them the strength and the tools to navigate a world that is very unfriendly and can be very unforgiving when it comes to people who are multiracial. It'll give them the strength to do that. (Interview 1)

Recommendations for Schools

In an educational setting, school administrators, faculty, and staff should be made aware of the implications of racial microaggressions and help both perpetrators and recipients of racial microaggressions find ways to handle situations of discrimination. This research will facilitate and foster awareness in the educational arena.

Develop awareness of racial biases. Educators should become aware of their own personal racial biases (Schwartz, 1998) based on upbringing and family origins. Sue et al. (2007b) have suggested: "[E]xplore [your] own racial identities and [your] feelings about other racial groups" (p. 283). Teachers should become aware of their racial biases and stereotypes, so as not to make inadvertently offensive comments. Teachers in general should work to remain neutral in terms of dealing with children of all races.

Become racially educated. Teachers should attend conferences on multiracialism and multiculturalism, and learn about the unique histories of different races, not only that of dominant society. Elyse hoped that teachers will "really encourage a more holistic view and a more incorporated view and to understand that for White students learning from that perspective, it's beneficial" (Interview 1).

Avoid microaggressions. Educators must become aware of the prevalence of racial microaggressions. Sue et al. (2007b) advised: "[I]ncrease [your] ability to identify racial

microaggressions in general and in [yourself] in particular" (p. 283). Teachers must become aware of how stereotypes are perpetuated in society and be cautious not to tokenize people of other races (Kanter, 1977). In other words, if educators can view racism from the perspective of others, they may be able to "understand how racial microaggressions… detrimentally impact [people] of color" (Sue et al., 2007b, p. 283).

Create a racially diverse academic curriculum. Eurocentric teaching reflects an antiquated One-Drop Rule curriculum that monoracially categorizes multiracial historical figures as Black. Amber (Follow-up Interview) and Yoshi (Interview 1) both indicated that the incorrect representation of part-Black multiracial historical figures (such as Homer Plessy, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. DuBois, and President Barack Obama) as Black contributes to the lack of multiracial role models on an academic level. Educators should dismantle Eurocentric teaching systems so that all racial groups are represented equally and accurately (Schwartz, 1998).

Provide a support network. Within the school site, support groups should be developed for multiracial people, as well as for faculty, staff, and other students. These groups could provide a forum for people to discuss all forms of microaggressions and ways of combating them. These support groups should also address issues about self-esteem, where students may learn ways to talk with each other using nonmicroaggressive language.

"Check one race only." Administrators and teachers should not expect students to select a race on school forms, nor should multiracial children be forced to select only one race. School officials should be more aware of students with multiple racial backgrounds. If a form must be completed (i.e., required government forms), then all racial options should be allowed to be

marked; and those choices should be honored, not essentialized. Ideally, the questions on these forms would be eliminated from school systems in general.

Educate the school community. Administrators within the K–12 schooling system should receive training from the school district in how to teach faculty, staff, and students about all forms of microaggressions (i.e., racial, gender, disability, sexual orientation), including the impact of microaggressions on both the perpetrator and recipient, and how to respond to microaggressive instances. Administrators could hold professional development courses for teachers and other school officials about microaggressions, and the effects that microaggressions have on students' academic and social development.

Administrators must address purposeful discriminatory acts against all students. Educators must not tolerate racist incidents among students. To create a safe space for all students, educators should develop a diverse school community that is not divided racially by class levels, financial status, or neighborhood demographics. Lastly, administrators, teachers, and staff should strive to treat all students equally, not treating multiracial students or Students of Color as second-class citizens (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Sue, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b), but to work for a socially just school community.

Recommendations for Society

Subtle acts of racism (Sue, 2010b; Sue et al., 2007b) influence the way the multiracial person discovers his or her place in society. Therefore, the findings of this research illustrated the need for people who are socially involved with multiracial people to be cognizant of the types of microaggressions that multiracial individuals encounter and how these racial microaggressions affect these individuals' experiences.

Beware of microaggressions Peers should be aware of microaggressions and stereotypes and be careful to not attribute special talents or abilities to the multiracial person because of their Blackness or their Whiteness. This awareness includes not generalizing the mixed-race experience by assuming that all mixed-race people are identical in thoughts and behaviors. Also, peers should not belittle the multiracial person's experience. If there is trouble understanding the mixed-race experience, one should not disregard the person; but instead, ask the multiracial person how to better understand his or her reality.

Stay open to the multiracial person. Monoracial peers should remain open to the changing experiences of multiracial individuals. People involved in social relationships with multiracial people should strive for awareness of multiracial identity choices and how the multiracial person's self-identify may change over time and in different situations (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore, 1999; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Root, 1990). Peers should accept that multiracial identity is a changing process, and that multiracial individuals have the freedom to identify themselves in many ways. Friends should respect the multiracial individual's identity choices and not expect the multiracial person to choose solely one race—if that is not how the person identifies himself or herself. In other words, friends should be supportive of multiracial identity choices and be open to celebrating the diverse cultures of other people.

Recommendations for Future Research

The information obtained for this dissertation substantiates a need for further research in the field of racial microaggressions imposed upon Black-White individuals and how these microaggressions affect schooling, academic achievement, and social development. Although

most of the six case study participants were from a racial combination in which the mother was White and the father was Black, future research could examine the Black-White racial combination in which the mother is Black and the father is White, and determine if racial microaggressions are similar or different to the ones experienced by the participants in this study.

Also, as a continuation of this study, research could examine the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial people who are part-Black, but not part-White. These racial combinations were evidenced in the cases of Ana (Hillside Focus Group) and Toad (Bayside Focus Group), both part-Hispanic, and Peach (Bayside Focus Group), who was part-Asian. Future research would study the unique microaggressions people with a non-White mixture may encounter.

Another study for future research could explore people who are half-White, but not half-Black (for example, people who are White-Asian or White-Hispanic), and the types of microaggressions those multiracial people may experience. A final recommendation for future research is to examine the microaggressive experiences of people of other racial mixtures, in which their parental combinations do not include either White or Black background (for example, a person who is Asian-Hispanic).

Relationship of the Current Study

Research in microaggressions has been expanded tremendously by Sue et al. (2007b). Stemming from the work of Critical Race Theorists (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson and Rousseau, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005), microaggression research is continually discussed in the fields of education, law, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Many types of microaggressions—based on disability, gender, sexual orientation, and class—as

well as against specific racial and ethnic groups, are currently being researched. Johnston and Nadal's (2010) work with multiracial microaggressions provided a taxonomy of generalized racial microaggressions that multiracial people may encounter because of their mixed-race status. Although theorists in the field have researched microaggressions in the lives of Asian Americans (Lin 2010; Sue et al., 2007a), Latino/a Americans (Rivera et al., 2010), African Americans (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Sue et al., 2008a; Sue et al., 2008b; Watkins et al., 2010), and multiracial people (Johnston & Nadal, 2010), this study has specifically examined microaggressions with Black-White multiracial individuals.

The significance of this study is that it expanded on the work of Johnston and Nadal (2010) concerning multiracial microaggressions. This dissertation examined the specific microaggressions experienced by people of the particular multiracial combination of Black-White; who have been historically and culturally oppressed due to the conflicting natures of White privilege and the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. The basis of this research study is that these multiracial people—who biologically are of both the White race and Black race—have distinctive and varied stories about embodying this racial combination.

As said previously, these multiracial people have experienced two types of racial microaggressions: they have received racial microaggressions due to being multiracial and also because of being monoracially categorized as Black, according to the tenets of the ideology of the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent. The data obtained for this dissertation illustrate the abundance and range of racial microaggressions experienced by the participants on a regular basis, and demonstrate the magnitude of the effects of racial microaggressions on the participants in terms of racial identity development. The researcher specifically examined how Black-White

multiracial people navigated a dual existence in relation to White privilege and the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent in light of being targeted by racial microaggressions.

