

Perspectives and Research on the Positive and Negative Implications of Having Multiple Racial Identities

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Much attention has been directed toward understanding the impact having a multiracial background has on psychological well-being and adjustment. Past psychological research has focused on the challenges multiracial individuals confront in defining a racial identity. The implication is that these challenges lead to outcomes that are psychologically detrimental. However, evidence to support this assertion is mixed. The authors review qualitative and quantitative empirical research examining multiracial individuals' identity development, depression, problem behaviors, peer relationships, school performance, and self-esteem, finding support for detrimental outcomes only in studies sampling clinical populations. Studies on nonclinical samples find that multiracial individuals tend to be just as well-adjusted as their monoracial peers on most psychological outcomes. Earlier assertions of maladjustment may have been due to reliance on qualitative research that sampled clinical populations. Other implications and future research are discussed.

Keywords: multiracial identity, biracial identity, race, identity development, multiple identities

Tiger Woods has received much attention, not only for being the youngest person to win the prestigious Masters Golf Tournament, but also for being an individual of mixed-race ancestry. His father is Black, Native American, and Chinese, and his mother is Thai, Chinese, and White. Woods represents a growing trend in American society. Since the repeal in 1967 of miscegenation laws prohibiting racial mixing, the number of interracial marriages in the United States has increased dramatically (Kennedy, 2003; Root, 2001). Consequently, the number of individuals who can claim membership in multiple racial categories has also increased dramatically (Root, 1996). The population of multiracial children has multiplied from 500,000 in 1970 to more than 6.8 million in 2000 (Jones & Symens Smith, 2001).

This explosion in the number of individuals with multiracial backgrounds has raised the issue of understanding where these individuals fit into preexisting social categories. Nowhere is this difficulty more clearly illustrated than in the controversy over whether the 2000 Census should have included a multiracial category. Until then, individuals of mixed ancestry had to choose between their component identities on the census form. However, multiracial groups have argued that picking just one identity forces multiracial individuals to deny other parts of themselves (Gaskins, 1999) and does not accurately reflect the nation's true racial make-up (Holmes, 1997). On the other hand, prominent civil rights

activists, such as Jesse Jackson and Kweisi Mfume, argued against the creation of a separate multiracial category in order to preserve minority numbers and maintain political influence (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002a).

A federal task force was set up to investigate the political and social implications of creating a new racial classification (Holmes, 1997). The task force asked questions such as, "If a multiracial category were included, would all people with different combinations of racial backgrounds, such as Black/Asian and Native American/White, be considered members of the same group? Would there still be individuals with multiracial identities who would choose to identify by a single race?" This issue was finally resolved in 1997, when it was recommended that the category "multiracial" should not be included in census forms but that instead multiracial individuals could check off more than one racial category.

This controversy illustrates that having a multiracial identity challenges American society's traditional notions and assumptions about race and racial categories (Johnson, 1992; Ramirez, 1996; Root, 1992; Spickard, 1992). Given the seeming difficulty American society has with trying to understand the notion of multiracial identity, psychologists have begun studying many of those questions considered by the U.S. Census Bureau Task Force, such as, how do multiracial individuals understand their racial identities? In addition, because multiracial families and multiracial individuals may pose a challenge to existing racial categories and the social systems upon which these categories rest, psychologists have become interested in understanding the consequence of coming from a multiracial background and in identifying the tremendous difficulties multiracial families and multiracial individuals encounter in navigating their social world (Gibbs, 1987, 1989; Root, 1992). For example, multiracial families contend with hardships such as a lack of social recognition (Nakashima, 1996), disapproval from extended family, exclusion from neighborhood and

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community (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson, & Harris, 1993), discrimination, and social isolation (Brown, 1995; Gaskins, 1999).

Considering the difficulties that multiracial individuals and interracial families face, it is understandable that the majority of work investigating the psychological impact of having a multiracial identity has focused on the harmful effects associated with the challenges that multiracial individuals face. In particular, the literature has focused on examining the difficulty multiracials face in defining a racial identity. Traditional work in this area predicted that this identity confusion would lead to negative psychological outcomes, such as lower self-esteem, lower academic performance, or poor peer relations.

In this article, we review theories that describe the process of racial identity development in multiracial individuals and the social-political context in which these theories were developed. We then discuss some of the unique challenges multiracial individuals face in developing their racial identity and the consequences that may stem from these challenges. Finally, we review the empirical work that has been conducted on the psychological outcomes of multiracial individuals to test these proposals.

Multiracial Identity Development: A Review

Scholars studying multiracial identity have been confronted with many challenges in trying to understand the process of racial identity development among multiracial individuals. For instance, one of the complexities of applying a single racial identity model to describe identity development for all multiracial individuals is the great variance among multiracial individuals in how they define their racial identity (Gillem, Cohn, & Throne, 2001; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002a, 2002b). Work on ethnic identity development, more generally, finds that the uniqueness of ethnic groups makes drawing general conclusions about identity development difficult (Phinney, 1990).

Multiracial individuals, in particular, are in a position to choose between many different identity options. Some multiracial individuals choose to identify with just one of the component races. For example, many multiracial individuals with mixed Black heritage choose to identify themselves solely as Black. At the same time, other multiracial individuals choose to identify with none of their component races and instead choose a new category: multiracial. Still others choose to be more specific. Rather than identifying themselves in the general category of multiracial, they identify themselves by their specific component races. For example, they could identify themselves as Asian/White or Black/White biracials. Finally, some multiracial individuals transcend these racial boundaries and identify themselves as human beings (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002b). Thus, there seems to be no single identity label that could be applied to all multiracial individuals. However, these challenges have not prevented scholars from exploring multiracial identity development and attempting to identify common elements in the process.

Theories of Multiracial Identity

The approaches psychologists have taken toward understanding the psychological impact of having a multiracial background have reflected the racial politics of the time (Root, 1996). As a conse-

quence, research on multiracial individuals has undergone a significant transformation over the past century. Prior to the civil rights movement, during a period of widespread racial inequality, the earliest work on biracial identity viewed it as problematic (Thornton, 1996). Those theories tended to predict negative outcomes resulting from having a mixed racial heritage (Johnson, 1992). Contemporary work on biracial identity, however, has taken a more optimistic and positive view. Thornton and Wason (1995) identified three types of approaches researchers have taken toward understanding multiracial identity. These are the problem approach, the equivalent approach, and the variant approach.

Problem Approach

The earliest scholars of multiracial identity proposed the model of the "marginal man" (Park, 1928, 1931; Stonequist, 1937). The marginal man was thought to be an individual caught between two cultures but who, in reality, was not a member of either world. Scholars often call this *dual minority status*. Many biracial individuals find themselves to be a minority twice over—they have minority status within larger society but also within the minority community, which may not perceive them to be a "full" member (Johnson, 1992). The marginal man theories focus on the deficits and problems associated with having a multiracial background. Researchers have labeled this approach the *problem approach* (Collins, 2000; Thornton, 1996).

As noted, scholars using this approach focus on understanding and identifying the problems associated with possessing a multiracial identity. They propose that the marginal man was susceptible to rejection, isolation, and stigmatization not only from the dominant group but also from the minority groups in society. For example, individuals of Asian/White heritage in the United States not only experience discrimination from the dominant White society but also from the Asian community (Root, 1996). Thus, the "marginal man" has to deal with difficulties experienced by monoracial minorities, but he or she also has to contend with additional difficulties associated with being multiracial (Teicher, 1968). Teicher (1968) wrote of Black/White biracial children, "Although the burden of the Negro child is recognized as a heavy one, that of the Negro-White child is seen to be even heavier" (p. 250). As a result of this marginal status, the marginal man was considered to be more susceptible to certain psychological outcomes, such as an inferiority complex, hypersensitivity, or moodiness (Stonequist, 1937). The research conducted during this period typically involved clinical populations and observations of behavioral and psychological problems (Thornton & Wason, 1995). As a result, this approach generally painted a pessimistic picture and predicted negative psychological consequences for multiracial individuals (Johnson, 1992; Johnson & Nagoshi, 1986).

Equivalent Approach

After 1970, there was a significant shift in the perspective researchers used to understand multiracial identity (Root, 1996). This shift reflected the changing climate of racial politics in the United States (Root, 1996). By this time antimiscegenation laws had been lifted, and there was an increase in racial pride because of the civil rights movement. There was also an increase in the

number of researchers with mixed heritage studying biracial identity (Root, 1996). These factors contributed to a transformation in the perspective taken toward understanding multiracial identity. Rather than proposing that multiracial individuals were forced to remain on the fringes of society, researchers began to take a more positive, optimistic, and sensitive perspective (Collins, 2000; Root, 1992; Thornton, 1996).

Thornton and Wason (1995) identified two new approaches that adopted more positive perspectives toward multiracial identity. The first approach was called the *comparative or equivalent approach* (Collins, 2000; Thornton, 1996). In this approach, researchers assumed that monoracial and multiracial individuals were equivalent. For example, they assumed that multiracial and monoracial individuals underwent the same process of racial identity development. The fact that multiracial individuals came from multiple racial backgrounds was not an important variable to consider, it was simply a different outcome resulting from the same process. Researchers who used the equivalent approach applied models of general racial identity development (e.g., Cross, 1987; Morten & Atkinson, 1983) to describe the identity development process of multiracial individuals (Thornton & Wason, 1995). However, it was soon apparent that these theories were inadequate for describing ethnic identity development in individuals with mixed backgrounds (Herring, 1995; Poston, 1990). Many criticized these models because they did not account for the possibility of being able to identify with multiple ethnic groups (Poston, 1990). Thus, these models could not fully capture the experiences of multiracial individuals as they tried to forge their racial identity. Even for multiracial individuals who might self-identify with only one of their component races, these models were not adequate because they did not recognize issues multiracial individuals had to deal with before coming to their decision to self-identify with only one of their component races (Gillem et al., 2001).

Variant Approach

The most recent approach to understanding multiracial individuals is the variant approach. The variant approach, suggested by Thornton and Wason (1995), provides a new framework for understanding biracial identity. This approach views multiracial identity as a unique category, separate from any monoracial category (e.g., Asian, White, or Black). Following from this approach, researchers proposed several identity development models specific to individuals with multiracial backgrounds (e.g., Collins, 2000; Jacobs, 1992; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990).

The majority of these models propose that multiracial individuals pass through a series of stages in their identity development. For instance, Jacobs (1992) used a doll-play interview paradigm to measure and identify the stages through which multiracial children pass as they develop their racial identity. In this model, Jacobs focused on exploring the development of a child's understanding of race as it pertains to skin color. Jacobs proposed that multiracial children and adolescents pass through three stages: (a) precolor constancy (early childhood), a stage during which the child's understanding of skin color is flexible; (b) postcolor constancy (approximately 4 years old), when biracial children begin to understand the social implications associated with skin color and

become ambivalent about their racial background; and finally, (c) biracial identity (8–12 years old), which is associated with the development of an integrated biracial identity.

