

# BLACK/WHITE BIRACIAL STUDENT SOCIALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Curry School of Education

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This mixed-methods research is an investigation into whether an environment of integration and involvement exists for biracial students in higher education and particularly, to what degree such an environment of socialization was created by the university targeted in this study. More exactly, does the university under study here, as an organization, provide the awareness and support required for biracial students to negotiate normative contexts and experience involvement and integration—are Black/white biracial students socialized at the university? The concepts of higher education as well as belonging and identity, inextricable components of college student socialization, are addressed. There was found to be a conspicuous structural separation of and consequential gap between the Office of University Student Engagement (OUSE) and the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH) potentially a remnant and indicative of the University's historically reactive stance on issues of equality. Also, the data reveal an employment of socialization processes founded on traditional racial classifications (hypodescent) and historical perceptions (ocular determination) that negatively impact students' college experience and socialization.

**DEDICATION**

“This is dedicated to you and your boys and if you knew what I knew you’d kill that noise.” MC Shan (1987). Down by law. Cold chillin’

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Straight up and down like six o'clock, without my partner this dissertation does not get started let alone done. You make my life, Joanna. Miah, this was never something we were supposed to do. Your inspiration is incredible. Dad had a saying, "I want to be like you when I grow up"—and let the church say, amen. "Mom, you made the album, how crazy is that?" I'll hope you'll read this, doubt you will and always understand. But who remembers jumping rope in the AC projects? I have not forgotten, Kia. I was guarded, raw and untrusting and they met it all with warmth, friendship and love. Unquestionably accepting me, the Lee's are forever a part of my family. If I wasn't Black/white biracial I may not care so much about *being* Black/white biracial. And on that note, thank you to all the students who were willing to share their stories of Black/white biracial-ness. Josie and Asa, you're the second generation like so many generations before you, be un-historically proud—leaders. Somebody once told me "Now and then, we all need a little help." My advisor, Brian Pusser, played an essential role in my entrance to this program and has been impactful in his support and guidance throughout. Thank you, Brian, for the opportunity and the help.

“The mulatto, in the cultural and sociological sense, is a man of divided loyalties. Fundamentally he is in different and exclusive groups. As an aspirant for inclusion in white society, he approves its ideals and upholds its standards. But the white group excludes him, and he excludes himself by the very fact of loyalty to the standards that exclude him. In social role and cultural participation he is identified with a special class or lives an unhappy and unaccommodated member of the Negro group. As such he upholds their point of view and fights for their cause. Thus within the mulatto is the same conflict that exists externally between the two culture groups: he is both a white man and a Negro.” (Reuter, 1923, p. 41)

“Thus, a real difference among colleges is the difference in the degree of freedom permitted to the individual, and in the importance attached to the development of individual mental and moral power.” (Eliot, 1908, p. 226-227)

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## CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

### **Black/white Biracial Students and College Impact**

In reviewing the higher education literature published between 1967 and 1989, Terenzini and Pascarella illustrated how college affects students while noting a dearth of research on student racial identity development at college (Terenzini & Pascarella, 2005). As a follow-up to this influential initial review, the authors' subsequent evaluation of higher education literature published between 1989-2000 confirmed that research on student racial identity development had in fact increased by the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Terenzini & Pascarella, 2005). This burgeoning interest in and scholarship on the racial identity development of college students can be attributed, in part, to the exponential growth in the number of minorities entering college between 1976 and 2000 (NCES, 2010). Despite this growth in colleges' minority enrollment numbers and resultant surge in research on racial minorities' identity development, this research did not sufficiently address questions regarding the impact of *the college* on students' racial identity development (Terenzini & Pascarella, 2005, p. 214). Put differently, growth in the matriculation of racial minority students (self-identified, ascribed and classified) spurred interest in their identity development during college, however, the role the college itself may have had or played in the identity development of minority students was neglected.

After four decades of growth in racial minority student research in higher education one racial minority group remains non-classified—the Black/white biracial<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The word “white” is intentionally lower-case throughout this document while “Black” is, with equal purpose, capitalized. This follows the practice of Cheryl Harris (1991) who succinctly explicates that providing upper and lower cases is an act of oppression first exercised by whites when using a lower case “N” for negro in an effort to create an image of Blacks as inferiors thus justifying their enslavement (p. 1710). In this vein, use of the word “White” (with an uppercase “W”) perpetuates an historic subordination

Perhaps because it endures as a potentially divisive concept, “classification” along with the negative connotations of the term as it concerns racial grouping, “othering,” and “essentializing,” are often shrugged off by classifiers. Arguably, the persistent aloofness of classification (e.g. whether or not people should be able to choose more than one race; whether “multiracial” should be its own category; whether multiracial people should be grouped with the minority group with whom they identify) in higher education serves to strengthen and expand whiteness<sup>2</sup> (Horton, 2006). Therefore it is imperative to note Classification is significant—it involves recognition of a group or entity such that the group officially exists for individuals to choose membership therein and belong to—thus it is imperative to consider the impact *non-classification* may have on group identity. For Black/white biracial college students, one impact of non-classification has been a dearth of data on the identity development of an understudied population. In fact as it concerns minorities collectively, and Black/white biracial students specifically, the impact of college on student development remains understudied.

The present research intends to address a gap in the literature by targeting two understudied elements of higher education: (1) biracial students and (2) a university’s impact on racial minority student development. The intent is to examine how college affects the classification and socialization processes for students who identify as Black/white biracial. Specifically, this dissertation investigates whether an environment

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effort. The word “Black” (with an uppercase “B”) however “is not based on domination,” references a specific minority culture, and is thus warrants the capitalization provided to proper nouns. Harris, C. (1992). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106, 1707-1791.

<sup>2</sup> Following up and further explicating the term “critical demography” (submitted as an alternative to the term “race”), Hayward Derrick Horton (2006) presents “whiteness” as “those physical and social places that have been culturally defined as being designated primarily... for the dominant population” (p. 118).

of integration and involvement exists for biracial students, and to what degree such an environment is created by a university/administrative effort to provide socialization.

### **Identifying the Black/white biracial**

In the 2010 census nine million (2.9%) U.S. people identified as two or more races with over eight million (92%) of those people reporting “two races” exactly; the largest “by far” of these two race combinations is white and Black at 1.8 million people (U.S. Census, 2011, p. 8). In fact, from Census 2000, the first time “two or more races” was an option, to the most recent 2010 census, the numbers indicate a 32% increase in self-identification as “two or more races” (U.S. Census, 2011). Most pertinently, 4.2 million children and adolescents—future college matriculates—were identified as multiracial in 2010, a 50% increase from 2000 (Williams, 2012).

Extant studies of Black/white biracial people have used various methods for identifying their sample. For example, Root (1998) in her sibling project used the criterion “biological parents who are of different races according to U.S. conventions of race” (p. 240) to target the biracial participants in the study. In other research the criterion for biracial participants was “one Black self-identifying biological parent and one White self-identifying biological parent” (Rockquemore, 1998, p. 199). Rockquemore’s decision to focus on the participants’ immediate inter-racial parentage as opposed to the details of any possible multi-racial or ethnic affiliations those parents may have was noted as the researcher’s prerogative (1998).

A university’s compliance with the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) Race and Ethnic Standards provides students an opportunity to select one, or more than one, race when providing identification information (OMB, 1997). Indeed, some

universities provide students with an option to choose the category “More than one race” as a single racial designation. While inclusive, this system was not designed for universities to classify specific multiracial students, let alone provide Black/white biracial students an opportunity to own or understand “their biracialism” (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002, p. 41).

### **Recognition of Black/white Biracial Student Identity**

While multiracial students may identify in a variety of ways in response to various ecological stimuli (Root, 1990) and subjective choice, parental racial identification lies at the foundation of the *bi*-racial term; it is also how biracial status is operationalized in this research. This noted, G. Reginald Daniel best captures the definition of Black/white biracial, as the term is used in this study, when discussing Black/white interracial parentage:

The primary carriers of this new multiracial identity are these ‘first-generation’ offspring of interracial marriages (although a significant number of first-generation individuals embrace an African American identity or, less frequently, a European American identity). This first-generation identity is derived from having one parent who is socially designated, and self-identified, as black, and one who is socially designated, and self-identified, as white, regardless of the multiple racial and cultural backgrounds in their parents’ genealogy.” (2002, p. 102)

Daniel’s (2002) reference to a “first-generation identity” becomes more logical in relation to three other terms he introduces: (1) “multigenerational” (those assigned a Black status while either having two biracial parents or one biracial parent and another

monoracial [Black or white] parent); (2) “synthesized” (race is one of many identities a biracial may have); and/or, (3) “functional” (whether integrative or pluralistic, the biracial displays a bias toward one racial component over the other; i.e. one either identifies and aligns more with whites or Blacks) (p. 107-110). These concepts help Daniel (2002) present a paradigm where biracial identity originates with the parent’s social designation. Subsequent ecological influences may have an impact (e.g. the child of one Black and one white parent may be immersed in Black culture or have a relationship and familiarity with only white family members or be raised in a pluralistic household), however ultimately racial identity is the choice of the biracial individual.

Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) contend that four factors shape students’ understanding of their “biracialism”: (1) appearance; (2) social networks; (3) socialization factors (e.g., childhood and adult socialization); and, (4) familial context (p. 60). These factors inform a Black/white biracial classification system consisting of four types Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) have labeled, Singular, Border, Protean, and Transcendent. For example, one’s “appearance” (hair texture, facial features, skin complexion or hue) may become a salient *factor* in her/his decision to identify as a “Singular” *type* of biracial (a biracial who identifies with only one, single—either Black or white—of their two composite races).

A focus of this study is whether or not universities (including administrators) provide oversight, express interests, and/or are guided by assumptions impacting the identification and socialization of the Black/white biracial student. The term “Black/white biracial” used in this study signifies individuals who acknowledge having one biological parent who self-identifies as white and another who self-identifies as

Black. Students who fit this criterion may or may not use the specific label of “Black/white biracial”; instead they may identify as biracial, Black, white, mixed, or some other racial designation or classification.

### **Black/white biracial students: Recognized and engaged?**

The research on student persistence and departure (i.e., studying how and why students endeavor at the university [persistence] and how and why they may leave it [departure]) often guides student socialization initiatives (Braxton, 2000; Braxon & Milem, 2000; Tinto, 1987). In an effort to increase persistence and decrease departure, the racial classification or membership of underappreciated groups may be acknowledged by university administration<sup>3</sup>. However, student socialization initiatives may be better served if guided not by research on persistence and departure but recognition and engagement (i.e., how the university acknowledges, and promotes the success of, individuals and groups). Specifically, recognition and engagement of racial groups existing beyond the traditional classifications (e.g. Black/white biracial students) would provide pointed examples of a college’s socialization efforts. Importantly, in universities where low administrator knowledge and commitment to biracial students exists, a general apathy may be manifest through minimal provision of supports and services for this growing population. The result may be low student socialization.

The extant typologies of biracial identity commonly used to target these students and frame their development (see Root, 1990; Poston, 1990; and, Rockquemore, 1999) can also form a locus for recognition and engagement of Black/white biracial students.

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<sup>3</sup> This may be more applicable for student affairs administrators who often have proximal student interaction and impact and for whom racial classification and group affiliation are dominant demographic markers.

Furthermore, college-impact<sup>4</sup> models (see Astin, 1993b; Weidman, 1989) can be employed to assess the college's engagement of the Black/white biracial student. While there are numerous development and person-environment interaction models (campus ecology models) of "developmental substance" providing student affairs professionals various approaches to student development (Rodgers, 1990, p. 28), to date the two mentioned above—biracial identity typology and college impact model—have yet to be combined. Such a synthesis may provide a valuable perspective on a college's socialization efforts by examining the impact of college on the various *types* of biracial students.

### **College Impact and Socialization**

**College impact model.** Most student development models focus on measuring higher education's contribution to an individual's "cognitive and affective" outcomes (Weidman, 1989, p. 289). In these development models the university often remains as a black box while students provide data at arbitrarily designated points displaying their ostensible "choice" to integrate, participate, belong, identify, and persist with varying degrees of success. Conversely, the model helping to frame this research (Weidman's Model of Undergraduate Socialization) focuses on measuring the contribution of a *specific* college's environment, and the interpersonal relationships within, on student socialization (Weidman, 2011, p. 253); a college impact model. Student socialization is defined as the culmination of the characteristics of an organization's social structures on students' interpersonal processes (Weidman, 1989, p. 297).

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<sup>4</sup> College impact models do not focus on the "particular internal process or dimension of student change" as much as they do the "processes and origins of change" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 50).

Scholars and administrators ideally apply a college impact model to evaluate and improve, respectively, the services and support a university provides its students. Incorporated improvements may be levied with the intention of affecting the general student population or targeted groups. The general student population is comprised of racial groups of students identifying within traditional classifications as well as those, like multiracial<sup>5</sup> students, existing beyond traditional classifications. When considering viable initiatives and available resources, students outside of traditionally recognized and classified groups may not be identified and targeted by university leaders as direct recipients of services and supports. While faculty may hold political positions and influence the culture and climate of a university, it is the administrators and students who do the majority of policy design and implementation. Of these two stakeholders (administration and students) and in consideration of graduation, transfer, withdraw and the dynamic student body, the provision of and improvements to university student supports is unilaterally at the discretion of administrators, although this may vary according to the student governance structure.

### **Rationale for Study**

The white and Black race combination is the largest self-identified multiple race group in the United States (U.S. Census, 2011)—examining the Black/white biracial population is essential for providing context to the general multiracial/biracial boom<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Multiracial is a subsuming group that includes biracial (see Root, 1990). While the two terms are not synonymous (biracial people are multiracial but not all multiracial people are biracial), research is introduced herein that utilizes multiracial such that it is applicable to the biracial group. To be clear, multiracial research that focused on people with parents from more than two races was not used.

<sup>6</sup> This increase is often associated with the 1967 Loving v. Virginia ruling negating laws prohibiting interracial marriage. However, it is posited that the biracial boom did not happen in the late 60's but in fact during the 17<sup>th</sup> century as “interracial sex has in fact been going on for centuries in North America” (Spencer, p. 84, 2006).

Generally, colleges and its students provide a convenient location and sample for diversity-focused research. Following the practice extended to most designated student groups, the university would ideally create and manipulate supports that promote the development of the biracial student. However, it is possible that higher education's, indeed the nation's, systemic disenfranchisement of biracial people/students' prerogative to identify (e.g., IPED's racial classification system and U.S. Census history of classifying "Mulattoes") has positioned individual institutions to insufficiently serve this population. The result is a population—Black/white biracial students—whose development may go underserved while experiencing continuous inequity in socialization. This research intends to explore how a college environment, as established by university leadership and perceived by biracial students, relates to biracial student socialization. More specifically, to what degree does the university and its administrators consider the Black/white biracial presence when creating an environment of student socialization?

Renn's (2009) position that connecting with others who share a similar cultural diversity (*involvement*) provides multiracial students with the support necessary to experience a sense of belonging and assume a racial identity (*integration*), is logical. However, does such coalescence through integration and involvement exist for biracial students? More exactly, does the university as an organization provide the support and constructs (i.e., socialization) required for biracial students to negotiate normative contexts and experience involvement and integration? This dissertation investigates whether an environment of integration and involvement exists for biracial students, and

to what degree such an environment was created by the university's effort to provide socialization.

### **Postmodern Lens**

The approach taken here follows Tierney (1997) in rejecting the modernist view of static conformity for one of dynamism and social justice—postmodernism. Therefore, this research accepts the challenge put forth by Tierney to re-conceptualize socialization in higher education as a process where an “individual is participating in the re-creation rather than merely the discovery of culture” (1997, p. 16). The immutable concept of “Culture” needs to be questioned, in keeping with the deconstructive nature of postmodernism. Also, as a “theoretical lens drawn from social justice or power” (p. 16), postmodernism is a fine medium for the transformative mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2014) proposed in this study.

In fact, rebuffing modernism is what makes Tierney's (1997) postmodern view of the university a conduit for transformative theoretical thought and a complimentary analytic lens through which to examine Weidman's student socialization model. Interestingly, Tierney's criticism of Weidman's (1989) inattentiveness to diversity in the original model of student socialization, has been recognized in the literature by Weidman himself (Weidman, Twale, Stein, 2001). From this criticism a question arose—Is true socialization “when all people march to the same institutional drummer?” (Tierney, 1997, p. 7). More specifically, what happens “when a man or woman, an Anglo-American, African American, or Latino, a physically challenged or able-bodied individual undergoes socialization” (ibid)? The essence of Tierney's inquiry is whether the

responsibility of socialization lies with individuals who are new (transitioning in) to the organization or with the organization's existing members and the organization itself.

Undergirding the research questions posed below is contemplation on administration's awareness of biracial student presence in higher education and the subsequent mis/understanding of this group's (biracial students) socialization needs in higher education. It is contended that—reflective of a modernist perspective—students are expected to adopt what is transmitted through the university culture in an effort to assume the role of a “successful student.” Through this assimilation students potentially forfeit opportunities for development. The result may be a perpetuation of the university's culture as well as the social reproduction that accompanies the cyclical matriculation of students who flourish in said culture. Thus, it is important to ask whether or not biracial students can, as Tierney frames it, “express any clear sense of institutional belonging or ethos” (1997, p. 13). This inquiry requires insight into whether or not, as creators and facilitators of the university's normative contexts, administrators recognize the presence of Black/white biracial students, and if such recognition encourages biracial students' uniqueness and permits the co-creation of a community and culture that actively reinforces (as opposed to promulgating) an ethos of “excellence and difference” rather than maintaining one of “similarity” (Tierney, 1993, p. 14).

### **Research Questions**

An interest in the involvement of biracial students in the co-creation of culture within higher education, and the university's role in manufacturing or prohibiting this socialization fuels this study. Therefore, this research intends to examine the following questions:

(1) What are the classifications, concerns and feelings of belonging experienced by Black/white biracial students at a research university?

- (a) Are there discernible “types” of biracial students and if so, what are they?
- (b) Do biracial students express perceptions of the “socialization” process (student interaction, education, and involvement) within the university and does this socialization process differ among types?
- (c) What are the supports and aids to socialization that Black/white biracial students identify as available to them?

(2) Are Black/white biracial students affected by the socialization efforts in higher education?

- (a) What is the pre-socialization to college of the Black/white biracial and are there existing norms shaping the socialization of Black/white biracial students in the University?
- (b) Are university efforts (toward socialization) cited recognized by Black/white biracial students?
- (c) What level of awareness does the university have of the biracial student population, culture, and involvement at the University?
- (d) Does the University have normative contexts that attract Black/white biracial students and to what degree do administration and student governance support these contexts?
- (e) In what ways is the concept of social justice reflected in the narratives of biracial students?