This research began as a small study to be conducted at a Southern California university. The original goal was to find participants through one of six Southern California universities. The researcher hoped to find at least four people to participate in the interviews and written narratives, and to form one focus group. However, because social networking communication has become a valuable tool in reaching people globally, the researcher utilized Facebook as a means of connecting her dissertation to other like-minded people. Other communication tools, such as speaking about the study on an Internet radio show and having informal discussions with peers about the study, as well as the researcher's attendance at the Critical Mixed-Race Studies Conference in Chicago, Illinois, provided greater access to a number of people interested in participating. A total of 11 multiracial part-Black individuals participated in one or more parts of the study, including forming two focus groups at two California universities. Six of these individuals were the final research case study participants; these participants were specifically of the Black-White racial combination. Therefore, because of social interest and the timeliness of this topic, part-Black multiracial individuals from across the United States became a part of this nationwide study.

Summary of the Six Case Study Participants

In some cases, the participants and I laughed together at the nature of these microaggressions and how they manifested in the daily experiences of these remarkable people. In some instances, there were shared feelings of frustration and anger because of the negative legacy these microaggressive acts leave. And, in some cases, there were tears because years of

microaggressive abuse leave a scar that never fully heals. That was my hope in meeting with these young people; that by working together, constructing a knowledge base, and creating a vocabulary through which to discuss these experiences, we could begin to heal some of these wounds.

As multiracial people, the participants and I had a lot in common. This dissertation afforded me the opportunity to work on listening to their stories, without interjecting my own personal thoughts and feelings, and to just be present in the moment. In listening through the lens of interviewer only, I learned amazing things about each person.

Amber and Elyse shared a similar lack of racial awareness while growing up. Amber mentioned that she was not aware of her racial background until late elementary school. Until then, it was something she just was not societally forced to think about. Elyse, as well, described how she grew up with friends of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and enjoyed somewhat of a naïve existence in terms of race. It was not until she went to college and was forced to choose an identity or accept a preset identity that she had to justify her racial background.

In late elementary and middle school, Pip was excluded by both Black and Hispanic girls, and was often questioned about her race. She mentioned trying to avoid justifying her racial background throughout middle school. Like Pip, Sonya wanted to avoid explaining her racial background, and instead, worked to fit in with White society.

Sonic shared that he was very aware at an early age of racial injustices based on skin color, and told of how his parents helped him identify himself as both Black and White. Yoshi, on the other had, did not discuss very much at all about his childhood, and the conversations centered on the pain he felt in being discriminated against in middle school.

It was not easy to meet a group of complete strangers and then expect them to open up and share some very private and painful memories. One thing that facilitated the entire process was telling them a little bit about myself and my purpose for undertaking this dissertation project; I have experienced subtle acts of racism throughout my life. I have always been caught between White privilege and the One-Drop Rule, and wanted to know if these young people, many years my junior, were experiencing the same kind of racism I had faced in college, and how they were dealing with it. I wanted the participants to know that I could relate to their experiences. I found that each person, whatever his or her character or personality, did indeed open up and share some very insightful, thought-provoking personal experiences. I strongly believe that a shared bond of trust and mutual understanding was formed with each participant.

I enjoyed my interviews with Amber very much. She was humorous at times in the delivery of her responses, and we enjoyed laughing with each other. I appreciate how detailed Amber was in her responses as she gave specific examples of microaggressions she had experienced.

Elyse answered interview questions astutely and very thoroughly. She mentioned that she had come from a childhood of never having to explain or rationalize herself racially to others to being asked frequently "What are you?" She seemed appreciative of the interview process, and she saw the interviews as a forum to come to terms with her own racial identity and work through identity issues.

Pip was "no nonsense" in her approach to the interviews, and answered her questions briefly and succinctly. Sonic was affable and easy to talk to. The conversations flowed effortlessly, because Sonic was well versed in discussions of race, from a personal and

multiracial perspective, as well as from a sociological perspective. He internalized race as a part of his personal experience as well as in the larger global context, and could verbalize that familiarity.

Yoshi had dealt with hostile racism from Black people while attending middle school in East Oakland, California. He offered the perspective of more blatant racism due to his lighter skin tone, and how it affected him in the school context as well as socially in dating.

Lastly, Sonya was the participant to whom I related the most. Sonya was also the one I cried with the most—as her personal experience mirrored mine so greatly. Calling herself an "honorary White person" (Interviews 1, 2, and 3) because of her two monoracially White parents, Sonya struggled academically and socially to be accepted into White society. But because of her part-Blackness, Sonya was criticized by her peers because of her physical appearance, and neglected by her teachers, as they favored the White students over her. Not fitting in at all in high school caused Sonya to find ways to identify herself as a multiracial human being in college.

I feel very fortunate that all 11 participants—and particularly the six interview and narrative participants—come into my life and became part of this study. I hope that the work the participants and I did together will, indeed, heal the scars—large and small—of dealing with being multiracial in an often oppressively monoracial society. I am grateful that these amazing people felt safe enough to trust me and the process of constructing this knowledge.

Positionality

As a multiracial person, I experience a tension between how I racially identify myself and how I am racially identified by others. That tension is exemplified in the historical juxtaposition

between the One-Drop Rule of Hypodescent and White privilege. Being Black-White multiracial means that although I might have access to the positive benefits of White privilege, racial microaggressions are a part of my daily life as a Person of Color.

The academic language of Critical Race Theory granted me the vocabulary to explain the racism I have experienced throughout my life. The CRT framework defined the term "microaggressions," describing how seemingly innocent acts said or done to People of Color carry racial and/or racist connotations—often unbeknownst to the microaggressor, but quite clear to the person being microaggressed. Research through the Critical Race Theory lens demonstrated how American society monoracializes people, not acknowledging or validating people of mixed-race heritage, especially denying individuals who are part-Black the right to multiple identity options. This theoretical framework expanded my knowledge base through the work of Derald Wing Sue, Marc Johnston, and Kevin Nadal; through this literature in particular, I, as a wounded party, was able to recognize these "racist injuries… [and] find [my] voice" (Yosso, 2005, pp. 74–75).

In an ethnographic nature, I gained a deeper understanding of the culture of the multiracial participants through multiple sources of qualitative data: personal one-on-one interviews, written and/or verbal narratives, and vignettes in focus groups. My positionality was that of a key instrument with an emic (insider) perspective. Being a multiracial woman, I confront these issues in my daily life, and my experiences have shaped my desire to work with other multiracial individuals and allow them the opportunity to share their "voice" (Yosso, 2005, p. 75).

I do not believe that a quantitative study would allow for the stories of multiraciality to be heard in their entirety and complexity; therefore, this research utilized qualitative approaches. Quantitative studies include facts, figures, and numbers, but do not involve the personal touch of lived experiences. Whereas quantitative data, as part of a direct and linear process, serves a valuable purpose, qualitative research is adaptable and permeable, allowing for flexibility of individual life experiences. Qualitative research can provide access to human understanding that touches the heart and soul of one's existence. A survey can only reach so far into the depths of human experience, whereas a story of one person's actual lived experience can transmit profound interpersonal information, and have a greater social and emotional impact on human beings.

In embarking on this research, I wanted to collect, interpret, and make meaning out of stories about multiracial people living in a monoracial world; stories about White privilege and the One-Drop Rule, of limiting and outdated ideologies that demand we abide by society's dictates, and of stereotypes and racist acts that pressure us to conform to monoracial identity labels. I looked for ways that these participants dealt with oppression and/or White privilege in their pasts, and had developed ways to combat these racist issues in the future. Ultimately, I understood that the participants and I are not alone in dealing with unsettling issues concerning multiracialism. Microaggressions continue to be a part of our daily lives.

