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"IF YOU'RE HALF BLACK, YOU'RE JUST BLACK": Reflected Appraisals and the Persistence of the One-Drop Rule

Nikki Khanna*
University of Vermont

Despite growing interest in multiracial identity, much of the research remains atheoretical and limited in its approach to measuring identity. Taking a multidimensional approach to identity and drawing on reflected appraisals (how they think others see them), I examine racial identity among black-white adults in the South and the lingering influence of the one-drop rule. Most respondents internally identify as black and when asked to explain these black identities, they describe how both blacks and whites see them as black. I argue that the one-drop rule still shapes racial identity, namely through the process of reflected appraisals.

In recent years, public discourse on issues concerning multiracial people has "increased exponentially," likely reflecting several factors (Brunsma 2005:1131)—the growth in the multiracial population since the 1970s, the government's decision to allow individuals to claim multiple races in the 2000 Census, and the increased visibility of multiracial public figures and celebrities (e.g., Tiger Woods, Mariah Carey). With heightened public discourse has come increased scholarly attention to multiracial people, especially in the last decade. Much of this emergent literature focuses on racial identity construction and examines the factors shaping racial identity among multiracial people.

Factors identified as important include racial appearance (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001; Khanna 2004), cultural exposure (Stephan 1992; Khanna 2004), family structural variables (Dalmage 2000; Harris and Sim 2002; Herman 2004; Rockquemore and Laszloffy 2005), family and peer socialization (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a,b; Rockquemore, Laszloffy, and Noveske 2006), social class (Daniel 2002; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a), regionality (Brunsma 2006), and social networks (Hall 1980; Root 1990; Saenz, Hwang, and Anderson 1995; Xie and Goyette 1997; Harris and Sim 2002; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a,b; Herman 2004). Further, studies also suggest that the one-drop rule is an important factor shaping racial identity, particularly for multiracial Americans with black ancestry. While historically used to define anyone with any "drop" of black blood as black (Davis 1991), some scholars argue that it remains important in shaping black identities even today (Waters 1990, 1991; Davis 1991; Zack 1996; Song 2003).

Moreover, this growing body of work often draws on the symbolic interactionist (SI) frame (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; see Williams 1996; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a; Tashiro 2002; Khanna 2004 as examples); racial identity is described as

*Direct all correspondence to Nikki Khanna, Department of Sociology, The University of Vermont, 31 South Prospect Street, Burlington, VT 05405; e-mail: nkhanna@uvm.edu

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a process in which identity is negotiated between the individual and larger society. An important thread within SI research is the influence of *reflected appraisals* (how individuals *think* they appear to others) on shaping identities (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934; Felson 1985), yet few studies examine how reflected appraisals shape racial identity among multiracial people. One exception is a survey study by Khanna (2004), who finds reflected appraisals to be important in shaping racial identity among Asian-white adults, yet few other multiracial studies examine this process. Hence, it is unclear if and how reflected appraisals influence racial identity among other multiracial groups.

To address this gap in the literature, I draw on interview data with 40 black-white biracial adults[1] currently living in the South and examine how reflected appraisals shape their racial identities. Because I am looking at racial identity among people with black ancestry, I also look at how the one-drop rule influences the reflected appraisal process (and hence identity). Few studies seriously engage reflected appraisals as a determinant of racial identity, and none examine the way in which the one-drop rule affects reflected appraisals. Additionally, I interview black-white biracial people who are currently living in the South for two reasons. First, the one-drop rule is historically rooted in Southern slavery and the Jim Crow segregation in the South, and recent empirical research suggests that the one-drop rule continues to shape black identities in the South (Harris and Sim 2002; Brunsma 2005, 2006). Second, little attention has been given to this region in previous studies. While quantitative studies suggest that the one-drop rule still impacts identity in the South, little qualitative work examines black-white identity within this context (see Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a for an exception).

To investigate the impact of reflected appraisals on racial identity and the influence of the one-drop rule on reflected appraisals, I take a multidimensional approach to racial identity. Building on the growing body of work that suggests that racial identity is multidimensional (Harris and Sim 2002; Tashiro 2002; Brunsma 2006), I conceptualize identity as *both* the racial labels individuals use to present themselves to others (e.g., black, biracial, multiracial, white) as well as how individuals internally identify themselves. In short, I look at racial identity in two ways: (1) as a "public" identity (the ways in which people label themselves to others) and (2) as an "internalized" identity (the race or races with which individuals most strongly identify). By conceiving of identity in these two ways, I am able to examine the influence of the one-drop rule on various dimensions of racial identity.

To examine these issues, I first contextualize the study with a brief historical overview of black-white multiracial people in America followed by a review of studies that suggest that the one-drop rule continues to shape black identities, especially in the South. Second, I offer theoretical background on reflected appraisals as it pertains to multiracial people, and suggest ways in which the one-drop rule may influence reflected appraisals (and hence racial identity). Third, I describe the research methodology and sample characteristics. Fourth, I describe the main findings of the study relevant to reflected appraisals, the one-drop rule, and racial identity. Finally, I conclude with a discussion that frames these key findings within the larger literatures of both race and symbolic interactionism.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE ONE-DROP RULE

Early records show that the first significant mixing between blacks and whites in America occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries in Virginia and Maryland between the first African slaves and the European indentured servants who worked beside them (Williamson 1980). Fearful that these interracial relationships would "taint" the purity of the white race, both states passed statutes in the 1660s to discourage and/or prohibit interracial marriage; soon, similar statutes were implemented in all colonies. Despite stringent antimiscegenation laws, these relationships persisted—sometimes through consent and other times through force under the Southern patriarchal system of slavery. White slave owners often raped their black female slaves, who were perceived as acceptable sexual outlets. Thus, many multiracial children (i.e., "mulattoes") of this era were born within the context of brute force and rape (Daniel 1996).

With the reality of miscegenation, mulatto children posed problems to the strict color line separating black and white. Where did they belong? Free or enslaved? To deal with the growing number of multiracial children, an informal one-drop rule was born in the South—anyone with any known trace of black blood was considered black. Thus, mulatto children of enslaved mothers were classified as black and remained slaves, which provided an economic asset to white slave owners. Because slavery was built upon the assumption that whites were a superior race and could not be enslaved, the one-drop rule also became increasingly important to justify the enslavement of a growing number of slaves with white skin and appearance (Zack 1993).

With the demise of slavery in 1865, the one-drop rule continued to persist. White Southerners interested in maintaining the strict color line separating black and white began to implement a system of legally sanctioned racial separation in the form of the Jim Crow segregation. To ensure complete racial separation, Jim Crow laws also prohibited interracial marriage between blacks and whites; these laws further necessitated legal definitions defining who was white and who was black. Growing fears that any amount of black blood might "taint" white blood prompted state legislators to carefully define who was black. It was during this time in American history that the once informal one-drop rule was codified into law (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a). In 1900, Booker T. Washington commented on the one-drop rule: "It is fact that, if a person is known to have one percent of African blood in his veins, he ceases to be a white man. The ninety-nine percent of Caucasian blood does not weigh by the side of the one percent of African blood. . . . The person is Negro every time" (Zack 1993:83). Under the weight of the Jim Crow segregation and the one-drop rule, black-white Americans were labeled as black. Daniel (1992) argues that most black-white individuals identified themselves as black, but some individuals, some of those who outwardly appeared white, resisted black classification by "passing" as white to enjoy the privileges available to whites and to avoid discrimination under Jim Crow (91). This option, however, was unavailable to the majority of black-white individuals who could not "pass" as white; they identified and were identified by others as black.