A second example of a variant model is Poston's (1990) progressive developmental model for biracial identity development. Poston proposed that individuals pass through a series of stages, starting with *personal identity*, in which children's ethnic group identity becomes salient, and they come to understand themselves as racial beings. The second stage is called *choice of group categorization*. At this stage, multiracial individuals face a crisis as they feel pushed to choose a racial identity. This stage is characterized by feelings of alienation. Multiracial individuals then move on to the stage of *enmeshment and denial*. By this stage, multiracial individuals will have chosen an identity—usually picking one of their component identities. This stage is characterized by feelings of guilt and confusion because the individual has chosen an identity that is not reflective of his or her true background. Finally, individuals reach the stage of *integration*. At this stage, the individual experiences a sense of wholeness and is able to recognize the value of all his or her component identities. In reaching this stage, multiracial individuals resolve the negative psychological outcomes associated with the previous stages. Integration is proposed to promote positive mental health.

Although these models differ in their descriptions of the identity development, a number of common elements exist among the models. Common to all of the theories of multiracial identity development is a stage through which multiracial individuals feel great tension and conflict about their racial identity. At this stage, multiracial individuals may feel forced to choose from among their different component identities. These models also propose that the final stage in the racial identity development process is one in which the individuals are able to accept, appreciate, integrate, and value all parts of their multiracial identity. As multiracial individuals progress through the different stages of racial identity development, they encounter many challenges that may impact their likelihood of reaching this final stage. In the following section, we explore some of the challenges they encounter and discuss some of the effects of these challenges on their psychological adjustment outcomes.

Racial Identity Development and Adjustment

Multiracial individuals encounter unique challenges as they forge their racial identity. Modern scholars generally agree that there are unique aspects to the process of racial identity development for multiracial individuals as compared with their monoracial peers (Gillem et al., 2001; Logan, 1981; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002a, 2002b). Because multiracial individuals encounter obstacles in their identity development process that monoracial individuals do not (Herring, 1995; Piskacek & Golub, 1973; Sommers, 1964), some scholars propose that developing a positive racial identity is a more difficult and confusing process for multiracial individuals than for monoracial individuals (Kich, 1992; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002a; Wardle, 1987). Herring (1995) wrote that biracial children "have the additional pressure of deciding which singular ethnic identity to choose or combat societal forces in the expression of biracialism" (p. 31). Although it is difficult to ascertain whether the degree of difficulty in identity development is greater for multiracial or monoracial individuals,

what does seem clear is that multiracial individuals face unique challenges that their monoracial peers do not.

Further, because multiracial individuals experience unique difficulties in their identity development process, and successful racial identity development is proposed to be necessary for successful psychological adjustment, researchers have proposed that multiracials will be more likely than monoracials to exhibit negative adjustment outcomes. For example, clinicians propose that youth who have the greatest difficulty in reconciling their racial identity will have the most difficult time maturing and adjusting successfully to society (Lyles, Yancey, Grace, & Carter, 1985). In the following section, we discuss some of these challenges faced by multiracial individuals and their consequences on racial identity development.

Conflict Between Private and Public Definitions

One of the earliest conflicts that multiracial individuals may experience in their identity development process is a conflict between their own self-definition and the definition imposed on them from the outside world (Nakashima, 1992). Scholars propose that identity develops through a process of negotiation in which individuals reconcile their own self-concepts with the expectations of those around them (Newsome, 2001). Multiracial individuals frequently encounter inconsistencies between how society defines them and how they define themselves. In one of the works we reviewed, a young woman of White/Asian descent was quoted: "I have trouble deciding whether to check the 'White' or the 'Asian' box, because I don't want to deny either side of my heritage. But I have even more of a conflict when I check the box marked 'other.' I am not an 'other' and have never been an 'other'" (Gaskins, 1999, p. 52). One possible consequence of this tension is that multiracial individuals may feel marginalized and be more prone to the development of a "marginal personality," characterized by traits such as moodiness, hypersensitivity, irritability, low self-confidence, self-hate, insecurity, and defensiveness (Piskacek & Golub, 1973; Stonequist, 1937). Herring (1995) wrote that "dual racial and cultural identity negatively affects normal ethnic socialization and developmental problems for biracial children" (p. 31).

Justifying Identity Choices

Multiracial individuals not only need to justify their identity choices to themselves but they must also justify their identity choices to society. Monoracial individuals are rarely faced with the prospect of having others in society disagree with their racial identity choices. For instance, a monoracial Asian individual who self-identifies as Asian will rarely have others question his or her choice, but a multiracial Asian/White individual who self-identifies as Asian may often encounter questions about his or her identity choice as well as challenges as to whether he or she really belongs in the chosen group. Justifying their identity choice forces multiracial individuals to question their own judgments about their membership in the group. A young woman of mixed-race ancestry is quoted in Gaskins (1999) as writing, "Being biracial isn't hard because we're confused about our racial identity. It's hard because everyone else is confused. The problem isn't us—it's everyone else" (p. 15).

Forced-Choice Dilemmas

Multiracial individuals often feel compelled to identify with one of their component racial categories (Hall, 1992; Nakashima, 1992) rather than recognizing the possibility that they can belong to multiple categories. The question of "What are you?" implicitly sends the message to multiracial individuals that they must define themselves in some way—be it by a single component category, as a multiracial individual, or any other option (Williams, 1996). Scholars often cite many social situations experienced by multiracial individuals in which there is an implicit message that they need to pick one identity over another. Standen (1996) termed this situation the *forced-choice dilemma*. Feeling forced to choose one identity and reject the other can also cause emotional turmoil in biracial children such as feeling guilty because the child feels disloyal to the other parent (Sebring, 1985). Moreover, being forced to choose among component identities forces multiracial individuals to deny one part of themselves, and this has been theorized to lead to a fragmented sense of self (Sebring, 1985).

Racial identification is made even more complicated because society provides no clear and consistent guidelines for racial identification for multiracial individuals. There are no consistencies in terms of the criteria used to define multiracial individuals. For example, consider the use of blood as a criterion for assigning racial identity. This criterion has been used in an inconsistent manner across racial groups. For instance, to be considered Black, one only needs to have one drop of Black blood in one's ancestry, according to the "one-drop rule" (M. Harris, 1964; Omi & Winant, 1986). However, to be considered Native American, one needs to prove a "blood quantum" (Wilson, 1992). Similarly, groups frequently change their judgments of inclusion and exclusion as a function of their goals. For example, many groups of color adopt inclusive criteria when political power is at stake and numbers are important but exclusive criteria when distinctiveness is important (Root, 1994). This inconsistency can lead to great confusion for a multiracial individual trying to understand where he or she fits in society. Being included and welcomed in some instances and excluded in other instances can lead individuals to become distrustful and insecure in their attachments and in their identification with their ethnic communities.

Lack of Role Models

Multiracial individuals also face the challenge of finding racially similar role models to guide them in understanding their racial identity. Wardle (1999) suggests that society's difficulty in dealing with multiracials who challenge rigid notions of racial categories contributes to the perpetual invisibility of the multiracial community. Thus, famous multiracial individuals such as abolitionist and editor Frederick Douglass, Olympic diving medalist Greg Louganis, and songwriter and performer Lenny Kravitz are often categorized into single-race categories.

Role models may be especially crucial for multiracial individuals during their late childhood and adolescence. Like other children, multiracial children look to see themselves represented in their immediate environment (e.g., course materials, TV, magazines) to help understand where they fit in, to help learn what is expected of them, and to guide them in understanding others' behavior toward them. However, multiracial individuals often en-

counter many challenges in finding appropriate multiracial role models. For instance, multiracial individuals usually do not share exactly the same racial identity as either of their parents. As a consequence, unlike monoracial individuals, multiracial individuals enter the world without immediate parental role models for their multiracial identities. Multiracial individuals also often experience difficulty finding racially similar peers who can relate to their experiences (Renn, 2000; Williams, 1996). Relating to others often provides social support, making the challenges one encounters growing up easier. Qualitative researchers have suggested that communities with larger multiracial populations and interracial families provide more supportive environments for the psychological adjustment of multiracial children (Pinderhughes, 1995; Teicher, 1968). When multiracial individuals are unable to find role models who share their heritage, the confusion accompanying early racial development may be difficult to navigate.

Conflicting Messages

A great deal of tension exists in the lives of multiracial individuals. Conflict about identity within the family may result in grave consequences for the well-being of the individual. Parents of multiracial children who are unified in their perception of their children are more likely to instill a unified sense of self. However, parents are often not unified in their perception of their child, and as a result the child's sense of self is weakened (Piskacek & Golub, 1973). Many theorists propose that some biracial individuals possess a fragmented sense of self, resulting in lowered self-esteem (Gordon, 1964). A fragmented self results in the child being less certain in his or her interactions and relationships with others (Piskacek & Golub, 1973). Theories suggest that multiracial children without a unified sense of self exhibit feelings of being misunderstood and isolated. They are predicted to have negative self-images and confused racial identities (McRoy & Freeman, 1986). Hauser (1972) proposed that identity confusion could result in grave consequences, such as anxiety, depression, academic underachievement, delinquency, substance abuse, and suicidal behavior.

Multiracial children are frequently exposed to conflicting messages from their parents and from the community. Conflicts between the messages sent by the family and community can be a source of tension. For example, within the interracial family, the multiracial child might see that people from different racial backgrounds can live together peacefully. Moreover, many parents of interracial families deemphasize the importance of race. However, out in the community, multiracial children learn about intergroup conflict, racial prejudice, racism, and discrimination. They see that race is a very salient and real factor in shaping people's experiences in the world.

In addition, because parents of multiracial children come from different racial backgrounds, they may adopt parenting strategies reflective of their differing backgrounds and, as a result, approach the teaching of values and principles from very different perspectives. These culture-value conflicts may create confusion and tension in the multiracial child. Individuals cannot handle this tension for an extended period of time. If this tension is not resolved, psychological and behavioral problems, such as neurosis or psychosis, may result (Piskacek & Golub, 1973). On the other hand, exposure to diverse perspectives and diverse cultures has

also been predicted to create positive outcomes such as more favorable intergroup attitudes (Stephan & Stephan, 1991).

Double Rejection

Multiracial individuals are in the unique position of being susceptible to experiencing rejection and discrimination not only from the dominant group in society but from minority groups as well (Comas-Diaz, 1996; Gibbs, 1987; Poston, 1990; Root, 1996). For example, Amerasians, who are born of White and Asian parents, are often not only rejected by the dominant White community but also by the minority Asian community. Asian communities are often just as oppressive as White communities about maintaining "racial purity" (Root, 1996). Grove (1991) found that Asian/White participants in her study often felt that Asians did not consider them to be members of the Asian community. Until recently in the United States, individuals of part-Japanese or part-Chinese ancestry had to identify as non-Asian because the Asian community would not accept them. The same situation applies to individuals of mixed Jewish and Gentile background (Spickard, 1992). It has been proposed that LatiNegras are not accepted by either the North American or Latin societies (Comas-Diaz, 1996). As a result of this double rejection, multiracial individuals receive many messages from society about who they are not but few messages about who they are. This may cause multiracial individuals to feel very isolated. As a result, scholars have proposed that multiracial individuals are less likely to have a strong peer group (e.g., Gordon, 1964). However, some researchers have proposed that encountering this discrimination can also result in multiracial individuals developing more resilient self-esteem (e.g., Cauce et al., 1992).