Through this research, I sought to illuminate dominant culture, promoting awareness of the impact that racial microaggressions have on multiracial people in terms of multiracial identity development and social development. But I also hope this research will develop a deeper understanding in multiracial people themselves about how to deal with and counteract racism through the power of their own stories so:

> [that] those injured by racism and other forms of oppression discover they are not alone in their marginality. They become empowered participants, hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to how the arguments against them are framed, and learning to make the arguments to defend themselves. (Yosso & Solórzano, 2002, p. 27)

Conclusion

This research began as a way of healing my own personal racial wounds. As a multiracial woman who has insisted on asserting a multiracial identity, I have endured difficult times maneuvering in a world that does not allow multiple choices. My initial intention was to see if the world was any friendlier, or, rather, less microaggressive, than it was during my youth. I have found that it is not. Racism and discrimination, even if less overt and more subtle, is still hurtful and based on privilege and oppression. This is not to say that the situation is as dismal as when I was growing up, but I still see an urgent need for this and similar research to promote greater knowledge and understanding of multiraciality. Unfortunately, I have lost a few friendships during the course of this journey – over the contents of this dissertation and the findings of this research. Perhaps their presumed burden and assumed acceptance of responsibility of White privilege was too heavy to comprehend. Perhaps their personal fear of appearing racist prevented a deeper understanding of the multiracial experience. Perhaps my own passion for this subject was too overbearing for some to appreciate and understand. I make no apologies for this passion, for it is a monumental part of my personal life experience as a multiracial woman. Yet for those other people who were enlightened upon this journey, I appreciate how beneficial simple conversations about microaggressions and the mixed-race experience have been for friends and acquaintances who have sought my advice. I have faith that this work is becoming more academically esteemed and respected in the field of education. I hope that educators will receive training in how to reduce racial incidents in their schools and to

resolve microaggressive occurrences when they happen. I also hope that people will learn to be mindful of the words they say to each other.

I also hope that people who are interested in multiracial studies will remember that all human beings are different, and that one cannot generalize another person's experience based on ideas such as race, gender, class, religion, and so on. Each person is an individual. If we, as a society, generalize the "mixed-race experience," we will simply perpetuate microaggressions. We must be aware of and appreciate the differences in all people.

A multiracial person may identify himself or herself in many ways. The participants in this study all espoused the designation of "multiracial," seeing themselves as part of both racial sides, with no internal borders separating the two races. These multiracial people celebrated both parts of their background equally and cohesively. Their experiences lent themselves to the title of this dissertation.

"Tie-Dyed Realities in a Monochromatic World"

Multiracial people navigate a monochromatic world because monoracial people tend to racialize others into one-color designations—usually ones that resemble themselves. The multiracial person, however, is anything but monochromatic, and his or her mixed-race experience encompasses more than one color along the spectrum. Being multiracial reflects a pattern that blends, mixes, and swirls, combining hues of one shade and overlapping with tints of another. This multicolored creation presents a vast array in which colors are not stratified or separated like in a rainbow, but intermingled with all shades between. Thus, this design creates a perfectly blended tie-dyed pattern, where the multiracial person is the embodiment of that tie-dyed reality. Elyse said it most succinctly: "The limbo is where I've been placed by society, but

I will dance my way in, around, and outside the parameters. Just because society sees in solid colors doesn't mean I'm not allowed to tie-dye" (Elyse, Personal Narrative).

APPENDIX A

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE OF MIXED HERITAGE

I HAVE THE RIGHT...
Not to justify my existence in this world.
Not to keep the races separate within me.
Not to justify my ethnic legitimacy.
Not to be responsible for people's discomfort with my physical or ethnic ambiguity.

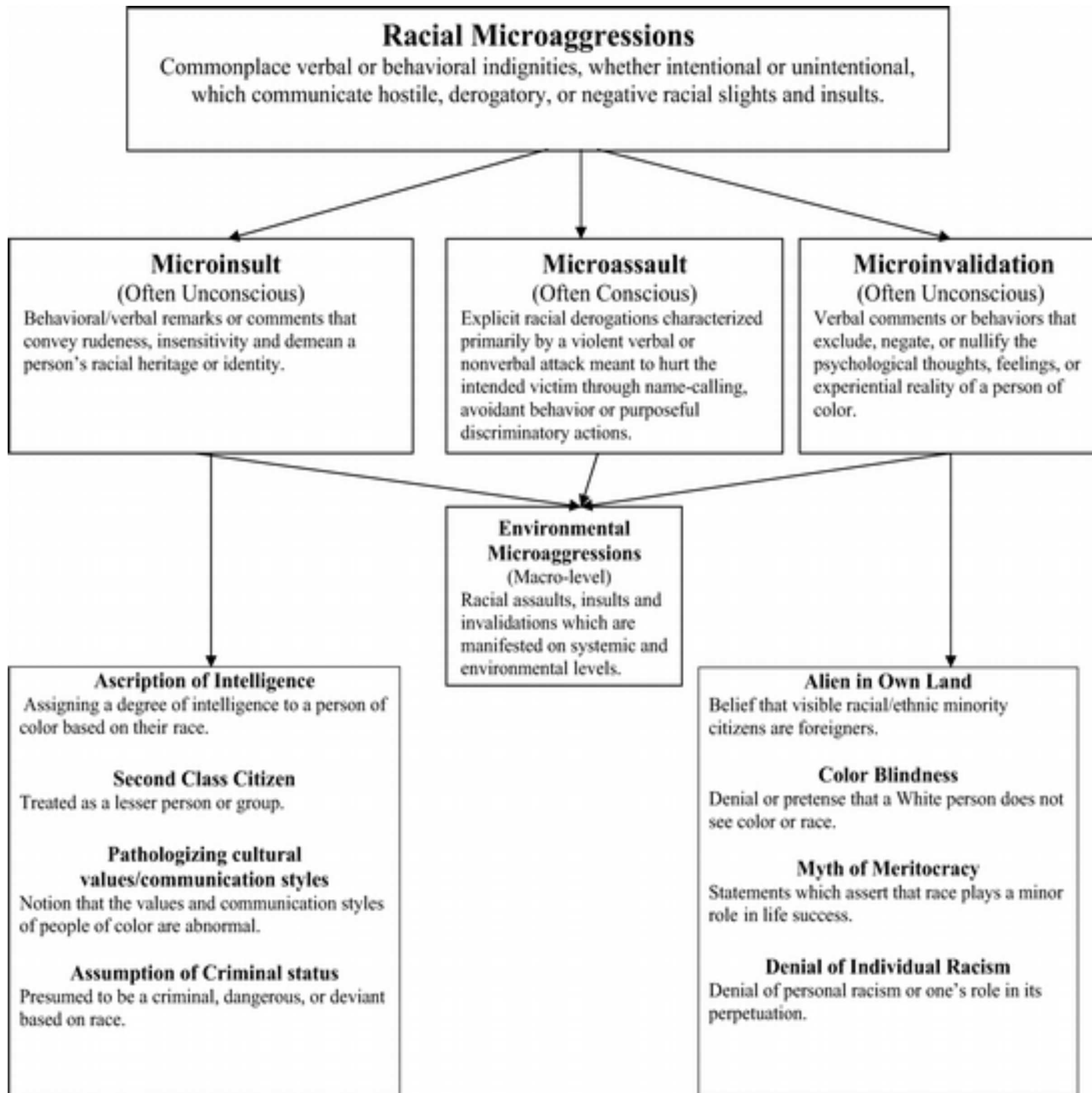
I HAVE THE RIGHT...
To identify myself differently than strangers expect me to identify.
To identify myself differently than how my parents identify me.
To identify myself differently than my brothers and sisters.
To identify myself differently in different situations.