The growing Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, which promoted equality in American society and the reversal of the Jim Crow subjugation, stirred a new sense of pride in black Americans. Blackness, once denigrated under Southern slavery and Jim Crow, was now elevated to a new level; the message of the time: "Black is in." While larger society had labeled Americans with any black ancestry as black for generations, multiracial black-white Americans began to embrace more strongly their black identities with a new sense of pride. Further, to counter subjugation wrought by the one-drop rule, black Americans began to embrace this powerful rule as a way of resisting white racism. To do this, they began to invoke the rule as a tool of inclusivity to promote unity and numerical strength among the black community (Williamson 1980; Spencer 1997; Pearlmann and Waters 2002).

Additionally, as the Civil Rights Movement continued, antimiscegenation laws soon met their demise. In a 1967 Supreme Court case, *Loving v. Virginia*, the court ruled antimiscegenation laws unconstitutional, and the ruling overturned antimiscegenation laws in 16 states. A repeal of these laws led to a subsequent rise in interracial marriage and a phenomenon described today as the "biracial baby boom" of the 1970s (Root 1992:3). America witnessed a rise in the numbers of biracial and multiracial births, including those with black-white ancestry.[2] As these individuals have reached adulthood, new questions emerge. How do they perceive themselves racially? How do they identify, and why? How do others see them? More importantly, are black-white Americans limited by the one-drop rule today to identify exclusively as black?

Recent studies suggest that while the one-drop rule once constrained one's racial options to black, more options are available to black-white people today (Korgen 1998; Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001; Roth 2005). Korgen (1998) finds that black-white biracial Americans have more choice in identity today and a greater range of racial options than in previous decades. In particular, she finds that those born before the Civil Rights Era are likely to identify exclusively as black, while those born in the post-Civil Rights Era identify as black, biracial, and sometimes white. She further finds that factors other than the one-drop rule, such as physical appearance, are becoming increasingly important in shaping racial identity among black-white biracial people. Similarly, Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001), in a study of black-white biracial college students in the Detroit area, find that the majority of respondents identified themselves as biracial or multiracial (61 percent), while only 13 percent of respondents identified themselves exclusively as black. Based on these findings, they conclude that "the one drop rule has lost the power to determine racial identity . . . " for black-white Americans (101). Taken together, both studies clearly suggest that the one-drop rule does not constrain racial options as it once did.

While these studies illustrate the widening range of racial options within the multiracial population (i.e., black, biracial, multiracial, and sometimes white), research simultaneously shows that the one-drop rule remains salient in shaping racial identity. Campbell (2007) argues that that the one-drop rule is a "powerful force in the United States even today" (922), and other scholars similarly claim that the one-drop rule remains important in influencing the racial identities of those with black ancestry

(Waters 1990, 1991; Davis 1991; Zack 1996; Song 2003). Mary Waters argues that "Black Americans . . . are highly constrained to identify as black, without other options available to them, even when they believe or know that their forbearers included many non-blacks" (1990:18). In a 1991 study, Waters found that half of her subjects knew their personal ancestries were not purely black, but all racially identified as black. She also found that the majority of her black sample believed that multiracial black-white children should identify as black, which further points to the continued influence of the one-drop rule (Waters 1991).

Several other quantitative studies parallel Waters's (1990, 1991) claims. Qian (2004) looked at how intermarried couples (black-white, Asian-white, Latino-white, and Native American-white) racially identified their biracial children in the 1990 U.S. Census and found that black-white children were more likely than any other group to be identified solely as nonwhite (59 percent were identified as black). While children were not selecting their identity themselves, Qian (2004) draws on the one-drop rule to explain the trend toward identifying as black and argues that "African American communities generally include descendents of every racial group, regardless of their physical appearance. Individuals with mixed racial backgrounds are often labeled black" (764).

Other quantitative studies also point to the continued influence of the one-drop rule, *especially in the South*. This may not be surprising considering that the one-drop rule is rooted in Southern slavery and the Jim Crow segregation. Harris and Sim's (2002) study of multiracial adolescents points to a considerable variation in identity choices as adolescents racially identified themselves in diverse and multiple ways depending upon the context of their interview. While this suggests some measure of fluidity and choice in identity for multiracial adolescents, Harris and Sim (2002) find that black-white youth show the most consistency in identification as compared with other multiracial adolescents. They were more likely than any other multiracial group to identify with their nonwhite race; 75 percent of black-white multiracial adolescents in the sample identified as black. To explain this trend, they point to "the enduring power of the one-drop rule" (Harris and Sim 2002:621). Further, they find that black-white adolescents living in the South were significantly less likely to identify as white as compared with black-white adolescents living in other regions of the country, which, according to Harris and Sim (2002), may be further evidence of the lingering one-drop rule in the South.

Similarly, Brunsma (2005, 2006) finds evidence of the one-drop rule in the South in two empirical studies of black-white biracial Americans. Findings from survey data on kindergarten-aged children show that parents in the South are more likely than parents in other regions of the country to identify their children exclusively as black (Brunsma 2005). This trend persists even after controlling for differences in socioeconomic status, and according to Brunsma (2005), "This non-effect of socioeconomic status shows a strong continuing salience of norms of hypodescent among partially black offspring" (1148). In addition, biracial college students in the South are least likely to identify as white and most likely to identify as black as compared with students in the Midwest and East (Brunsma 2006). The uniqueness of the Southern sample is,

according to Brunsma (2006), "somewhat expected" given the "impact of the one-drop rule in the South" (568).

While recent survey studies argue for the continued influence of the one-drop rule (Harris and Sim 2002; Qian 2004; Brunsma 2005, 2006), they provide little direct evidence that it is the one-drop rule and not some other factor that best explains the trend toward identifying as black. These survey studies provide a broad view by revealing the trends in how people identify (i.e., trend toward identifying as black), but these numbers offer little in the way of explanation. In-depth qualitative work is needed to further an understanding of *how* these processes play out in day-to-day social interactions and is also necessary to further an understanding of *why* people identify themselves the way they do (as black, white, or biracial). Is it the one-drop rule, physical appearance, or some other factor that most clearly explains the trend toward identifying as black in the South? Further problematic is that some of these studies look at how parents identify their biracial children but not at how biracial individuals identify themselves (see Qian 2004; Brunsma 2005). This may provide a distorted picture given that parents may rely on the one-drop rule, while their children may not. Keeping in mind the influence of the one-drop rule on identity, I now turn to a discussion of the relationship between reflected appraisals and racial identity.

REFLECTED APPRAISALS AND RACIAL IDENTITY

A central concept within the SI perspective is the "looking-glass self" or reflected appraisals (Cooley 1902). According to Cooley (1902), self-concepts are formed as reflections of the responses and evaluations of others in the environment. In the process of the "looking-glass" self, individuals first imagine how they appear to others. Second, they imagine others' judgment of that appearance. Finally, they develop some sort of self-feeling or self-concept from this process. In short, individuals come to see themselves as they perceive others to see them. Their self and identity are formed, at least in part, by this reflective process.