Empirical Evidence

Clearly, multiracial individuals face many challenges related to their racial identity. Traditional theories of multiracial identities have predicted negative outcomes for individuals of multiracial heritage. These theories propose that multiracial individuals experience more difficulties in the racial identity development process, consequently leading to negative psychological adjustment outcomes.

Thus, two predictions result from this proposal. The first is that multiracial individuals experience greater problems with regard to identity-related issues. These include carrying more negative attitudes toward their racial identities and being less likely to achieve a coherent racial identity. The second prediction is that multiracial individuals experience poor psychological and adjustment outcomes, all stemming from these identity issues.

To test these predictions, we reviewed the empirical research on the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals. Specifically, we reviewed six commonly examined outcomes: (a) racial identity development, (b) depression, (c) problem behaviors, (d) school performance, (e) peer relations, and (f) self-esteem.

In the following section, we report the results of two separate reviews summarizing the findings from two types of empirical literatures, one including qualitative studies and the other quantitative studies. The qualitative research consists of either (a) clinical case studies in which researchers who were also clinical practitioners presented a clinical experience with a biracial client or (b) semistructured formal interviews in which researchers developed a

set of questions for biracial participants. The quantitative studies were conducted using paper-and-pencil formats in which participants provided answers on standardized scale measures that could be aggregated and compared across different groups (e.g., grade point average [GPA], Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale). In many cases, the quantitative studies reported results from secondary analysis of national data sets not specifically targeted at multiracial individuals. In other studies, the investigators collected their own data.

Qualitative Studies

Method

Literature search. We used several methods to collect articles and papers reporting the findings of qualitative studies.

1. We conducted computer searches of the PsycINFO, ProQuest, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Dissertation Abstracts International databases using the keywords *biracial*, *multiracial*, and *interracial offspring*. This search revealed 1,765 documents, although most of the documents were not relevant.
2. We sent out requests for papers through three major psychology e-mail list servers: American Psychological Association Clinical, Society of Personality and Social Psychology, and Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. These requests were also forwarded to a number of other lists such as that of the National Association for Multicultural Education.
3. We conducted a search on the MCAT database (the catalog of University of Michigan Library holdings) for appropriate books using the keywords *biracial*, *interracial marriage*, and *multiracial*.
4. We checked the books in the stacks surrounding the books that we had identified through Step 3 to locate any other relevant books.
5. We reviewed the reference sections of the papers, articles, and books collected from the methods described above to identify any other articles that seemed relevant.
6. We wrote directly to authors of unpublished doctoral dissertations to request a copy of their dissertations or the relevant data.
7. We wrote directly to researchers in the field of multiracial identity from whom we had not already heard via Step 2 for any unpublished manuscripts or manuscripts in press.

As we conducted this search, it became evident that there was a lack of empirical research on the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals. However, through this method we were able to locate 28 works reporting results of qualitative studies, such as interviews and case studies.

Selection criteria. In selecting the 28 works reporting qualitative research for inclusion in our review, we used the following criteria. First, the studies must have been conducted in the United States. We found four data sets collected in Latin America and Japan, but we chose not to include these studies because in these countries the monoracial majority would not be White. This difference would introduce an added level of complexity that we would not be able to adequately address without more than four available studies.

Second, the studies must have included multiracial participants in the interviews. Finally, the interviews in the studies must have been conducted to answer questions related to psychological outcomes for the purposes of

scientific study. We found several authors who interviewed multiracial participants (e.g., Gaskins, 1999). However, these interviews were not conducted for the purpose of understanding psychological processes, and they were not governed by American Psychological Association guidelines or other standards of scientific study.

Information coded. We recorded the following information for each of the studies: (a) author names; (b) author contact information; (c) where the study was conducted (location); (d) sample size; (e) age of participants; (f) breakdown of sex of participants; (g) racial background of participants; (h) any restrictions pertaining to each group, such as whether all of the participants came from two-parent families or whether comparison groups were siblings; (i) social class of each group, if available; (j) method of data collection; (k) the type of interview conducted (i.e., semistructured interview or case study); (l) the identity and/or psychological variables of interest; (m) unusual features of the studies (e.g., immigrant sample); (n) whether the sample was clinical or nonclinical; (o) publication source; and (p) year of publication, if published (Cooper, 1998; Rosenthal, 1991).

Method for coding qualitative studies. The coding of the qualitative studies was conducted in three steps, based on the procedures used by other qualitative researchers (e.g., Basu, 2003; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). First, we established the categories and definitions of the psychological adjustment outcomes (i.e., racial identity development, depression, problem behaviors, school performance, peer relationships, and self-esteem) that were to be investigated and coded. Second, we both read through the reports of the interviews and pulled out quotes that addressed the psychological adjustment outcomes identified in the first step. We overlapped on 99% of the quotes pulled. We re-reviewed any quotes that one of us pulled but the other did not to determine if these quotes should be included for coding in the next step. In all of these cases, the quotes were included. These quotes were then transcribed to a computer document so they could be reviewed without any identifying information such as title, researchers, or study location. From this exercise, we gathered 122 independent quotes.

In the final step, two different independent coders reviewed the 122 quotes. For each quote, each coder made up to three judgments. The first judgment was whether each quote could inform us about the outcome of any of the psychological adjustment categories identified in the first step. If yes, then the coder indicated the psychological adjustment category the quote addressed, and the direction of the outcome indicated by the quote (i.e., whether the quote indicated positive or negative adjustment outcome). If the quote was judged not to address any of the categories, the quote was dropped.

The two coders in the final step disagreed on 4 of 122 quotes, yielding a 97% agreement rate. In these 4 cases, the coders met to discuss discrepancies and found that discrepancies were due to a clerical error on the part of one coder. The coders recoded the quotes after a brief review of the defining characteristics of each category and reached 100% agreement. Interrater reliability was 100% on whether statements indicated positive-negative adjustment.

Synthesis of study results. To integrate the results of the qualitative studies, we conducted a count of the number of studies that mentioned each of the psychological adjustment outcomes as well as the directions of these outcomes. Results for the studies conducted with clinical populations are summarized in Table 1. Results for the studies conducted with nonclinical populations are summarized in Table 2.

Results

Characteristics of the studies. Of the 28 qualitative studies, 29% were conducted with clinical populations. Of the studies for which sex of participants was reported, 56% of the study participants were female. The age of participants ranged from 5 to 95 years of age. All of the qualitative studies surveyed multiracials with either the case study method or semistructured interviews.

Table 1
 Summary of Clinical Qualitative Studies on the Psychological Adjustment of Multiracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age range	Multiracial identity	Id. dev.	Sad/happy	Prob. beh.	School perf.	Peer rel.	Self-esteem
Buchanan & Acevedo (2004)	1	U.S.	22	Latino/White	Good	Good	—	—	Good	—
Gibbs (1998)	4	U.S.	13–19	Black/White	Good	Bad	Bad	—	Bad	Bad
Lyles et. al. (1985)	1	Southern U.S.	11	Black/White	—	—	Bad	—	Bad	—
McRoy & Freeman (1986)	1	U.S.	7	Black/White	Both	—	Bad	Bad	Bad	—
Pinderhughes (1995)	3	U.S.	15–28	Black/White	—	Bad	Bad	Good	Both	—
Piskacek & Golub (1973)	4	U.S.	6–13	Black/White	Bad	Bad	—	Bad	—	—
Sommers (1964)	1	Los Angeles	24	Black/White	Bad	Bad	Bad	—	Bad	Bad
Teicher (1968)	3	Los Angeles	8–12	Black/White	Bad	Bad	Bad	Good	Bad	Bad

Note. All qualitative data were collected using the case study method. For the six psychological adjustment outcomes, identity development (Id. dev.); depression (Sad/happy); problem behaviors (Prob. beh.); school performance (School perf.); peer relations (Peer rel.); and self-esteem, outcomes are indicated as negative (Bad), positive (Good), or both. Dashes indicate that the information was not mentioned in the article. U.S. = United States.

^a Number of multiracial participants in the sample.

Racial identity development. A survey of the qualitative studies revealed mixed results for the degree to which multiracial individuals experienced difficulty with their racial identity. Nineteen studies documented findings suggesting that multiracial individuals predominantly felt positively about their multiracial identity and felt comfortable dealing with issues related to their racial identity. For instance, Hall (1992) surveyed 30 Black/Japanese individuals and found that respondents were comfortable and proud of their ethnicity. Participants also cited benefits of having a mixed-race background, including being able to appreciate the best of both cultures, being able to accept and empathize with other cultures and races, and being able to overcome discrimination. Other studies found similar results (Gaskins, 1999; Salgado de Snyder, Lopez, & Padilla, 1982).

Kerwin et al. (1993) conducted semistructured interviews with 9 biracial adolescents and their parents in the northeastern United States. They found that biracial adolescents reported being comfortable talking about their racial background. Hall (1992) found that multiracial participants made twice as many positive comments about their multiracial identity as negative comments, suggesting that participants were generally positive and proud of their multiple heritages. Finally, Gibbs and Hines (1992) conducted semistructured interviews on the psychosocial adjustment of 12 biracial adolescents and their families in San Francisco. They found that the majority of these adolescents felt positive about their biracial identity and believed that they were able to develop an integrated identity and did not have a fragmented self.

On the other hand, we also found 14 studies documenting negative experiences associated with multiracial individuals' ability to define and develop their racial identity. Some of the negative experiences multiracial individuals reported included feelings of discomfort at having to respond to queries from others about their identity (Basu, 2003); failing to integrate their multiple racial identities (e.g., Gibbs, 1998; Gillem et al., 2001); and experiencing identity conflict, crises, and confusion (e.g., McRoy & Freeman, 1986; Teicher, 1968). For instance, Piskacek and Golub (1973) conducted case studies of 4 male Black–White multiracial children and reported instances in which the multiracial child was confused

about his race because the child was unsure of whether he was more similar to his Black or White peers.

In sum, evidence for both positive and negative experiences associated with racial identity development exists within the qualitative literature. Gaining exposure to a wide range of cultures and developing integrated identities are examples of some of the benefits associated with a multiracial background. Conflict and confusion are examples of some of the challenges associated with a multiracial background.

Depression. We defined depression very broadly and included not only references of clinical depression but also indications of negative mood or sadness. A survey of the qualitative studies revealed that reports of depression seemed to be related to whether the study sampled from a clinical or nonclinical population. Specifically, we found that more reports of depression came from clinical studies, whereas reports of happiness came only from studies sampling nonclinical populations. Overall, 36% of the qualitative studies (i.e., 10 out of 28) indicated that multiracials mentioned experiencing a period of depression or sadness. Out of the 10 studies that reported a period of depression or sadness for multiracials, 5 sampled clinical populations. For instance, Sommers (1964) conducted a case study of a Black/White male adult and found that this participant reported having to seek help for his inability to sleep and to stop his suicide attempts. Teicher (1968) conducted a case study of 3 Black/White female adolescents and found that 1 of the adolescents experienced a great deal of anxiety and depression, despite maintaining a pleasant and cooperative façade.