These questions are addressed through a mixed-methods study employing theories of biracial identity development and biracial typology as well as techniques drawn from college impact models. Ultimately, the research intends to address how the college environment, as established by administration and perceived by biracial students, impacts biracial student socialization. This research does not intend to target biracial students' intrapersonal identity development at college. Rather, the focus will be the group identity/identification, labeling, intergroup and to a lesser degree interpersonal, experiences of biracial students while interacting at the university. It is expected that these student experiences will help expose any role the university's normative order, as well as any supporting college leadership, may have in the creation of a context and culture that contributes to the socialization experience of Black/white biracial students at the university.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Black/white biracial:* A person whose biological parentage is interracial with one parent identifying as Black and one parent identifying as white.

*Classification:* The categorical assignment of people into groups according to shared socially recognized characteristics or attributes. This type of grouping is commonly practiced with race but can be used with religion, education, employment, income, etc.

*Socialization:* This is an individual and organizational phenomenon, wherein: an individual realizes a role within a group reflective of that individual's alignment with the group's culture and norms while concurrently the organization provides the social

patterns (norms and culture) that influence and maintain individual and group membership.

*Socialization (general)*: An accumulation of characteristics from family, community or institutional social structures that impact and inform an individual's intra/inter-personal processes.

*Socialization (process)*: The level of interaction, involvement and education achieved as a result of an individual's membership and participation in social structures.

*Normative context*: The formal and informal factors (academic & social) influencing a college's normative pressures. Culture, ethos.

*Normative pressures*: A compulsion either real or ephemeral to conform to a status quo.

*Normative order*: The mission (also referred to as the Moral Authority) and expectations of staff and faculty as well as students and student governance. This dissemination of institutional expectations can be a hierarchical or emanate from the organization's core.

*Belonging*: The perceived bond, identity, and acceptance one may feel from a group.

*Social justice*: The realization of individual will and voice in pursuit of one's identity within what may or may not be a society of equality, equity or mutual respect.

*University/college*: A private or public four-year, residential institution of post-secondary education that may or may not also provide graduate programs.

*Administration*: The central and academic leaders of the university whose primary focus is the completion of institutional goals and achievement of the mission.



## CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Identity, Biracial Identity, and Student Development**

This study draws upon the literature to investigate the socialization of biracial students in higher education. This requires a review of research on identity (specifically biracial identity) and higher education with an emphasis on higher education administration. The review will also address issues of college impact, socialization, and social justice.

Generally, literature concerning any research on biracial identity and socialization has focused on the following concepts: the racial duality of biracial identity; ecological influences (e.g., family, culture, socioeconomic status [SES], and phenotype); and, biracial identity development. The scholarship of biracial identity in higher education is relatively new to the field (Renn, 2008); its inchoate framework draws upon research from the 1920's and 1930's (Evans, et al., 2009) involving race and racial admixtures. As the progenitor of the—slightly modified—race models later attributed to biracial people, these early sociological concepts represent the scholarly foundation and origin of identity for the biracial person. However, prior to examining biracial identity it is valuable to first discuss identity in an effort to discern individual from group identity along with the overarching conceptualizations that nurture group identification within institutions.

### **Identity**

Richard Jenkins (2014) succinctly states, “identity is the human capacity—rooted in language—to know ‘who’s who’ (and hence, ‘what’s what’)” (p. 5). Indeed, this brief

definition phrased in layperson's terms may summarily capture the conflicts and crises involved with negotiating the stages of psychosocial development. In the vein of psychosocial development, Erikson (1960) noted that identity involved the connotation of "both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (p. 30).

As a simple concept, identity—who you are and with whom you associate—becomes nuanced, layered and multifaceted when social actors and environments enter the analysis. Investigating the individual standpoint of self, personality, and identity, the psychological literature reveals that research on these concepts and terms originates with Freud, Erikson, and Marcia. Freud (1920/1957) may be best known for psychoanalysis and the identification of the id, ego, and super-ego components personality, while Erikson extrapolated the ego and presented the ego-identity and his stages of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1980). Marcia (1988) notes that the most important concept of Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development identity work is ego-identity. In devising an assessment for Erikson's (1959) ego-identity and more explicitly the spectrum between the pole of identity achievement (crisis engaged, commitment made) and identity diffusion (no crisis—no sense of choice—and no commitment), Marcia (1966) proffers the two intermediate "concentration points" of moratorium (crisis encountered, open to and exploring commitments) and foreclosure (no crisis—not available to see choices—but may be willing to make commitments) (p. 552). The experience and negotiation of *crisis* (the questioning and consideration of existing choices and values) and *commitment* (selecting and aligning oneself with particular choices or values considered in crisis) reflects the status (Identity Achieved or Identity

Diffused, Moratorium or Foreclosure) an individual may occupy along the ego-identity spectrum (Marcia, 1968, italics added). In this spectrum, the statuses of moratorium and foreclosure are often used to profile and provide personality traits for college students. Indeed, college life has become a referent for psychosocial moratorium as a stage where young people “through free role experimentation may find a niche” (Erikson, 1966, p. 156).

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that identity, like the ego, super-ego, and id, is unobservable—“What can be seen and measured are behaviors that should result if an identity has or has not been formed” (Kroger & Marcia, 2011, p. 33). In this frame, the behaviors illustrative of an “identity-achieved” individual would reflect a free-thinking (i.e., aware of and considering choices) person who aligns her/himself with the values of a given community. Along the lines of sharing and “recognizing” and regarding a community’s “recognition” of one’s identity formation, Erikson (1968) emphasized that an individual’s “growth and transformation make sense to those who begin to make sense to him” (p. 156). In other words, a vital component of identity formation is the community’s acceptance and validation of that identity.

**Relevance.** This study will consider the social identification and classification of Black/white biracial students in college. Therefore, the separation of *identity* (reviewed above) and social *identification* (the acceptance of and alignment with the group one may be classified into) is important. In making this distinction the term “group” is evoked; Sherif and Sherif (1979) define a group in terms of inter-group relations (i.e., ingroup and outgroup). A group is a social unit depicted as having properties that “can be measured and which have consequences for the behavior of its members” (Sherif & Sherif, 1979, p.

9). An examination of the classification and identification of Black/white biracial students will benefit from further attention to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory.

**Social identification, social identity and categorization.** Social identity and identification involves group classification and membership as well as an interaction between groups.

***Social identification.*** One's self-concept includes their personal (i.e., individual traits) and social identity (i.e., membership in relevant groups); however social identification is "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). This definition of social identification is couched in Ashforth and Mael's (1989) discussion of Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identification Theory (SIT): similar to the psychosocial concept of identity established above, SIT requires limited exploration for the purposes of this paper. However, there are key principles involved in Tajfel and Turner's (1979) SIT that assist in understanding group identification both assigned-designated by others and asserted-claimed by the individual (Daniel, 2010, citing Cornell & Hartmann, 1998).

***Social identity.*** Providing perspective on student membership within an organization (e.g., college), whose day-to-day operations are managed by various groups (e.g., administration, faculty, and students), assists in illustrating the process and effects of socialization in said organization. Socialization involves an individual or group's acceptance or rejection of a normative order within an organization or society (Weidman, 1989). Depending on the distribution of power, individual/group hierarchy or stratification, or "value connotation" provided to groups (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, &

Flament, 1971, p. 154) an ingroup/outgroup identification takes form based on “the pertinent lines of criteria for the division of people into ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 151). This separation of groups along with their distinguishing qualities provides their members with a comparative social identity (e.g. as a member of X group I think I am better than members of Y group) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is this social identity of groups that may lead to alienation, competitive biases, and prejudice-influenced behavior, the impetus of which is often stereotype. However, it is valuable to note that ingroups and outgroups, or the “us” and “them” mentality, is promoted by society’s categorization and division along lines of “social criteria” (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971, p. 151).

**Classification.** The first process in Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) social identity theory is the grouping that occurs through classification. The creation of groups is the logical precursor to assuming the identity of a group (i.e., social identification) and as a member of a group, comparing groups (i.e., social comparison) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this manner classification occurs on an individual or group level; however, classification is perpetuated, worldwide, from a governmental level (e.g. censuses, subsidies, tax incentives and laws, legislature, choice of war, allies, etc.). At this institutional level and specifically regarding race in the United States of America, the racial and ethnic classification system (established by OMB in 1977 and used in all US Censuses since) has “become the *de facto* standard for state and local agencies, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the research community” (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 122, italics in the original). In consideration of this and regardless of whether or how

race classification may or may not evolve<sup>7</sup>, it has been stated that racial classification initiatives driven by equality and diversity fall under two ideologies: multiculturalism and color-blindness (Rattan & Ambatty, 2013).

*Multiculturalism.* The embrace of plurality involved in multiculturalism has initiated the creation of an “inclusive climate” in communities since the 1960’s (Williams, 2013, p. 05). On college campuses, multiculturalism and multicultural and inclusion models saw universities embracing and promoting the values of minority groups in an effort to assist in the success of these group members, encourage pan-institutional respect for different cultures, and initiate research and awareness of “previously ignored communities of women, minorities, and others” (Williams, 2013, p. 255). Indicative of multiculturalism, and propagated by the institutions, students may be classified in various ways through initiatives such as: cultural/race/group-specific offices, departments and organizations; cultural/race/group-specific housing; cultural/race/group-specific student clubs and organizations; and strategies allowing various degrees of student self-identification (e.g., options to choose more than one race or a multiracial category or sex options beyond “Male” and “Female”) during enrollment<sup>8</sup>.

*Color-blindness.* Burgeoning in the late 2000s, colorblindness is a contemporary, robustly studied concept, and at a very basic level refers to the idea that all people are the

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<sup>7</sup> See Bonilla-Silva’s (2006) postulation of a Latin-American derived three-tiered racial classification of white, quasi-white, and black. Also see, California’s 2003 proposition 59 and the effort to create “racial equity” by eliminating categorization altogether. Or consider the efforts of various groups looking to be counted in the census and in response the OMB’s (1997) decision establishing the “mark one or more” system for racial identification used since the 2000 census (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 124).

<sup>8</sup> Regardless of how universities collect student data on the front end, it is reported out in accordance with governmental and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) regulations (i.e. students are eventually classified by the university into recognizable categories in compliance with report procedures. E.g. students selecting Black and white races are reported “Two or more races,” students identifying as Hispanic, regardless of a chosen race, are reported “Hispanic,” and gender is only recorded as “Male” or “Female”).

same, reflected in the assertion that one “does not see race” when interacting with others. A leading researcher in this field, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2013), presents a “colorblind racism” ideology as problematic due to a white-dominated position on race, race relations and racial classification in the United States of America. The intricacies of the colorblind concept and colorblind racism are beyond the scope of this research; however, Bonilla Silva’s prediction of a “Pigmentocracy” (i.e., hierarchy based on skin tone), while being based on Latin America’s racial formation, has arguably been a historical fact for people of color, specifically the Black population in the U.S., for hundreds of years. Importantly, Bonilla-Silva’s (2013) attention to the racial classification systems in South America provide a cautionary tale of a potential three-tiered racial hierarchy<sup>9</sup> (i.e., “Latin Americanization”) forming in a colorblind United States of America. Regardless of the racial paradigm or sorting model employed by a government, the scheme’s operationalization requires interaction between the various groups.

**Intergroup relations and power.** Arguably, phenomena such as stereotyping, discrimination, ingroup/outgroup relations, and recognition are social psychological themes; broadly and with brevity these terms and concepts have been addressed in this review. Although social psychological themes may thread this research the study is not intended to be a social psychological study. The reason for this loose coupling (of social psychology and the present research) is perhaps best stated by Sherif and Sherif (1979) in their influential discussion on the problem of intergroup relations:

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<sup>9</sup> Bonilla-Silva’s (2013) position is that a new “Triracial Order” of Whites, Honorary Whites, and Collective Blacks will arise with the middle group—Honorary Whites—existing as a “buffer” for any racial conflict. This hierarchy provides an illusion of oneness as “Americans” when in actuality racial inequality may expand and the area to combat any disequilibrium contracts. Bonilla-Silva’s reference to a decreasing space to fight increasing hegemony is important. This idea speaks directly to the concept of “whitespace” noted in chapter one. As more “people of color” are inducted into an Honorary White category, whitespace increases as does white power. Those relegated to non-white status will decrease in number as will any area or opportunity they may have to coalesce.

Delineation of the problem will make it clear that research on intergroup relations entails more than study of the intergroup behavior of individuals—which is the proper level of analysis for social psychology. It also entails problems of institutionalized power relations and complex organizational systems, both formal and informal, which require analysis at their own level by political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and others. (1979, p. 8).

While data collected from Black/white biracial students during this study may reveal experiences as individuals who may or may not identify as members of a group interacting with other groups at college, integral to these experiences will be the institution (college) itself. The university and administrators as a “complex organizational” system realizing “institutionalized power relations” (Sherif & Sherif, 1979, p. 8) between groups will be addressed further in the review. At this point the literature on biracial identity will be examined.

### **Biracial Identity**

In 1935 Everett Stonequist noted the dichotomous lure of group membership faced by bi-cultural peoples. In later work Stonequist (1961) would advance Robert E. Park’s (1928) antedated concept of “a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies” (p. 892). The premise of this later work is that the cumulative identity of the mixed-person—biracial—will be reflective of two races and judged by a third community (Stonequist, 1935). This sociological research on biracialism from the 1920’s and 30’s was prophetic; the marginal man of the past was raced by a third community—society—offering only assimilation or outcast as options. In this regard, society (whether society in general, an intra-racial subset or an organization) may become the arbiter of belonging

for the biracial. An important concept in this research, “belonging” will be discussed more thoroughly later; however highlighting biracial belonging is beneficial at this point.

Physical attributes, traits, physiogamy, hue, phenotype—in other words, appearance—is the ubiquitous variable in seemingly most if not all literature/research focusing on biracial people. Historically, biracial peoples’ melded morphological attributes may or may not betray their racial allegiance—the two-race admixture may result in a person appearing as one race while identifying as another. As a result, multiracial people seeking to mitigate racial identity issues have embraced “their total identity” in an effort to “have more physical and psychological comfort with themselves” (Williams, 2009, p. 779). Cognizant of the search for identity and comfort, researchers have proposed models specifically addressing the identity formation of the multi/biracial. A select few of these models are highlighted below as germane to this research.

**Poston’s Paradigm.** Today in pursuit of identity, the marginal person encounters a society that although pluralistic, may be as unaccommodating as in the past. In an attempt to more accurately represent the identity development of the biracial individual, Poston (1990) designed a “new and positive” (p. 153), five-level paradigm to reflect the experiences of biracial individuals. The five levels are as follows: (1) *personal identity*- occurs during childhood when racial and ethnic identity, having not yet become important, may not be as significant as psychosocial factors such as self esteem; (2) *choice of group category*- this demarks when the biracial must choose between a multiracial or monoracial identity with the three considerations involved in this choice being: (i) status and (ii) social support factors (both influenced by parental position in society, style, community exposure, and acceptance), along with (iii) personal factors

(individual traits and attributes); (3) *enmeshment/denial*- represents the affect that accompanies the choice of group category and includes loathing, guilt, and lack of acceptance by self and others; (4) *appreciation*- a biracial, while perhaps continuing to choose one group category over the other, begins to acknowledge the other ethnic/racial identity group and may try to better understand and incorporate it; and, (5) *integration*- is when a biracial chooses to embrace all facets of their ethnic and racial composition (Poston, 1990). These five levels are linear and progression is individually motivated, although influenced by external variables. They illustrate the biracial identity development model's shift from the deficit theory of Stonequist's marginality and also the earliest separation from what was then viewed as the traditional minority (Black) development model. This second distinction is paramount for two reasons. Models such as Helms' (1990) Black identity and Cross' (1978, 1991, 1995, 1998) Nigrescence model did not provide "accurate representation" of the biracial individual—monoracial models were glaringly deficient for multiracial identification (Williams, 2009, p. 791).

Poston's model addressed the limitations of previous models while offering a paradigm specific to individuals with racial heritage in both minority and dominant cultures (Root, 1990, p. 153). To be clear, Poston's model conceptually borrowed directly from two of the three central concepts in Cross's Nigrescence model—Personal Identity (PI) and Reference Group Orientation (RGO) (the third is Racial Salience) (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). In this regard, Poston submits his model as a biracial person's possible mindset (i.e., self-efficacy, esteem, and value) potentially dictating affect regarding racial identity, belonging, and esteem (Poston, 1990). Put another way, a

biracial person's level of maturity and psychosocial development impacts how s/he feels about racial identity.

**Root's Minority Identity Development Model.** Root proposed a minority identity development model similar to Poston's (Renn, 2008); however, Root's model differs in her emphasis on the various statuses, other than race and ethnicity, that work to "co-construct" racial identity for a biracial person (Root, 2009, p. 67). An ecological framework is integral to Root's theory and will be discussed further below.

Root's (1990) model of multiracial identity development observed four outcomes responsive to society and hypodescent (i.e., the "one drop" rule or the notion of biracial peoples being assigned the racial designation of the lower status parent, discussed below). These outcomes include: (1) the acceptance of hypodescent and the ascribed societal identity; (2) ownership of racial minority status and identity duality (e.g. "I am half white and half Black"); (3) alignment with one racial group (e.g. "I am white" or "I am Black"); and (4) identification with a separate/subsuming group (e.g. "I am mixed raced" or "I am biracial") (Root, 1990). It can be observed (and is noted by Root) that other than the first outcome, which involves acquiescence, the remaining three outcomes utilize coping mechanisms and support strategies. Such mechanisms are activated to either mitigate the negative perception of others regarding a biracial person's allegiance to her/his minority identity or empower them to not be disabled by marginalization (Root, 2009).

**Rockquemore's Typology.** Concentrating specifically on Black/white biracial individuals, Rockquemore's biracial identity typology includes four identity options that biracial people may embrace: (1) singular identity (identify as either Black or white); (2) border identity (identify as exclusively Biracial); (3) protean identity (can identify as

either Black or white or Biracial depending on the situation); and, (4) transcendent identity (does not choose to identify by race) (Rockquemore, 1999, p. 228).

Rockquemore, Brunσμα, & Delgado (2009), note that biracial people may exercise identity options based on context. In other words, biracial individuals are by definition composed of two different races<sup>10</sup> and are capable of making a conscious decision, at a situationally-specific developmental point (or perhaps at multiple points), as to the race with which they will identify. In these situations or contexts, biracial people have the dilemma of choosing the race they feel will be most circumstantially advantageous or the one that most accurately reflects their “personal identification” (Sanchez & Bonham, 2009, p.130; Rockquemore, et al, 2009). Rockquemore’s typology specifically addresses the identity development of Black/white biracial individuals along with their self-identification and represents a logical next step in the evolution of Black/white biracial identity models. Rockquemore and Brunσμα (2002) contend that four factors shape students’ understanding of their biracialism: (1) appearance; (2) social networks; (3) socialization factors- childhood and adult socialization; and, (4) familial context (2002, p. 60).