Later theorists and researchers further substantiate Cooley's (1902) notion that the self develops out of the reflected appraisals of others (Mead 1934; Sullivan 1947; Schlenker 1980; Felson 1981, 1985). According to Felson (1981), "self-perception does not occur in a social vacuum" (79); whether based on the actual responses of others or on perceptions of those responses, other people have the potential to exert a strong influence on individuals' conceptions of themselves. Further, Felson (1981) suggests that reflected appraisals are likely to be important in instances when there are no clear criteria or objective feedback (such as grades or test scores) as a basis for self-evaluations. In the absence of clear-cut and objective criteria for judging who belongs where, biracial and multiracial individuals may rely on reflected appraisals to decide where they belong racially. In addition, Israel (1956) and Backman, Secord, and Pierce (1963) claim that others' appraisals exert more influence when the subject is in a state of uncertainty. This may pertain to multiracial individuals, who are arguably more likely to encounter more ambiguity about their race than individuals with monoracial backgrounds.

While much of the work on multiracial identity remains atheoretical, existing theoretical work relies heavily on the SI frame (see Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a). Some of this work suggests that reflected appraisals may play an important role in racial identity formation. Khanna (2004), as described earlier, finds that reflected appraisals are important in shaping the identities of Asian-white adults. How they believe they are perceived by *others* (whether as Asian, white, or some other race) influences their racial identities; more specifically, their perception of how others view their phenotype (i.e., racial appearance) most strongly influences their racial identities.

In this article, I extend research on reflected appraisals and racial identity by looking at black-white biracial individuals, a group historically defined as black based on the one-drop rule. While phenotype is particularly important in the reflected appraisal process for Asian-white adults, phenotype may be less important for black-white adults. Historically, physical appearance had little consequence for identity because one drop of black blood defined one as black regardless of physical appearance (e.g., having "white" normative characteristics such as light skin and straight hair did not translate to a white classification). Whether the one-drop rule trumps physical appearance today remains to be seen.

Alternatively, instead of trumping physical appearance, the one-drop rule may influence how black-white biracials' physical appearances are perceived by others. The legacy of the one-drop rule has shaped how Americans (black, white, and other Americans) perceive normative "black" phenotypes, likely influencing the reflected appraisal process even today. According to Russell, Wilson, and Hall (1992), black Americans show a "kaleidoscope of skin tones" (9); this is due both to the long history of interracial mixing between blacks and whites and the broad definition of "blackness" as defined by the one-drop rule. Put simply, the one-drop rule defined all multiracial individuals with any amount of black ancestry as black. Because individuals with black and white ancestry were classified as black, the normative phenotypic image of a "black" person became broad; black phenotypes vary widely in skin tone (i.e., from very dark skin to very light skin) and physical characteristics. Individuals possessing characteristics deemed "white" (e.g., fair skin, blue eyes, and/or straight hair) may indeed have white ancestry but nevertheless were classified as black in American society because of their black ancestry. Even today, having some "white" phenotypic characteristics does not necessarily conflict with Americans' image of blackness (see Vanessa Williams and Lena Horne as examples of individuals who are "black" with some degree of white ancestry and "white" features).

This broad image of blackness, which has been shaped by generations of the one-drop rule, may also influence how others view *biracial* black-white Americans even today. Regardless of any "white" physical characteristics, others may nevertheless perceive biracial individuals simply as black because like other black Americans, possessing normative "white" physical characteristics does not conflict with their perceptions of what a "black" person looks like. As a consequence, appraisals of their phenotypes (both real and reflected) may be influenced by the historical legacy of the one-drop rule, consequently shaping black identities even today.

DATA AND METHODS

This article is part of a larger study examining racial identity formation and negotiation among black-white biracial adults. For a period of 20 months in 2005 and 2006, I conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with 40 black-white biracial adults living in a large urban area in the South. In-depth interviewing allowed respondents to describe in rich detail how they think about their identities and how they think others have influenced how they see themselves. I asked open-ended questions on a range of topics such as their racial identities, how others have influenced their identities, family socialization, critical moments that shaped their identities, and challenges to their chosen identities by others. All interviews were audiotaped.

To participate in the study, respondents had to meet several criteria. First, respondents must have had one black parent and one white parent (as identified by respondents). Because many African Americans have some white ancestry (Clifton 1989 as cited in Root 1992), many of their black parents may be considered multiracial as well. Because race is a social construction, not a biological reality, however, I restrict the definition of who is biracial to self-definition by respondents.

Second, respondents had to fall between the ages of 18 to 45. The lower age limit was included to omit children and adolescents from the sample, who are likely to have comparatively limited experiences regarding race and are likely to be still forming their identities. The purpose of the upper age limit was to include respondents who grew up during the post-Civil Rights Era. Korgen (1998) argues that those who grew up in the pre-Civil Rights Era are more likely to identify exclusively as black as the one-drop rule constrained their choices in racial identity, while those born in the post-Civil Rights Era show more fluidity in their racial identities. Because I am looking at the influence of the one-drop rule on identity today, I chose to limit my sample to those arguably less restricted by the one-drop rule (Korgen 1998).

Third, I interviewed respondents who were currently living in a large urban area in the South. Recent studies suggest that there may be something unique about racial identity in the South—black-white Southerners are less likely to identify as white and more likely to identify as black as compared with those in other regions[3] (Harris and Sim 2002; Brunsma 2005, 2006), yet few qualitative studies examine identity among black-white individuals in this Southern context (for exception, see Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a). While I do not compare biracial experiences across regions of the United States, I frame this study as a look at racial identity in the South because the experiences of these respondents may not necessarily mirror the experiences of biracial Americans in other regions.

Because locating biracial individuals within the general population is often difficult, I relied on convenience and snowball sampling. I began recruiting respondents by placing flyers in a variety of places including local colleges, universities, and places of worship. Flyers read, "Do you have one black parent and one white parent?" to target black-white biracial individuals. I omitted terms such as "biracial" or "multiracial" from the flyers, aware that individuals who did not consider themselves biracial or multiracial

may not have answered the advertisement. I also asked interviewees to pass along my information to others with similar black-white biracial backgrounds.[4]

As an Asian-Indian/white woman, I am uniquely positioned as *both* an insider and an outsider with regard to my respondents. In particular, I share a white-minority biracial background with these respondents, but I do not share their black ancestry. To partially position myself as an insider, I explained my biracial background before each interview. Often respondents were curious about my background before I explained it, and I believe that sharing this information "broke the ice" with many of my respondents.[5] While some respondents may have perceived me as an outsider, no interviewer can completely escape this status when doing face-to-face interviews. Twine (2000) argues that while having a shared racial background may grant one an "insider status" with interviewees when doing race-related research, she says, "race is not the only relevant 'social signifier' " (9); my gender, age, sexuality, status as researcher, education, racial appearance, and perceptions of my racial identity may have positioned me as an outsider for some respondents even if I shared their same black-white biracial background. My challenge throughout this project was to be mindful of this insider/outsider relationship and of the potential effect on interviewee responses and my own subsequent analysis.