On the other hand, six studies found that multiracial individuals enjoyed periods of happiness or explicitly mentioned experiencing little or no depression (e.g., Gibbs & Hines, 1992). None of these studies sampled clinical populations. For instance, Gibbs and Hines (1992) interviewed a sample of 12 Black/White adolescents and reported that only 1 participant described himself as depressed. Thus, the researchers concluded that the majority of the study participants were generally happy.

Our survey of the qualitative studies reveals a pattern in which the prevalence of depression is related to the type of sample

Table 2
 Summary of Nonclinical Qualitative Studies on the Psychological Adjustment of Multiracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age range	Multiracial identity	Id. dev.	Sad/happy	Prob. beh.	School perf.	Peer rel.	Self-esteem
Basu (2003)	14	Northeastern U.S.	18–43	Asian/White, Black/Latino, Black/Native American, Black/White, Latino/Asian, Latino/White	Both	Bad	—	—	Good	—
Buckley & Carter (2004)	5	New York City	18–28	Asian/White, Black/White	Bad	—	—	—	Both	—
Collins (2000)	15	Northwestern U.S.	20–40	Asian/White, Black/Asian	Both	—	—	—	Bad	Good
Gibbs & Hines (1992)	12	Northwestern U.S.	13–18	Black/White	Both	Both	Bad	Bad	Both	Both
Gillem et al. (2001)	2	—	17–19	Black/White	Both	Good	—	Both	Both	Bad
Hall (1992)	30	Northwestern U.S.	18–32	Black/Asian	Both	Good	—	—	Both	Good
Henricksen & Trusty (2004)	7	Southwestern U.S.	18–22	Black/White	Good	Bad	—	—	Both	Good
Kerwin et al. (1993)	9	Northeastern U.S.	5–16	Black/White	Good	—	—	—	Both	—
Knaus (2003)	8	Northwestern U.S.	20–28	Asian/White, Black/Asian, Black/White	Both	Both	Bad	Both	Both	Bad
Korgen (1998)	3	U.S.	18–46	Black/White	Good	Good	Bad	—	Both	—
Newsome (2001)	72	Northwestern U.S.	15 ^b	—	Good	—	—	—	Good	—
Poussaint (1984)	37	U.S.	17–35	Asian/White, Black/Asian, Black/White	Good	—	—	—	Both	Bad
Renn (2000)	24	Northeastern U.S.	19–23	—	—	—	—	—	Both	—
Roberts-Clarke et al. (2004)	8	Eastern U.S.	23–56	Black/Asian, Black/White, Latino/White	Good	—	—	—	Both	—
Rockquomore & Brunsma (2002b)	177	Midwestern U.S.	18–58	Black/White	—	—	—	—	Both	—
Salgado de Snyder et al. (1982)	63	California	12–18	Latino/White	Good	—	—	Good	—	—
Storrs (1999)	27	Northwestern U.S.	—	Asian/White, Black/Asian, Latino/White, Native American/White	Good	Both	—	—	—	—
Tashiro (2002)	20	Northwestern U.S.	45–95	Asian/White, Black/White	Both	—	—	—	Both	—
Thornton & Gates (2001)	61	U.S.	20–33	Black/Asian	Bad	—	—	—	Bad	—
Williams & Thorton (1998)	20	U.S.	—	Asian/White, Black/White	Both	—	—	—	Both	—

Note. All qualitative data were collected using semistructured interviews. For the six psychological adjustment outcomes, identity development (Id. dev.); depression (Sad/happy); problem behaviors (Prob. beh.); school performance (School perf.); peer relations (Peer rel.); and self-esteem, outcomes are indicated as negative (Bad), positive (Good), or both. Dashes indicate that the information was not mentioned in the article. U.S. = United States.

^a Number of multiracial participants in the sample. ^b Investigator only provided mean age.

investigated. We find evidence of happiness in nonclinical samples but not in clinical samples. On the other hand, we find evidence of depression more often in clinical samples than in nonclinical samples.

Problem behaviors. Similar to the pattern of results found for depression, a survey of the qualitative studies revealed that the prevalence of problem behaviors also seemed to be related to the type of sample, clinical or nonclinical, in the study. We defined problem behavior as any type of behavior that is deemed undesirable or harmful, such as delinquency, drug use, alcohol use, smoking, and adolescent sexual activity.

Nine qualitative studies documented instances of problem behaviors. Two thirds of these studies examined clinical samples and used a case study methodology. Thus, out of the eight qualitative studies examining clinical populations, six found evidence of behavioral problems among the multiracial participants. Gibbs (1998) conducted case studies of 4 Black/White adolescents and found evidence of teenage pregnancy, stealing, and truancy. Lyles et al. (1985) conducted a case study of a Black/White female

adolescent who reported disciplinary problems at home and at school. McRoy and Freeman (1986) conducted a case study of a Black/White male adolescent who reported that he had frequent fights with his peers.

On the other hand, problem behaviors were less prevalent among the studies examining nonclinical populations. Of the 20 qualitative studies conducted on nonclinical populations, only 3 reported evidence of tobacco use, early sexual activity, and/or alcohol use among multiracial participants (Gibbs, 1998; Gibbs & Hines, 1992; Williams, 1996). However, it would be premature to conclude that problem behaviors are not an issue of concern in nonclinical multiracial populations. It is possible that the researchers investigating multiracial individuals in nonclinical samples were not probing for problem behaviors.

In sum, it appears that there is a higher incidence of problem behaviors for multiracial individuals in qualitative studies examining clinical populations than in studies examining nonclinical samples. Of course, because clinical samples are selected for problem behaviors, this pattern of results is not surprising.

School performance. The type of population sampled also had an impact on school performance. Five studies reported that multiracial individuals were performing well in school, whereas five studies found the opposite. Four of the five studies reporting that multiracial adolescents were doing well in school studied nonclinical populations. For example, Gibbs and Hines (1992) reported that among the 12 Black/White adolescents that they interviewed in their study, the majority was doing above average in school and reported high educational aspirations. Three quarters of this sample had an A or B average and planned to go to graduate school. Gillem et al. (2001) conducted semistructured interviews with 2 Black/White multiracial adolescents. They found that 1 student reported loving school and doing well, whereas the other student reported having poor grades.

The five studies finding poor academic performance all sampled clinical populations. McRoy and Freeman (1986) found that the participant in their case study did below average in school. Piskacek and Golub (1973) found that the 6-year-old boy in their case study also fared poorly in school. Thus, once again, the results of our survey of the qualitative studies suggest that in the general population multiracial individuals were faring well in school but that in the clinical population they were not.

Peer relations. Social acceptance and rejection were issues mentioned frequently among the qualitative studies. For multiracial respondents, 17 studies mentioned social acceptance, and 22 studies mentioned experiences of social rejection. We did not find any patterns differentiating between studies that used clinical or nonclinical samples. Social acceptance and rejection seemed to be experienced in both clinical ($n = 7$) and nonclinical ($n = 18$) samples. However, we did find a pattern in terms of the dates in which the studies were conducted. Studies conducted in the past decade, since 1995 ($n = 16$), were more likely to find both social rejection and social acceptance, whereas studies conducted before the past decade ($n = 9$) were more likely to report only social rejection. These changes may be a reflection of changing racial attitudes in society and/or the changing perspectives of researchers.

Many testimonials from multiracial individuals recounted periods of not fitting in with peer groups as a result of their multiracial identity (e.g., Collins, 2000; Gibbs, 1998; Gibbs & Hines, 1992; Lyles et al., 1985; Poussaint, 1984; Sommers, 1964). For example, Collins (2000) reported that many of the multiracials interviewed felt rejected by the communities associated with their component races. Some multiracials clearly believed they were targets of prejudice as a result of their multiracial status. Others expressed experiences of social rejection that could be the result of having a minority status more generally (e.g., McRoy & Freeman, 1986; Teicher, 1968; Williams, 1996). For example, multiracial participants were often ridiculed by their peers or slandered with racial slurs targeting their minority status. These experiences were found in studies conducted both in the past decade and before.

However, several studies ($n = 14$) conducted more recently have documented social acceptance. For example, some multiracials expressed that they could move easily among racial groups, finding little resistance as a result of their racial identity (Basu, 2003; Gillem et al., 2001; Kerwin et al., 1993; Williams & Thornton, 1998). For instance, Renn (2000) reported that the multiracial students she interviewed felt that they fit in well among their peers. Others researchers found that the multiracial participants in their

studies reported that their monoracial friends were respectful of their multiracial background. This pattern may reflect a change in social attitudes toward race relations over time as American society becomes more aware and accepting of relationships among members of different races.

Self-esteem. Our survey of the qualitative research on self-esteem revealed evidence of both high and low self-esteem among multiracial individuals. Once again, the type of sample surveyed seemed to affect the direction of results found in the studies.

We found seven studies documenting reports of low self-esteem and four studies documenting reports of high self-esteem. Of the seven studies documenting low self-esteem, three of these studies sampled clinical populations. For instance, Sommers (1964) conducted a case study on a Black/White adult male and reported that this man saw himself as an "ugly and despicable" (p. 337) person because he felt like an imposter. Gillem et al. (2001) also found that the participants in their study reported having low self-esteem and hating themselves.

All four studies that documented high self-esteem sampled from nonclinical populations. Gibbs and Hines (1992) reported that of 12 multiracial teenagers interviewed in their study, only 1 teenager reported feelings of low self-worth, while 7 teenagers reported high self-worth. Hall (1992) interviewed a sample of 30 Black/Japanese adults from the greater Los Angeles area and asked them to fill out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. She found no relationship between possessing a multiracial identity and self-esteem. Participants generally reported high self-esteem. Moreover, she found that participants also reported that their physical appearance was considered to be exotic and attractive. Thus, high self-esteem among multiracials seemed to be found only in the studies that examined nonclinical samples, but low self-esteem was found in studies that examined both clinical and nonclinical samples.

Summary and Discussion for Qualitative Study Results

In sum, our survey of the qualitative research on the psychological adjustment outcomes of multiracial individuals revealed mixed support for the predictions made by traditional theories of multiracial identity (see Table 3). We found evidence of both positive and negative psychological adjustment for multiracial individuals, suggesting that the processes underlying successful adjustment are more complex than suggested by traditional theories of multiracial identity. Specifically, we found evidence that having a multiracial background not only poses challenges as traditional theories propose but also provides resources that contribute to resilience in meeting these challenges. For instance, we found that whereas some multiracial individuals felt rejected by others because of their racial identity, many multiracial individuals cited benefits coming from their multiracial heritage, such as having access to and potentially gaining support from a larger number of cultural communities.

Moreover, we found that the direction of a study's results was related to whether the study sampled clinical or nonclinical populations. Not surprisingly, studies that sampled clinical populations tended to find negative outcomes such as higher depression, problem behaviors, lower school performance, and lower self-esteem. However, studies that sampled from nonclinical populations found more positive outcomes, such as periods of happiness and high self-esteem.