Among the more contemporary multiracial psychological and typological models a common thread is an emphasis on identity-in-context, or ecological factors (Evans, 2009). Indeed, it is critical to attend to “the interactive role of geographic history, gender, class, sexual orientation, or generation” in their consideration of racial identity development (Root, 2009). Kristen Renn (2003) uses Brofrenbrenner’s (1979, 1993) ecological model as a frame from which to view multiracial student identity development

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<sup>10</sup> Gina Miranda Samuels in her 2010 article regarding the identity formation of multicultural adoptees, offers the thought-provoking point that the label “biracial” reifies a concept of “genetically pure” racial groups whose offspring are then “identified in racial fragments” (p.28).

in higher education. While bi/multiracial identity development is not the focus of this research, Renn (2003) makes a strong case for the use of an ecological model when examining beyond the psychosocial and interpersonal processes of the multiracial individual.

***Ecological Influences.*** In the biracial identity literature, ecological influences such as, phenotype and appearance (e.g., physical attributes like hair, eyes, nose, lips, body type), culture, parents, community, peers, and SES can play a key role in identity development. For example, with the absence of a universally recognized identity for multicultural groups the “ambiguous” label used to describe any physical and social features deriving from phenotype variance and cultural impact is reinforced. As a result, a group of people whose physical attributes appear to differ from those assigned to existing classified types must: (1) have their own classification, (2) adopt an established classification or (3) exist unclassified or amorphous.

A biracial person’s appearance (facial features, complexion, hair texture) is commonly considered the determinant of her/his community and race. However, consideration must be given to the postulate that “racial categories ascribed and the racial categories self-ascribed can change as a function of changes in the individual’s social status” (Bodenhausen, 2010, p. 2). Indeed, Coleman and Carter confirm that the ability to exercise choice of one’s racial identity is unique to biracial individuals while noting that this choice is regulated by the particular societal context (2007). While choice of identity can be arbitrary for biracial individuals who may be targeted as ambiguous, their tacit racial positioning is imputed to historic, social constructs and theories such as hypodescent.

*Hypodescent.* Peery and Bodenhausen (2008), citing Harris (1964), present the theory of hypodescent as one where the offspring of different raced parents assume the racial identity of the “socially subordinate parent.” An example of hypodescent theory is the “one-drop rule” which, when combined with social identity theory, resulted in the widespread belief, especially in the South of the United States, that individuals with any African ancestry should be considered African Americans (Coleman & Carter, 2007). As a result, individuals of mixed heritage in the early and middle 20<sup>th</sup> century often self-identified with the classification of African American. Bonovitz presumes that the racial group classification system itself was structured around an ideal of racial purity (2010). According to Bonovitz, a biracial person exists amorously in exclusion, continuously teetering on and dabbling in racial categories, never fully being admitted to either group (2010).

Terry and Winston note that children whose parents are of different races face the “complicated psychological task” of choosing the racial category with which to self-identify (2010). Those labeled “people of color” are often assumed to have a racial identity fitting one of the five minimum categories for race: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African-American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and, White. While this classification of racial group membership contributes to adolescents’ identification formation and sense of self (Terry & Winston, 2010) it is not sufficient for understanding the historical development of biracial individuals’ identity in consideration of other ecological factors of biracial self-identification and perception. These racial identification and perception factors play a significant role in affecting the

involvement or disengagement and overall sense of belongingness associated with biracial student development in higher education.

***Socialization and classification.*** The sparse literature on biracial college student socialization reflects a spectrum of faculty and administrator actions ranging from the ostensibly unbiased “colorblind” (Bonilla-Silva, 2013) and “colorblindness” (Litere, 2000, p. 130) perspective to what can best be described as overtly insensitive assertion (e.g. are biracial students “minority enough”?) (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012, p. 537). The latter action may be attributed to “ambiguity” or “ambiguous” being applied as a label to describe biracial student appearance and identity (Poston, 1990; Rockquemore & Brunson, 1999; Root, 1990). The phenotypic variance among biracial students may prohibit others from making an accurate classification via the eye-test. Utilizing the term “ambiguous” provides comfort when attempting to safely describe the biracial (for example, see Bradshaw, 1992; Willadsen-Jensen, & Ito, 2006; Peery, & Bodenhausen, 2008; Pauker, Weisbuch, Ambady, Sommers, Adams, & Ivcevic, 2009; Chen & Hamilton, 2012).

The historic use and acceptance of the term “ambiguous” to describe the appearance of multi/bi-racial people notwithstanding, the literature also reveals researcher’s reliance on ambiguity when accounting for multi/bi-racial identity and development (see Deters, 1997; Herring, 1995). Biracial people are stereotyped<sup>11</sup> as ambiguous. Inasmuch as it leads to discrimination, this stereotype is as inimical as any other. To state under the auspices of empirical research that the appearance or identity of

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<sup>11</sup> Stallybrass’s (1977) definition of stereotype—“an over-simplified mental image of (usually) some category of person, institution or event which is shared in some essential features, by large numbers of people” (p. 601)—is generally accepted and cited in the literature (e.g. Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Forgas, 1982; de Mas & Ryan, 2001).

biracial targets is unclear or open to interpretation, implies that either (1) the biracial target has not made a clear racial decision or (2) others observing have yet to decide on the target's race. Both implications involve choice that (A) for most if not all biracial people, identity is not something they may have firm ownership of or easily arrive at, and (B) for observers is not theirs to make. However, considering the increase in the multiracial population, and the elevated projected numbers of multiracial students entering higher education, the use of "ambiguity" as a disclaimer and label may be increasingly challenged.

Beyond the ocular driven non-classification of ambiguous there exists an argument over whether failure to provide appropriate identification options for multiracial and biracial individuals in higher education has led to their over-representation within the traditional category of "African American" students (Williams, 2009). Research exists in higher education demonstrating how permitting students of color to choose two or more races weakens monoracial minority representation (Jaschik, 2006). Also, a recent survey of the 31 elite colleges that constitute the Consortium of Financing Higher Education (COFHE) revealed that of the Black freshman entering these highly selective colleges, 19% were actually Black multiracial students and 4% of them were Black Hispanic students<sup>12</sup> (Brown, 2009).

The previous two examples suggest that students historically aligned with the monoracial Black classification, when provided a choice, are now identifying more accurately as multiracial. The questions around this identity phenomenon introduce

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<sup>12</sup> After 1997 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determined that Hispanic/Latino was not a race but an ethnicity. All census respondents must answer whether they identify as Hispanic/Latino before they enter their race. Therefore, one could choose the ethnicity of Hispanic/Latino yet still choose to be Black in combination with another race.

issues potentially affecting higher education policy as, according to Brown (2009), the number of college-age Blacks identifying as multiracial in the next decade will “skyrocket” (p.148). The increased identification of the biracial/multiracial population will bring with it research opportunities. Williams (2009) declares that a non-existent category of classification and the conflation with Black or African American populations has resulted in a lack of data and research on “Black-White biracial students.” The consequence has been a failure to study issues specific to the biracial population (Williams, 2009, p. 781). Black/white biracial students’ college socialization is one such issue.

### **Student Development**

In higher education, the concept of student development exists definitively, philosophically, and pragmatically (Rodgers, 1990). As a simple definition, student development involves an increase in personal capacity. More specifically, Rodgers (1990) presents student development as “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (p. 27).

In fact, Rodgers (1990) posits that “student development” as a term has a much broader span than the above definition indicates. It is revealed that conceptually there are four applications for the term *student development*: (1) as a concept it frames the universities’ holistic interaction with students and provides a basis for higher education; (2) as a catchall phrase for the late-adolescent and emerging adult theories (psycho-social, cognitive structural, person-environment-interaction, and typological) addressing the college-age student; (3) it is the philosophical foundation that supports the creation

and maintenance of the initiatives and programs created for college students (this third application of student development is tantamount to student affairs—the purpose of college is the holistic development of the student); and (4) as a programmatic directive for student affairs professionals and faculty who “facilitate learning and development” (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27). The fourth application comprises the actual initiatives, programs, policies and services, provided to students (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27). Guided by Rodgers’s (1990) four applications the following assumption can be made (the numbers indicate the coordinating Rodgers student affairs application): In higher education there is a (#3) philosophical directive to provide students with holistic learning and increased capacity and this effort is supported by (#4) faculty, student affairs and student affairs professionals who develop and maintain programs, policies, and initiatives (#2) that may be constructed from student development theory(ies).

### **The Development of Students**

Student development has been a part of higher education since Harvard opened its doors in 1636 (Evan, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn, 2010). Over time, student development has persisted as have “contested topics” of what constitutes student development along with what practicing student development involves (Evans, et al. p. 05). Evans, et al. (2010) citing Rodgers (1990) and Sanford (1967) impress that student development involves “a positive growth *process*” (p. 6, italics added) and should not be defined solely as a “growth” or “change.” The terms “growth” and “change” as individual descriptors can be positive or negative and may involve either an elaboration (growth) or alteration (change) to students’ being. It stands to reason that students may experience both positive and negative growth and change in college. Student

development by definition encompasses student capacity building—positive increases. Therefore, a logical conclusion may be that growth and change that is not positive does not fall within the concept of student development.

### **College Impact and the Development of Students**

In discussing college impact models Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) introduce Astin's (1970) Input Environment Output (I-E-O) model as one that explicitly studies "college effects" and is diametrically opposed to student development models that attempt to explain the how's and why's of student change (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 53). In presenting the expansion of Astin's research and perspective, the researchers note the creation of Astin's Student Involvement Theory (SIT) (also in the college impact model category) and declare Astin to have envisioned the "purpose of higher education as one of talent development" (p. 53). The SIT is valuable as a college impact model that "occupies the middle ground between psychological and sociological explanations of student change" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 53). Perhaps most importantly, with SIT Astin advances the concept that "development or change is not merely the consequence of college's impact on a student but also a function of the quality of student effort or involvement with the resources provided by the institution" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 54). Astin's (1984) SIT is directly linked to student development (Flowers, 2004; Hu & Suh, 2001) to the extent that the fourth tenet of the SIT posits that the "development" arising from an "educational program" is directly proportional to "quality and quantity" of student involvement in said program (Astin, 1999, p. 519).

In comparison, the I-E-O model (Astin, 1993b) was conceived as a framework for evaluating the effect(s) of college environments on student outcomes. Astin's stated

intent for the I-E-O model was to provide administration, faculty, and students with a “better basis for knowing how to achieve desired educational *outcomes*” (1993a, p. 7, *italics added*). The I-E-O model can be used to assess students’ growth from matriculation (input) to departure or graduation (output) in consideration of the college’s influence (environment). However, it does not evaluate the *ways* students may grow or the *process(es)* involved in increasing students capacity while in college (Rodgers, 1990) therefore it is categorized as a college impact model (Terenzini & Pascarella, 2005) and accordingly would not be a valid indicator of student development as it has been defined in the literature.

Furthemore, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) have noted that *outcomes* in the I-E-O model involve “students’ characteristics, knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors as they exist after college” (p. 53). These outcomes allow researchers to study the effects of college through a comparison with student inputs in consideration of the college environment. The model is not intended to explain student development although it is intended to measure the impact of college by comparing how students have changed—which may or may not involve development—between matriculation to and graduation from the college. While the intent of such a model is not to measure student development but college effects, it is plausible that the measured outcome of college effect may be illustrative of student development (e.g. a student’s First Destination upon graduation may be the result of development or it may be the result of a change in values).

**The involvement of socialization in student development.** Utilizing Lewin’s (1936) heuristic  $B = f(P, E)$  Rodgers (1990) notes that in the 1980’s, student development

focused on P (the Person) while neglecting interaction with E (the Environment). Later theories would measure campus ecology however both foci (the person or the person, environment) at best only measure ecology (interaction with the environment) and have “not focused on student development per se” (Rodgers, 1990, p. 32). Numerous models and theories have been implemented to measure and analyze this concept of student development (e.g., student growth, progression, and capacity increase).

Addressing this collection, Evan, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn, (2010) separated the various models and theories into two categories: psychosocial and cognitive structural (these two groups are addressed above with Rodgers, 1990). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) suggested wider spanning groups when establishing the clusters used to catalog the decades of literature they reviewed. In their research the authors separated models and theories of student development and change into “two broad” groups: (1) developmental theories of student change and (2) college impact models of student change (p. 18).

Integral to the literature’s consistency (Sanford, 1963; Rodgers, 1990; Renn, et al., 2011), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) are explicit in noting the difference between *change* and *development* in higher education. Change can be bidirectional (positive or negative) and while development contains changes, the changes involved in development are progressive and imply growth (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); these changes contribute to the realization of a synthesized, synergistic, ideal self. Change occurs in both groups of theories and models (i.e., developmental and college impact). However, as it concerns college impact models the emphasized change is “associated with the characteristics” of the various institutions students attend (between-college effects) or the

various experiences students may encounter while enrolled in an institution (within-college effects).

## **College Impact: Involvement, Departure (Disengagement), Belongingness, and Socialization**

### **Involvement**

In a response to traditional pedagogical approaches employed by college faculty and administration, Astin submits the *Student Involvement Theory* (SIT) with its five postulates: (1) involvement is denoted by the amount of energy (physical and psychological) a student invests in an “object” (Astin, 1984, p. 519); (2) involvement occurs along a continuum; (3) student involvement is both qualitative and quantitative; (4) the learning and personal development acquired through education programs is “directly proportional” to the quality and quantity of student involvement; and, (5) an educational policy’s effectiveness correlates with the policy’s ability to elevate student involvement (Astin, 1984).

The five postulates of Astin’s SIT derived from studies of college drop-outs (Astin, 1984). Minorities were not the focus of these earlier studies however they were represented in the sample, thus, minority-specific data is accessible. Indeed, how minorities specifically are affected by faculty pedagogy and interaction (or lack thereof) was at the crux of the research that spawned Astin’s SIT. Scholars have argued that applying Astin’s SIT to the biracial college student population may provide a better understanding of any involvement biracial students may experience, as well as how it may vary from the level of involvement felt by other students and how biracial students may be variegated in consideration of the four established primary types (Rockquemore

& Brunnsma, 2002). Importantly, involvement may factor into biracial student's social status and racial identity (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002, p. 63), and may also have implications for persistence and engagement, which have often been studied as "departure" and "disengagement".

### **Departure/withdraw and disengagement**

In 1975, Tinto presented a model proposing the existence of "explicit connections" between (1) the college and its culture (i.e., academic and social systems), (2) administration and faculty (those who shape these systems), and (3) the subsequent retention of students (Tinto, 1975 & 2006). In narrative form it can be stated that these three connected entities, whether in the academic or social sphere, may involve inept efforts to integrate students on the part of administration and faculty, ultimately influencing student drop-out rates (Tinto, 1975). To mediate this drop-out rate Tinto proposed a theory of student interaction.

Addressing the proposed bifurcation of the college (two spheres-academic and social) it has been suggested that research on student retention has yielded various initiatives implemented in student affairs (social sphere) while "comparable changes" were not made on "the academic side of the house or in the organization of higher education" (academic sphere) (Tinto, 1997, p. 168). For example, to bolster retention and sense of belonging in a growing, diverse student body there may be an increase in extra-curricular, student affairs-type activities. However, similar accommodations are not made for students to successfully establish themselves academically or identify within the curriculum. This neglect of academic inclusion despite social assimilation may compel students to reevaluate their academic expectations potentially resulting in a voluntary

withdraw from the university (Tinto, 1975). For the purposes of this research, Tinto's "voluntary withdraw" is not viewed solely as student drop-out but more generally as student disengagement. To withdraw from the university a student does not need to physically remove her or himself. In fact, physical departure or drop-out may represent an extreme pole on the spectrum of withdrawal. Importantly, scholars interested in the engagement of students of color have argued that deeper attention to factors promoting a sense of belonging is warranted (Griffin, Perez III, Holmes, Mayo, 2010; Kosoko-Lasaki, Sonnino, Voytko, 2006; Patton and Harper, 2003).

### **Belongingness**

Hurtado and Carter (1997), in response to Tinto's (1975) model of student departure, sought to examine the degree to which Latino students' "background characteristics and college experiences" contributed to their sense of belonging (p. 324). Belongingness is a dimension of the perceived feeling of cohesion an individual may experience with a group (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). The sense of belonging construct "reflects students' affinity with their institution, including whether students feel part of campus life, are a member of the community, and feel a sense of morale as a result of being a student" (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005, p. 239). In further explaining this phenomenon, Hurtado and Carter note:

A sense of belonging contains both cognitive and affective elements in that the individual's cognitive evaluation of his or her role in relation to the group results in an affective response. Thus, studying a sense of belonging allows researchers to assess which forms of social interaction (academic and social) further enhance students' affiliation and identity

with their colleges.” (1997, p. 328)

Important in their research, Hurtado & Carter (1997) establish a key position—developing a sense of belonging is not the sole responsibility of a student. As reinforced by Johnson, Soldner, Leonard, Alvarez, Inkelas, Rowan-Kenyon, and Longerbeam (2007), Hurtado and Carter’s research pushed against Tinto’s (1993) position that the integration of students involved participation in a college’s conventional and established activities along with students’ amalgamation in “existing institutional structures” (p. 526). Johnson, et al. (2007) further support Hurtado and Carter’s “sense of belonging” by stating the concept is illustrative of college and student “interplay” wherein “Student success is in part predicated upon the extent to which they feel welcomed by institutional environments and climates” (p. 526).

In conceptualizing belonging, acknowledgement is given to Astin’s (1984) and Pascarella and Terenzini’s (1991) findings that the experience of integration resulting from student involvement and engagement (Hurtado & Carter, 1997) is integral to college student development. However, Hurtado and Carter (1997) suggest that to truly comprehend college student engagement, more research on “racial and ethnic” minorities’ view of participation in college is necessary (p. 324). With this in mind, Hurtado and Carter (1997) pose three questions of value to this present study: (1) How does one account for the success of students who encounter educational environments in which few understand their culture; (2) do some students perceive themselves as marginal to the mainstream life of a campus; and, (3) what contributes to students’ sense of marginality, and does this sense of marginality contribute to students’ lack of success in college? (p. 325).

Upon critique of Spady's (1971) and Tinto's (1975) attempts to explain student integration through a comparison with Durkheim's (1951) suicide theory, Hurtado and Carter (1997) arrive at two strong conclusions: (1) the "integration" constructs used by researchers of higher education not only vary but are focused on social and academic contexts. Perhaps more importantly they are not focused on the psycho-social context originally intended in Spady's (1971) integration theory; and, (2) "integration can mean something completely different to student groups who have been historically marginalized in higher education" (p. 327). As a result, Hurtado and Carter's path analysis included the independent variable of "perceptions of a hostile racial climate" (1997, p. 330). These perceptions were predicted to occur in students' second year, the result of a transition from the first year and a precursor to any sense of belonging in the third year (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). In developing and testing their model for student sense of belonging as it applies to Latinos, one of Hurtado and Carter's (1997) most salient findings was how the traditional measure of college belonging "may not yield the same attachment to the institution among different racial-ethnic groups" (p. 339). The distinctions applied in Hurtado and Carter's research brought sense of belonging to the fore for comparison with the Tinto integration models while challenging the subsequent "integration models" developed by researchers following Tinto's theory [see Appendix E for a further discussion of integration and how these assertions were informed by Attinasi's (1989, 1992) studies of Chicano students].