I HAVE THE RIGHT...
To create a vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial or multiethnic.
To change my identity over my lifetime -- and more than once.
To have loyalties and identification with more than one group of people.
To freely choose whom I befriend and love.

Note: From "A Bill of Rights For Racially Mixed People," by M. P. P. Root, 1996, In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *The multiracial experience: Racial borders as the new frontier* (pp. 3–14). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX B

CATEGORIES OF AND RELATIONSHIPS AMONG RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS



Note. Reprinted with permission from, "Racial Microaggressions In Everyday Life: Implications For Clinical Practice," by D. W. Sue, C. M. Capodilupo, G. C. Torino, J. M. Bucceri, A. M. B. Holder, K. L. Nadal, and M. Esquilin, 2007, *American Psychologist, 62*(4), pp. 271–286.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP VIGNETTE

Elizabeth, age 21, is a college junior at a private university, majoring in art history, and with a minor in dance. Coming from an upper-middle class background, her father is an attorney and her mother is a schoolteacher; she went to private elementary and middle schools and college preparatory high school, and due to her father's business, has traveled extensively throughout Europe, Africa, and South America. She is a multiracial person, coming from an interracial union where her father is White and her mother is African-American. Elizabeth has a mixed, racially ambiguous look: she has tan skin, White facial features, and wavy textured (African) brown hair. Based on physical appearance, she is sometimes mistaken for Hispanic.

At a recent college party, Elizabeth met Christopher, a White college senior, business major, age 22. The two of them seemed to hit it off. They had common interests in music and art, and a love for classic movies.

Elizabeth and Christopher spent about 45 minutes talking about their interests, academic pursuits, and future plans. And not once did Christopher ask her the question, "What are you?" that she is asked quite frequently by new acquaintances. Because of her unique and ambiguous racial appearance, she is often asked to explain her racial background to others. Although she is quite proud of her distinct multiracial heritage, she has often been monoracially classified as 'Black' once others know her background. She asserts herself proudly as a multiracial person, as that is how her family socialized her as she was growing up – to embrace both sides of her background with pride, and not to identify as only one.

As the evening drew to a close, she said it was time for her to leave. He offered to walk her to her car. Here is how the conversation went:

Elizabeth (thinking to herself): Wow… I totally like this guy! I hope he asks me out!

Christopher: So, what are you doing this next Saturday night? Want to grab some Italian food?

Elizabeth: Sure! That would be great!

Christopher: Maybe go dancing after dinner? Since you are a dance minor?

Elizabeth: Yeah! I'd love that! Do you know any good dance clubs around here?

Christopher: Well, there's the Bamba Room over on Wilshire which has some really cool Salsa and Merengue tunes.

Elizabeth: I love Merengue dancing!

Christopher: I thought you would, I mean, being that you are Dominican, right?

Elizabeth: Uhh, no. But I love Merengue dancing… we had a seminar in school a few weeks back about how Merengue…….

Christopher (interrupting): Oh, I just assumed with your look that you were Dominican. Well, what are you?

Elizabeth (thinking to herself): Aahhh, the race question… every guy I have met always seems to ask this question. Can't they get to know me first as a person before putting me into a box?

Elizabeth (out loud): What am I?

Christopher: Yeah, what nationality are you? You've got such a cool look, I just assumed you were Dominican. But what nationality are you?

Elizabeth: Oh my nationality… I am American.

Christopher: I know that, but what are you? Like your race.

Elizabeth (thinking to herself): That's a question I usually don't answer until date number three… gees, get to know me first then we can discuss my racial identities… but it's probably okay since we've hit it off so well)…

Elizabeth (out loud, and trying to keep the mood light and humorous): I am from the human race! Tee hee hee!

Christopher (blank stare): What? No, I mean, what race are you? Like Black, Mexican, Oriental…?

Elizabeth (thinking to herself): Oh my goodness… Mexican, Oriental? Is this guy for real? He must be they type who puts all people of Hispanic background in the 'Mexican' category… and Oriental? I am not a rug! The proper term is 'Asian'! I don't think it's going to work out with this guy after all.

Elizabeth (out loud, and proudly): I am a multiracial American.

Christopher: Yeah, I know that… I mean, it's obvious you're not White, so what is your mix?

Elizabeth (thinking to herself): This guy just won't give up!!!

Elizabeth (out loud): Why does my racial background matter to you?

Christopher: C'mon… what's the big secret? I just want to know… you have such a unique look.

Elizabeth (feeling pressured): I'm half-White and half-Black.

Christopher: Ooohhhhhhh, so you are Black!!!!!!!!!!

Elizabeth: Yes, I am half-Black, and I am also half-White.

Christopher: Now I know where to take you dancing!!!!!! You are Black, so you must be a HIP-HOP dancer!

Elizabeth (dumbfounded): Uuhhh, no, I don't do hip-hop – at not least not very well. I am actually a classically trained ballet dancer. What makes you think that I would be a hip-hop dancer?

Christopher (trying to sound "hip"): No way! Don't cha got some cool HIP-HOP moves? C'mon, show me some of that flava!!!

Elizabeth: What?

Christopher (still trying to sound "hip"): Don't cha got some street moves you can show me? No wonder you're such a good dancer, because you're Black. You've got that natural rhythm that doesn't come easy to us White people!

Elizabeth: What???

Christopher: That's cool – you're Black!

Elizabeth: Yeah, and I'm White, too….

Christopher: So, Elizabeth… is that your real name or do you have an 'ethnic' name?

Elizabeth: Uuhhh, I think I had better….

Christopher: Wow! You are Black! You have got the coolest look I've ever seen for a Black girl… I mean, you look so exotic, I totally thought you were from the Dominican Republic. But you are… wow!!! Are you on scholarship? I know this school has some pretty cool minority scholarships. Do you get to go to school for free?

Elizabeth: Uuhhh… Listen, it was nice talking with you but I have to go now.

Christopher: And what a nice Volkswagen Bug you have! Where did you say you live again? Aren't you scared to drive it in the hood? Listen, instead of Italian food, I bet you know some really good soul food restaurants around here. I'd sure love for you to explain how some of that down-home southern cooking is prepared. And why are they called 'black-eyed peas?' Geez, you are Black, there is so much I want to know!

Elizabeth: Listen, Christopher, I enjoyed talking with you at the party, but your racial stereotypes are not appropriate, and are somewhat outdated. My real name is Elizabeth, I live in Brentwood, I am not on scholarship, and I am a racially mixed person. I don't know anything more about black-eyed peas than I know about corned beef and hash. And I won't be able to go dancing – hip-hop, Merengue, or otherwise – with you next week. Good-bye.

Christopher (as she drives away): Geez, what's wrong with her?!? Some people are just so sensitive!!!!!

APPENDIX D

MULTIRACIAL FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hi, my name is "facilitator." Thank you for coming here today to participate in this focus group. The purpose of this group is to gain a better understanding of day-to-day discrimination and experiences of subtle racism. I am sure that you are familiar with overt forms of discrimination such as racial slurs or hate crimes. However, today we are interested in hearing about your experiences of subtle acts of being discriminated against because of your race(s). These experiences may have occurred in any setting or at anytime in your life. I will be asking you some questions that I encourage you to answer to the best of your ability and I recognize that many of you will have unique experiences of being subtly discriminated against. There are no wrong answers.

Now I am going to give everyone a form that basically states that your participation in this group is entirely voluntary and that you may decline to participate and leave the group at any time. Please read this sheet carefully before signing it. It discusses potential risks to you as members of this group as well as the use of audiotaping during this session. In audiotaping our conversation, it will allow me to be involved in the group without having to take too many notes.