Table 3
 Summary of Qualitative Studies of Multiracials by Type of Sample (Clinical or Nonclinical)

Outcome	Identity development		Sadness/happiness		Problem behaviors		School performance		Peer relations		Self-esteem	
	Bad	Good	Bad	Good	Bad	Good	Bad	Good	Bad	Good	Bad	Good
Nonclinical	10	16	5	5	3	1	3	3	16	15	4	4
Clinical	4	3	5	1	6	0	2	2	6	2	3	0

Social attitudes toward interracial relationships also seemed to have an effect on psychological adjustment. Studies conducted more recently tended to find more evidence of social acceptance and improved peer relationships. Studies conducted before the past decade reported a great deal of social rejection and isolation, whereas studies conducted since then report both rejection and acceptance. This trend in the findings may reflect the impact that changing social attitudes toward race relations may have on the experiences of multiracial individuals and the focus that researchers take. At the same time, it is also possible that this trend may reflect a growing number of studies conducted in the past decade that have been carried out on nonclinical individuals, who in general may experience more social acceptance than individuals from clinical samples.

Our main goal in synthesizing the qualitative results was to establish the frequency with which difficulties in psychological adjustment were mentioned by multiracial interview participants. However, we caution readers about several limitations associated with synthesizing qualitative studies. First, the structure of the interviews could not be held constant across studies. For example, interviewers may specifically probe for mental health issues in one study, but not in another. For this reason, drawing conclusions by making comparisons across studies will always be equivocal.

We also caution readers against drawing conclusions on the basis of the number of studies that do not mention a behavior or outcome. For example, if we report that 10 out of 28 studies mentioned that multiracial participants engaged in a certain behavior, it does not mean that multiracial participants did not engage in that behavior in the other 18 studies in which this behavior was not mentioned. There are many possible reasons why this behavior may not have been mentioned in those studies. Although it is possible that the behaviors were not mentioned because the study participants did not engage in them, it could also be possible that the studies did not mention these behaviors because the investigators did not probe for them.

Furthermore, the interview structure may impact the participant's tendency to mention mental health issues. In many cases, multiracial participants may have mentioned an indicator of poor psychological adjustment without suggesting that it was connected to their multiracial identity. Therefore, it is difficult to be sure that poor psychological adjustment was perceived as connected to their unique multiracial status. Similar to quantitative limitations, we cannot draw conclusions about whether relative psychological adjustment was caused by multiracial status. Specifically, because these studies did not use a comparative minority or majority group, we also cannot address whether minority status, in general, could also be responsible for poor psychological adjustment.

To help address these limitations and to provide a fuller picture of the experiences of multiracial individuals, we also conducted a

review of studies that used quantitative measures to examine issues of psychological adjustment. Reviewing studies using quantitative measures can address a number of issues that the preceding review of qualitative studies could not. First, the quantitative studies many times included comparisons between multiracial and monoracial individuals. These comparisons provide us with insights about how multiracial individuals were faring relative to their monoracial peers. Second, a review of the quantitative studies can provide a better picture of the reliability and generalizability of the findings from the qualitative studies.

Quantitative Studies

Method

Literature search. The same search reported earlier for qualitative studies was used to locate studies using quantitative methods. We found 15 papers reporting quantitative measures comparing multiracial and monoracial individuals.

Selection criteria. We used the following criteria for selecting quantitative studies to be included in our review. The studies must have reported (a) quantitative measures on at least one of the outcomes that we investigated, (b) data collected in the United States, and (c) measures for both a multiracial and a monoracial comparison group. Our selection criteria resulted in 16 studies reported in 14 published articles or in press papers and 2 unpublished manuscripts.¹

Information recorded. We recorded the same information for each of the quantitative studies as we did for the qualitative studies, with the following exceptions. We did not record the type of interview conducted, as this information was not applicable. In addition, we recorded (a) measurement instruments; (b) type of significance test used (i.e., *F* test, *t* test, chi-square); (c) direction of the results; (d) *p* level; and (e) effect size (i.e., *d*) if reported.

Method for coding studies. Studies were coded independently by the two of us. The coding was conducted in two steps. In the first step, the dependent measures reported in each of the studies were identified. The second step indicated whether the measures reported could be categorized as an indicator of one of the outcomes of interest. For instance, we each indicated whether the measure GPA would be categorized as an indicator of school performance. The reliability of the codings was 97%. Items on

¹ McKelvey, Webb, and their colleagues conducted a series of published studies on the psychological adjustment outcomes of Vietnamese Amerasians brought to the United States to be reunited with the American fathers who were veterans of the Vietnam War. We did not include many of these studies because many of the Amerasian participants had experienced extraordinary trauma such as the loss of a parent. We believed this could account for the effects found in these papers rather than the participants' multiracial background. However, we did include McKelvey and Webb's (1996) article because this study was conducted in the United States and did not examine a traumatic event in the participants' lives.

which we disagreed were then discussed to determine whether they should be included. In the end, we agreed on 100% of the measures.

Synthesis of study results. Initially, when we began the project, we had planned to conduct a meta-analytic review of the quantitative studies. However, our search through the literature revealed so few studies reporting quantitative data comparing the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals to monoracial majority and minority individuals that we had to adjust our plans. We found few direct replications and a great deal of heterogeneity among the studies that we collected. There was such a wide variety of methods used, participants studied, measures taken, and comparisons made (e.g., multiracials vs. monoracials, multiracials vs. monoracial majority, Asian/White multiracials vs. Asian monoracials, etc.) among these 16 papers that we were able to find few studies that overlapped and could be combined easily. For many of the psychological outcomes, we found no studies using the same measures testing the same comparison groups. Thus, the lack of direct replications and heterogeneity among the studies made conducting a rigorous formal meta-analytic review unachievable. Moreover, the small number of studies available for each outcome made us wary of the reliability and validity of the results that we would attain from a meta-analytic review.

Therefore, rather than synthesizing the studies statistically, we describe the results of the studies simply by noting their direction and statistical significance. Although this approach is far from ideal and requires very cautious interpretation, we felt the evidence base for any particular comparison was still too shallow to warrant a formal statistical integration.

Results

Characteristics of the Studies

All of the quantitative studies used nonclinical samples, with the earliest study published in 1976 and the most recent in 2004.

Identity Development

We collected studies measuring multiracial individuals' attitudes toward their racial identities, their perceptions of the attitudes others hold toward their identities, and their experiences in the process of racial identity development. We found six studies reporting quantitative measures associated with various aspects of multiracial identity development. We summarize the findings for identity development in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 summarizes the

studies reporting comparisons of racial identity development measures between multiracial and monoracial majority (White) participants, whereas Table 5 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons of racial identity development measures between multiracial and monoracial minority participants. Overall, across these studies there is little evidence that multiracial individuals are experiencing poor outcomes in terms of their racial identity development.

Grove (1991) investigated identity development among 17 Asian/White biracial, 17 monoracial Asian, and 17 monoracial White adolescents by administering the Marcia's Identity Interview and Mars Asian Values Scale. She found that the majority of Asian/White biracial participants viewed being multiracial positively and that there were no differences in the percentage of biracial participants and monoracial majority (White) participants who attained achieved identity status ($d = 0.00$), the final stage in the four-stage process identified in Erikson's (1968) theory of ego identity. Moreover, when compared with monoracial Asian participants, a larger percentage of multiracial Asian/White participants attained identity status ($d = 0.41$).

Bracey, Bamaca, and Umana-Taylor (2004) compared the scores of 181 multiracial, 982 monoracial White, 626 monoracial Asian, 331 monoracial Black, and 1,162 monoracial Latino adolescents on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). They found that multiracial adolescents showed more integrated identity development than the monoracial White adolescents ($d = 0.12$) but less integrated identity development than the monoracial Latino ($d = -0.18$), monoracial Black ($d = -0.26$), and monoracial Asian ($d = -0.24$) adolescents. Phinney and Alipuria (1996) also surveyed 194 multiracial, 631 monoracial minority, and 65 monoracial majority (White) high school students on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure and found that there were no significant differences among these three groups of adolescents on their mean level of identity integration ($d =$ not calculable [NC] because of missing information). Unfortunately, they did not report direction of the comparisons among these three groups.

Jaret and Reitzes (1999) examined the importance of race to one's identity among 50 Black, 48 multiracial, and 389 White

Table 4
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding Racial Identity Development for Multiracials Compared With White Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age range	Measure	Positive identity	Sig
Bracey et al. (2004)	982 White; 3 Asian/Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure	Multi	Yes
Grove (1991)	17 White; 17 Asian/White	New England	17–22	Asian Values Scale	Equal	No
Herman (2004)	6,743 monoracial; ^b 298 White/Asian	Southern California	15.5 ^c	Private regard	Equal	No
Sanchez & Shih (2004)	42 White; 12 Asian/White, 15 Black/White, 30 Latino/White	Michigan	17–31	Private regard Public regard	Multi Major	Yes Yes

Note. Sig = significant difference; U.S. = United States; Multi = multiracials showed higher means; Equal = multiracials showed no significant difference in positive identity compared with White monoracials; Major = majority (White) monoracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b Author did not report the breakdown of participants by monoracial racial group although analyses were conducted across several independent monoracial racial group memberships. ^c Mean age.

Table 5
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding Racial Identity Development for Multiracials Compared With Minority Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age range	Measure	Positive identity	Sig
Bracey et al. (2004) Asians vs. multiracials	626 Asian; 3 Asian/ Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)	Min	Yes
Blacks vs. multiracials	331 Black; 3 Asian/ Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	MEIM	Min	Yes
Latinos vs. multiracials	1,162 Latino; 3 Asian/ Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	MEIM	Min	Yes
Grove (1991)	17 Asian; 17 Asian/ White	New England	17–22	Identity Status Interview ^b Asian Values Scale	Multi Min	No No
Herman (2004)	6,743 monoracial; ^c 298 White/Asian	Southern California	15.5 ^d	Private regard	Min	Yes
Phinney & Alipuria (1996) High school sample	27 Asian, 232 Black, 372 Latino, 65 White; 194 multiracial	Southern California	14–19	MEIM	—	No
Sanchez & Shih (2004)	62 minority; 12 Asian/ White, 15 Black/ White, 30 Latino/ White	Michigan	17–31	Private regard Public regard	Multi Min	No Yes

Note. A dash indicates that not enough information was given in the article. Sig = significant difference; U.S. = United States; Min = minorities showed higher means; Multi = multiracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b We only reported identity status for racial identity although identity achievement was measured in other domains (e.g., occupation, sex roles; Grove, 1991). White participants were not asked their racial identity status. ^c Author did not report the breakdown of participants by monoracial group although analyses were conducted across several single monoracial group memberships. ^d Mean age.

individuals. They found racial identity was reported to be more important to the Black study participants than the multiracial participants ($d = \text{NC}$) and less important to White study participants than to multiracial participants ($d = \text{NC}$).