Hurtado and Carter's research acknowledges that Tinto's (1993) most recent revision of his model of integration incorporates the term membership to supplant the concept of integration. This is done in an effort to address critics noting the implied

assimilation involved with integration along with the subsequent implications for historically marginalized students (1997). Then, applying Bollen and Hoyle's (1990) Sense of Belonging test, Hurtado and Carter were able to establish further distinctions between researchers' various constructs of integration (based on psychological measures) and the more applicable measures that "reflect students' participation in and interaction with the academic and social systems of college" (p. 338). This process allowed Hurtado and Carter to discern and evaluate the scope of constructs researchers' were using to measure integration and arrive at the conclusion that "not all" of the college activities Latino students engage in established a sense of belonging to the college community on a whole (p. 338). This in light of Hurtado and Carter's (1997) assertion that group membership entails more than participation and in fact helps students understand their immediate environment while providing the skills necessary to negotiate college—the researchers attributed this concept of dual benefit (the immediate student environmental and larger college campus) to Attinasi (1989, 1992).

The research of Attinasi's (1989) "study on the college going behavior of Chicano university students" (p. 255) indeed supports Hurtado and Carter's hypothesis. A valuable conclusion reached by both Attinasi (1989) and Hurtado and Carter (1997) is: students who "make sense" and meaning of the college environment, through group interaction, have individual needs addressed while also being linked to the campus as a whole (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p. 338). In his study Attinasi (1989) notes five stages "categories, or patterns," of college getting-ready behavior: (1) initial expectation engendering; (2) fraternal modeling; (3) mentor modeling; (4) indirect simulation; and, (5) direct simulation (p. 256). Specifically germane to the research here, and as it

concerns socialization, Attinasi (1989) declares that all generalized expectations of college-going were formed in the primary category of “initial expectation engendering;” the subsequent stages represent “substance” about college going (p. 257). This declaration’s relevance lies in the premise that initial expectations for students to attend college, from an academic standpoint, begin as early as elementary school. This primary stage and initial expectation is accompanied by the familial reinforcement and parental insistence on higher education. Therefore, this primary stage speaks to students’ ascribed values as potentially impacting college success yet also perhaps transcending college belonging and socialization<sup>13</sup> (Attinasi, 1989).

This concept of initial expectations or pre-existing attributes served as a focal point for Bean’s (1985) study of college student dropout syndrome. Bean offers that this type of procedural or anticipatory<sup>14</sup> socialization beginning in elementary school is established by role-models and reinforced through advanced placement curriculum along with the acquisition of “the appropriate norms, attitudes, self-images, values, and role behaviors that lead to acceptance” (p. 38). As a result, the intervening variables (grades, institutional fit, institutional commitment) in Bean’s conceptual model could either reflect a student’s college socialization or an institution’s ability to select favorable—anticipatorily socialized—matriculates (p. 38). To be clear, these exogenous variables—grades, institutional fit, and institutional commitment—are indicative of socialization and

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<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that in his model Weidman (1989) does address pre-socialization (college going and career expectations based on values gleaned from parental modeling and home life) as well as the ongoing normative pressures provided by parents and non-college reference groups.

<sup>14</sup> Not to be confused with Weidman’s (1989) application of the term “Anticipatory Socialization” (p. 380) which addresses students’ modification of values as a result of the college’s influence and in preparation for a specific—anticipated—career.

for Bean, socialization could be *college* (occurring at the college) or *anticipatory* (occurring leading up to college).

**Belonging and socialization.** A primary factor and frequently researched interpersonal process in multiracial identity development is the significance of peer-group acceptance and perceptions of in-group others (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). These two elements, acceptance and perceptions, are found in Tinto's (1975) concept of student integration and Astin's (1984) involvement theory, both of which (noted above) have influenced research on students' sense of belonging and identity. While a sense of belonging and identity may be a component of group membership, it can be argued that these factors are not necessary components of socialization. Restated, students' understanding of a college's culture (Tierney, 1989) and development of the knowledge necessary to successfully function within said college culture (Brim, 1966), may not be the result of or result in a sense of belonging to or identity development within said college.

This is perhaps best illustrated in Lambert, Stillman, Hicks, Kamble, Baumeister, and Fincham's (2013) postulation that one can attain an association (fulfilling need for membership) within a group without becoming a pertinent member (achieving a "sense of belonging") of that group (p. 01). Such an instance would epitomize a need to belong versus a sense of belonging. Simply put, the need to belong is a dominant human directive although if achieved it does not guarantee acceptance (Lambert, et al., 2013). The authors continue by positing that human belonging is meshed with the need to find meaning and thus a meaningful life is contingent on one's feeling of belonging (Lambert, et al., 2013).

## **Biracial Student Involvement in Higher Education**

There is evidence that biracial students' sense of belonging has been challenged in higher education (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). However, an increase in the multiracial population along with a shift in attitude toward the ideal of interracial coupling provides a favorable combination for multicultural students (Shang, 2008); it potentially reflects a growth in acceptance for biracial people's identity if not their identification. This potential increase in acknowledgement of biracial students may result in the perception of increased access (a contributing factor being the enumeration of biracial people whose previously selected a monoracial option). As it is for many students and students of color, *access to* higher education can be a paramount concern for biracial students. However, noting the increasing presence of students with interracial parentage who may presently and have historically self-identified as Black (Campbell, 2007), along with the growth or boom of multiracial people documented in the last two censuses (U.S. Census, 2000, 2010) *success in* higher education may become a primary concern. This is particularly relevant for biracial students who may be negotiating their identity and identification.

To facilitate the success of biracial students, Shang encourages student service professionals in higher education to be aware of the growing biracial presence when providing advising or mentoring assistance (2006). If performed successfully, student service professionals in higher education can assist with mediating subsequent insecurities faced by biracial students attempting to construct identity while attending college. One example of this mediation on the part of student affairs is Race Oriented Student Services (ROSS).

ROSS are a result of the post-Civil Rights epoch's distinctive call for racial pride and a resistance to assimilation to the macro-culture (read white culture) (Literte, 2010). On college campuses this translated to the establishment of monoracial student centers along with organizations for non-dominant races and ethnicities (e.g. Afro-American Center; Asian Student Union)—these entities continue to “deny the existence and veracity of biracial identity and persons” (Literte, 2010, p. 125). The failure of ROSS initiatives to acknowledge the duality of biracialism in an attempt to fulfill a historical social justice obligation for racial groups who assume a singular racial ancestry (Literte, 2010) is detrimental to the identity development of biracial students. More directly, universities communicate two things through ROSS initiatives: (1) the racial groups that matter have been selected and provided space to coalesce and develop and (2) groups not selected have for some reason been determined to not matter and their group identity and coalescence is not a student priority. For biracial students ROSS in higher education can serve as a barrier (Literte, 2010) to student involvement (Astin, 1984), multiracial identity (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patterson, Renn, 2009), and social integration (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000).

Student identity and identification, in consideration of race have long been key topics in the study of higher education (Astin, 1984; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Tierney, 2000). Williams's (2009) posit that research around the education experiences of biracial individuals is a relatively new topic follows up Renn's (2008) insight on the scarcity of research on multiracial student identify and that “the literature on how they come to have those identities” is even smaller (p.17). Further complicating this limited research on multiracial identity in higher education is a traditional oversight of the role of

the university as an organization in the development of multi/bi-racial identity. It will be discussed how socialization involves a degree of integration with an organization and students' identity development and sense of belonging may be necessary for college integration and involvement but not sufficient for socialization. Socialization, as illustrated herein, involves a college's recognition of an individual or group.

### **Socialization**

Socialization is a bidirectional phenomenon and as such can be viewed from the perspective of (1) the individual being socialized and (2) the organization or community within which the individual seeks membership (this dual perspective phenomenon will be discussed further in the next section). From a community, society or organizational perspective, "Socialization efforts are designed to lead the new member to adhere to the norms of the larger society or of the particular group into which he is being incorporated and to commit him to its future" (Clausen, 1968, p. 6). From the perspective of the individual, "socialization involves learning the appropriate (i.e., normative) modes of 'social behavior and/or role enactment' within the groups in which membership is desired" (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978, p. 422 as quoted in Weidman, 1989, p. 294).

In higher education, correlation between socialization and student development may be challenged and interplay questioned (e.g. is the degree of student socialization a product of or influenced by the degree of student development and vice versa?).

Empirical correlation between the two is not abundant although Weidman (2001) contends that socialization does involve an overlap of Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) college student development and college impact conceptual models. Furthermore, the literature reviewed here defines socialization as involving students learning an

organization's norms then adopting appropriate modes of behavior. It has also been established that student development involves an increase in capacity and capabilities as an outcome of college attendance (Rodgers, 1990).

**Process.** Brim (1966) defines socialization as “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society” (p. 3). While Brim’s *Socialization After Childhood* addressed broad adolescent development, Weidman (1989) adopts Brim’s definition of socialization while noting that society is not a “unitary construct” (Weidman, 2006, p. 254) and that socialization processes extend beyond traditional college years through adulthood and is indeed a lifelong phenomenon (Weidman, 1989). Weidman (2011) declares socialization is not merely comprised of individual cognitive development but also an organizational dimension. This introduces two components germane to this study, (1) the “affective dimensions of college impact,” specifically how college may influence “students’ values, personal goals, and aspirations (Weidman, 1989, p. 290) and the (2) dual perspective—organization and individual—phenomenon (Weidman, 1989; Tierney, 2008). Taking these two components into consideration a notable conclusion is that a student’s “acquisition and maintenance” of her/his membership in disparate groups is what truly couples the individual and organizational aspects of socialization (Weidman, 2011, p. 254).

Through deconstruction of Holland’s (1968) socialization and theory of a personal fit in an environment or organization, Weidman produces a theory of socialization based on a static, pre-existing, and immutable culture (Tierney, 1997). Socialization as it involves the “acquiring of knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (Holland, 1966) of society

or an institution presupposes that new stakeholders do not co-create the culture but in fact culture awaits “incorporation by the newcomer” (Tierney, 1997). However, it is Tierney’s presumption that socialization does not involve the acquisition of an organization’s knowledge, skills, or dispositions (i.e., culture) but rather the acquisition of what Van Maanen (1983) describes as “Specific skills, knowledge, and values that transcend particular socialization settings” (p. 4).

Van Maanen (1983) states clearly his proposal of two types of socialization processes for new members in an organization, with one relying on the *transfer* of knowledge, skills, and values and the other focusing on *transforming* of knowledge, skills, and values. Transforming new members involves the adoption of the company culture; it is what is usually considered socialization. Whereas transferring new members’ skills and attitudes are less common as these “ascribed attributes” (e.g. personality, morality, language), while considered foundational, may transcend the environment’s setting (p. 4). These ascribed attributes may often result from external ecological factors and experiences.

**Relevant ecological factors for biracial college students.** Renn (2009) presents the following three ecological themes influencing multiracial college students’ identities: (1) physical appearance (i.e. looking Black enough; usually determined by skin complexion, kinkiness of hair, shape of the nose, etc.); (2) relevant cultural knowledge (e.g. being aware of and able to discuss relevant music, language, literature, etc.); and, (3) peer culture (the supported knowledge of different cultures as well as the ability to move among said cultures) (2008). The first theme, physical appearance or how a student looks, is integral to her/his racial authenticity and how s/he is perceived and received by

other students and even faculty at college (Renn, 2009). Renn further contends that the second theme, a multicultural student's cultural knowledge or awareness of her/his diversity, also contributes to her/his legitimacy and ability to "fit in" with others (2009).

The theme of peer culture influences the multiracial student's development in both positive and negative ways. Connecting with a group of students who share a similar cultural diversity can provide multicultural students with the support necessary to negotiate the social and historical aspects that factor into choosing a racial identity (Renn, 2009). Adversely, all peer groups may not be supportive. Specifically, Renn draws attention to monoracial groups such as Blacks who may provide resistance to multiracial students, and whites, who may be racist (2009). Broadly speaking, as multiracial students, biracial students seeking identity formation in higher education must resign themselves to do so in an environment—the university institution—that may not be designed to create and sustain relationships that acknowledge and cultivate them as people.

### **Integrating College Impact and Socialization: Weidman's Conceptual Framework**

Weidman (1989) notes that research on college impact consistently exploits models framing the following four sets of variables: (1) the background characteristics of the student; (2) the college's characteristics and environment; (3) measuring any "linkage" students' may have with the college; and (4) the 'indicators of college effects'" (p. 292). Continuing, Weidman (1989) states the above listed "four sets of variables can provide a reasonably accurate portrait of several important aspects of the longitudinal process of college impact" (p. 293). However, these variables insufficiently explicate "why" college effects systematically occur. Simply, any of these four frameworks may

provide a general structure of college impact while Weidman's model presents a potentially generalizable illustration of how these structures may be formed.

To begin to effectively comprehend college's impact on students (i.e. achieve "systematic understanding") Weidman (1989) suggests "identifying and operationalizing the specific social and interpersonal mechanisms that transmit and mediate the influences of the college environment" (p. 293). These "social and interpersonal mechanisms" are "conceptual dimensions" (p. 293) of the socialization process, imperative for examining college impact (Weidman, 1989). Once this has been established, Weidman introduces a rationale for the Model of Undergraduate Socialization framework (Appendix E). Weidman then embarks on an examination of a socialization process involving norms and social integration, reference groups and social relationships, anticipatory socialization and temporal aspects of socialization (Weidman, 1989, ps. 294-296).

It has been noted above that researchers can utilize a college impact model to measure socialization as an outcome (Weidman, 1989). Indeed, Weidman (1989) has been credited as a harbinger of this trend with his premise that a model of socialization is required when analyzing college impact (Padgett, Goodman, Johnson, Saichaie, Umbach, & Pascarella, 2010). Furthermore, when setting the foundation for his study on organizational socialization, Tierney notes Weidman's (1989) employment of Brim's (1966) definition of socialization as "the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society" (1997, p. 3).

In framing his own model of socialization, Tierney (1997) highlights several definitions (Bragg, 1976; Tierney, 1989; Dunn, Rouse, & Seff, 1994) derived from

Merten (1979) before making his declaration that “culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and *socialization* is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities” (p. 4, italics added). Combining and restating Brim and Tierney’s definitions for the purposes of this research—college socialization involves learning and applying one’s comprehension of the college’s culture; this socialization ideally empowers students with the requisite adroitness to be effective and fit in a college. The degree of adroitness correlates with the extent of student socialization and can be determined by using college impact models.

### **Biracial Student Socialization and “Fit” at the University**

Typologies in the literature (e.g. Renn 2009; Root, 1990) show biracials’ status with ingroups and outgroups is influenced by ecological themes (e.g., family, culture, socioeconomic status [SES], phenotype). More directly, Mohan and Venzant Chambers (2010) have noted ecological themes as instrumental to students’ “fit” in a particular community. While the process of finding acceptance and fit is a potential phase/step in adolescent development for most college students, the task of finding acceptance and fit may be a birthright for biracial students. Because Black/white biracial people represent the union of society’s two most historically disparate racial groups fitting in can be multi-dimensional and relevant from an early point in life. For this reason, aspects of the definition of socialization—involvement and interaction with peer groups, community ingroups, and “others”—consistently raised as the backdrop for biracial student development in college (see Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002; Renn, 2003; Renn & Arnold, 2003; Renn, 2008; Renn, 2009; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patterson, Renn, 2009) may be ubiquitous for most biracial students regardless of college matriculation.

Helping to contextualize the university as an organization in a social context (DiMaggio & Powell, 2006) while chipping away at the university's dehumanized, monolithic status, McLaughlin (2006) states that "organizations do not act; people do" (p. 214). This statement aligns with Tierney's (1997) previously noted contention that socialization is not new members adopting an organization's culture (i.e. assimilation) as much as organizations benefitting from the acquisition of new member skills that transcend particular social settings. Ultimately, through the actions of its administrators and similar to society writ large, the university exists as an organization that institutionalizes (Jepperson, 1991) and normalizes, the identification, classification, and perceptions of students. As a result, issues of recognition and social justice may arise for underrepresented individuals and groups within the university. While the historic classification and disenfranchisement as it relates to biracial people has been noted above, to better contextualize its relevance, a review of social justice will be beneficial.

### **Social Justice and Higher Education**

Mill (2007) plainly submits that justice involves two things: a rule and a way to govern or enforce that rule. Contributing to Mill's parameters and the conceptual frame of social justice, Zajda, Majhanovich, and Rust (2007) impress that by definition the term *justice* is social<sup>15</sup>. Individuals may freely choose to be just and in fact when the descriptor "social" is added the term "social justice" references something emerging "not organically and spontaneously from the rule-abiding behavior of free individuals, but rather from an abstract ideal imposed from above" (Zajda, et al., 2007, p. 11). Imposed

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<sup>15</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary defines "justice" as administration of law or equity; maintenance of what is just or right by the exercise of authority or power. Assuming self-control, the concepts of "administration," "authority" and "power" only exist in social situations.

by whom? And, what might the imposition of social justice involve? Revisiting John Stuart Mill helps to address these questions.

Expounding on the “sentiment of justice,” John Stuart Mill argues that this sentiment is propelled by “intellect and sympathy” which in turn fosters a reaction of “retaliation or vengeance” when contemplating the ills, wrongs, and pains an individual may experience “through, or in common with, society at large” (2007, p. 55). Mill (2007) assures that there is no morality involved in this individual sentiment of justice and that in fact, morality emerges only when the individual sentiment serves “social sympathies” (p. 55). It is this social sentiment that acts as a barometer of justice. Put simply, individuals feel pain and have an innate response of indignation to the source of the pain. However, social sentiment “moralizes” (p. 55) the indignation so that it aligns with the greater or common good (Mill, 2007). Therefore, in response to the first question posed above—who imposes social justice—it can be said that society imposes social justice. However this answer is not as simple as it appears; it is complicated by an issue confirmed in the literature—those who *constitute* the “society” impact how justice is interpreted and who receives justice based on personal merit (see Aristotle as translated in Broadie, 2002, p. 162). However, this abstract concept of merit, “individual achievement as the standard of reward,” can be complicated to recognize and administer fairly (Stone, 1997, p. 45). Thus it is valuable to examine the second question posed above—what does the imposition of social justice involve? The issues, qualifications, determination, even the existence (Hayek, 1976) of social justice all can be categorized in this area of imposition. The imposition—levying—of social justice will be very briefly addressed here, however it has historically been a point of contention for scholars

resulting in various definitions of “social justice” as a concept, a comprehensive discussion of which is beyond the scope of this review.