I would like to give everyone the opportunity to ask any questions they may have before we begin the group… *Questions / Answers. . .*

Statement of Confidentiality
I will be audiotaping this session in an effort to maintain the integrity of your dialogue. However, your identities will not be revealed to anyone, and only the researchers will have access to this tape. This discussion is to be considered confidential, and I would hope that you would all respect each other rights to privacy by not repeating any portion of this discussion outside of this session.

Opening Question
At this time I would like for each of you to say your first name, your (major and level in university), your occupation (if applicable), and why you are interested in participating in this study.

Opening Activity
As an opening activity, I would like for you to read the vignette to yourselves and think about the details of the story. I will set the timer for 15 minutes, allowing enough time for you to read and reflect. A piece of paper and pencil will also be distributed to you, in case you would like to write some notes. (Participants will then read silently to themselves the vignette.)

General Question
Multiracial Americans often have experiences in which they are subtly invalidated, discriminated against, and made to feel uncomfortable because of their race(s). In reading the vignette, what were some thoughts you had about the character and the issue she dealt with?

In thinking about your daily experiences, could you describe a situation in which you witnessed or were personally subtly discriminated against because of your race?

Interview Questions
• What are some subtle ways that people treat you differently because of your race?

• Describe a situation in which you felt uncomfortable, insulted, or disrespected by a comment that had racial overtones.

• Think of some of the stereotypes that exist about your racial group. How have others subtly expressed their stereotypical beliefs about you?

• In what ways have others made you feel "put down" because of your cultural values or communication style?

• In what ways have people subtly expressed that "the White way is the right way"?
In what subtle ways have others expressed that they think you're a second-class citizen or inferior to them?

• How have people suggested that you do not belong here because of your race?

• What have people done or said to invalidate your experiences of being discriminated against?

Transition Questions
• What are some of the ways that you dealt with these experiences?

• What do you think the overall impact of your experiences has been on your lives?

Ending Questions
* So today you shared several experiences of subtle discrimination. Some of you said. . .
* There were several themes that were consistent across many of your experiences. These themes include. . .
* Does that sound correct? If not, what themes might you add?

Adapted from D. W. Sue, J. Bucceri, A. I. Lin, K. L. Nadal, & G. C. Torino. (2007). Racial microaggressions and the Asian American experience. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 13*(1), 72–81.

APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #1 PROTOCOL

As you know, your participation in this interview is based on your acknowledgment that subtle racism exists, your enrollment in a local university, your identification as racially mixed person of partially African-American descent, and your acknowledgment that you have had some personal experiences with racism. For the purposes of this interview, I will ask you questions concerning multiracial identity and your background growing up as a multiracial person.

1. Tell me a little bit about growing up. What are some of the things you remember?

2. Do you remember a time or incident where you first were aware that you might be somehow different? [*Probe* differentness related to race and racial identity; e.g., “Did you go through a period of time where you felt you had to decide your race?”]

3. Describe the experience when you first figured out (found out, learned, discovered) that you were biracial.

4. Describe a time when you first had a racial experience due to being biracial.

5. What are some encounters or experiences you may have had as a biracial individual?

6. What do you say when someone asks you what your racial/ethnic background is? Has this changed over time? [*Probe* change; e.g., “Do/Did you notice change in behavior and attitudes which are affected by whom you are with or what you are doing?”]

7. Who have been important people in helping you identify as you do? [*Probe* family, friends, teachers and school officials, dating relationships, comfort in talking about race.]

8. Do you have attitudes and beliefs or practice customs of [please choose] Native Americans, African Americans, or Whites? How did you learn about these?

9. What are some things you've noticed about multiracial people? [*Probe* similarities/differences between self and others.]

10. What are some things that you have noticed about monoracial people (i.e., people of one race)?

11. What have you liked about being of mixed heritage? What has been hard about being of mixed heritage?

12. What advice do you have for parents of multiracial children? Friends? Teachers? For other multiracial individuals?

Adapted from Milville, M. L., Constantine, M. G., Baysden, M. F., & So-Lloyd, G. (2005). Chameleon changes: An exploration of racial identity themes of multiracial people. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(4), 507–516.

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #2 PROTOCOL

As you know, your participation in this interview is based on your acknowledgment that subtle racism exists, your enrollment in a local university, your identification as racially mixed person of partially African-American descent, and your acknowledgment that you have had some personal experiences with racism. For the purposes of this interview, the subtle racism with which I am most concerned is called *racial microaggressions*. Racial microaggressions are subtle and often unconscious exchanges or interactions that result in the communication of insulting or demeaning messages to people of color. Some people might view these exchanges or situations as harmless and nonoffensive, but they often leave many people of color feeling denigrated or slighted because of their racial group membership.

During this interview, I would like to ask you about several aspects of your schooling (K-12, and university) and academic relationships with respect to experiences of subtle racism or racial microaggressions.

1. Discuss the most memorable situation in your schooling in which you felt uncomfortable because you perceived an interaction with another person (teacher, administrator, friend, etc.) to have racial undertones. What feelings came up for you in that context? Please describe the impact of this interaction on your relationship specifically.

2. What specific challenges did you face as a multiracial person with regard to dealing with subtle racism or racial microaggressions in school? What types of feelings did you experience toward that person (those people) with regard to these challenges or experiences? How did you deal with these feelings? To what extent did you share those feelings with others?

3. What impact do you believe that specific experiences of subtle racism or racial microaggressions in schooling had on you personally? On the relationship with that person (those people)? On your academic work or achievement? On your social development?

4. Did your strategies for dealing with experiences of subtle racism or racial microaggressions in schooling change over the course of your relationship with this entity(ies)? If so, how?

5. Discuss your perceptions of and feelings about your this entity(ies) over the course of your schooling experience. To what extent did these feelings and perceptions change? To what extent did you share your feelings and perceptions with this person?

6. I'm nearly ready to conclude the interview, but I'd first like to know the kinds of feelings that came up for you in the context of responding to the interview questions.

7. Is there anything else you'd like to add to the interview that I asked about earlier or that I did not inquire about specifically?

Adapted from Constantine, M. G., & Sue, D. W. (2007). Perceptions of racial microaggressions among Black supervisees in cross-racial dyads. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(2), 142–153.

APPENDIX G

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #3 PROTOCOL

This final interview is a wrap-up of the interview process. I want to make sure that all the information I have obtained from you in the previous individual interviews and the focus group is accurate. Please feel free to make corrections or additions as necessary.

1. In the course of this study, you shared several experiences of subtle discrimination. You said…

2. There were several themes that were consistent across many of your experiences. These themes include…

3. Does that sound correct? If not, what themes might you add?

4. Are there any feelings about the topics discussed you would like to expand upon? How did answering detailed questions about your experiences with stereotypes and racial microaggressions affect you?

5. Is there anything else you would like to add at this time?

6. Thank you for your participation in this study. Please also remember that the due date for your written narrative about a personal experience with racial microaggressions is on ________. Do you have any questions about that?

APPENDIX H

WRITTEN NARRATIVE PROMPT

In the course of our work together, you might think of particular racial microaggressions that you may have experienced in your life. Please write a story of an example of a time or times when you may have felt stereotyped, victimized, or marginalized due to your mixed racial heritage.

APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

February 6, 2011 page 1 of 3

Loyola Marymount University

Dissertation Title: The effects of racial microaggressions on Black-White multiracial university students in terms of schooling and identity development.

1) I hereby authorize Ms. Claire Anne Touchstone, Loyola Marymount University, Ed.D. candidate, to include me in the following research study: The effects of racial microaggressions on Black-White multiracial university students in terms of schooling and identity development.

2) I have been asked to participate on a research project which is designed to examine the effects of racial microaggressions in the daily experiences of partially-Black racially mixed university students, and which will last for approximately one month (from February 6 through March 6, 2011).

3) It has been explained to me that the reason for my inclusion in this project is because I am a currently enrolled university student (undergraduate / graduate), ages 18+, who is of partially Black (African-American) descent.