Defining and Measuring Racial Identity

Building on recent research that suggests that racial identity is multifaceted (Harris and Sim 2002; Tashiro 2002; Brunsma 2006),[6] I take a multidimensional approach to racial identity. Inspired by this body of work, I define and measure identity in two ways: (1) as a "public" identity and (2) as an "internalized" identity. In this study, a public identity refers to the way in which respondents label themselves to others, while an internalized identity refers to how one internally identifies (i.e., how they see themselves).[7] It is important to note that these identities may be contextual and fluid depending upon the situation and audience.

Regarding public identities, I look at the descriptors respondents use to describe or identify themselves to others (e.g., as biracial, multiracial, mixed, interracial, black, white). I asked respondents, "How do you identify yourself to others?" This dimension of identity, the social labels individuals use to describe themselves, mirrors how multiracial identity has often been studied in quantitative research. To move beyond a one-dimensional portrait of identity, however, I also define and measure identity as an internalized identity. Other qualitative studies have similarly looked at internal or subjectively-held racial identities (see Brown 2001; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a for examples). To assess an internalized identity, I asked two closed-ended questions: "How strongly do you identify with being black? Would you say very strongly, somewhat, very little, or not at all?" I then repeat this closed-ended question and asked how strongly they identify as white. With both questions, I give respondents the opportunity to explain their responses. I then asked a third question,[8] "Is there a racial group, whether white or black, with which you more strongly identify?"[9]

Characteristics of Respondents

My data collection efforts resulted in a sample of 40 black-white biracial individuals. The ages ranged from 18 to 45, with the average age a little over 24 years of age. More than half of the respondents, 57.5 percent, fell between the ages of 18 to 22, which is typical college age; this is not surprising considering that much of my recruitment efforts began at local colleges and university settings. Of the remaining respondents, 27.5 percent of respondents fell between the ages of 23 and 30, and 15 percent of respondents were over the age of 30. Additionally, of the 40 respondents, 22.5 percent are men and 77.5 percent are women.

Respondents with white mothers and black fathers made up the majority of the sample at 72.5 percent, while 27.5 percent of respondents had a black mother and white father. This imbalance reflects Census statistics that show that black men are more likely to marry and/or cohabitate with a white partner as compared with black women. In 2000, black men had white wives 2.65 times more often than black women had white husbands (2000 U.S. Census).[10] Additionally, while the majority of respondents were raised with both biological parents (57.5 percent), 30 percent were raised solely by one biological parent.[11] Finally, 12.5 percent of respondents were adopted.[12]

In terms of socioeconomic background, the majority of respondents have a middle- to upper middle-class background. Regarding education, for example, all of the respondents are currently enrolled in college or are college educated—67.5 percent are current college students and the remaining 32.5 percent of respondents had at least completed a bachelor's degree. In addition, 15 percent of all respondents are currently in graduate programs pursing advanced degrees (e.g., astronomy, nursing, psychology, and social work). Finally, while the majority of respondents (82.5 percent) are currently in school pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees, 20 percent of respondents hold full-time jobs and careers as teachers, researchers, nurses, social workers, and store managers.

Regarding region, all respondents were currently living in the South. The majority of respondents, 27 respondents, have spent their entire lives living in a Southern state(s). Of the remaining respondents, seven have been living in the South for at least 10 years, and six have been living in the South for less than 10 years (all have been in the South for at least two years).

Limitations

Before summarizing the findings of the study, there are several limitations to be discussed. First, this sample was limited to respondents living in the South, but this sample is not representative of all black-white biracial Southerners. Thus, while these findings provide rich data on identity construction for these individuals, these findings cannot be generalized beyond the sample.

Second, this sample lacked variation in social class; respondents were either in college or were college educated, which was not surprising considering that many were recruited from college campuses. This limitation raises questions regarding the influence of the one-drop rule on people of other social class and educational backgrounds. Some

argue that social class impacts racial identity; the higher one's social class the less likely he or she will identify with the "lower-status" racial group (Daniel 2002; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002a; Yancey 2003) and the more likely he or she will identify as multiracial or not to check any of the options given (Roth 2005). This suggests that if the one-drop rule shapes black identities among these college students and college-educated individuals, the one-drop rule may be even stronger among less educated and lower-class black-white biracial Americans.

Third, there is an inherent imbalance in the ways in which "public" and "internalized" racial identities were operationalized. "Public" identity was measured with an open-ended question, while "internalized" identity was measured with a series of closed-ended questions, which framed racial identity as more strongly identifying as black *or* white. While the interview format allowed respondents the opportunity to deviate from this bimodal format (and identify with neither or both groups equally), caution must be taken when comparing respondents' responses to questions tapping both dimensions of identities. The disjuncture between the two measures may be explained by the differential framing of the questions. The framing, especially with regard to how internalized identity was measured, poses serious constraints on measuring the continuum of possible identities available to biracial people. In particular, when respondents are asked whether they identify more strongly as black or white, a multiracial group orientation is missing. Hence, this study is limited in that it cannot examine the effect of reflected appraisals and the one-drop rule on shaping an internalized multiracial identity.

FINDINGS

I first examine how participants identify themselves with regard to race, paying particular attention to "public" and "internalized" identities. Second, I show how reflected appraisals shape the "internalized" racial identities of these black-white respondents. Individuals in this sample frequently explain their "internalized" identities by pointing to how they believe they appear to others; for instance, 11 individuals in this sample identify more strongly as black than white in part because they believe "larger society" or "others" see them as black. Finally, I take a closer look at reflected appraisals by examining how respondents' perceptions may differ depending upon the race of the observer. Respondents often draw a distinction in how they believe they are perceived racially depending upon whether the observers are white or black. More than a third of respondents argue that while other blacks are likely to recognize their multiracial background, other whites simply perceive them as black. These conflicting perceptions have the potential to shape different "racial reflections" (i.e., multiracial or black), yet I show how the one-drop rule affects the entire reflected appraisal process, subsequently shaping black identities.

Identity: "Public" and "Internalized"

An interesting pattern emerges among this sample with regard to both "public" and "internalized" racial identities (see Table 1). Regarding "public" identities or the ways in

TABLE 1. "Public" and "Internalized" Identity Responses

		Public identity	Internalized identity			Public identity	Internalized identity
1.	John	Biracial	Black	21.	Alicia	Mixed	Black
2.	Grant	Multiracial	Both	22.	Angie	Black	Black
3.	Natalie	Biracial	Both	23.	Kim	Biracial	Both
4.	Samantha	Mixed	Black	24.	Carrie	Biracial	White
5.	Nicole	Multiracial	White	25.	Lisa	Biracial	Black
6.	Denise	Black	Black	26.	Stacey	Biracial	Both
7.	Michael	Mixed/biracial	Black	27.	Jack	Biracial	White
8.	Anthony	Mixed	Black	28.	Leslie	Mixed	Black
9.	Nick	Mixed	Black	29.	Sarah	Biracial	Black
10.	Stephanie	Biracial	Black	30.	Charlotte	Biracial	White
11.	Michelle	Biracial	Black	31.	Georgia	Mixed	Black
12.	Kendra	Black	Black	32.	Allison	Mixed	White
13.	Beth	Black	Black	33.	Kristen	Biracial	Black
14.	Isabel	Multiracial	White	34.	Chris	Biracial	White
15.	Julie	Mixed	Black	35.	Sheryl	Mixed	Black
16.	Natasha	Black	Black	36.	Jackie	Biracial	Black
17.	Olivia	Multiracial	Both	37.	Lauren	Biracial	Black
18.	Caroline	Biracial/interracial	White	38.	Blake	Biracial	Black
19.	Monique	Biracial	Both	39.	Cherise	African American	Black
20.	Kate	White	White	40.	Shane	Mixed/biracial	Both

which these respondents label themselves to others, an overwhelming majority of respondents (82.5 percent) label themselves using multiracial descriptors (e.g., biracial, multiracial, mixed, interracial). In comparison, only 17.5 percent of respondents label themselves monoracially—six respondents label themselves exclusively as black/African American and one respondent labels herself as white. That these respondents are more often identifying as biracial or multiracial (or some related term) and less often identifying as black parallels recent empirical work showing similar trends (Korgen 1998; Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001).