### **The imposition of social justice**

To begin deconstructing how social justice is levied or prevails, a comprehensive working definition is needed. As a result of researching various scholars’ contemplations on social justice, Jost and Kay (2010) proffer the following thoughtfully inclusive definition of social justice as,

...a state of affairs (either actual or ideal) in which (a) benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation principle (or set of principles); (b) procedures, norms and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, liberties, and entitlements of individuals and groups; and (c) human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors including fellow citizens. (Jost & Kay, 2010, p. 1122)

The authors are deliberate in identifying three (a, b, and c) circumstances or tenets contributing to social justice issues. These three tenets, accordingly, match onto the three sub-categories of social justice: distributive, procedural, and interactive (p. 1122). These sub-categories of social justice are operationalized in phenomenon such as Affirmative Action (distributive), Equal Opportunity (procedural), and ingroup/outgroup biases (interactive). Therefore, while Rawls’s (1999) distributive definition of social justice as “the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation” (p. 6) remains popular

in the social sciences, it does not address the procedural or interactive dimensions of social justice. A sufficient evaluation of the multidimensionality of social justice is beyond the scope of this literature review. However, the focus here is to highlight social justice as a dense, yet generously used, term involving the equity (distributive), equality (procedural), and respect (interactive) resulting from institutional (e.g. society; higher education) initiatives as well as group and stakeholder interplay. In closing this section there will be a very brief word to address and contextualize the individualism of justice and how it becomes a societal issue (social contract).

Rousseau's *Social Contract* is an apt example of individual-will working with, and collectively becoming, the general-will of society (Wraight, 2008). Rousseau is presented as cherishing an inherent freedom of people distorted by social interaction; the result is a transformation from *amour de soi* to *amour-propre* (Wraight, 2008, p. 14-17). While both phrases (*amour de soi* and *amour-propre*) can be translated to "self-love," *amour de soi* speaks more to self-preservation and happiness while *amour-propre* is marked by devolution to self-importance and recognition in an insecure effort to validate self-worth (p. 16). This need to pursue self-interest without being consumed by it and to concurrently remain part of a society whose general-will is reflective of one's personal-will is a problem that exists today. Rousseau frames the problem as follows:

The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may

still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before (Rousseau, p. 14, 1920)<sup>16</sup>.

To address this problem and these wills a social contract is suggested wherein individuals receive protection while participating as an equal and free individual in the community. Such a community is achieved when individuals respect the rights of others—addressing the general will—and in so doing may forego certain individual goods.

Bertram's (2012) research on Rousseau notes three types of wills involved in a social contract: *private* (selfish as an ego-centric individual), *collective* (prosocial as a citizen of the community) and *corporate* (committed as a member of one of society's sub-groups). Delicacy lies in attempting to balance the collective will that would be a natural composite of citizens' private wills without a focused advancement of the corporate will. In other words, how do individuals maintain membership in a society (a collective will) that meets the separate needs of all its constituents (private wills) without over-pursuing any one affinity (advancing a corporate will and potentially creating fissures or splintered sub-groups)? A potential result when focusing on corporate will at the expense of the collective can be "unequal relations of dependence." In such a scenario, the innately healthy dispositions of people are "subverted into a more grasping, self-centered set of motives" resulting in "unhappiness and moral degradation, perpetuated by unequal and repressive political systems" (Wraight, 2008, p. 18).

This dystopia, feared by Rousseau and for which he prescribes a social contract, is one that has been historically encountered by the minority, underserved, and/or underrepresented, peoples of societies and institutions worldwide. The unequal "state of

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<sup>16</sup> It is perhaps the wills (*personal*- "person and goods of each associate;" and, *general*- "the whole common force") involved in this problem that are the essence of any social justice issue especially those concerning a minority group and society.

affairs” achieved in such a society begets at least one of the three types of social justice (distributive, procedural, or interactive) mentioned above. In the United States these types of social justice are operationalized through efforts such as Title IX, Equal Opportunity Employment, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Affirmative Action, etc.

Earlier sections in this review of literature addressed classification, ecology and belonging in an effort to discuss the contribution of these matters to the historic inequality and moral degradation brooked by the Black/white biracial population in the United States. In consideration of these oppressive practices (e.g. the marginal man theory, hypodescent, and U.S. Census classifications along with centuries of identities borrowed, stolen, and revoked in an effort to be recognized, respected, and belong) and with an understanding of social justice, it can be argued that social justice for the Black/white biracial is an imperative. Importantly, in higher education settings, the administration plays a critical role in providing access to social justice for biracial students. Thus, the role of administration in higher education will be addressed next, with the intention of providing insight to the organizational dimension of socialization. The aim is to illuminate the fissure between student development and administration, define the administrative role, and provide a brief word on administrators and the organizational structure of the university.

### **Administration and Governance in Higher Education**

Campbell and Slaughter (1999) note, “tension between faculty and administrators” is routinely regarded “as an enduring part of academic life” (p. 310). Indeed, since the Colonial Era there has been strife between the non-academic boards

creating institutions and the faculty teaching in them; in the middle and saddled with responsibilities of the board and management of the faculty, the president would become the point of administration (Thelin, 2010). Thelin (2010) further describes the evolution of the administration model as an increased in presidential autonomy strengthens the power of those administrators aiding in development and operations. Conversely, faculty never achieves “the power to appropriate funds, manage the institution, or even to have the final word on students to be admitted” (p. 93). This early American higher education operational format followed the university models of European contemporaries and counterparts. As this model of governance (administration) and academic structure (faculty) took form and crystallized, the entities of administration and faculty would evolve as discrete components of higher education. While the transformation of the faculty to its current form is beyond the focus and scope of this paper, it is valuable to examine the more recent state of the university administrative paradigm with a focus on the specific set of administrators who may have direct oversight of general diversity experiences and the experiences of Black/white biracial students in particular.

### **Administrative/Administrators Impact on Socialization**

Weidman (1989) expounds on Brim’s (1966) definition of socialization by declaring that socialization “involves the acquisition and maintenance” of a person’s “membership in salient groups” while remaining a member of society on a whole (p. 294). Weidman makes an important distinction when noting how the units (family, friends, and organizations) comprising society are themselves a composite of groups and people. This atomistic paradigm permits socialization to be viewed from the perspective of individuals or groups within a society, as well as society on a whole (Weidman, 1989).

This noted, a student seeking association with a particular affinity group of a college might do so while establishing and maintaining membership in the college as a whole organization; critically, the endeavor of establishing college membership involves administrative participation. To comprehend the administrator-student relationship, it is important to first define what a higher education administrator is. After a discussion on the definition of administrators, examining how they (administrators) operate in the higher education structure will help elucidate their contribution to student socialization.

**The role defined.** The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines administration as “The action of carrying out or overseeing the tasks necessary to run an organization, bring about a state of affairs, etc.” Accordingly, an administrator is “a person charged with directing or managing the affairs of a region, institution, etc.” (OED, 2014). The Bureau of Labor and Statics (BLS) lists among the responsibilities of Post Secondary Academic Administrators, the oversight of “student services, academics, and faculty research at colleges and universities” (BLS, 2014). A common thread in these definitions is the supervision and management of a defined set of responsibilities in an organization or entity.

As mentioned above, administration has been integral to American higher education since its inception and the scope of the role has modified accordingly with time; the ambiguity of the term “administrator” is crucial. The administrator role in much of the literature is illustrated simply and in broad terms. However, a closer look at the administrator may reveal a more complex character charged with leadership, management, policy processes, and quality control. What follows is an overview of the categories and types of administration within higher education, followed by an

examination of the goal of administrators, and the type of administrator expected as the focus of this research.

**Leaders or followers?** Administrators are “the nuts and bolts” (Williams, 1989, p. 100) of the college machine. As noted above, administrators manage and oversee organizational operations and in this regard can be viewed as leaders. Bolman and Deal (2006) offer a suitable caveat concerning leadership and management of organizations—“the best leaders are the best followers” (p. 369). This notion becomes especially poignant when considering the socializing influences (e.g. family, friends, education) impacting administrators. While it is beyond the scope of this review, it is valuable to note that administrators—potential socializing agents for the university—are themselves products of socialization. Therefore, and as leaders of the university, administrators must also be viewed as people who are “imperfect cogs in the bureaucratic machinery;” they have personal needs that may not align with the university, causing friction and tenuous interpersonal relationships (Bolman & Deal, 2006, p. 166). That is to say, as a cadre of leaders within the university machine, administrators may face their own challenges of following or toeing the company line as socialized agents of an institution.

**The Administrative agent in the university.** The institutional structure of a university, Ehrenberg (1999) notes, is headed up by central administration which includes “the president, provost, and all the administrative and support services” (p. 100). These “administrative and support services” are inclusive of departments and enterprises ranging from admissions to student affairs as well as the bookstore and information technology. The remaining administrators can be found in “the rest of the university” consisting of “undergraduate colleges, professional schools, and graduate colleges”

(Ehrenberg, 1999, p. 100). While Ehrenberg considers administration from an economic vantage ruminating on the university from a “utility-maximizing framework” (p. 99), his delineations of administration are useful. In this view, administrators either fall into the category of *central* administration or *academic* administration. This aligns with Birnbaum’s (1989) declaration that college administration is bifurcated. One division (central administration) of this bifurcation is a “conventional bureaucratic hierarchy” ultimately serving the Board’s will. The other (academic administration) involves faculty presiding over the institutional aspects on which it is considered “they have professional jurisdiction” (p. 39).

In listing their assumptions of college administrators, Astin and Scherrei’s (1980) primary premise is that, ultimately, the objective of any administrator should be the “fulfillment of the aims of that organization” (p. 1). In the case of higher education, administrators’ aim should be the “maximization of faculty productivity” as well as “the enhancement of student learning and development” (Astin & Scherrei, 1980, p. 2). While these aims may be easily sorted into Ehrenburg’s (1999) categorization of central or academic administrations, Astin & Scherrei (1980) propose that differences in administration are more “taxonomic” (p. 4). The various administrator styles and administration roles that may exist along with the potential categories of college administrators create a nebulous group that the literature is unhelpful with delineating (Astin & Scherrei, 1980). Seemingly, the administrators described by Astin and Scherrei are members of the central as well as the academic administration group. This would be logical as both administration groups are ideally unified in pursuit of a university’s mission with a primary focus on “student learning and development.” Therefore, it is not

a matter of whether or not all administrators affect students; instead, the issue is how distal or proximate that impact will be.

**Administrators of diversity.** The section of the review of literature will attempt to narrowly tailor the definition of administrator as it is used in this study (i.e. higher education personnel who focus on diversity in general and/or the experience of Black/white biracial students particularly). Observing the “paucity of literature that focuses specifically on the representation of African American administrators and their experiences at predominantly White colleges and universities” (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015, p. 1) the goal here will be to frame or define this type of administrator while also considering the responsibilities and expectations of the role. The section will conclude with a word on the future for “diversity” administrators in higher education.

**Role.** A college administrator dedicated to diversity has historically observed different roles. In their research on the role of the Chief Diversity Officer, Damon Williams and Katrina Wade-Golden (2013) impresses the dynamism of the role through the use of a model illustrating the expectation of diversity in response to the nation’s racial atmosphere at the time (Figure 1 [table 1], below). In this figure, the national campus climate for diversity appears to be in sync with historical events (e.g. Brown v. Board of Education (1954); Civil Rights (1964) & Voting Rights Acts (1965); Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; LGBTQ movement in the late 1990’s until present). Throughout this period the role of the diversity administrator remained pliant.

Figure 1.

**Table 1. Three Models of Organizational Diversity Capabilities in Higher Education**

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Affirmative Action and Equity</i>	<i>Multicultural</i>	<i>Academic Diversity</i>
Launching point	1950s and 1960s	1960s and 1970s	Late 1990s–2000s
Locus	Civil rights movement	Black Power movement	Diversity movement
Drivers of change	Shifting laws, policy, social movements	Campus social protests, shifting legal policy	Changing demographics, workforce needs, persistent inequalities, legal and political dynamics
Definition	Focused institutional effort designed to enhance the compositional diversity of the university's faculty, staff, and students and to eliminate discriminatory practices	Institutional diversity efforts designed to provide services for ethnic and racially diverse students, women, and other bounded social identity groups and secondarily to research these groups and constituencies	Focused agenda centered on infusing diversity into the curriculum of the institution and conducting research around issues of diversity
Diversity rationale	Social justice	Social justice	Educational value
Focus	Profile change	Supporting diverse constituents	Psychosocial and cognitive development
Strategy	Remediating and eliminating discrimination	Providing diversity services, fostering community and tolerance on campus, and conducting research and teaching courses in the areas of diversity	Providing diversity as an important resource for student learning
Target of efforts	Underrepresented groups of students, faculty, and staff	Underrepresented groups, social identity groups, women, primarily students	All students
Organizational capability	Affirmative action programs, plans, and policy statements; Race-sensitive admissions programs and processes; equal opportunity programs	Multicultural affairs units, cultural centers, and ethnic and gender studies institutes and programs	Centralized diversity requirements and diversity programs such as intergroup relations offices.
Dynamic of change	Incremental—first order	Incremental—first order	Incremental—first order

Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013 p. 10

An interpretation of the models defined above may suggest higher education's is currently in a "dimension" of "Academic Diversity." However, Williams & Wade-Golden (2013) are clear in stating these as the phases diversity in higher education and not assuming all institutions recognize the same dimensions (i.e. there may be colleges and universities occupying the "Affirmative Action and Equity" or "Multicultural" dimensions of the model). Diversity efforts at a university may also be concurrently

multiphasic<sup>17</sup> as illustrated in Williams's (2013) models, a fact that may become the focus of a university's Chief Diversity Officer (CDO).

*Chief diversity officer.* As a relatively new phenomenon in higher education, there is focused yet thorough literature available on the role of the CDO. For the purpose of this research it will be important to key in on the role's particular function as it concerns students and socialization. In this capacity the CDO is part of a university senior executive team responsible for a "fundamental commitment to inclusive excellence" (Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis, 2014, p. 1). In their document setting the standards for CDOs in higher education for the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE), Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis (2014) ensure that diversity, inclusiveness and equity are the responsibilities of all administrators and leaders in higher education; the standards the authors present are meant only as "guideposts" (p. 228) for CDO responsibilities and not a confirmation of their sole responsibility for university-wide diversity efforts.

The main purposes of a CDO position are framed by Williams & Wade-Golden (2013) as the maintenance of "institutional excellence" as well championing and providing voice for students, faculty and staff of various minoritized, underserved and bounded groups as well as the initiatives developed and implemented to support these groups. The literature reveals that until recently, CDOs may not have existed in the executive or "chief" realm of a university's hierarchy and was more likely a term bestowed on the administrator considered to be leading diversity efforts (Williams &

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<sup>17</sup> Residence Life may employ more of a Multicultural dimension in providing housing for various populations where Admissions may incorporate more of an *Affirmative Action and Equity* dimension in their review of applications and subsequent acceptances. Faculty demographics along with their curriculum development, tenure processes, recruitment and hiring may all also be at different dimensions.

Wade-Golden, 2013). Various roles in a university may address diversity however the “Chief” diversity officer ideally manages a pan-university portfolio while exhibiting “campus-wide leadership at the executive level” (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013, p. 30).

This is an important distinction. As noted above, “Administration” in higher education can be academic or operational and within that academic component “Administrators” focus on a variety of areas, departments and schools. At the executive or chief level, the administrator reports directly to the president and in this regard is an extension of the president serving at the will of a Board (Westmeyer, 1990). That is to say, all administrators do not focus on under-served/represented or bounded groups or diversity in particular and all administrators who might focus on these populations or diversity may or may not do so (1) at a pan-university level (2) with the direct authority and support of the president.

### **Student Impact**

The simplest way to assess the “educational consequences” (p. 2) of administration’s actions is to illustrate them on a continuum of potential results (Astin & Scherrei, 1980). In this conceptualization, one pole of the continuum would be “proximate outcomes” directly impacted by administration and the other pole would be “distal outcomes” displaying a negligible connection to administrative actions (Astin & Scherrei, 1980, p. 2). In their research, the authors found that on this continuum, administrators’ proximate outcomes affected student attitudes, and distal outcomes were associated with little impact on student behavior (Astin & Scherrei, 1980). A key principle illustrated by the continuum is that the behavior of administration has an

indirect impact on student behavior; there appears to only be a remote “connection between administrative practice and student learning” (Astin & Scherrei, 1980, p. 3).

This last claim creates doubt concerning any need to research administration’s impact upon student outcomes and learning, let alone socialization. And, while the statement may not accurately portray administrative roles on a whole, it minimally supports the more traditional perspective that higher level planning, resource allocation, and policy creation and management of administration, results in limited direct impact upon students. However, the authors conclude (as a result of their study) that involving “student outcomes” (e.g. graduation; employment; etc.) as a primary responsibility for administrators would improve the college administrative practice “significantly” (Astin & Scherrei, p. 4). Regardless of potential incentive for or outcome accountability provided to administration, administrator’s impact on student outcomes and learning may be marginal compared with students’ daily interaction with and influence of peers.

### **The Historical Recognition of Students in Higher Education**

For students in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, United States higher education did not include the exploration and autonomy often associated with today’s college experience. In fact, students in the eighteenth century were riddled by administration’s rules (May, 2010). In an effort to express their discontent these students led revolts and sabotage efforts (Thelin, 2011). The expectation of the silent and dutiful student (Katz & Korn, 1968) inspired clandestine meetings while emerging student governance forced higher education to heed student demands. Bemoaning colleges’ strictures on academic and social life, students sought fulfillment in their own governance as evidenced by the

creation of literary societies, honor systems, student assemblies, class councils, as well as student councils and associations—student government (May, 2011, p. 209-214).

This movement would mark the eve of “college life”—the student created barrier of freedom, pleasure, and adolescent hedonism that deflected the imposition of academic rigor and rejected the “self-abnegation” administration expected of students (Horowitz, 2013, p. 25). The advent of an extra-curriculum would stand as a student-authored world existing “alongside the official world of the college” (Thelin, 2011, p. 65). These student-authored, extra-curricular expressions—student governance—represented the independence of a more united student body, one that would need to be embraced by higher education.

### **Student Governance**

An equally unique, perhaps enigmatic, landscape is created by the existence of student government or student governance at a university. A responsible examination into the impact of administrative decisions on student socialization should acknowledge any shared governance and subsequent power paradigms. More precisely, when examining “an institution’s philosophy toward the culture and value of student involvement” it is essential to provide “context to the role of student government” (McKaig & Policello, 1999, p. 1).

The literature reveals how in response to university unrest, administrators created student *government* associations in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Laosebikan-Buggs, 2006). It should be noted that student *governance* has been a part of the university structure since the 18<sup>th</sup> century (May, 2010, citing Coates & Coates, 1985; Cohen, 1998).

The disparity in their (student government and student governance) inceptions may be explained by their different roles.

**Student governance and the beginning of involvement.** Student governance has existed in American higher education since the 1700's. The limited autonomy and strict rules levied upon students (May, 2010) presented them with a college culture "designed to control nearly every aspect of student life" (Gieser, 2010, p. 6). In an effort to gain minimal autonomy students began assembling and unifying to create and engage in extracurricular activities.

Today, student governance is a college norm. The often-heralded example of this student regulation is the honor system. While gaining popularity in the United States and internationally (Dix, Emery, & Le, 2014) traditional honor codes in higher education represent a "significant minority" of colleges and universities (McCabe & Trevino, 1993, p. 524); approximately 100 institutions of higher education utilize student honor system or codes (Grasgreen, 2014). Schwartz, Tatum, and Wells (2012) make an important distinction between "traditional" and "modified" honor codes, the latter of which have been implemented increasingly since the 1990's and prolific student use of the internet (p. 90). Traditional honor codes on the other hand are considered part of a university's fabric, are student driven and governed, and influence "not only academic behavior but all aspects of college life" (Schwartz, Tatum & Wells, 2012, p. 90). Putting aside the earnest or dubious intentions propelling student honor systems (Thelin, 2010), they represent a foundational convention of student democracy. Indeed, original honor systems were reinforced as official honor codes, granting students' a role in the college disciplinary process (May, 2011); this student "self-regulation" would preempt "student

involvement in campus judicial matters,” laying the foundation for student government (Harris & Dyer, 2006, p. 34-35).