4) I understand that if I am a subject, I will participate in a focus group interview and three individualized interviews, and write a reflection about multiracial experiences.

   The investigator(s) will conduct the interviews and collect the written reflections.

   These procedures have been explained to me by Ms. Claire Anne Touchstone, Loyola Marymount University, Ed.D. candidate.

5) I understand that I will be videotaped (in the focus group) and audiotaped (in the individualized interviews) in the process of these research procedures. It has been explained to me that these tapes will be used for teaching and/or research purposes only and that my identity will not be disclosed. I have been assured that the tapes will be destroyed after their use in this research project is completed. I understand that I have the right to review the tapes made as part of the study to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or in part. Tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

6) I understand that the study described above may involve the following risks and/or discomforts: discussing multiraciality issues in a group setting and/or in individualized interviews. Participants may experience some discomfort or embarrassment as a result of being asked about their multiracial experiences. If participants do not feel comfortable answering any part of the focus

group or individualized interview protocols at any time, they can discontinue their participation. Further, while the focus group interviews will involve a small group setting, all responses in the individual interviews will be kept confidential. In addition, if participants do not want their responses to be used in this study, they may ask to have them eliminated from the study. Please note that contact information for the Researcher and the LMU Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee is provided so participants can address any and all problems or questions before, during, and after the study. Lastly, if needed, participants will receive information on how to contact Student Psychological Services if they wish to speak with a professional counselor.

7) I also understand that the possible benefits of the study are: sharing multiracial experiences with other multiracial people, learning something more about myself, and contributing information that might benefit society.

8) I understand that Ms. Claire Anne Touchstone, Loyola Marymount University, Ed.D. candidate, who can be reached at 310-869-9375, will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.

9) If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent reobtained.

10) I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time without prejudice to my participation in future studies.

11) I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my participation before the completion of the study.

12) I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question that I may not wish to answer.

13) Compensation for Participation:

Full Participation – Three Sections: I understand that I will receive a $40.00 gift certificate to Starbuck's or Target for my participation in all three sections this study (focus group interview, three individualized interviews, and written narrative).

Partial Participation – Two Sections: I also understand that if I participate in two sections (i.e., three individualized interviews and written narrative), I will receive a $25.00 gift certificate to one of the above-listed establishments.

Partial Participation – One Section: I also understand that if I participate in one section (i.e., focus group interview), I will receive a $15.00 gift certificate to one of the above-listed establishments.

Withdrawal From Study: I further understand that if I withdraw before the study is completed or in the event my participation is terminated through no fault of mine, I will be compensated in the amount of a $10.00 gift certificate to one of the above-listed establishments.

14) I understand that in the event of research related injury, compensation and medical treatment are not provided by Loyola Marymount University.

15) I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact John Carfora, Ed.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 338-4599, John.Carfora@lmu.edu.

16) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature_______________________________________ Date ____________

Witness____

APPENDIX J

EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS BILL OF RIGHTS

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §24712, I understand that I have the following rights as a participant in a research study:

I will be informed of the nature and purpose of the experiment.

I will be given an explanation of the procedures to be followed in the medical experiment, and any drug or device to be utilized.

I will be given a description of any attendant discomforts and risks to be reasonably expected from the study.

I will be given an explanation of any benefits to be expected from the study, if applicable.

I will be given a disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures, drugs or devices that might be advantageous and their relative risks and benefits.

I will be informed of the avenues of medical treatment, if any, available after the study is completed if complications should arise.

I will be given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study or the procedures involved.

I will be instructed that consent to participate in the research study may be withdrawn at any time and that I may discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

I will be given a copy of the signed and dated written consent form.

I will be given the opportunity to decide to consent or not to consent to the study without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, coercion, or undue influence on my decision.

APPENDIX K

UNIVERSITY CONTACT LIST

California State University, Long Beach

California State University, Los Angeles

Loyola Marymount University

Pepperdine University

University of California, Berkeley

University of California, Los Angeles

University of Southern California

APPENDIX L

SAMPLE PROCEDURAL STRUCTURE

FIRST GROUP MEETING (SEPTEMBER 1):

- Go to meet group

- Listen to group members.

- At leader's cue, introduce myself to group.

- Inform group members of the project / explain all details:
    - Participant Qualifications
    - Reading Vignettes and discussing in Focus Group Interviews
    - Individual Interview Process
    - Written Narratives

- Ask if there might be some group members who meet the criteria who may be interested in participating in project.

- If so, request a time to visit group FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW within the next week → maybe during next group meeting.

INTRODUCTORY FOCUS GROUP MEETING (SEPTEMBER 8):

- Welcome group members.

- Thank them for participating in this first phase of the project.

- Introduce myself.

- Explain again the details of the entire project →
    - Reading Vignettes and discussing in Focus Group Interviews
    - Individual Interview Process
    - Written Narratives (DUE ONE MONTH FROM TODAY)

- Answer pertinent questions.

- Ask participants to sign-in their name, phone number, and email address on sign-in sheet – so I may be able to contact them.

- Explain details and purpose of vignette / focus group discussion.

- Distribute vignette to focus group members.

- Members will read vignette to themselves. Allow 15 minutes for vignette reading.

- Members and researcher will engage in focus group interview for 60 minutes.

- At end of focus group:
    - Thank members for participating.
    - Ask members who will continue the study during individual interview process. Remind those members that I will contact them to arrange three (3) individual interviews with them.
    - Distribute WRITTEN NARRATIVE journaling prompt to participating members, informing them of due date.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #1 (SEPTEMBER 15):

- Welcome interviewee.
- Thank them for participating in this phase of the project.
- Explain details of Interview #1.
- Answer pertinent questions
- Conduct Interview #1 as per PROTOCOL.
- At end of INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #1:
    - Thank member for participating.
    - Arrange time, date, place for INTERVIEW #2
    - Remind participant of WRITTEN NARRATIVE due date.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #2 (SEPTEMBER 22):

- Welcome interviewee.
- Thank them for participating in this phase of the project.
- Explain details of Interview #2.
- Answer pertinent questions
- Conduct Interview #2 as per PROTOCOL.
- At end of INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #2:
    - Thank member for participating.
    - Arrange time, date, place for INTERVIEW #3
    - Remind participant of WRITTEN NARRATIVE due date.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #3 (SEPTEMBER 29):

- Welcome interviewee.

- Thank them for participating in this phase of the project.

- Explain details of Interview #3.

- Answer pertinent questions

- Conduct Interview #3 as per PROTOCOL.

- At end of INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #3:
    - Thank member for participating.
    - Arrange time, date, place for INTERVIEW #3
    - Remind participant of WRITTEN NARRATIVE due date.

WRITTEN NARRATIVES (DUE OCTOBER 1)

- At INTRODUCTORY FOCUS GROUP meeting, inform participants of written narrative portion of study.

- WRITTEN NARRATIVE PROMPT will be distributed to participants at the end of FOCUS GROUP meeting.

- NARRATIVES WILL BE EMAILED TO ME BY DUE DATE.

CLOSING FOCUS GROUP MEETING (OCTOBER 6):

- Welcome group members.

- Thank them for participating in all phases of the project.

- Bookend project by making general statements about information obtained through VIGNETTES / FOCUS GROUP, INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS, and WRITTEN NARRATIVES (no private information will be discussed, all topics will be general and anonymous).

- Answer pertinent questions.

- Distribute thank-you notes and gift certificates.

- End of project.