While the majority of respondents label themselves using multiracial terms, however, there is considerably more variation among "internalized" identities.[13] Interestingly, the majority of respondents said they more strongly identified with being black (60 percent), and only 22.5 percent more strongly identified with being white. The remaining respondents, 17.5 percent, claimed to identify with both racial groups equally. I focus the remaining analysis on "internalized" identities and investigate the trend toward identifying as black.

Reflected Appraisals and "Internalized" Racial Identity

In this section, I examine how others' perceptions of one's race influences "internalized" racial identities. Many individuals, for example, more strongly identify as black because they believe that is how they are perceived by others. When asked about their racial identities, 65 percent of respondents describe their identities in relation to how they think "others" or "larger society" perceives them (without being directly prompted or probed by the interviewer).

According to Michael, who labels himself as biracial but more strongly internally identifies as black, his identity is heavily influenced by how he thinks he is perceived by "society." When asked to explain his self-described strong black identity, he says:

> I would say I identify very strongly [as black] only because I think part of how you define yourself is the category that society puts you into. And when people look at me, they're not going to see a white person, you know? And they definitely see me as a person of color. . . . So I definitely feel like I identify more with my black side because that's how I'm perceived, rather than being [white]. I'm perceived as African American. . . . I think all groups kind of throw me into the black category because those are my dominant features. . . . I think it's a visual thing . . . black features are just more dominant over all races. . . . I think the only reason I identify more with being black is because society's kind of labeled me as that.

Michael identifies as black because he perceives that others see him as black. He explains his identity as due in part to his "dominant features" and his "black features," drawing on phenotype to explain how others label him as black. According to Waters (1990, 1996), multiracial people with black ancestry are largely constrained to identify as black. She argues that certain ancestries are "essential" and become a defining aspect of a multiracial person. This is because in American society, a nonblack identity (i.e., biracial or white) will likely not be accepted if one looks black "according to the prevailing social norms" (Waters 1996:447).

Like Michael, Alicia labels herself as mixed but more strongly internally identifies as black. When explaining her internal black identity, she describes how she thinks others see her, similarly noting her "dominant" black features:

> [My black features are] kind of more dominant. I look more black than I do white. At some point, like sophomore year [or] junior year of high school, I kind of realized I was black and I guess now I more associate with being black than being white. And like, how other people see that way I look. . . . I feel like black is such a dominant race. Because it shows up so much on your skin that you kind of at some level have to associate with being black very strongly. People who just see me don't really take the time to ask me what I am. They just assume I'm black.

Alicia notes the importance of her racial appearance, but most notably, she describes her physical appearance in the context of how "other people" see her.

Angie labels herself as black than white and internally more strongly identifies as black. To explain her black identity, she also emphasizes how she believes she is perceived by others:

> Well I only identify as what people see me. So I'm black. Black foremost. I remember when I was growing up in Germany, it was obvious that I wasn't German . . . from the outside looking in and even now when I meet someone that's German, they'll bend over backwards to try to speak the most broken English that they can muster up. . . . Like me, personally, I know I'm darker. I can't pass for white. I know what I am.

Daily interactional experiences confirm to Angie how others see her—as black (not German, not white).

Similarly, Nick labels himself as mixed but also internally more strongly identifies as black than white. When asked to explain this identity, he also describes how he thinks he is perceived by others: "Well my features and qualities are more with blacks anywhere . . . you know, just from the outside looking in, people don't really see anything but a black guy." Notably, both Nick and Angie draw on the same phrase ("from the outside looking in") to explain their internalized black identities.

Cherise labels herself as African American and internally more strongly identifies as black than white. When asked why she more strongly identifies as black, she replies:

> I think it's just because when I get out into the real world and I'm looking for a job and I'm looking for an apartment and, you know what I'm saying, and the person that is looking to hire me looks at my face, they aren't going to see a white person . . . and they're not going to know if I'm biracial or if I'm just a light-skinned African American. They're just going to see a black person.

Michael, Alicia, Angie, Nick, Cherise, and others more strongly identify as black, in part because of how they believe they are perceived by others. Kate, on the other hand, internally identifies more strongly as white because she believes others see her as white. The few occasions where she has asserted a black identity, she has faced challenges by her white peers who she says see her as a "white girl." She says:

> Like whenever people would be telling racial jokes and they are doing all those little black people jokes or whatever, I would be like, "Wow, hey I am black. . . . " And they

were like, "You are not black. You are a white girl. . . . " I would think I have black in me . . . but they would say I am white . . . [How did that make you feel when they said that you're not black?] In my head I would think, yeah, I'm a white girl. . . . I mean I would think, yeah I am part black, but then again I would be like, "Yeah you are right. I am a white girl."

These findings parallel previous research, which finds reflected appraisals important in shaping racial identity (Khanna 2004). Additionally, some respondents (as described above) draw links between their phenotypes (e.g., their "black features") and their black identities, which further supports previous work suggesting that phenotype is important in shaping racial identity (Korgen 1998; Khanna 2004). While reflected appraisals appear to be linked to these internalized identities, I now turn to investigating how external perceptions of biracial phenotypes may differ depending upon the audience. Root (1990) suggests that multiracial people may be perceived differently by different people. Because how they see themselves is influenced by how they think they appear to others, the racial reflection they see in their "looking glass" may differ depending upon *who* is looking—for instance, whether the observers are white or black.

Perception of One's Race by Other Whites and Blacks

Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) find that how biracial people think others view them is moderated by social context—the black community distinguishes among shades of color, whereas whites see only black and white. Thus, how individuals see themselves may vary depending upon the racial background of the observer. In this section, I explore respondents' perceptions of how they appear to other white people and other black people. Over a third of respondents (without being directly prompted by the interviewer) describe how they believe white people perceive them exclusively as black, yet they believe that other black people often recognize their biracial/multiracial backgrounds; they argue that their light skin, straight hair, and/or white facial characteristics often indicate to other black people that they are not solely black. Interestingly, however, respondents argue that while black people may be more likely to recognize their multiracial ancestry compared with whites, blacks nonetheless draw on the one-drop rule to label them as black.

Differing Perceptions: Whites versus Blacks

In this sample, 37.5 percent of respondents draw a distinction between how they think they are perceived racially by other whites and other blacks. According to Olivia, blacks and whites perceive her differently. When asked how she thinks people, in general, characterize her racially, she says:

Some people just see me as a black woman. But there's other people who are just like "What are you?" . . . it just depends on the background of the person who's approaching me. [How so?] Blacks always know that I'm mixed with something else. They always know that. They see me as a black woman that's mixed with something else. They don't know what that something else is, but they know it's something else. [What about whites?] Whites, I think, most of the time see me as a black woman.