**Student government and institutional governance.** Student government is a result of and not synonymous with student governance. Discerning between the two concepts (student governance and student government) and the prevalence of student government in administrative decision-making is a beneficial distinction for this research. A strong history and culture of student government, it can be argued, may decrease the impact of administration on student socialization at a college. In such cases, the sovereignty of student government may result in administrative impotence. Student government is a component of the institution’s governance. As such it (student government) maintains relationships with other groups in the institution’s governance structure (e.g. faculty council, faculty senate, staff councils and associations, the institution’s governing board, etc.) with the strength of said groups determining the influence of student government (McKaig & Policello, 1999). Student government as a university recognized legislative body exists as an entity of authority whose influence is granted to them by the university. The mandated, delegated, deferred, and appointed responsibilities (p. 05) of student government are both integral to and dispensed by the university (McKaig & Policello, 1999).

The various cultural elements impacting an institution of higher education’s student government can be as subjective as the various forms of student government themselves. And, if examining a university’s position on student involvement and culture is predicated on understanding its student government, it arguably could not be done without examining the university’s whole governance system.

In this regard, student government should not be viewed as Balkanized sovereignty as much as a component of institutional governance's monolith. Put simply, student government may be highly visible and valued yet still exist as part of a larger ruling process or body. While an exhaustive evaluation of higher education governance is beyond the scope of this study its acknowledgement adds value to the research.

Central to this study is the proposition that Black/white biracial student development may go underserved while experiencing continuous inequity in socialization. Thus, this study includes an exploration of how a college environment, as established by university leadership and perceived by biracial students, relates to biracial student socialization, with a particular focus on the degree to which the university and its administrators consider the Black/white biracial presence when creating an environment of student socialization. This discussion of administration in higher education establishes the penetrating impact of higher education's institutional structure and empowered administration on the socialization of students.

### **Conclusion**

In considering biracial identity in higher education, this literature review has focused on the constructs of racial duality in biracial identity as well as biracial identity and involvement in higher education. The intention is to examine the relationship between biracial identity, academic and social integration, and administrative responsibilities.

Multiracial and biracial identity models and theories have been increasing in popularity from the 1930's to the present. Beginning with the "marginal man" theory, bi-cultural individuals have been portrayed as existing on the edge of two societies. In the

1980's multicultural models (with origins in monoracial minority identity models) were continuously redesigned and refined for application to biracial individuals (e.g. Poston's paradigm & Root's immersion model). In an act of evolution and perhaps a search for distinction, these models have progressed to Rockquemore's biracial typology specifically addressing Black/white biracial identity. The Rockquemore typology was found to be the most applicable for the purposes of the proposed study.

The study of biracial self-identity (and identification) in higher education is new, although qualitative studies involving Black/white biracial students have been conducted and documented in available research papers, a dearth still exists. While this present research may provide selective insight to biracial student identity as well as college's contribution to identity development, it is intended to focus on the institution's identification of Black/white biracial students as a way of understanding their socialization experiences. Socialization in this respect is not intended to solely involve the individual dimension—the student's cognitive development and acquisition of the college culture—socialization also has an organizational dimension. The coupling of these two dimensions (student acquisition of culture and the university's recognition of the student's attributes) will potentially provide a deeper understanding of socialization.

## Chapter 3—METHODOLOGY

### **The Approach**

This study employed a transformative worldview (Creswell, 2014) and utilized an explanatory, sequential mixed-methods research design to examine biracial student socialization in college. Research began with document analysis after which a student survey was developed and distributed. The data from the survey informed focus group discussions, which informed interviews. The study concluded with a second document analysis. Utilizing a survey, focus groups and interviews were then undertaken to allow the data to provide a more holistic picture, an approach based on the concept that “one database could help explain the other database, and one database could explore different types of questions than the other database” (Creswell, 2014, p. 15). This multifaceted approach benefits the worldview applied in this research.

### **Worldview**

Creswell (2014), following Guba (1990), presents the term *worldview* as “a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study” (p. 6). The application of the term worldview in a methodology is motivated by the subjective set of experiences and philosophical positioning a scholar harbors when conducting research (Creswell, 2014). Due to its application of an epistemological and ontological perspective, worldview (specifically the *transformative* worldview) is an apt methodological approach for this research. The transformative worldview encompasses metaphysical paradigms of epistemology, ontology, axiology and a systematic methodology (Mertens, 2010a).

**Transformative.** Ontologically, the transformative worldview espouses a belief in one reality with multiple interpretations (Mertens, 2010a). This ontological perspective distinguishes a transformative worldview from postpositivism’s empirical pursuit of proposed reality based on retention/rejection of hypotheses; constructionism’s collective, individual interpretations of reality or a situation; and pragmatism’s focus on problem-solving, actions, and a consequence based reality. While these three belief systems (postpositivism, constructivism, and pragmatism) have recognizable ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings and expectations, transformative worldview differs through its basis in axiology (Mertens, 2010b). This concentration on the nature of morals and ethics—axiology—positions the transformative worldview to be “an umbrella for research theories and approaches that place priority on human rights and social justice” (Mertens, 2010b, p. 473).

### **Transformative Paradigm**

The transformative paradigm<sup>18</sup> has arisen to fill a need not met by the traditional, established paradigms. Specifically, the transformative paradigm is a product of historically marginalized people “finding a means to bring their voices to the world of research” (p. 10). Researchers help present these “voices” by observing the transformative paradigm’s axiological assumptions of enhancing social justice, advancing human rights, and demonstrating a “respect for cultural norms” (Mertens, 2010a, p. 470). Supported by the assumptions of researchers, the voices of marginalized peoples are reflected in the transformative approach and serve as a guide or framework for

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<sup>18</sup> Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have advanced the concept of paradigms as philosophical beliefs comprised of axiology, methodology, epistemology, and ontology, which motivate and guide actions in research.

researchers committed to increasing social justice (Mertens, 2010b). A premise of this study is that the socialization of biracial students is an issue of social justice.

### **Design**

In alignment with the social justice foundation of the transformative view, this explanatory mixed-methods study followed the recommended “cyclical model” supported by a “transformative methodological belief system” (Mertens, 2010, p. 472). In such a model, community member participation and involvement is vital from initiation throughout the research process (Mertens, 2010). Therefore, this research began with a document analysis informing the development of survey questions (Appendix A) helping to structure focus group questions (Appendix B) that informed interview questions posed to administrators (Appendix C) before concluding with another document analysis. The survey instrument and focus group questions were administered to the general sample of Black/white biracial students. The interviews included key university administrators with primary responsibilities in student services and/or minority affairs. There were document analyses of extant University literature and artifacts.

### **Document Analysis**

A focus on Black/white biracial students provides insight on how socialization may or may not contribute to one being an “effective member” (Brim, 1966) of the college. The document analysis was intended to reveal the college’s normative order (i.e. the University’s<sup>19</sup> mission(s) and expectations of staff and faculty as well as students and student governance) and normative contexts (i.e., the educational objectives and

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<sup>19</sup> Throughout this document “University” with a capital “U” is used to reference the site of data collection and distinguish it from the general term “university” with a lowercase “u.” In this study, the term “University” is not an allusion to any particular university.

interaction opportunities of the academic and social spheres, respectively) (Weidman, 1989). This normative order sets the expectations for faculty and subsequent faculty expectations for students, making it (normative order) what Weidman (1989) described as a “potent agent of socialization” (p. 304).

**Sampling and analysis plan.** The primary document analysis was undertaken to assist in identifying the University’s moral authority (mission) and the corollary normative order. This involved data mining of and Boolean searches in the University’s websites along with utilizing JSTOR’s Enabled Data Mining Project (<http://about.jstor.org/news/jstor-enabled-data-mining-project-signals-next-wave-research>) and the University library’s research interface with Virgo and GOOGLE. The primary document analysis included consulting relevant documents in the library for historical evidence of the involvement and socialization of minority and underserved populations at the university. This data excavation was intended to reveal the history and culture of the university through an analysis of the institution’s race based actions/reactions (e.g. historical events and subsequent outcomes; admissions trends; classifications; extracurriculum involvement; and university provisions in support of minority and underserved students) as well as their minority student body.

A second document analysis (at the conclusion of the data collection process) focused on how the university’s normative order may or may not have been historically operationalized, shared, and aligned throughout the university. This operationalization directly impacts the Black/white biracial student. How the normative order may have affected, or perhaps accommodated, Black/white biracial students, was examined through a review of existing policies along with current events that may or may not address

bi/multi-racial socialization at the university. Importantly, this second document analysis was more directed and purposeful in targeting bi/multiracial students, and any specific initiatives intended for, involving or excluding Black/white biracial students, at the university.

## Survey

Informed by the initial document analysis and the historical evidence of exclusion, oversight and resistance displayed toward women and minorities (specifically those racially identifying as Black) at the University, a survey was developed and administered to students who identified as fitting this study's criteria of a Black/white biracial undergraduate student. The survey provided the quantitative descriptive data utilized in this mixed methods research. To identify and measure the individual socialization of student participants in this study, the following three primary socialization processes (Weidman, DeAngelo, & Bethea, 2014) were targeted: (1) *interpersonal relationships* (interaction with peers and faculty), (2) *intrapersonal and learning activities* (participation in academics, e.g. going to class, attending lectures, studying, etc.), and (3) *integration* (becoming part of the social and academic life of the university) (p. 45). From the perspective of the university, socialization would involve shared (among members of the university) observation and adherence to organizational norms (i.e., the accepted and expected observation of organizational regulations as reflected by the day-to-day behavior of the organization's members).

An organization's socialization efforts may be measured by any creation and maintenance of an environment (i.e., social and academic contexts; norms; Weidman, 1989) that nurtures its individual members. More comprehensively, Weidman's (1989)

Model of Student Socialization illustrates three main components (Student background characteristics; Collegiate experience; Socialization outcomes) while recognizing two external sources of pressure (Parental socialization; Non-college reference groups) (Appendix D). The survey employed for this study contained items addressing each (to a greater or lesser degree) dimension of this socialization model. However, as noted above the research focused on the socialization processes of interpersonal relationships, intrapersonal and learning activities, and integration.

Specifically, this research examined the socialization efforts of an institution of higher education as it effects and is perceived by the target population of Black/white biracial undergraduate students. Reflective of this focus, the research questions address socialization as it concerns the individual (Research Question #1) and the organization (Research Question #2). This bifurcation of the concept of socialization—socialization “of the individual” and socialization “by the organization”—provides a necessary distinction. As noted in the literature review, socialization of the individual often involves one appropriating the required role and norms within an organization while displaying acceptable behavior and establishing desired relationships. Socialization from the perspective of the organization involves the establishment of an environment where individuals can readily identify and embrace that organization’s norms such that the individual becomes a valued member of the organization’s future.

This analysis will involve several dependent variables—entities—distinguished through the survey as “types” (guided by Rockquemore’s Biracial Typology; there are four: Border, Protean, Singular, and Transcendent) of Black/white biracial students from which a respondent may choose to identify. However, if the samples sizes are too small

to run meaningful analysis as initially intended. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the four Black/white biracial types listed above.

**Sampling.** The participant sampling for this survey and study was purposeful. A purposeful selection of Black/white biracial students was attempted by contacting students who self-identified and reported being biracial during the University enrollment process. This information was obtained through the Office of the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer (VPSA). Every Black/white biracial student as defined (students with one Black and one white parent) in this study may not self-identify as “biracial” during admissions and registration, with this in mind the request to the VPSA included students who identified as Black as well as those who did not identify at all. Students who fit the above criterion were sent an email notice (Appendix D) informing them of the study and requesting participation in the survey. Concurrently, similar emails were sent to criterion matching students who were identified through the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH) and a council of leaders from various Black student organizations.

The question immediately following the consent agreement in the survey (Appendix A) asks respondents whether they are a Black/white biracial and the following question asks respondents whether they are full-time undergraduate students. Students who answered “Yes” to these questions could proceed and participate in the survey. Conversely, students who answered “No” to either of these first two questions were exited from the survey. At the conclusion of the survey there was a question asking if respondents would be interested in participating in a focus group; those who responded positively to this question formed the sample pool for potential focus group participants.

From this pool, 22 students expressed interest in participating in a focus group, 15 were randomly elected and 10 participated in the focus group and one student was interviewed individually (Participant alias are listed below in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Study participant alias list

Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Individual Interview
Tania	Snow	Sally
Elsa	Aladdin	
Ana	Ariel	
	Nahla	
	Belle	
	Jasmine	
	Regina	

**Measures.** Items used by Ingram, Chaudhary, and Jones (2014) in their research of biracial students' interaction on the college campus served as a reference point for the development of items incorporated into this survey. To assist in focusing Weidman's socialization model on the population (Black/white biracial students) targeted in this study, the creation of questions was also informed by the Survey of Biracial Experiences (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002), the biracial college student interaction survey (Ingram, Chaudhary, & Jones, 2014) and Rockquemore's (1999) Biracial Typology. Development of this study's survey instrument (27 items) was guided and framed using Weidman's (1989) undergraduate student socialization model. Specifically, the survey items attempt to address three major areas of Weidman's model: student background

characteristics, collegiate experience, and non-college reference groups. The data gleaned from the independent variables established in the Weidman model along with the dependent variables provided in the biracial typology help establish the entities and attributes necessary for an SPSS analysis.

**Analysis plan.** The survey was administered through Qualtrics online survey software. Qualtrics was also used to collect and analyze (as more of a conduit) the data. Although it runs data analyses Qualtrics software also interfaces with SPSS; this was valuable in rendering the descriptive statistics for the study. An original plan was to use Discriminant Analysis (DA) to identify predictor variables that could be used to discern between the four Black/white biracial groups (the four types of Black/white biracial people) identified in this study. A Descriptive DA ideally would have identified group differences based on variables (attributes) with a Predictive DA then determining which group an entity may be placed in considering their attributes (Grimm & Yarnold, 1995). The unforeseen small sample sizes rendered DA unavailable. Due to the small size analyses were insignificant and ultimately a descriptive statistics were used. For this examination, the predictor variables from the Context section of the survey were scaled. Sectioning of the survey was based on the three major areas of Weidman's socialization model discussed above: student background (SES, aptitude, goals and values); the academic (major, and institutional quality & mission); and social (the college size, housing, and groups & organizations) normative contexts; the influence of parents and non-college reference groups; and the college socialization processes (interpersonal, intrapersonal, and integration).

The survey was sent to a total of 1963 undergraduate students who, when enrolling, racially self-identified as Black, Black and White, or “Not Specified”. These 1963 students were sent an email informing them of the study and the opportunity to participate; 138 respondents accessed the link and began the survey with 101 agreeing to participate. Following the knockout questions there remained 66 participants of which 65 continued the survey. A total of 47 students completed the survey. Qualtrics was used to produce the survey and collect the data. The raw data was exported to and analyzed in IBM SPSS. This survey contained an item allowing respondents to volunteer for participation in a follow-up focus group; the questions posed in the focus group were informed by the survey data. The focus group was composed of a random selection of students who responded to the “request for interested focus group participants” item in the survey. Qualitative data in this study was coded and analyzed using Dedoose.

### **Focus Group**

**Sampling.** The focus group was a stratified random sample of survey respondents who expressed interest in participation in a focus group. The focus group efforts involved 11 students. Over 20% of survey completers were involved in the focus group (63% of survey completers indicated an interest in participating in the focus group), twice the amount of the original target size of ten percent. The decision to double the percentage resulted from a survey completer rate that was half of the original target. Due to the sufficient number of student participants, two focus groups were held as well as an interview with a student who could not make the focus group meeting times and was highly motivated to participate.

**Measures.** The focus group was guided by nine questions (Appendix B) designed to further explore the basic information collected from the survey. Aligned and consistent with the three domains of the Weidman socialization model—student background characteristics, collegiate experience, and non-college reference groups—the questions aspired to invoke student experiences as they related to any sense of belonging and socialization at the university. These foundational focus group questions were honed following the collection and analysis of the survey data.

**Analysis plan.** The focus group data was qualitative and captured using an audio recorder. The focus group recordings were saved as audio files on the researcher's computer, once all sessions were completed the files were sent to be transcribed. A phenomenological approach was used to research and analyze the transcribed documents for relevant information and themes and coded accordingly. The presence of tone, pitch, speed, and affect vocally conveyed in the audio file helped contextualize the transcribed account of the focus group sessions. Although the qualitative software Dedoose has the capability to upload audio files and capture themes while coding, the transcribed Word documents were uploaded instead and coding was completed by reading through the documents and utilizing Dedoose's tools.

### **Administrator Interviews**

**Sampling.** The three administrator interviews were the result of a targeted selection process. The intent was to select three senior administrators in departments or areas considered to have direct impact and influence on the study's targeted population (Black/white biracial students). Senior level status was important in an effort to minimize bureaucracy, power deference and potential for questions to go unanswered due

to limitations in scope and knowledge of portfolio. As university administrators (in consideration of the definition established and distinctions made in the review of literature above) the three selected had pan-university responsibilities for whom diversity could be considered a integral component of their position. While all were at a senior level and the head of their respective offices, only one reported directly to the president.

**Measures.** The interview was guided by five questions (Appendix C) designed a priori and specifically sought the administrators input on the general idea of socialization at the University and specifically what the socialization of the Black/white biracial student might entail. These questions were informed by the literature on socialization as well as Hurtado and Carter's (1990) research on belonging. Ultimately there were a few follow up questions posed that were not in the original five however these questions were posed in an attempt to better understand a concept the administrator may have introduced their response (e.g. when discussing the many student groups recognized by the University in response to the question, "Historically how is socialization operationalized/achieved with diverse populations?" the follow up question was "Are any of these student groups specifically for or founded by Black/white biracial students?").

**Analysis plan.** The interview data was qualitative and captured using an audio recorder. The interview recordings were saved as audio files on the researcher's computer and when all interviews were complete these files were emailed for transcription. The transcribed documents uploaded to Dedoose, analyzed for relevant information and themes and coded accordingly.

## **Site and Timeline**

The sampling frame for this study will be from a research university located in Eastern United States. In the university undergraduate population <50% are domestic racial minorities of which <10% have been identified as “Multi-race.” The undergraduate population has an average age in the 20’s and is coeducational.

This study occurred during the 2014/2015 academic year. Upon approval from the IRB, contemporary and historical documents contributing to the University’s organizational ethos around awareness and socialization of various racial groups were analyzed. Immediately this document analysis was the administration of a survey to all qualified and responding biracial students. Focus groups followed-up the survey and were comprised of Black/white biracial students expressing a desire to further participate in focus groups. There were also individual interviews with senior level administrators. A second document analysis further examined any university socialization efforts experienced by Black/white biracial students according to the data collected. The survey, focus group and interview data along with the examination of extant artifacts allowed for triangulation of data, reinforcing credibility.