APPENDIX M

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

3rd January 2011

Dear ________________,

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research regarding the effects of racial microaggressions on Black-White university students. I am pleased that you would like to be a part of this study. This is a three-part study that consists of (1) a focus group interview, (2) three individualized interviews, and (3) writing a short reflection / vignette about a personal microaggressive experience. Unfortunately, due to our geographic locations, I presume that you will not be able to participate in the focus group portion of this study, as participants will have to meet in a group in the Los Angeles area. However, I hope that you will be able to participate in the other two portions of this study (the three individualized interviews and the written vignette); and you will be compensated for your participation in those two parts. I am, however, including in this packet the focus group vignette that the focus group interviewees read and discuss, for your perusal. It is a scenario of a microaggressive incident and might be a topic of discussion in one of our individualized interviews.

Please find enclosed a few items that may further explain the details of this study. Please feel free to peruse, and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I have enclosed an Informed Consent Form that you will need to read, sign, and return a scanned copy to me with your original signature, before any research can be completed. I may be reached by telephone at 310-___-____, or via email at _______@hotmail.com. I may also be reached via Facebook in my Inbox. If you decide that you would like to be a participant in this study, please contact me so we can arrange the dates and times for your three individualized interviews and the collection of your written vignette.

Once again, thank you for your continued interest in my study. I look forward to our working together.

Sincerely,

Ms. Claire Touchstone, M.A.
Loyola Marymount University
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX N

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR DISSERTATION ON MULTIRACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

Hello! My name is Claire Anne Touchstone, and I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola Marymount University, gathering research for my dissertation on ***the effects of racial microaggressions on multiracial Black-White university students (undergraduate / graduate), ages 18 or older***. While I am interested in people of Black-White mixed background, I will accept any applicant who is of mixed Black background.

Racial microaggressions are defined by Derald Wing Sue and colleagues (2007) as: ***"brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group."*** Some examples include (Sue et al., 2007):

- **Alien in Own Land:** When assumed to be foreign-born based on race: "Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English."
- **Ascription of Intelligence:** "You are a credit to your race." "You are so articulate."
- **Color Blindness:** Statements that indicate that a person does not want to acknowledge race: "When I look at you, I don't see color." "There is only one race, the human race."
- **Assumption of Criminal Status:** A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race: For example, a man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a person of color approaches or passes. Or, a store owner following a customer of color around the store.
- **Denial of Individual Racism:** A statement made when people deny their racial biases: "I'm not racist. I have several Black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."

Can you think of a microaggression that has happened to you in your life, particularly as a result of being of mixed racial background?

For this study, I am particularly interested in ***multiracial microaggressions***, defined by Johnston and Nadal (2010) as ***"daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, enacted by monoracial person that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights toward multiracial individuals or groups."*** Some examples include*:

- “What are you?
- “You have to choose, you can’t be both.”
- “One day, everybody will be mixed.”
- “Were you adopted? Is that your mother, father?”
- Being accused of “acting White”
- Forms that allow only one racial choice
- Tokenism: being the racial spokesperson for your minority race: “Why do all Black people ______ (fill in the blank)?”
- Subjected to minority stereotypes and microaggressions

** Adapted from “Multiracial Microaggressions: Exposing Monoracism in Everyday Life and Clinical Practice” by Marc P. Johnston and Kevin L. Nadal (2010), in “Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact,” edited by Derald Wing Sue (2010).*

Study Procedures:

This three-part study consists of:

1. Reading a vignette of a microaggressive experience and discussing in a focus group interview (of 6-8 people).
2. Three (3) individualized interviews (each to take place 3-7 days apart).
3. Writing a short narrative/reflection (1-2 pages) of a personal microaggressive experience based on being of mixed background.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous, and participants may withdraw at any time from the study without penalty. All participants will be given an Informed Consent Form and Subject's Bill of Rights. All participants will be compensated with a gift card to either Starbuck’s or Target; the amount of the gift card will vary depending on partial or complete participation (up to $40.00), but all participants will receive compensation for their time.

Participants must be ***18 years old or older and enrolled in a university*** in order to participate. If you are a person of African-American mixed heritage (particularly with one African-American parent and one White parent) and are interested in participating in my study, please contact me. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you!

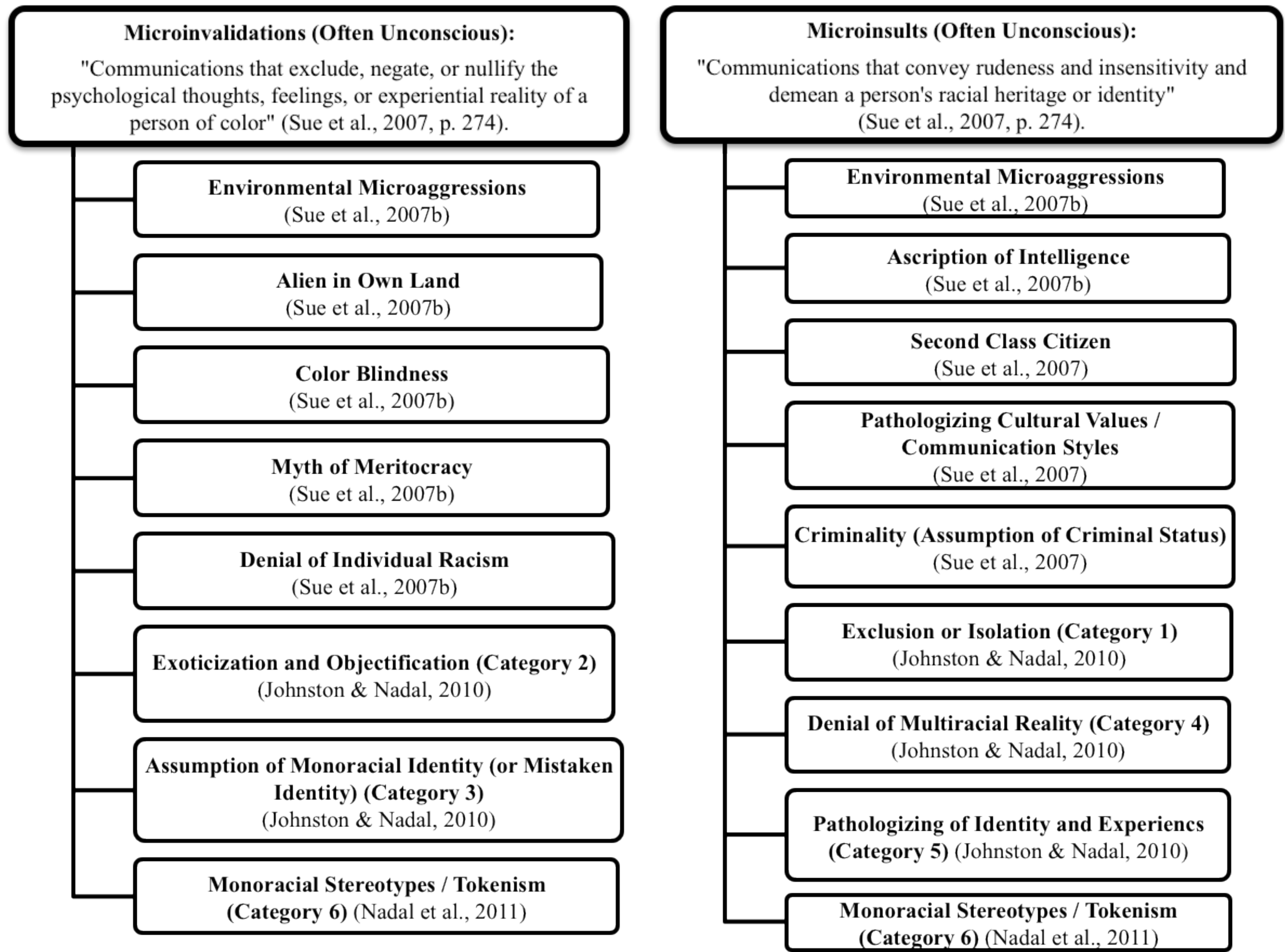
Ms. Claire Anne Touchstone
Ed.D. Candidate, Loyola Marymount University
310-___-____ or _______@hotmail.com

Facebook Community Page: "Multiracial People of Black-White Background needed for Dissertation": Please check out my page and click "Like" to become a member!