Sanchez and Shih (2004) investigated the discrepancy between multiracial individuals' attitudes and their perceptions of others' attitudes toward their racial identity. They surveyed 62 monoracial minority, 42 monoracial majority (White), and 57 multiracial participants on their public and private racial regard. They found that multiracial individuals reported lower public racial regard than both monoracial majority ($d = -0.13$) and monoracial minority participants ($d = -0.03$), reflecting multiracial participants' perceptions that society disapproves of their racial identity. However, they also found that multiracial participants reported higher private racial regard than monoracial majority ($d = 0.14$) and monoracial minority participants ($d = 0.02$), suggesting that despite their

beliefs of society disapproval, multiracial individuals still orient themselves positively toward their racial identity.

Similarly, Herman (2004) found that most multiracial groups reported positive feelings for their racial identity that were no different than monoracial Whites ($d = \text{NC}$). However, she did find that Asian/Whites reported less positive feelings about their racial identity than the other groups ($d = \text{NC}$).

Taken together, we find little evidence among the four studies that multiracial individuals suffer negative identity development outcomes. However, at the same time, the story underlying multiracial identity may be more complex than previously appreciated. For instance, Sanchez and Shih (2004) found that multiracial individuals show low public racial regard but high private racial regard, whereas monoracial individuals show the opposite pattern. This suggests that identity development and the relationship multiracial individuals have with their racial

identity differs from the relationship monoracial individuals have with their racial identity.

Depression

Four studies compared the prevalence of depression among multiracial individuals and monoracial majority and minority peers. We summarize the findings for depression in Tables 6 and 7. Table 6 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons of depression measures between multiracial and monoracial majority (White) participants, whereas Table 7 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons of depression measures between multiracial and monoracial minority participants. Overall, the results suggest a preliminary trend for multiracial individuals to show higher levels of depression when compared with their monoracial majority peers but not when compared with their monoracial minority peers. However, given that there are only four studies, this result should be viewed with caution as the reliability of this trend has not been fully established.

Milan and Keiley (2000) and Cooney and Radina (2000) analyzed the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health comparing levels of depression reported by multiracial adolescents with their monoracial peers. Milan and Keiley compared the scores of 3,521 monoracial majority (White), 272 multiracial, and 1,941 monoracial minority adolescents on a 20-item scale to measure depression. They found that multiracial adolescents reported significantly higher levels of depression than monoracial majority adolescents ($d = 0.09$). However, multiracial adolescents reported lower levels of depression than monoracial minority adolescents ($d = -0.02$), although this difference was not significant. Cooney and Radina found similar results using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. They compared the scores on this scale from 916 male monoracial majority (White), 250 multiracial male, and 138 monoracial minority male adolescents. Multiracial male adolescents reported higher levels of depression than monoracial majority male adolescents ($d = 0.11$) and monoracial minority male adolescents ($d = 0.01$). Cooney and Radina also compared the scores of 954 female monoracial majority (White), 284 multiracial female, and 146 monoracial minority female adolescents on the same scale. For female adolescents, they found significantly higher rates of depression for multiracial female adolescents when compared with monoracial majority female adolescents ($d = 0.21$) but only slightly higher rates when compared with monoracial minority female adolescents ($d = 0.03$).

McKelvey and Webb (1996) compared levels of depression using the Vietnamese Depression Scale among a sample of 140 Vietnamese Amerasians who moved from Vietnam to America under the Amerasian Homecoming Act, their 71 non-Amerasian siblings, and a control group of 118 unrelated Vietnamese immigrants. They found that the multiracial participants reported higher levels of depression than their monoracial majority siblings ($d = 0.16$) and monoracial minority peers ($d = 0.47$). However, it is not clear from this study whether the higher level of depression can be attributed to their multiracial background or other factors such as their adjustment to a new and foreign culture.

In contrast, Cauce et al. (1992) administered the Child Depression Inventory to a sample of 22 Black/White and Asian/White biracial adolescents and a group of 22 Asian and Black adolescents matched on age, school year, and socioeconomic status. They found that the monoracial adolescents reported higher levels of depression than the biracial adolescents ($d = -0.08$), although the difference was not significant.

Problem behaviors. We summarize the findings for problem behaviors in Tables 8 and 9. Table 8 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons between multiracial and monoracial majority (White) participants, whereas Table 9 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons between multiracial and monoracial minority participants. We included in this category measures of undesirable behavior, such as delinquency, drug use, alcohol use, smoking, and adolescent sexual activity. The quantitative studies that investigated problem behaviors suggests a slight tendency for multiracial individuals to exhibit higher levels of problem behaviors compared with their monoracial majority and monoracial minority peers; however, this tendency may also depend on the behavior being examined. We describe five studies (including the behavior measured) and the results in greater detail below. Once again, the reliability of these trends should be considered with caution given the small number of studies.

Cooney and Radina (2000) examined rates of delinquency as reported in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and found that multiracial male adolescents reported higher rates of delinquency than their monoracial minority peers ($d = 0.02$), whereas multiracial female adolescents reported lower rates of delinquency than their monoracial minority peers ($d = -0.04$), but these differences were not significant. With regard to their monoracial majority peers, however, both multiracial male and

Table 6
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding Depression for Multiracials Compared With White Monoracials

Study	n^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure
Cooney & Radina (2000)				
Boys	916 White, 250 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale
Girls	954 White, 284 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale
McKelvey & Webb (1996)	71 White, 140 Asian/White	Texas	19–33	Vietnamese Depression Scale
Milan & Keiley (2000)	3,521 White, 272 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Depression Scale

Note. Multiracials showed significantly higher mean levels of depression than White monoracials. U.S. = United States.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership.

Table 7
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding Depression for Minority Multiracials Compared With Minority Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	Depression	Sig
Cauce et al. (1992)	11 Asian; 11 Black, 11 Asian/White, 11 Black/White	Seattle, WA	11–13	Child Depression Inventory	Min	No
Cooney & Radina (2000) Boys	250 multiracial, 138 minority monoracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale	Multi	No
Girls	284 multiracial, 146 minority monoracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale	Multi	No
McKelvey & Webb (1996)	140 Asian/White, 118 Asian	Texas	19–33	Vietnamese Depression Scale	Multi	Yes
Milan & Keiley (2000)	1,941 minority monoracial, 272 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Depression Scale	Min	No

Note. Sig = significant difference; WA = Washington; U.S. = United States; Min = minority monoracials showed higher means; Multi = multiracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b Grade level provided when no age range was provided in the article.

female adolescents reported significantly higher rates of delinquency (female $d = 0.04$; male $d = 0.13$).

Similarly, Field (1996) compared a group of 31 Black/White biracial adolescents with a group of 31 White and 31 Black adolescents on behavioral adjustment as measured by the Youth Self-Report of Behavioral Problems and the Child Behavior Checklist. She found that multiracials reported engaging in significantly more behavioral problems than the monoracial majority adolescents ($d = 0.34$). She also found that multiracial adolescents reported more problem behaviors than monoracial minority adolescents ($d = 0.28$), although this difference was not statistically significant. Milan and Keiley (2000) used a 19-item measure of conduct problems and found that multiracial adolescents engaged in significantly more conduct problems than both monoracial majority ($d = 0.08$) and minority adolescents ($d = 0.16$).

McKelvey and Webb (1996) examined alcohol use among Vietnamese Amerasians and found that the Amerasian study participants reported significantly more alcohol use than their monoracial majority siblings ($d = 0.23$) or monoracial Vietnamese control group ($d = 0.17$). Finally, Beal, Ausiello, and Perrins (2001) administered the Middle Grades Health Survey to 82 Latino, 72 Black, 19 other race, and 22 multiracial seventh-grade children in Roxbury, Massachusetts, for sexual activity and tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use. They found that monoracial minority adolescents reported more alcohol and tobacco use than multiracial adolescents ($ds = NC$), but these differences were not significant. However, they did find that multiracial adolescents reported significantly more marijuana use than the monoracial minority adolescents ($d = NC$) and that a significantly larger proportion of Black monoracial adolescents engaged in sexual activity than the

Table 8
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding Problem Behaviors for Multiracials Compared With White Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	Group with more behavior problems	Sig
Cooney & Radina (2000) Boys	916 White, 250 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Delinquent Behavior Scale	Multi	Yes
Girls	954 White, 284 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Delinquent Behavior Scale	Multi	Yes
Field (1996)	31 White, 31 Black/White	Denver	13–18	Youth Self-Report of Behavioral Problems	Multi	Yes
McKelvey & Webb (1996)	71 White, 140 Asian/White	Texas	19–33	Self-reported alcohol use	Multi	Yes
Milan & Keiley (2000)	3,521 White, 272 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Conduct Problems Scale	Multi	Yes

Note. Sig = significant difference; Multi = multiracials showed higher means; U.S. = United States.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b Grade level provided when no age range was provided in the article.

Table 9
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding Problem Behaviors for Multiracials Compared With Minority Monoracials

Study	n ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	Behavior problems	Sig
Beal et al. (2001)	72 Black, 82 Latino, 19 other, 22 biracial	Roxbury, MA	7th	Self-reported tobacco use Self-reported alcohol use Self-reported onset of sexual activity Self-reported marijuana use	Min Min Min ^b Multi	No No Yes Yes
Cooney & Radina (2000)						
Boys	138 minority monoracial, 250 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Delinquent Behavior Scale	Multi	No
Girls	146 minority monoracial, 284 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Delinquent Behavior Scale	Min	Yes
Field (1996)	31 Black, 31 Black/White	Denver, CO	13–18	Youth Self-Report of Behavioral Problems	Multi	No
McKelvey & Webb (1996)	118 Asian, 140 Asian/White	Texas	19–33	Self-reported alcohol use	Multi	Yes
Milan & Keiley (2000)	1,941 minority monoracial, 272 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Conduct Problems Scale	Multi	Yes

Note. Sig = significant difference; MA = Massachusetts; Min = minority monoracials showed higher means; Multi = multiracials showed higher means; U.S. = United States; CO = Colorado.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b Black monoracials showed significantly higher means.

adolescents in the other groups (*d* = NC). In sum, the results of the studies suggest that there may be a slight tendency for multiracial adolescents to report more problem behaviors than their monoracial peers.

School performance. We summarize the findings for school performance in Tables 10 and 11. Table 10 summarizes the studies

reporting comparisons between multiracial and monoracial majority (White) participants, whereas Table 11 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons between multiracial and monoracial minority participants. School performance was measured with indicators such as the number of years of education, GPA, grade retention, test performance, and attitudes toward school. Five studies re-

Table 10
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding School Performance for Multiracials Compared With White Monoracials

Study	n ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measures	School performance	Sig
Cooney & Radina (2000)						
Boys	916 White, 250 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	GPA	Equal	No
Girls	954 White, 284 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	GPA	Major	No
D. R. Harris & Thomas (2002)						
White vs. Black/White	5,264 White, 128 Black/White	U.S.	7th–12th	Verbal test scores GPA Grade retention	Major Major Major	Yes No No
White vs. Asian/White	5,264 White, 113 Asian/White	U.S.	7th–12th	Vocabulary verbal test GPA Grade retention	Major Major Multi	No No No
White vs. Native American/White	5,264 White, 304 Native American/White	U.S.	7th–12th	Vocabulary verbal test GPA Grade retention	Major Major Major	No Yes Yes
McKelvey & Webb (1996)	71 White, 140 Asian/White	Texas	19–33	Years of education	Major	Yes
Shih et al. (in press)	56 White; 66 Asian/White, 28 Black/White	Midwestern U.S.	College	Math test scores	Multi	Yes

Note. Sig = significant difference; U.S. = United States; GPA = grade point average; Equal = multiracials showed no significant difference in positive identity compared with White monoracials; Major = majority (White) monoracials showed higher means; Multi = multiracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership.