## **Rationale for Procedure**

This study utilizes Weidman’s (1989) model of socialization as a theoretical framework. Weidman’s entire model was not explored in this study (post-college outcomes and employment is not a focus) however students’ pre-college socialization and the normative contexts confronted at college are involved. It was helpful to ascertain the values, career aspirations, goals, SES, and aptitudes held by students entering college, prior to their confronting the normative order and contexts of that college. To that end,

the survey instrument intended to help identify any pre-college socialization, frame types of Black/white biracial participants and also glean students' perceptions of the college's normative order and normative contexts.

As it concerns any impact of anticipatory socialization (preparation for the career and life a student may expect upon graduation) and non-college reference groups, the survey data provides a foundation from which to probe any influence parents and non-college reference groups may have in promoting a sense of belonging in consideration of in college socialization processes (e.g. inter/intra-personal interaction and processing along with academic and social integration) (Weidman, 1989). Importantly and germane to this study is how the socialization model applies to a unique group of students (identifying as Black/white biracial as defined in this study) who unlike many if not most of their peers, are managing racial identity and classification issues at a university where there may be inadequate knowledge of and insufficient support for their group.

In short, students may recognize their goals, values, aspirations, aptitudes, etc. upon college entrance while encountering norms and subsequent socializing influences (normative pressures). Ideally accompanying this matriculation would be an assessment of the degree to which a university's normative pressures will impact students' success. Whether or how they modify or maintain their goals, values, etc., in consideration of the college's influences and pressures is a matter of socialization. The survey and focus group(s) provided students' background characteristics, goals, values, etc. (helps to establish their role) along with some insight on their perception of the college's normative order and context (which helps establish norms and will be captured in interviews). A

more objective view of the college's normative order was obtained through a document analysis.

The document analysis, through a historical perspective, reveals the college's normative order (faculty and administration's expectations of students as derived from the university's mission). The stronger (i.e. the more ingrained and reticulated) the normative order the stronger the expectations of groups, administrators, and faculty on students (Weidman, 1989). Mission based expectations at a university can be driven by the expectation of faculty and administrators to achieve certain objectives. These expectations may then cascade through the goals faculty and administrators may have for students. According to Chickering (1969) the more aligned these objectives are between university staff, faculty, administration and groups, the stronger the college's normative consensus will be (Weidman, p. 305). Simply, the "Moral Authority" (Parsons & Platt, 1973, p. 167) of an institution is operationalized by the organization's normative order which is upheld and carried out by various organizational stakeholders pursuing their institutional objectives; the more closely these objectives are aligned between stakeholders the higher the institutional solidarity.

Following the document analysis the survey provided an opportunity for student insight on socializing influences (interaction with others, faculty and groups) and pressures (non-college reference group affiliation, contact with family, etc.). The focus groups provided more detailed data around the elements of influences and pressures experienced by the students. More exactly, the focus groups provided an opportunity to examine this study's Black/white biracial student participants' college experiences, their decisions or determinations regarding their biracial identification at the University along

with any sense of belonging. The focus groups and survey provided a range of perspectives on biracial student socialization and the interviews with administrators provided an administrative lens through which to view the socialization of Black/white biracial students as well as any socialization efforts targeting Black/white biracial students and sponsored by the university. The secondary document analysis was guided by the data revealed in the survey and focus groups, allowing for a more critical examination of college norms.

The interest in student socialization, specifically of the Black/white biracial student, in college informed this study's research questions as well as the selection of a site. The intention was to investigate two major research questions and their related sub-questions:

- (1) What are the classifications, concerns and feelings of belonging experienced by Black/white biracial students at a research university?
  - (a) Are there discernible "types" of biracial students and if so, what are they?
  - (b) Do biracial students express perceptions of the "socialization" process (student interaction, education, and involvement) within the University and does this socialization process differ among types?
  - (c) What are the supports and aids to socialization that Black/white biracial students identify as available to them?
- (2) Are Black/white biracial students affected by the socialization efforts in higher education?

- (a) What is the pre-socialization to college of the Black/white biracial and are there existing norms shaping the socialization of Black/white biracial students in the University?
- (b) Are University efforts (toward socialization) cited by Black/white biracial students?
- (c) What level of awareness does the University have of the biracial student population, culture, and involvement at the University?
- (d) Does the University have normative contexts that attract Black/white biracial students and to what degree do administration and student governance support these contexts?
- (e) In what ways is the concept of social justice reflected in the narratives of biracial students?

### **Sampling Strategy**

#### **Sample**

The sample student group in this study was comprised of full-time, non-commuting college undergraduates spanning the traditional range of 18-24 years of age. The survey participants represented a fairly even distribution of students across the four undergraduate years. As socialization is a process with “temporal aspects” (Weidman, 1989, p. 296) without studying an incoming class during their undergraduate career a longitudinal effect is best achieved through maximum variation within the sample. The study’s need to capture diversity in college years has also been influenced by Hurtado and Carter’s (1997) model of sense of belonging (p. 336). In their study of Latino undergraduate students, Hurtado and Carter (1997) targeted relatively new

students (second years) with burgeoning academic identities or sense of belonging and students at the other end of the spectrum (fourth years) with a more defined sense of the university and their role within it.

The respondents and participants in the study's survey and focus groups identified as Black/white biracial. Traditionally a student with two natural parents from two different monoracial groups, in this case Black and white, is biracial. Biracial students in this study had one biological Black parent (This distinction is made as adopted biracial people may have a homogenous set of monoracial parents or one parent. Also, interracial parents may adopt a monoracial child—these are examples of “transracial” individuals (Daniel, 2002, p. 114). To be clear, everyone in the sample of this study did not identify with being biracial but all identified as having one Black parent and one white parent. No participants were the offspring of two Black/white biracial parents.

### **Reflexive Analysis**

As the researcher I enter this study with a set of assumptions that should be articulated and noted as potential influences in collection of data, analysis of data, and the eventual reporting of the study. I am a Black/white biracial male who has traditionally self-identified as biracial, mulatto, or Black. Prior to higher education matriculation, I associated mostly with people who phenotypically appeared Black, were perceived by others as Black, and self-identified as Black. Upon entering college (a small state college where the student population was over 90% white) the white people and behaviors I encountered were foreign, confusing, entertaining, and at times, ingratiating. I participated in, manipulated, and leveraged social relationships and affiliations to improve and maximize my college experience. From a student affairs perspective I feel I

was exposed to as much diversity as the university had to offer. As a person of color, diversity was interaction with white students and experiencing the expectations of white faculty and administrators. In this regard, I never felt a sense of academic belonging. These relationships contributed to the obfuscation of identity while reinforcing the development of a mutable persona. My undergraduate college experience was not a supportive or enlightening racial self-discovery but a four-year case study on pervasive, at times subtle, and always, insidious racialization. This has contributed to my belief that many colleges and universities are not designed to appropriately facilitate or support the growth and development of people of color. As a graduate student I have become more aware of this climate, the lack of parity, equity and identity in the institution of higher education and perhaps more importantly, my responsibility to challenge this status quo.

## CHAPTER 4-RESULTS

### Introduction

The respondent data collected in this study was the result of a survey, focus groups and interviews. The study's survey was sent to a total of 1963 undergraduate students who, when enrolling, racially self-identified as Black, Black and White, or "Not Specified." These 1963 students were sent an email informing them of the study and the opportunity to participate; 138 respondents accessed the link and began the survey with 101 agreeing to participate. Following the knockout questions<sup>20</sup> there remained 66 participants of which 65 continued the survey. A total of 47 students completed the survey. Qualtrics was used to produce the survey and collect the data. The raw data was exported to and analyzed in IBM SPSS.

Sequentially, of the 22 respondents expressing interest in a follow-up focus group, 15 students were randomly selected for participation in two focus groups. Ten students participated in the focus groups (three in the first and seven in the second) and one student was individually interviewed. Three senior level administrators were identified and interviewed. All focus groups and interviews were facilitated and recorded by the researcher save one administrator who consented to the interview and asked not to be recorded. All recordings were transcribed and uploaded to Dedoose where the data was coded and analyzed.

The methods sequentially employed in this study were, (1) document analysis, (2) survey, (3) focus group(s), (4) interviews and (5) document analysis. As indicated, data

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<sup>20</sup> After the consent agreement the survey began with three "knockout" questions: Are you a Black/white biracial (do you have a parent who identifies as Black and a parent who identifies as white); are you a full-time undergraduate student; and, are you over 18 years of age? Answering "No" to any of these questions knocked the respondent out of the survey.

collection began with an initial document analysis. Another document analysis was carried out at the conclusion of data collection and analysis. The initial document analysis presents a historical view of the University's condition and normative order in an effort to establish a reference point for the respondent data garnered from the survey, subsequent focus group(s) and interviews. The second document analysis was conducted reflective of study participant data and establishes a contemporary view of the University as it relates to the target population and socialization explored in the research questions.

After a review of the study's research questions, the initial document analysis will be presented along with the second document analysis. Following these document analyses will be a note on the study's fit with the Weidman model of undergraduate student socialization, after which the results of the research questions will be presented. Data from the survey, focus groups and interviews are presented according to relevance with research questions. The study began with the following research questions:

- (1) What are the classifications, concerns and feelings of belonging experienced by Black/white biracial students at a research university?
  - (a) Are there discernible "types" of biracial students and if so, what are they?
  - (b) Do biracial students express perceptions of the "socialization" process (student interaction, education, and involvement) within the University and does this socialization process differ among types?
  - (c) What are the supports and aids to socialization that Black/white biracial students identify as available to them?
- (2) Are Black/white biracial students affected by the socialization efforts in higher education?

- (a) What is the pre-socialization to college of the Black/white biracial and are there existing norms shaping the socialization of Black/white biracial students in the University?
- (b) Are University efforts (toward socialization) cited by Black/white biracial students?
- (c) What level of awareness does the University have of the biracial student population, culture, and involvement at the University?
- (d) Does the University have normative contexts that attract Black/white biracial students and to what degree do administration and student governance support these contexts?
- (e) In what ways is the concept of social justice reflected in the narratives of biracial students?

Upon collection and analysis of data the above research questions were modified to three research questions. The research questions provide focus on the concepts presented in the original research questions, yet are streamlined allowing the data and its subsequent themes to be more conspicuous. These questions will be analyzed further in the chapter below and are as follows:

**Research Question 1** - *How do Black/white biracial students identify?*

**Research Question 2** - *How do Black/white biracial students and institutions of higher education, through university/college administrators, conceive and perceive their respective roles regarding socialization into higher education?*

**Research Question 3** - *In what ways is the concept of social justice reflected in the narratives of Black/white biracial students, their racial identities and college socialization?*

### **Document Analysis and Normative Order**

**Document analysis.** Rarely, the exception being select historical studies, is document analysis the sole method employed to answer a study's research question(s). A document analysis, or "content analysis" (Creswell, 2008, p. 230), often serves to "enhance or enrich" higher education research through an examination of various written and printed articles and artifacts (Love, 2003, p. 84). In this study, the initial document analysis provides insight to the research questions. Although this document analysis is presented separately any relevant data obtained is also be applied when analyzing relevant research questions.

As a means to support and triangulate the original data from the survey, focus groups, and interviews, the document analyses will help establish "the values and beliefs" (p. 160) of university stakeholders through a description and interpretation of extant documents and artifacts (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The document analyses involved a review of "public and private records" related to the target group and the site in an effort to "understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2008, p. 230-231) of Black/White biracial student socialization at the University.

**Normative order.** This primary document analysis also identifies what Weidman (1991) labels the "normative order" (p. 304) of a university. The normative order involves the mission and subsequent normative expectations of students by faculty and administration (Weidman, 1991). The normative order is foundational to a university and

catalyzes students' college experience. Weidman (1991) attributes his conceptualization of the college experience (including the normative pressures framing the "groups" and "other college settings" (i.e. social contexts) (p. 304) negotiated by undergraduates) portion of his socialization model to Parsons and Platt's (1973) postulation on student socialization. As cited in Weidman (1991) Parsons and Platt submit that two concepts drive socialization, (1) an institution's "moral authority" (Parsons & Platt, 1973, p. 167) which is characterized by the high expectations imposed on students through select University groups and (2) the interpersonal "relationships among various members of academic settings" (p. 304). Parsons and Platt's (1973) concept of socialization presents a cascade of mission messaging. This messaging establishes and endorses what Weidman (1989) labels a university's **Normative Contexts** (both *Academic* and *Social*)<sup>21</sup> directly impacting students' college experience.

The Weidman<sup>22</sup> model (Appendix E) can be presented as the equation (A + B = C) where the sum of what Weidman calls a university's (A) *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* plus students' (B) **Socialization Processes** equal students' **COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCE** (C). The Weidman model presents **Socialization Processes** as involving (1) *Interpersonal Interaction*, (2) *Intrapersonal Processes* and (3) *Social and Academic Integration*. *Social and Academic Integration* at a university requires an understanding of that university's *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts*

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<sup>21</sup> Weidman's (1989) model is a conceptual framework utilizing terms that have general application and definitions in Higher Education and Student Affairs, writ large. For this reason, when referencing and using these terms in the context of Weidman's model (Appendix E), capitalization and italics will be used. The Weidman model has five main boxes all of which contain various levels of "conceptions" (p. 300). When used in this research the main sections will be **UPPERCASE AND BOLD** with the first level conception **Upper and lowercase and Bold**, the second level will be *Upper and lowercase bold italics*, third level will be *Upper and lowercase italics* and the fourth level will be Upper and lowercase.

<sup>22</sup> When referencing Weidman's categories there is capitalization and italics whereas the components themselves are just capitalized.

(norms). Therefore, awareness of *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* is crucial to realizing **Socialization Processes**. In other words, if a college's *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* and student **Socialization Processes** are foundational to the college experience, and achieving **Socialization Processes** requires Academic and Social *Integration* (acquired through an awareness of the *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* ), it stands to reason that students' awareness of the *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* contributes to socialization at college. The *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts*, then, are in fact as integral to the college's efforts toward socialization as they are to students experiencing socialization processes.

In short, an institution's normative order begins with a mission that provides a "frame of reference" (Weidman, 1991, p. 306) for all its stakeholders. In an institution such as a university, systematic alignment to the mission creates a normative order of expectations operationalized through normative contexts and socialization processes. This all contributes to the college experience a university may provide. In this case, with their selection of a university students may, in fact, be selecting a particular college experience prior to their arrival.

### **Initial Document Analysis**

The initial document analysis attempts to uncover the normative order of the University as it may concern Black/White biracial students. It is intended to frame socialization and address the history of bi-racial-ness/*ism* at the university through a review of extant policies, records, data, and artifacts. Through this process a portrait of the University as it concerns socialization and minority groups will form providing a background against which to view the study's original data.

### **The University's Foundation**

The University was established in the nineteenth century with a vision of developing students as pragmatic leaders and servants of the community. The vast range of faculty scholarship was evident in the wide span of course and curricular offerings. While the University was deeply connected with the state, its first incoming class also included a significant number of out-of-state students.

### **The University's History of Segregation**

**Women.** Reflective of the era's white male dominated ideology, the University began as a segregated institution prohibiting the enrollment of women and racial minorities. In the late-nineteenth century the University sponsored a professional school that enrolled mostly women. In that same time period the University also extended other conditional educational opportunities to women. However, close to the turn of the twentieth century the University officially prohibited undergraduate women, maintaining a position against coeducation. It was well into the twentieth century before the University began to admit women and it would not be until after WWII that it had its first woman admitted to the undergraduate college. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century women made up more than half of those admitted as undergraduates and were significantly represented in graduate and professional programs.

**Blacks.** As with women, the first Black or African American student associated with the University was not admitted as an undergraduate or part of an incoming class. The first Black graduate students were admitted to the University's graduate degree programs in the 1950's in very small numbers; a few years later, undergraduate Black students would be admitted.

**Reactive administration.** The majority if not all of the notable historic events recounted above, involving women and African American enrollment at the University, appear to have been influenced by legislation at the local, state and federal levels. Women were not admitted to the University until after women gained suffrage. The admissions of Black students followed local rulings as well as *Brown v. Board of Education*. Yet another federal court ruling would be required before the first female undergraduate was admitted.

Given the University's vision to be an exemplar of higher education in the U.S. it makes sense that it would mirror the nation's legal position on timely issues of equality. The University was envisioned to be a leader in education however extant documents reveal that the University has not been progressive. Rather, it has been conservative, if not reactionary, regarding racial relations, sex/gender equality and the legal mandates enforcing an egalitarian ideology.

### **Secondary Document Analysis**

The data collected and analyzed in this study brought forth information requiring a deeper examination of the University's moral authority and any subsequent impact it may have on Weidman's **Normative Contexts**. Several University offices and entities were also connected to emergent themes in the data, specifically: the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage; Residence Life; and Greek life (Inter-Fraternity Council, Inter-Sorority Council, and National Pan-Hellenic). As a result, this secondary document analysis will examine existing University organizations in an effort to research emergent themes in two main areas: missions and student affairs.

### **Missions and Normative Contexts**

A review of missions will provide insight to what Weidman (1984) referred to as the **NORMATIVE CONTEXTS** (p. 450) of the university and what Parsons and Platt (1973) regarded as the impetus of “institutional moral authority” (p. 167). Norms and the guiding culture are by-products of a university’s mission influencing its constituent colleges, departments and offices; all of which are logical foundations for an environment of development. To observe the cascade of the University’s moral authority (specifically as it relates to the administrators interviewed in this study) the missions of the offices of the Undergraduate Student Experience, of Operations for Students of African Heritage, and Diversity and Equity are reviewed. This review of mission will begin with the mission of the University.

### **Mission of the University**

Until a few years ago the mission of the University had been unchanged for decades. The newest iteration declares the University’s status as a “public institution of higher education” shaped by a “founding vision of ...development of the full potential of talented students from all walks of life” and serving its home state by “developing responsible citizen leaders and professionals.” In realizing its mission the University pledges “an enduring commitment to a vibrant and unique residential learning environment” as well as “unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community.”

### **Mission of the Office of Undergraduate Student Experience (OUSE)<sup>23</sup>**

The OUSE did not provide a statement titled “mission” however it clearly lists its purpose(s) which is a key function of a mission as outlined by Camelia & Marius (2013), *supra*. The OUSE “advocates student needs” and provides support in a commitment to

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<sup>23</sup> The Office of Undergraduate Student Experience (OUSE) is an alias used in place of the actual name of the office at the study site. Similarly, the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH) and the Office of Respect, Equality and Difference (ORED) are also aliases.

“enhance” students’ experiences and foster “a safe and welcoming environment” at the University. They also support students’ “learning and interpersonal growth” and aid them in “navigating and developing a unique” experience. Furthermore support for diversity is provided wherein the Office pledges the provision of an environment that includes and welcomes “the full spectrum” of humans.