Like Olivia, Michael notes differences in how he believes he is perceived by other whites and other blacks. Above he described how "society" sees him as black, but later in his interview he further clarifies that statement by adding, "With black people, I think when I say I'm black, they want to know what I'm mixed with because they know I'm not solely black. You know, with white people they just keep it, 'Oh you're black' and they just leave it at that."

Alicia strongly identifies as black. When asked to explain this identity, she responds by describing how "people" assume she is black (see above). Later in her interview she qualifies this statement by adding, "Black people never assume I'm black. Black people always will ask me what I'm mixed with. Like, they always know I'm black and something. I think white people assume I'm black more often than not."

Like Olivia, Michael, and Alicia, other respondents similarly describe how they think other whites perceive them as black. Carrie, who attended predominantly white schools growing up, notes that she was always referred to as the "black girl" in school. Natasha, who grew up in a predominantly white community, describes being similarly labeled as "black," "the black girl," and "the black friend" while growing up by her white peers. Other whites, according to Natasha, primarily saw her as black even when aware of her biracial background. Likewise, even though she claims that most of her white peers were aware of her biracial background, Beth notes that "Growing up [my white peers] saw me as black Beth. Not biracial Beth. And certainly not white Beth."

While these respondents argue that other whites often perceive them as black, a handful of respondents describe how other whites often assume they are white.[14] This finding parallels Brunsma and Rockquemore's (2001) claim that whites see only black and white. Kristin, noting a distinction in how she is perceived by other whites and other blacks, remarks:

> If people want to know who I am then I'm very open and tell them I'm biracial. "Yeah, my mom's white" and they're kind of like, "Okay." I guess most black people know [that I'm biracial]. They're like, "Well that girl isn't white. . . . She's something else, but she's not white." Whereas white people always assume I'm white. . . . I guess it's because my skin's a little bit lighter, my hair's lighter, my eyes are lighter and so, yes, people just assume that [I'm white]. I guess white people usually. But then when I tell them [that I am biracial], I've had white people that are totally shocked and are like, "What? You're what?"

According to Kristen, other whites assume she is white based on her white physical characteristics. When she reveals her biracial background, whites openly express surprise and shock. They express surprise and shock likely because they could not readily detect *any* visible characteristics that would indicate black ancestry. Put another way, Kristin could easily "pass" as white. Even more interesting, Kristin describes numerous interactions with white peers and parents of those peers when her biracial background is revealed. She says not only are they shocked, but she argues that they begin to see her differently—as black (not white or biracial). She describes instances where other whites have remarked, "Oh, I didn't know you were black!" or "Really? You're black?" This is particularly interesting given her white outward appearance and the fact that only

moments before the revelation, she was seen as white. Thus, according to Kristin, she can easily "pass" as white, but once her biracial background is revealed, she is seen as black.

Three of the five respondents who claim they can "pass" as white argue that once they reveal their black ancestry, whites look at them and respond to them differently. In short, whites interact with them as a black person.[15] In these cases, we can see the explicit use of the one-drop rule, but we can also see it operating implicitly as well. Its continued legacy is apparent in that many whites assume that these biracial individuals are black; it is rare, they claim, for whites to recognize they are multiracial. As Cherise noted earlier, most people are "not going to know if I'm biracial or if I'm just a light-skinned African American. They're just going to see a black person." *Any* visible black physical characteristic (regarding skin color, hair texture, and/or facial features) compels many whites to assume these biracial individuals are black simply because it is difficult for them to distinguish between black and biracial based on phenotype.

Perception of Race by Blacks: A Closer Look

Because respondents often describe how other blacks more readily recognize their multiracial backgrounds as compared with whites, one might conclude that in contexts where observers are white, reflected appraisals will shape black identities, while in contexts where observers are black, reflected appraisals will shape multiracial (or biracial) identities. Upon closer look, however, this is not the case. While these biracial respondents believe that other black people often recognize their multiracial backgrounds, they concurrently describe how other black people nevertheless see them as black. In particular, a quarter of respondents describe how other black people invoke the one-drop rule, both explicitly and implicitly, to label them as black (without a prompt from the interviewer). Thus, while other black people may be aware of their biracial backgrounds, respondents often feel that other blacks still see them as black as if saying, "Yes, you may be biracial, but really you are black." For example, Monique describes the messages she receives from blacks regarding her race:

> I've heard comments [about my race] especially in passing. Every once in a while, a total stranger will ask me what I am. Or they say, "You must be mixed" or "There's something about you." I get that a lot from black people. [However] I've also heard the comment so many times that, "If you've got a little in you, it's all in you" from other blacks.

According to Monique, when black people make this comment, they are referring to her black ancestry—if she has a little blackness, then she is black.

Like Monique, Michelle believes that other black people perceive her as black despite her outward white physical appearance. To explain her strong internalized black identity, she describes interactions she has had with other black people and says, "It goes back to that whole, 'If you have one drop of black blood in you, then you're black. . . .' And you know, [they'd say], 'Oh, she's black' and, 'She's not mixed. She's black. She's black.' They just kind of overlooked everything." Because of the one-drop rule, Michelle perceives that other blacks see her as black despite her biracial background and white outward

appearance. Later in her interview, she adds, "You know, they always say now that you're never really a hundred percent black. If you've got some Indian in you, [other black people will] say that, but at the end of the day, you're still black."

Denise, who both strongly internally identifies and labels herself as black, describes how other black people see her as black despite knowing about her biracial background. Interestingly, she feels her identity choices are somewhat constricted by other blacks who implicitly draw on the one-drop rule. She says:

> If I'm in a group of blacks, I would definitely say I'm black. I would say black first. [If they ask] "What are you?" [I would say] "I'm black, but I'm also half white." [Why is that? Why do you say black first?] [Other black people] have said, "Why don't you just say black? If you're half black, you're just black. You're not really white. You're not a mix."

John, who outwardly appears white but internally identifies himself more strongly as black, also notes how other black people draw on the one-drop rule to label him as black. He says:

> Historically, it's kind of a one-drop rule . . . just about all black people have relatives who are mixes or partial races. Got a grandparent or something. So black people are pretty familiar with how [the one-drop rule] will work . . . when [my biracial background's] come up, [black people] tend to say, "You're black . . . ." So if anything, [black people] just say, "Yeah, you're black. . . . " They consider me black and that's it. There's no discussion. Yeah, "You're black." That's it.

Because John feels that other black people use the one-drop rule to label him as black (despite his white outward appearance), he more strongly identifies as black than white. While he may not literally see a black person when he looks in the mirror, figuratively he does; because his social interactions with black people communicate to him that other black people see him as black, he can see a black reflection in his "looking glass."