Table 11
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding the School Performance of Multiracials Compared With Minority Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	School performance	Sig
Cooney & Radina (2000)						
Boys	138 minority monoracial, 250 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	GPA	Multi	No
Girls	146 minority monoracial, 284 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	GPA	Multi	No
D. R. Harris & Thomas (2002)						
Black vs. Black/White	2,080 Black, 128 Black/White	U.S.	7th–12th	Verbal test scores GPA	Multi Multi	Yes Yes
Asian vs. Asian/White	692 Asian, 113 Asian/White	U.S.	7th–12th	Grade retention Verbal test scores GPA	Multi Multi Min	No Yes Yes
Native American vs. Native American/White	38 Native American, 304 Native American/White	U.S.	7th–12th	Grade retention Verbal test scores GPA	Multi Multi Multi	No Yes Yes
McKelvey & Webb (1996)	118 Asian, 140 Asian/White	Texas	19–33	Grade retention Years of Education	Multi Min	No Yes

Note. Sig = significant difference; U.S. = United States; GPA = grade point average; Multi = multiracials showed higher means; Min = minority monoracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership.

ported comparisons of school performance among multiracial individuals and their monoracial majority peers and minority peers. A review of these five studies suggests that multiracial adolescents are doing just as well, if not better, than their monoracial minority counterparts but worse than their monoracial majority counterparts in school. However, once again, with only four studies it is hard to draw firm conclusions from the available data.

Both Cooney and Radina (2000) and D. R. Harris and Thomas (2002) analyzed the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. D. R. Harris and Thomas found few significant differences between multiracial adolescents and monoracial majority adolescents in GPA, test performance, and grade retention. The only difference they found indicated greater grade retention and lower GPA for White/Native American biracial adolescents ($d = \text{NC}$) and lower test performance for Black/White biracial ($d = \text{NC}$) compared with White adolescents. However, when the multiracial adolescents were compared with their monoracial minority counterparts, D. R. Harris and Thomas (2002) found that in most cases, the multiracial adolescents reported less grade retention, higher GPA, and higher test scores ($ds = \text{NC}$). The only subgroup that did not show this trend was the Asian/White multiracials compared with Asian monoracials ($d = \text{NC}$).

Cooney and Radina (2000) found that multiracial male adolescents reported marginally significant higher GPAs than the monoracial minority male peers ($d = 0.10$) but no differences when compared to the monoracial majority male peers ($d = 0.00$). They also found that multiracial female adolescents reported significantly higher GPAs than their monoracial minority female peers ($d = 0.13$), but lower GPAs, although not significantly different, than their monoracial majority female peers ($d = -0.08$). McKelvey and Webb (1996) found that Vietnamese Amerasians reported significantly fewer years of educations than both their monoracial (White) siblings ($d = -0.13$) and their monoracial Vietnamese immigrant peers ($d = -0.08$).

Finally, Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, and Peck (in press) had 94 multiracial (66 Asian/White and 28 Black/White) and 56 monoracial majority (White) individuals take a math test. They found that the multiracial participants scored significantly higher than the monoracial participants on this test ($d = 0.32$).

Peer relations. Quantitative studies suggest that multiracial adolescents develop good relationships with their peers in terms of popularity, feelings of acceptance, support, and trust. We located two studies reporting quantitative measures of peer relationship quality.

Chang (1974) examined 251 children of mixed-race marriages and 98 children of same-race marriages in Kansas. She found no differences between mixed-race children and single-race children on measures of popularity using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale ($d = \text{NC}$). Cauce et al. (1992) surveyed 22 biracial adolescents between ages 11–13 years on a number of measures including the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment and compared their answers with a matched set of monoracial minority adolescents. In terms of peer relationships, these researchers found that multiracial adolescents scored higher in trust ($d = 0.39$) and communication ($d = 0.35$) and lower on alienation ($d = -0.16$) than their monoracial peers. Thus, although both studies found that the differences were not significant, the means of both studies fell in the direction of multiracial participants reporting better relationships.

Self-esteem. Many studies have investigated the level of self-esteem among multiracial individuals, including measures of self-worth, self-liking, or self-esteem. We located nine studies (11 different samples) reporting quantitative measures of self-esteem or self-worth among multiracial individuals. The quantitative studies have yielded mixed results. We summarize the findings in Tables 12, 13, and 14. Table 12 summarizes the studies reporting comparisons between multiracial and monoracial majority (White) participants, whereas Table 13 summarizes the studies reporting

Table 12
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding the Self-Esteem of Multiracials Compared With White Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	Self-esteem	Sig
Bracey et al. (2004)	982 White, 37 Asian/White, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White, 3 Asian/Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 14 Black/Latino	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	—	No
Field (1996)	31 White, 31 Black/White	Denver, CO	13–18	Self-Perception Scale for Adolescents	Major	No
Herman (2004)	6,743 monoracial; ^b 1,496 biracial	Southern California	15.5 ^c	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	—	No
Milan & Keiley (2000)	3,521 White, 272 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Self-Worth Scale	Major	Yes
Sanchez & Shih (2004)	43 White; 12 Asian/White, 15 Black/White, 30 Latino/White	Michigan	17–31	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Multi	Yes
Stephan & Stephan (1989) Sample 1	34 White, 57 Asian/White	Hawaii	College	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Major	No
Sample 2	129 White, 123 Latino/White	New Mexico	College	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Multi	No

Note. Dashes indicate that the information was not mentioned in the article. Sig = significant difference; U.S. = United States; CO = Colorado; Major = majority (White) monoracials showed higher means; Multi = multiracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b Author did not report the breakdown of participants by monoracial racial group although analyses were conducted across several single monoracial group memberships. ^c Mean age.

comparisons between multiracial and monoracial minority participants. Table 14 summarizes studies that make comparisons between multiracials and monoracials, not differentiating between monoracial majority and minority participants.

Some of the quantitative studies found that multiracial individuals were showing lower self-esteem than their monoracial peers. For instance, Milan and Keiley (2000) found that on a five-item measure of self-worth administered to 3,521 monoracial majority (White), 272 multiracial, and 1,941 monoracial minority adolescents in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the multiracial adolescents reported significantly lower levels of self-worth compared with both monoracial minority ($d = -0.14$) and monoracial majority adolescents ($d = -0.10$). Field (1996) also found that monoracial majority adolescents reported higher self-esteem on the Self-Perception Scale for Adolescents than multiracial adolescents ($d = \text{NC}$).

Other studies found that multiracial individuals were showing higher levels of self-esteem than their monoracial counterparts. For instance, Sanchez and Shih (2004) found that in a survey of 62 multiracial, 42 monoracial majority (White), and 57 monoracial minority individuals, the multiracial individuals reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem than monoracial White individuals ($d = 0.25$) and marginally significantly higher levels of self-esteem than monoracial minority individuals ($d = 0.22$). Stephan and Stephan (1989) surveyed two samples, one in Hawaii and one in New Mexico, on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. In Hawaii, Stephan and Stephan asked 100 Asian monoracial, 57 Asian/White multiracial, and 34 monoracial White college students to fill out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. They found that multiracial participants reported higher self-esteem than monoracial Asian participants ($d = \text{NC}$), but lower self-esteem than monoracial White participants ($d = \text{NC}$). However, neither of these comparisons was found to be statistically significant. In New

Mexico, they asked 54 monoracial Latino, 123 Latino/White, and 129 monoracial White participants to fill out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. In this sample, they found that multiracial participants reported higher self-esteem than both monoracial Latino ($d = \text{NC}$) and monoracial White ($d = \text{NC}$) participants. Once again, these comparisons were not found to be statistically significant. Cauce et al. (1992) found that multiracial participants reported higher scores on the Self-Perception Scale for Adolescents than monoracial minority participants ($d = \text{NC}$), although these differences were not significant.

Still other studies, simply reported that they found no differences when comparing multiracial participants to their monoracial majority or minority counterparts, without indicating the direction of their findings. For instance, both Herman (2004) and Bracey et al. (2004) reported that there were no significant differences in the scores on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale when they compared multiracials with their monoracial majority (White) counterparts ($d = \text{NC}$). Bracey et al. found that multiracial participants reported significantly higher self-esteem than their monoracial Asian peers ($d = \text{NC}$) but significantly lower self-esteem than their monoracial Black peers ($d = \text{NC}$). They found no differences when multiracial participants were compared with their monoracial Latino peers ($d = \text{NC}$).

The final set of studies examined self-esteem among multiracial individuals and compared them with monoracial individuals without differentiating between monoracial majority and minority. For instance, Chang (1974) found that mixed-race children reported higher total self-concepts indicating that the children of mixed-race background had more positive perceptions of themselves than children of single-race marriages ($d = 0.34$). Chang also found that mixed-race children reported higher scores on the Behavioral subscale of the Self-Concept Scale, indicating more positive psychological adjustment compared with their monoracial peers ($d = 0.35$). Phinney and Alipuria (1996) examined a sample of 47

Table 13
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding the Self-Esteem of Multiracials Compared With Minority Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	Self-esteem	Sig
Bracey et al. (2004)						
Asians vs. multiracials	626 Asian; 3 Asian/Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Multi	Yes
Blacks vs. multiracials	331 Black; 3 Asian/Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Min	Yes
Latinos vs. multiracials	1,162 Latino; 3 Asian/Black, 6 Asian/Latino, 37 Asian/White, 14 Black/Latino, 26 Black/White, 95 Latino/White	Southwestern U.S.	13–20	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	—	No
Cauce et al. (1992)	22 minority monoracial; 11 Asian/White, 11 Black/White	Seattle, WA	11–13	Self-Perception Scale for Adolescents	Multi	No
Herman (2004)	6,743 monoracial; ^b 1,496 biracial	Southern California	15.5 ^c	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	—	No
Milan & Keiley (2000)	1,941 minority monoracial, 272 multiracial	U.S.	7th–12th	Add Health Self-Esteem Scale	Min	Yes
Sanchez & Shih (2004)	62 minority monoracial; 12 Asian/White, 15 Black/White, 30 Latino/White	Michigan	17–31	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Multi	Yes
Stephan & Stephan (1989)						
Sample 1	100 Asian, 57 Asian/White	Hawaii	College	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Multi	No
Sample 2	54 Latino, 123 Latino/White	New Mexico	College	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	Multi	No

Note. Dashes indicate that the information was not mentioned in the article. Sig = significant difference; U.S. = United States; Multi = multiracials showed higher means; Min = minority monoracials showed higher means; WA = Washington.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership. ^b Author did not report the breakdown of participants by monoracial racial group although analyses were conducted across several single monoracial group memberships. ^c Mean age.

racially mixed university students and compared them with a group of 345 monoracial university students attending two large state universities in Southern California. They found that there were no significant differences in self-esteem between multiracial and monoracial students ($d = NC$).