Facebook Group Page: "Multiracial People of Black-White Background needed for Dissertation": mixeddaancer@groups.facebook.com

APPENDIX O

HYBRID MICROAGGRESSIONS TYPOLOGY


Microinvalidations (Often Unconscious):
"Communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274).
Environmental Microaggressions
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Alien in Own Land
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Color Blindness
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Myth of Meritocracy
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Denial of Individual Racism
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Exoticization and Objectification (Category 2)
(Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
Assumption of Monoracial Identity (or Mistaken Identity) (Category 3)
(Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
Monoracial Stereotypes / Tokenism
(Category 6) (Nadal et al., 2011)
Microinsults (Often Unconscious):
"Communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity"
(Sue et al., 2007, p. 274).
Environmental Microaggressions
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Ascription of Intelligence
(Sue et al., 2007b)
Second Class Citizen
(Sue et al., 2007)
Pathologizing Cultural Values / Communication Styles
(Sue et al., 2007)
Criminality (Assumption of Criminal Status)
(Sue et al., 2007)
Exclusion or Isolation (Category 1)
(Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
Denial of Multiracial Reality (Category 4)
(Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
Pathologizing of Identity and Experiencs
(Category 5) (Johnston & Nadal, 2010)
Monoracial Stereotypes / Tokenism
(Category 6) (Nadal et al., 2011)

Adapted from "Racial Microaggressions In Everyday Life: Implications For Clinical Practice," by D. W. Sue, C. M. Capodilupo, G. C. Torino, J. M. Bucceri, A. M. B. Holder, K. L. Nadal, and M. Esquilin, 2007, *American Psychologist, 62*(4), pp. 271–286; Johnston, M. P., & K. Nadal (2010). Multiracial microaggressions: Exposing monoracism in everyday life and clinical practice. In D. W. Sue (Ed.) *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 123–144). New York: Wiley & Sons; Nadal, K. L. Wong, Y. Griffin, K., Sriken, J., Vargas, V. Wideman, M., & Kolawole, A. (2011). Microaggressions and the multiracial experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1*(7), 36–44.

APPENDIX P

MEGA-CHART OF CATEGORIES

Category 1 – Exclusion or Isolation

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
Questioning Authenticity (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Being told: “You’re not Black enough” or “you’re white-washed.”	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Expected to choose a side	X			X							
Endorsement of Monoracial Society (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Checking a box on forms	X	X	X			X					
Not a part of either side / not fitting in	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Second-Class Status and Treatment (Johnston and Nadal, 2010) / Second-Class Citizen (Sue et. al., 2007b):											
Exclusion in family	X		X								
Exclusion in friendships				X		X					
Exclusion in dating relationships	X			X	X	X					
Exclusion in school (by teachers, administrators, staff)		X	X	X	X				X		
Exclusion from the Black community / females	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Exclusion from the White community				X		X					

Category 2 – Exoticization and Objectification

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
Putting Race on Display (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Being asked: "What are you?"	X	X	X	X	X		X				X
Receiving comments re: physical appearance (hair texture, skin color)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
People touching their hair	X		X	X							
Objectified Sexually (Johnston and Nadal, 2010) / Exoticized in Societal Interactions:											
Being told: "You look / are exotic."				X	X		X				
Particularly being exoticized by Black males	X	X	X				X				
Presumed heightened level of attractiveness Being told: "All mixed-race people are good-looking."		X		X							
Idealized as racial sexual token									X		
Multiracial People as the "Racialized Ideal" (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Being told: "You have the best of both worlds."		X		X						X	X
- "You're cool because you're part-Black."											X

Category 3 – Assumption of Monoracial or Mistaken Identity.

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
Assumption of Monoracial Identity (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Assumed to be monoracial (Black or White) or mistaken to be another person who is monoracial	X							X			X
Assumed to be a different monoracial race (besides Black or White).		X	X	X	X	X	X				X
-- Overhearing racial comments or jokes from people who do not know the multiracial person's race(s)								X			
-- Receiving comments about last name (because it does not match their assumed monoracial phenotype)	X										X

Assumption of Mistaken Identity (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Assumptions about family relationships – parents and children cannot be related because they do not look alike	X	X	X		X						
-- Being asked" "Are you together?"	X	X	X	X							
-- Being asked: "Are you adopted?"		X	X		X	X					

Category 4 – Denial of Multiracial Reality

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
Accused of “Acting White” (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Accused of “acting, wanting to be White”	X	X	X						X	X	
Also, sounding or dressing White		X	X								
Different racial groups competing to “claim” multiracial person for their own group (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Being told: “You’re almost White.” → Message: You’re almost one of us (White people).			X								
Being told: “As long as you don’t act Black.” / “Don’t come back all ghetto.” → Message: Don’t be Black.		X			X						
Being told: “You don’t consider yourself Black.”					X						

Non-acceptance of the Multiracial Reality by Monoracial People:											
Whiteness is Ignored (Being "One-Drop Ruled")		X	X		X		X			X	
-- Being subjected to racial comments because people DO know they are multiracial but ignore that fact				X		X				X	
People avoiding asking questions					X						X

Category 5 – Pathologizing of Identity and Experiences

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
Examples of Psychopathology (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Being told: "Multiracial people have issues / are confused."	X		X			X					
Being told: "Multiracial people are arrogant / stuck up."	X		X								
Being pathologized in peer and dating relationships	X					X					
Being pathologized because of physical appearance (Pathology of Phenotype)	X			X	X	X					
Examples of Family Pathology (Johnston and Nadal, 2010):											
Interracial relationships (and multiracial children) are wrong, abnormal, deviant	X		X	X		X					
Being stared at / receiving "vibes"	X			X		X					
Pathologizing of Cultural Values and Communication Styles (Sue et. al. 2007b):											
Pathologizing of Cultural Values and Communication Styles (related to monoracial stereotypes) (see Sue et. al.)	X	X		X							

Category 6 – Microaggressions Based on Racial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011) / Racial Microaggressions Typology (Sue et. al., 2007)

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
Microaggressions Based on Racial Stereotypes (Nadal et al., 2011) and Tokenism:											
Monoracial Stereotypes and Tokenism - Particularly “That’s your Black side.”	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	
Racial Microaggressions Typology – Microinsults (Sue et al., 2007b):											
Ascription of Intelligence / Ascription of Intellectual Inferiority		X		X	X		X			X	X
Assumption of Criminal Status	X			X							
Pathologizing of Cultural Values and Communication Styles (see Category 5 = Pathologizing of Multiracial Experience)	X	X	X	X	X						
Second-Class Citizen (see Category 1 = Exclusion or Isolation)		X			X				X		

Racial Microaggressions Typology – Microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007b):											
Alien in Own Land	**X**		**X**		**X**						
Color-Blindness (including telling multiracial person how to feel about racial incidents / racism doesn’t exist / they’re too sensitive					**X**					**X**	
Denial of Individual Racism	**X**	**X**				**X**			**X**	**X**	

Category 7. Environmental Microaggressions

	Amber	Elyse	Pip	Sonic	Sonya	Yoshi	Ana	John	Luigi	Peach	Toad
White privilege Juxtaposed with the "One-Drop Rule"		X	X	X							
Media Environmental Microaggressions	X				X	X					
Eurocentric Teaching That Perpetuates White privilege	X	X		X	X	X					
Schools As Segregated Places	X	X	X		X						
Lack of Multiracial Role Models	X		X	X	X						
Purposeful Discriminatory Acts		X				X					

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