Thus, while these biracial respondents perceive that other black people are more likely than whites to recognize their multiracial backgrounds, they also believe that other black people nevertheless see them as black, often drawing on the one-drop rule. For those who believe they appear black to other black people, their reflected appraisals (how they imagine they appear to others) will likely shape a black identity in contexts where the observers are black. Even for those with racially ambiguous or white racial appearances, they too describe how other black people see them as black. Hence, respondents in this sample describe how they believe that *both* whites and blacks see them as black.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study adds to the growing body of literature on multiracial identity by illustrating the importance of reflected appraisals in shaping racial identity. Importantly, these findings also show how reflected appraisals are fundamentally shaped by the one-drop rule (for black-white Americans in particular). Few studies examine reflected appraisals as a determinant of racial identity (Khanna 2004), and I find that biracial respondents

frequently explain their black identities as due, in part, to how they believe they are viewed by "others" and by "larger society." As suggested by Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001), however, who argue that how biracial people think others view them is moderated by social context, many respondents draw distinctions between how they believe they are perceived depending upon whether the observers are white or black. Other white people, they argue, see them as black, while other black people are more likely to recognize their multiracial backgrounds. These conflicting perceptions have the potential to shape different "racial reflections" (e.g., as black or multiracial), yet I find that the one-drop rule affects the entire reflected appraisal process, subsequently shaping "internalized" black identities for the majority of respondents.

Regarding other black people, respondents often describe interactions with other black people who recognize their multiracial background but nonetheless draw on the one-drop rule to label them as black. Respondents in this sample frequently described how black peers, coworkers, friends, and even complete strangers invoke the one-drop rule to say, "Yes you may be biracial, but really you're black." Once used by whites as a tool of oppression, Davis (1991) argues that this rule serves as a positive strategy to resist white racism by unifying black Americans, and other scholars similarly claim that the black community has embraced the rule arguably as a means of promoting black unity and inclusiveness (Williamson 1980; Spencer 1997; Pearlmann and Waters 2002). Thus, even for those who appear racially mixed or even white, they find that other black people label them as black. Patterson (2007), in a recent *Time* magazine article, writes that the one-drop rule was

> . . . invented and imposed by white racists until the middle of the 20th century. As with so many other areas of ethno-racial relations, African Americans turned this racist doctrine to their own ends. What to racist whites was a stain of impurity became a badge of pride. More significantly, what for whites was a means of exclusion was transformed by blacks into a glorious principle of inclusion. . . . (P. 44)

From this set of findings, it appears that the one-drop rule trumps physical appearance (especially for those who outwardly appear white but feel that other blacks nevertheless see them as black). At first glance, this suggests that phenotype may have little consequence for racial identity for black-white biracial Americans, contradicting previous work linking phenotype and identity in other multiracial groups (Stephan 1992; Khanna 2004). Comments from other biracial respondents, however, who point out their "black features" to help explain their black identities, indicate otherwise. Clearly, phenotype does have some relationship with identity, although it is a highly complex one. This complex relationship is evident in how respondents believe they are perceived by whites.

Regarding other whites, the majority of respondents describe how they believe other white people see them exclusively as black. Some respondents who can easily "pass" as white claim that any revelation of their black ancestry leads to black (not biracial or multiracial) classification by other whites. This finding again suggests that there may be some trumping of ancestry over phenotype, at least among these respondents. I argue, however, that phenotype also shapes racial identity; this is evident in the majority of

respondents who do not outwardly appear white but rather appear black, multiracial, and even racially ambiguous. These respondents describe how other white people see them as black and often any visible "black" characteristic (regarding skin tone, hair, facial features) lends to the assumption that they are black, not biracial. Even if these biracial respondents have fair skin, blue eyes, and/or straight hair (i.e., phenotypic characteristics considered normative for whites), *any* noticeable black physical characteristic(s) continue to take precedent and often lends to a black classification by other whites.

This finding parallels Waters's (1990, 1996) argument (as described earlier) that certain ancestries are "essential" and become a defining aspect of a multiracial person. In American society, she further argues, a nonblack identity (i.e., biracial or white) will likely not be accepted if one looks black "according to the prevailing social norms" (Waters 1996:447). What shapes "prevailing social norms" regarding black phenotypes? Put simply—years of the one-drop rule. Generations of interracial mixing between blacks and whites and the broad definition of "blackness" as defined by the one-drop rule have created a broad phenotypic image of blackness (Russell et al. 1992); possessing normative white physical characteristics (e.g., light skin, blue eyes, and/or straight hair) does not necessarily conflict with Americans' images of blackness.

Thus, while previous studies show a link between phenotype and racial identity for other multiracial Americans (Khanna 2004), I find that for black-white Americans, the link is not as clear cut and straightforward; rather, the link is complex and arguably asymmetric. In short, "white" phenotypic characteristics may not preclude a black identity (as other black people invoke the one-drop rule as an inclusive tool and/or because "white" characteristics do not necessarily conflict with Americans' image of blackness), yet it appears that having any "black" phenotypic characteristics automatically rules out a white identity (because of the one-drop rule, having any "black" characteristics conflicts with our image of whiteness even today). Thus, the relationship between phenotype and racial identity is still influenced by the *legacy* of the one-drop rule. This one-drop legacy influences how phenotypes are perceived even today, which in turn affects reflected appraisals (how biracial respondents think others see them racially) and hence racial identity (see Figure 1).

Finally, while this study shows that the one-drop rule continues to shape "internalized" black identities (via reflected appraisals), these findings also show a simultaneous rejection of the rule with regard to "public" identities. Only six respondents identify

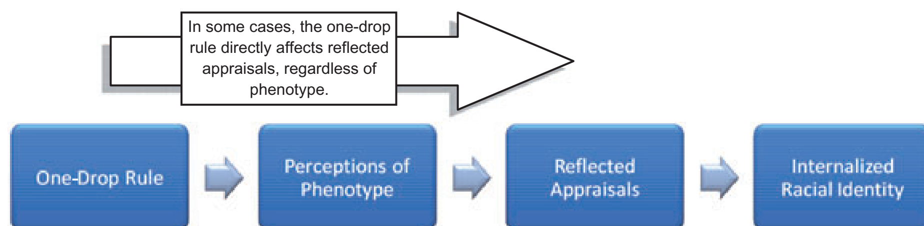

FIGURE 1. The Relationship between the One-Drop Rule, Phenotype, and Racial Identity.

exclusively as black or African American, while the majority of respondents "publicly" identify as biracial or multiracial. The widening range of racial options available to these biracial respondents undoubtedly point to the declining power of the one-drop rule, which parallels the findings of recent studies (Korgen 1998; Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001); however, I find that the one-drop rule continues to operate via societal ascriptions that nonetheless tell them that they are black. Harris and Sim (2002), in explaining why black-white adolescents in their sample identified as multiracial but often identified as black when asked to choose their single best race (black or white), similarly argue that "Given the enduring power of the one-drop rule, we suspect that many white/black adolescents are socialized to understand that *even if they identify as multiracial, they are 'really' black*" (621; emphasis added). These findings further support their claim—black-white biracial people may "publicly" identify as biracial or multiracial yet societal ascriptions, via reflected appraisals and the one-drop rule, continue to tell them that they are black, hence shaping "internalized" black identities.

Based on these findings, there are at least three areas for future research. First, this sample was limited to respondents living in the South but was not representative of all Southerners. Future work should aim for a more representative Southern sample. Qualitative work, as used here, was valuable in providing rich data regarding respondents' own perspectives on how and why they identify the way they do, but quantitative data with representative samples will allow for generalizability to the entire region. Further, future work should comparatively examine black-white biracial Americans in various regions to see if the one-drop rule operates differently (if at all) outside the South.