Summary and Discussion of Results for Quantitative Studies

In sum, our review of the empirical studies using quantitative methods provides us with a preliminary picture of how multiracial individuals fare relative to their monoracial majority and minority

Table 14
Results for Quantitative Studies Regarding the Self-Esteem of Multiracials Compared With Monoracials

Study	<i>n</i> ^a	Location	Age/grade	Measure	Self-esteem	Sig
Chang (1974)	98 monoracial, 251 multiracial	Kansas	5th–6th	Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale	Multi	Yes
Phinney & Alipuria (1996)						
College sample	345 monoracial, 47 multiracial	Southern California	17–24	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	—	No
High school sample	27 Asian, 232 Black, 372 Latino, 65 White; 194 multiracial	Southern California	14–19	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	—	No

Note. Dashes indicate that the information was not mentioned in the article. Sig = significant difference; Multi = multiracials showed higher means.

^a Number of participants by racial group membership.

peers. We found no clear and strong pattern emerging from the available quantitative data. Many times the direction of an outcome seemed to depend on the outcome being considered, the comparisons being made, and the measures being used to assess a particular outcome. For instance, for the outcome of problem behaviors, we found that the type of behavior being measured (i.e., adolescent sexual activity, marijuana use, delinquency) made a great difference in the pattern of results. Unfortunately, there are not enough studies for each type of comparison and measure to examine these effects separately or systematically. However, one possible preliminary trend that seems to be emerging is that multiracial individuals may be faring worse when compared with monoracial majority (White) individuals but not when compared with monoracial minority individuals on some outcomes (e.g., depression, school performance). However, this is not a strong pattern, and a great deal more research would need to be conducted to establish this trend.

Conclusion and General Discussion

This article provides the first comprehensive review of both the theoretical and empirical work on the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals. In undertaking this project, we discovered that the field of multiracial identity development and psychological adjustment is still very much in the beginning stages of its development, but it is also growing quickly. To build this body of work, we collected and summarized articles in the fields of psychology, sociology, philosophy, history, political science, psychiatry, public health, cultural and ethnic studies, and social work. As a result, we were able to provide an overview of the field exploring what is known, what is not known, and what needs to be known about how multiracial individuals are faring in our society and the factors that influence their psychological well-being.

Summary of Findings

Our review of the available multiracial literature reveals that although scholars have proposed a number of theories to explain multiracial identity development and its consequences (e.g., Gordon, 1964; Park, 1928, 1931; Root, 1996; Stonequist, 1937; Wardle, 1987, 1999), researchers have conducted few empirical studies to test these theories. In reviewing the empirical literature, we addressed two issues proposed by the theories of multiracial identity development: (a) that multiracial individuals suffer in the process of forming a racial identity and (b) that this suffering results in poor psychological adjustment. Although the number of empirical studies available was too small to address these issues conclusively, we were able to identify some preliminary trends to provide insights into avenues of further investigation.

First, we found supportive evidence for the prediction that multiracial individuals suffer in their racial identity development process only when we analyzed qualitative studies that sampled from clinical populations. Many of these clinical sample studies found participants reporting difficult racial identity-related experiences such as being rejected by others or being confused about belonging. However, among studies that sampled from nonclinical populations, we found little evidence that multiracial individuals in the general population were dissatisfied, unhappy, or uncomfort-

able with their racial identity, suggesting that multiracials in the general population do not devalue their multiracial identity.

Second, we found that support for the prediction that multiracial individuals suffer from negative psychological adjustment emerged only under specific conditions. Specifically, whether or not a study found positive or negative trends for the psychological adjustment of multiracials depended on factors such as the type of sample being investigated (i.e., clinical or nonclinical), the outcome being considered, and the specific monoracial population to which the multiracial population was being compared. For instance, when compared with monoracial majority peers (i.e., Whites), multiracial individuals appeared to fare worse on many outcomes, such as depression and behavioral problems. However, when compared with their monoracial minority peers, how well the multiracial individuals fared depended on the outcome examined. For example, multiracials tended to have better school performances but lower racial regard than minority monoracials. Thus, it seems that there might not be a simple answer to the question of whether multiracial individuals suffer from negative psychological adjustment to a greater extent than their monoracial peers.

Theoretical Implications

The trends identified in the empirical work, although preliminary, may have some important implications for the theories of multiracial identity. First, our review of the empirical work suggests that the story underlying the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals may be more complex than these theories have previously appreciated. Many theories of multiracial identity development tend to examine the impact of a multiracial background on psychological outcomes in isolation, overlooking other factors that might interact with, mediate, or moderate the effects of having a multiracial background. Different characteristics of the studies such as the time period in which the study was run, or the type of population sampled, seem to be related to the direction of the findings and also seem to be playing a role in the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals. Thus, to fully understand the impact a multiracial background can have on psychological outcomes, many different factors need to be considered.

There is evidence from our review that other factors may impact outcomes that traditionally have been attributed to coming from a multiracial background. For instance, multiracial individuals may report higher levels of depression when compared with monoracial majority (White) individuals but not when compared with monoracial minority individuals. This pattern seems to suggest that minority status, more generally, may play a role in generating depression among multiracial individuals, in addition to (or perhaps, even instead of) coming from a multiracial background more specifically. This implies that if other factors are considered, such as minority status, the degree of impact that having a multiracial background has on psychological adjustment may be smaller than previously thought.

Second, scholars could also focus attention on understanding interaction effects between other factors, such as experiences with discrimination and the general racial climate and coming from a multiracial background. It is possible that individuals with a multiracial background may interpret or understand the same social experiences in a much different way from individuals with a monoracial background. For instance, multiracial individuals may

come to understand experiences of discrimination in a different way from monoracial individuals. Multiracial individuals who possess both majority and minority component identities may come to understand the perspectives of both the groups that historically have been oppressed and the groups that historically have been privileged. Monoracial minorities, on the other hand, may have experiences from only one of these perspectives.

Finally, the results of our review suggest a complementary approach scholars might take in their efforts to understand multiracial experiences. Specifically, in addition to finding evidence of hardships, challenges, and poor adjustment, our review also finds evidence of happiness and achievement among multiracial individuals. Traditional theories of multiracial identity have successfully identified the processes that put multiracial individuals at risk for poor adjustment. We have provided an overview of these many challenges. To complement this focus and to provide a more complete picture of the multiracial experience, theories of multiracial identity can also begin to identify the processes that may buffer multiracial individuals from such challenges, thus helping to account for these positive outcomes. For example, theories of multiracial identity can focus on identifying resources that multiracial individuals may have, such as family or friends, to help them handle hardships. Focusing on benefits and strengths can provide insights into the processes underlying resilience in multiracial individuals.

Future Directions for Research in Multiracial Identity

More empirical work is needed to test the theories proposed about the experiences of multiracial individuals and the consequences of coming from a multiracial background. The results of our review provide suggestions for a number of promising avenues for future research on multiracial identity.

Multiracial Versus Minority Effects

As we suggested in the previous section, future studies could disentangle the effects of being a minority with the effects of being multiracial on psychological adjustment outcomes. One way to address this issue might be to conduct studies with both a monoracial minority and a monoracial majority comparison group. If both multiracial and monoracial minority individuals show the same pattern of results, and this pattern is different from monoracial majority individuals, it is possible that the effects being observed may be due to the experiences of being a minority, rather than being multiracial specifically. Also, studies could examine individuals whose component identities are all from racial minority groups (e.g., Asian/Black) and compare them with individuals whose component identity combine majority and minority groups (e.g., White/Asian). This strategy could disentangle the effects of being from a particular racial group as opposed to the more general minority experience.

Moderators and Mediators

Scholars have suggested a number of factors that may impact the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals, such as their physical appearance (e.g., Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002a), the openness of their family and community to interracial relation-

ships, their component identities (Sebring, 1985; Teicher, 1968), the racial composition of their community (Pinderhughes, 1995), or their gender (Cooney & Radina, 2000). Unfortunately, there are not enough studies available to systematically examine the effects of these factors on psychological adjustment. However, evidence from our review does hint at possible promising avenues to pursue in this regard. For instance, for the outcome of school performance, D. R. Harris and Thomas (2002) found significant differences in the pattern of results among the different racial groups. Asian/White multiracial adolescents were found to do less well in school than their monoracial Asian peers; but Native American/White multiracial adolescents were found to do better than their monoracial Native American peers. These results suggest that component racial background plays a role in affecting school performance and that this could be an important topic for future studies to investigate.

Exploring New Methods to Answer a Wider Array of Questions

Methodologies used have been mainly surveys, questionnaires, case studies, and interviews. All of the studies used a cross-sectional design. We found neither experimental studies nor longitudinal studies in our literature search. However, future research using multiple methodologies (e.g., both experimental and longitudinal studies) can provide researchers with new tools and possibly new insights into the psychological experiences of multiracial individuals.

For instance, experimental studies can help researchers understand issues such as the susceptibility of multiracial individuals to racial stereotypes. It is possible that multiracial individuals may have a different understanding of race. Thus, experimental manipulations surrounding race, such as subliminal exposure to racial primes, may elicit different reactions from multiracial individuals compared with monoracial individuals. These types of studies could provide a window into psychological processes through which it might not be possible to observe or collect information through explicit self-report measures.

Longitudinal studies can also provide a more comprehensive picture of the multiracial experience. Longitudinal studies can track the progress and development of multiracial individuals over time. The majority of the empirical studies we found sampled adolescent populations. Although studies of adolescents provide a picture of the experiences multiracial individuals have as they develop into adults, they do not provide information about the type of adults they become. Thus, we have little information about how these psychological adjustment outcomes impact multiracial adults. A number of possibilities exist. For example, though multiracial individuals may experience a difficult adolescence (even more than monoracial majority peers), they eventually could overcome these difficulties and become well-adjusted adults. Alternatively, it is possible that multiracial individuals who experience a difficult adolescence are permanently affected and do not become well-adjusted adults. Longitudinal studies that follow individuals over different periods of their lifetime and gather data in multiple waves through these life stages can address these issues.

In sum, we find that multiracial identity research is very much a new and developing field. To understand multiracial identity and its effects on psychological adjustment, scholars have had to

grapple with the social attitudes, the political developments, the philosophical understanding, and the historical context surrounding race and race relations. All of these factors directly impact the experiences of multiracial individuals, influencing the relationships multiracial people have with others as well as with themselves. Considering the complexity of the issues surrounding race and multiracial identity, it is no wonder that scholars have not been able to come to a clear understanding of multiracial identity and its impact on psychological adjustment. However, there is growing interest in multiracial identity, and researchers in diverse fields such as sociology, public health, psychiatry, philosophy, psychology, and political science have begun to explore the experiences of multiracial individuals. An understanding of multiracial identity and its psychological impact is valuable and can contribute greatly to understanding the role that race plays in our social world and its impact on individual psychological experiences.

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