Second, future work should examine the disjuncture between "public" and "internalized" identities. While previous work suggests that identity is multidimensional, less is known about how these dimensions relate to each other. For instance, why do people label themselves as biracial when they more strongly (and often very strongly) identify as black? Relatedly, this study examined the influence of the one-drop rule on various dimensions of racial identity; the one-drop rule influences "internalized" identities yet has little influence on "public" identities. Future work should look at why people outwardly label themselves as biracial in contexts in which others ascribe them a black identity (e.g., the South).

Finally, while the majority of respondents in this sample internally identified as black, remaining respondents internally identified white or identified with both racial groups. This raises an important question—How does their experience differ from those who identify more strongly as black? I find that these respondents describe the *same patterns* as respondents who identify more strongly as black regarding how they believe they are perceived by others; they too describe how they think other blacks and whites see them as *black*. However, these respondents appear to resist these appraisals, and this suggests that other factors may affect or even buffer the influence of reflected appraisals on racial identity. Clearly multiple factors are shaping racial identities, and more work is needed to better understand the development of nonblack identities. Additionally, future work should explore how biracial people actively negotiate identities that are structured by the one-drop rule. Put simply, how do they negotiate nonblack identities

(white or biracial) in the face of appraisals that tell them they are black? Yeung and Martin (2003) argue that others' perceptions do not always influence an individual's identity; instead, some individuals may work to "bring others around to their self-conceptions" (843). For those who internally identify as white, for instance, they may resist appraisals that tell them they are black and instead work to change how others see them.

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NOTES

[1]The term *biracial* refers here to "a person whose parents are of two different socially designated groups, for example, black mother, white father" (Root 1996:ix). In comparison, the term *multiracial* is conceptually broader and refers "to people who are of two *or more* racial heritages" (Root 1996:xi). Multiracial individuals may have parents who are of two different racial groups (thus this term includes biracial people) or parents who are biracial or multiracial themselves (e.g., white mother, biracial father). Throughout the article, I refer to respondents in this sample as *biracial* because they have one black parent and one white parent (as identified by respondents), but I use the term *multiracial* when discussing black-white people more generally (or people with other mixed-racial backgrounds).

[2]Because the 2000 Census was the first Census to officially count the "multiracial" population, it is difficult if not impossible to document actual numbers to show how this population has changed over time. Scholars working within the area of multiracial studies, however, generally agree that the *Loving* decision led to a rise in interracial relationships and multiracial children (see Root 1992, 1996). For exception, see Spencer (2006).

[3]One exception may be Louisiana, which has historically deviated from the rest of the South regarding the one-drop rule and black classification. Daniel (1992) notes that Louisiana Creoles have historically resisted binary classification as black or white in favor of a ternary system that recognizes the intermediate status of multiracial people.

[4]Thirty-six respondents were recruited from flyers and only four respondents were recruited via other respondents.

[5]Sharing information about my biracial background often sparked conversation and gave respondents an opportunity to ask me questions. I believe this opened up the conversation, and I found that respondents seemed to be more enthusiastic about answering my questions once I had divulged some information about myself.

[6]Brunsma (2006) distinguishes between two dimensions of "identity"—(private racial identity) and "identification" (public categorization, such as on Census forms); Harris and Sim (2002) distinguish between three dimensions of identity—"internal racial identity" (what an individual believes about his or her own race), "external racial identities" (observers' beliefs about an individual), and "expressed racial identities" (words and actions that convey beliefs about an individual's race); Tashiro (2002) distinguishes between five dimensions of identity—"cultural

identity" (which encompasses one's core values and ways of being in the world), "ascribed racial identity" (how one is racially identified by others), "racial identification to others" (the way one identifies oneself to others, such as on forms), "racial self-identification" (how one truly identifies), and "situational racialization of feeling" (refers to one's feeling of whiteness or blackness based on circumstance and context). While these scholars conceptualize different dimensions of identity, there are overlaps and similarities between their conceptualizations.

[7]A "public" identity (the way in which respondents label themselves to others), as used here, resembles Brunsma's (2006) notion of "identification" (public categorization) and Tashiro's (2002) notion of "racial identification to others" (the way one identifies oneself to others). An "internalized" identity (how one internally identifies or how they see themselves), as used here, resembles Brunsma's (2006) notion of "identity" (private racial identification), Harris and Sim's (2002) notion of "internal racial identity" (what an individual believes about his/her own race), and Tashiro's (2002) notion of "racial self-identification" (how one truly identifies).

[8]A similar version of this question was used in a previous survey study examining racial identity among biracial people; respondents were asked if they more strongly identified as Asian or white (Khanna 2004). While it appears that respondents were "forced" to choose black or white in this study, the open-ended interview format (unlike the Khanna 2004 survey) allowed them the opportunity to respond that they did not, in fact, feel closer to one racial group or another.

[9]I used these three closed-ended questions to gauge an internalized racial identity. For the majority of respondents, responses were consistent between questions. For nine respondents, however, they gave the same answer (e.g., "somewhat") when asked how strongly they identify as white and as black, indicating that they identified equally with both racial groups. When this occurred, I used the question, "Is there a racial group, whether white or black, with which you more strongly identify?" to further gauge identity to see if, in fact, respondents identified more closely with one racial group over another. Of these respondents, two respondents chose one racial group over another when further probed, while seven responded that they identified with both groups equally. These seven respondents were coded as internally identifying with both racial groups.

[10]This statistic was calculated by the author from the table "Hispanic Origin and Race of Coupled Households" released by the U.S. Census Bureau on March 13, 2003 (http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t19/tables/tab01.pdf).

[11]Of those raised by one biological parent, nine respondents were raised by their biological white mothers, two were raised by their biological black mothers, and one respondent was raised by her biological black father.

[12]One respondent was adopted by two black parents, one by two white parents, one by a single white woman, and two by interracial black-white couples.

[13]The majority of respondents publicly identified as multiracial (or some related term), and this may be explained in several ways. First, it is plausible that respondents publicly identified as multiracial because they knew the interviewer was multiracial and may have felt that was the appropriate or "right" answer in the context of the interview. Second, respondents may have been primed to identify as multiracial given the topic of the interview and the focus of the study. Finally, with the increased visibility of celebrities and public figures who publicly identify as multiracial (e.g., Tiger Woods), it may be more popular and accepted today to identify as multiracial than in previous decades. As described above, these findings parallel recent empirical studies showing similar trends, which suggest that publicly identifying as multiracial is becoming increasingly popular (Korgen 1998; Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001).

[14]Five respondents claim that they outwardly appear white (this is based on their own self-assessment), and they claim that they are often perceived, by other whites in particular, as white (when their black ancestry is unknown) (John, Michelle, Kate, Kristen, and Sarah).

[15]These respondents describe a range of responses from other whites once their ancestry is revealed, including prejudice and discrimination (racial slurs, exclusion) as well as "special treatment" (they describe how other whites "tiptoe" around them as to not offend them or appear prejudiced). For these respondents, it must also be noted that there may be situations in which they do not share their ancestry (e.g., they do not have the opportunity or they actively choose to not share the information). In cases where others see them as white based on their racial appearance, they will likely interact with these individuals as if they are white. Hence, *in these situations*, they may be less restricted in the ways they can identify themselves if they so choose (e.g., they may have the option of identifying as white).

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