### **Mission of the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH)**

The OOSAH has a general threefold mission (1) broadly assisting University entities in “meeting the challenges of service delivery” to OOSAH’s target population—African American students—by creating a “supportive environment” that encourages the “full participation” of these students at the University; (2) inciting interest in the African American culture as a “major force in a pluralistic society;” and (3) as an agent of change and proponent of students that enlightens the University on the “interests of students” while promoting changes to any organizational initiatives that may “inhibit the development of a genuinely pluralistic organization.”

### **Mission of the Office of Respect, Equality and Difference (ORED)**

Lacking a designated heading of “Mission” the ORED clearly, in their “Commitment to Diversity,” states its purpose to “provide leadership, information, consultation... to the various units and constituencies within the University... in an effort to embrace diversity and equity... synergize actions... and cultivate inclusiveness and mutual respect throughout the community.” To uphold this purpose, the ORED is committed to a “vision of leadership” in diversity and equity. From this position the ORED pledges to “assist and monitor” the University, all inclusive, in recruiting and retaining “faculty, staff and students from historically underrepresented groups.”

### **Mission Commonalities/Themes**

A review of the mission statements makes any cascading conspicuous and it illuminates what may be different or missing. The normative order of a university is founded on the institution's mission then cascaded throughout the institution, anchored in its culture and perpetuated through the expectations and actions of faculty, staff, offices and departments. The present study's data reveals the Black/white biracial student participants were greatly impacted by the actions and programs of the offices and departments listed above. Reviewing their mission is integral to understanding the ideology that may be motivating the actors and actions of these offices and departments.

An examination of the missions listed above reveal a ubiquitous theme (diversity) and some consistent language although messaged differently. For example the OOSAH has a mission (neither the ORED or OUSE have a distinct mission) that is comparatively detailed and lengthy. OOSAH is by far the most cited and potentially influential office discussed by the Black/white biracial students participating in this study. These participants noted OOSAH's focused actions as an indicating a need for special consideration or resources for a targeted population (students of African descent). The OOSAH's word choice in and descriptiveness of their mission may reasonably be assumed to be the foundation for these actions.

### **More on OOSAH, OUSE and Student Affairs**

The OOSAH arose from racial unrest culminating in a student protest and confrontation of the University's administration in the 1970's; as a result it is a sole entity and not officially part of the OUSE's purview. That is to say, although OOSAH is a part of student affairs serving students who utilize all of the programs and services under the

auspices of the OUSE (in fact, OUSE serves every other University recognized racial group or organization), OOSAH and OUSE are bifurcated entities.

**OUSE and residence and Greek life.** The OUSE does oversee two other components mentioned in the data, Residence life and Greek life. According to the University's ORED, the Black/white biracial population (more specifically "multiple-race") along with the international student population have increased. This coupled with a decrease in the Black student population may account for the creation of alternative living locations such as the [Salad] House and the newer College for International Living.

The Greek system at the University is comprised of various councils. Two of these councils are mostly constituted by minority or in some manner "diverse" student members. Combining all members in Pan-Hel organizations may not total more than one large fraternity's chapter. It is noteworthy that the University does recognize a Greek organization whose members are non-monoracial.

### **How This Study Fits the Weidman Framework of College Impact**

This is a study of socialization in higher education. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define organizational socialization as "the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (p. 3). Socialization can be evaluated from the perspective(s) of the individual seeking membership in an organization or community and the organization or community itself. From an individual perspective the results of socialization include "a readiness to select certain events for attention over others, stylized stance toward one's routine activities, some idea as to how one's various behavior responses to recurrent situations are viewed by others, and so forth" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 4). From the perspective of the

organization or community (in this case a university), socialization involves the maintenance of an environment constructed in part from the attributes of members participating in a shared observation and adherence to organizational norms (the accepted and expected observation of organizational regulations as reflected by the day-to-day behavior of the organization's members). An organization's socialization efforts may be measured by any creation and maintenance of an environment (social and academic contexts; norms [Weidman, 1989]) that nurtures its individual members.

More comprehensively, Weidman's (1989) Model of Undergraduate Socialization illustrates five dimensions, three main components **STUDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS**, **COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCE** and **SOCIALIZATION OUTCOMES** and two external sources of pressure, **PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION** and **NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS**) (Appendix E). The survey created for use in this study contains items addressing each (to a greater or lesser degree) of these five dimensions of Weidman's socialization model. However, this research targeted three primary socialization processes (Weidman, DeAngelo, & Bethea, 2014): (1) *Interpersonal Interaction* (interaction with peers and faculty), (2) *Intrapersonal Processes* (participation in academics, e.g. going to class, attending lectures, studying, etc.), and (3) *Integration* (becoming part of the social and academic life of the university) (p. 45).

Reflective of this research focus, the Research Questions (RQs) listed above address socialization as it concerns the individual (Research Question #1) and confronts the organization (Research Question #2). This bifurcation of the concept of socialization (socialization "of the individual" and socialization "by the organization") provides a

necessary distinction. As noted in the literature review, socialization of the individual often involves one appropriating the required role and norms within an organization while displaying acceptable behavior and establishing desired relationships.

Socialization from the perspective of the organization involves the establishment of an environment where individuals can readily identify and embrace that organization's norms such that the individual becomes a valued member of the organization's future.

### **The Results Format**

The study's research was guided by two questions with a total of eight sub-questions (ten questions total). However, for the purposes of reporting and analyzing the data collected here, I have organized the data around three overarching questions based on the research questions developed for this study. These three questions are:

**Research Question 1** - *How do Black/white biracial students identify?*

**Research Question 2** - *How do Black/white biracial students and institutions of higher education, through university/college administrators, perceive and engage their respective roles regarding socialization?*

**Research Question 3** - *In what ways is the concept of social justice reflected in the narratives of Black/white biracial students, their racial identities and college socialization?*

A multitude of findings around the socialization of Black/white biracial students at the University informed three broad themes identified in this study: (1) The historical racial classification system utilized at the University and its impact on a Black/white biracial group who may not fit tidily into this classification system; (2) the feeling of belonging at the University, specifically the effect of the Office of Operations for

Students of African Heritage (OOSAH) on Black/white biracial students' identity, identification and feelings of belonging; and (3) the impact of the University's norms (academic and social) on the socialization of the Black/white biracial student. For the purposes of the analysis the three themes above, and any derivatives, can be identified by the key words **Classification**, **Belonging**, and **Normative contexts**. As the three Result Questions emerged from research focused on socialization in higher education, **Socialization** is also utilized as a theme in which to present and analyze the data.

### **Analysis of Research Questions**

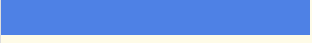






#### **Question 1 - *How do Black/white biracial students identify?***

**Black/white biracial awareness.** The survey instrument used in this research asked the Black/white biracial participants how they identified. This question was posed recognizing the three concepts of awareness for the Black/white biracial discussed in Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002); these concepts are referenced throughout this current research: (1) *identity*- who a person sees themselves as being and the group(s) with whom s/he may align; (2) *identification*- how others and groups perceive a person and the subsequent alignment, access and/or belonging provided and/or expected; and (3) *classification*- the process of officially self-selecting into or be placed in a group to which a person will formally belong for the purposes of record-keeping, enumeration and distribution of resources. As it concerns group belonging and alignment, *identity* and *identification* will be employed throughout this research to reference intra- and inter-personal perceptions. *Classification* will be used to address group and institutional categorization of individuals and peoples. However, as classification may involve a

person's self-selection into a group as well as a person's assignment to a group, it may also use as a thematic catchall term for processes involving identity and identification.

**Classification.** Immediately after the first knock out question (at which point anyone still participating in the survey has indicated they have one Black and one white parent) respondents were asked, "How did you identify your race when enrolling at the University?" The results and classifications of the 57 Black/white biracial students responding to this item are listed in the table below.

Table 1. Participant racial selection and classification

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Black/ African American		54	95%
2	White		37	65%
3	Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander		0	0%
4	Indigenous American and Alaska Native		1	2%
5	Asian		2	4%
6	Race not specified in this list		4	7%
7	None (I did not identify or answer the question)		1	2%
8	I do not remember how I answered		2	4%

Noted in the methodology, this research employs Rockquemore and Brunnsma's (2002) typological framework of four Black/white biracial types (Singular [Black; white]; Border; Protean; and Transcendent). The study is also aligned with the researchers' contention that four factors shape students' understanding of their biracial identity: (1)

appearance; (2) social networks; (3) socialization factors (childhood and adult socialization); and, (4) familial context (Rockquemore & Brunσμα, 2002, p. 60). Three of these factors (social networks, socialization and familial context) match the following dimensions in Weidman's (1989) model of undergraduate socialization (Appendix E): **NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS, PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION and STUDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS**. This factor (Rockquemore & Brunσμα) and dimension (Weidman) similarity will be further analyzed in the data below. More specifically, Rockquemore and Brunσμα's (2002) factor of "appearance," while unshared with the Weidman conceptual framework, arises throughout the study as a relevant aspect in both classification and belonging for the Black/white biracial students participating in this study.

To provide insight on the discussion around the socialization of Black/white biracial students at the University, study participants revealed the racial classification (based on the University's standard racial categories; Table 1 above) they chose upon matriculation. On a separate item they selected into a "type" of Black/white biracialness. The table below (Table 2) displays the racial classification (based on the University's standard racial categories) selected by the various "types" of Black/white biracial students participating in this study.

Table 2. Participant racial classification by Black/white biracial type

<b>RACE*</b> <b>TYPE</b>	Number of respondents	Black	white	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Indigenous American/ Alaska Native	Asian	None	I do not remember	Race not specified in this list
Singular <i>Black</i>	<b>9</b>	9	2					1	
Singular <i>white</i>	<b>3</b>	1	1					1	1
Border	<b>28</b>	27	23			2			1
Protean	<b>9</b>	9	7				1	1	

Transcendent	<b>4</b>	4	3		1				
	<b>53</b>								

\* Respondents were instructed to check all that apply. Total responses may not equal “Number of respondents.”

It is noteworthy that this sample of Black/white biracial students selected every racial classification option except Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Also, when the responses for Black/white biracial type (“Number of respondents”) is cross-tabulated with the race selected when enrolling at the University, the number of “Black” race responses is almost always equal to the total number of Black/white biracial respondents. That is to say, almost all of the study’s participants, regardless of biracial type (Rockmore & Brunisma, 2002), chose to be classified as Black. The Transcendent type’s 100% classification with the Black race and Singular white’s 33% classification with Black dispel expectations formed by the literature and through focus group feedback.

The feedback from respondents selecting the Transcendent type is as enigmatic in this study as it was for Rockquemore and Brunisma (2002). Those researchers assured they were providing due diligence to a biracial type as yet neglected in the literature; indeed their researched illustrated cause for them to change assumptions of the Transcendent type (Rockquemore & Brunisma, 2002). The Transcendent type provides perhaps the best opportunity to be mindful that this study’s theoretical framework represents “temporary descriptive categories” posed by Rockquemore and Brunisma (2002), utilizing symbolic interactionism, to analyze their data. The Transcendent type along with Singular, Border, and Protean, are labels for familiar biracial identity concepts noted by other multiracial scholars<sup>24</sup>. Simply, along with representing a very small

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<sup>24</sup> Key here is the work of G. Reginald Daniel’s More than black wherein all of these biracial types are discussed. In fact Rockmore and Brunisma briefly not Daniel’s (2002) postulation around the transcendent type.

sample among all the various biracial student “types” being studied (in this study and Rockquemore & Brunson’s, 2002), the Transcendent type and the others, appear fluid, dynamic or indefinite.

Traditionally, racial classification, identity development and understanding of biracial-being for the Black/white biracial, are founded on ocular dimensions ([facial and somatypical features], Omi & Winant, 2015) and *prima facie* (Banks, 2013; Daniel, 2010; Herring, & Horton, 2004). Similarly, the perceived physical attributes of Black/white biracial students participating in this study proved integral to feelings of belonging and identification at the University. An example of this identification based on appearance can be seen in this focus group member’s assessment of how others place them in the University’s racial binary: “Like I think you’re either White or Black at this university and depending on what group you’re in, people will, you can say you’re Biracial and I’m fine saying that, but people will then respond to that and be like ‘yeah, you say you’re Biracial, but let’s be honest, you’re Black.’ Or like ‘oh, but really you’re a White girl.’”

The senior administrator at the Office of the Undergraduate Student Experience (OUSE) was quite transparent in noting their surprise at the increase of bi/multi-racial students at the University stating, “I was struck by the number of students who were identifying as multiracial or Biracial. I thought that was an interesting development.” They appeared to be contemplating the motivation of students choosing not to select only one racial identifier and instead “being much more comfortable saying, ‘you know, there are a number of them.’ I see it when I go into our database under ethnicity, you will now see two or three listed and not just one.” This vantage point recognizes the bi/multiracial

student population while other administrators openly declared no distinction between Black and Black/white biracial students.

In fact, “We make no distinction between Biracial and other African American students” was the declaration of an administrator at the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH). This unifying statement was followed by the clarification that “We [the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage] assume that most African Americans are historically mixed in one form or another.” The inference can be made that biracial people are mixed and since African Americans are “historically mixed” the two groups (biracial and African American) are either indistinguishable or negligibly different.

*The distinction.* While fifty-seven percent of survey participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they looked like Black people are traditionally thought to look, thirty-three percent of respondents “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to the statement “I look the way Black people are historically thought to look” (10% did not know). A greater percentage (67%) “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that they look “Black mixed with something else.” And, forty-five percent indicated they looked like a person of color but not Black or mixed with Black. In short, most of the survey participants did not feel they looked like Black people are historically thought to look but did think they looked Black mixed with something else. Recalling the prevalence of hypodescent in the U.S. an implication can be made that sixty-seven percent of the study sample may think they are perceived as Black by others, regardless of their biracial-ness or which Rockmore and Brunσμα (2002) type they may select into.

**Discernable types of Black/white biracial students.** The model of

Rockquemore's biracial typology has been introduced in this research's theoretical framework and the four biracial types listed in this model were used as options in this study. Students were asked to select a statement that best described them based on experience (e.g. "I consider myself exclusively Black—I am Black.") with each statement<sup>25</sup> mapping onto one of the four Rockquemore types: Singular, Border, Protean, and Transcendent.

Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated identification with a certain "type" (Border, Protean, Transcendent, Singular) of Black/white biracial (5% chose an option indicating "none" of the four types matched their racial identity). The most selected type was Border (50%) followed by Singular (Black) and Protean both at sixteen percent. The Transcendent type was claimed by seven percent of survey takers with the Singular (White) type coming in at five percent, as did the respondents claiming no identification or match with any type. The majority of focus group participants (mostly Border type) shared their perspectives as students who identified and sought identification and classification as biracial students however experienced barriers to doing so. This identity impediment can be seen in the following statement from a focus group participant, "I'm fine identifying myself that way [as biracial] and that's how I feel comfortable, but I don't think that's understood at [the University]." Using Hurtado and Ponjuan's (2005)

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<sup>25</sup> The phrase options and the Black/white biracial *type* they mapped on to were as follows: "I consider myself exclusively Black—I am Black." (*Singular*); "I consider myself exclusively white—I am white." (*Singular*); "I consider myself exclusively biracial—I am mixed, I am a blend, I am half-and-half, etc." (*Border*); "I consider myself somewhat of a chameleon—In certain company or groups I may identify as white, in others I may identify as Black and still others I may identify as mixed. My identity can shift between any two or three of these [Black, white, mixed] depending on the situation." (*Protean*); "I consider myself a composite of many descriptors [scholar, friend, human, daughter/son, sibling, artist, athlete, etc.] and do not use race to identify. In an effort to not have my identity defined by the constructs of race, I have chosen to not identify with any racial category." (*Transcendent*); Other (You racially identify or do not identify in a way that is not covered in one of the four options above.) If "Other" please write in how you racially identify.

determination that belonging “reflects students’ affinity with their institution” and involves feeling like “part of campus life...a member of the community” and having “... a sense of morale as a result of being a student” (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005, p. 239), it is valuable to note that seventy-two and sixty-seven percent of the survey’s respondents felt, “like part of the University” and “comfortable at the University,” respectively.

An important foundation to the Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) model of Black/white biracial types used as a framework in this study is Mary Waters’s (1990) work on the salience of white ethnicity; Waters’s (1990) work undergirds Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) model although Rockquemore and Brunnsma are clear in their position that the choice of white ethnicities differs from the social structuralism of race. Walters’s (1990) research, whose focus was to investigate why multi-ethnic white people identified with one ethnicity more significantly than another, lent two significant components to the Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) model: (1) the framework of factors determined to affect the selection of an ethnicity<sup>26</sup> and (2) an emphasis on the role of “choice” when exploring identity. Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) employment of Water’s research will be discussed further in the social justice conclusions section of Chapter Five.

**The five percent.** In presenting a breakdown above of the Black/white biracial type selection for this study’s participants it is noted that five percent of the respondents selected “Other.” Respondents who selected other were asked to provide a racial identity statement best describing them and in 100% of those responses the word “mixed” was used while also, perhaps unknowingly, describing themselves as one of the available

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<sup>26</sup> Waters’s (1990) factors for selection of white identities were, (1) knowledge about an ethnicity, (2) surname, (3) physical appearance and (4) the popularity of the ethnic groups being considered

types. For example these two statements appear to align with Border type (*italics added*): “I don't like to label, I consider myself *mixed*, whites consider me *mixed* or black, blacks consider me *mixed*” and “I am *mixed*, but I closely identify with my African American heritage. I secondly claim latinos, and seldom I would claim those before I claimed caucasian.” This last sentence may contain a juxtaposition. The respondent notes they closely identify as African American and secondly as Latino, an identity with white is not mentioned in these top two. To then state they would “seldom” claim these two identities before Caucasian is confusing and possibly unintended.

The following “other” respondent’s write-in is very similar to the response expected from a Protean type: “it depends on so many social factors. I see myself as *mixed*, but sometimes it's advantageous to be seen as black, sometimes as white. But I personally never identify myself as fully white because I can't.” Another respondent appears to be a combination of Border and Transcendent types: “I can claim black a bit more easily, but I generally don't. I'm *mixed*, and I tend to take both sides--white and black--into my identity simultaneously. But, I am much more than that, and especially with my friends, my race doesn't define who I am. I do.” It would appear that “mixed” supersedes or subsumes other categories for some biracial students in this study.

***Classification as “mixed”.*** Supplementing the survey data, many focus group respondents referred to themselves as “mixed.” However, one respondent expressed their discontent with the “mixed” descriptor:

There’s slightly a problem with that, that I’ve come across and it’s slightly annoying is this idea of a mixed person. People always tell me like ‘oh, mixed people are so beautiful’ they’re so this or so that, and I’m just like

‘I’m just a person.’ Yes, I identify as Biracial, but that shouldn’t also instill certain things immediately in me already. Also, I just really wish race wasn’t such a huge issue, but it always will be.”

This experience falls into the microaggression category of “Exoticization and Objectification” established in Johnston and Nadal’s (2010) microaggression taxonomy of multiracial individuals. The category is exemplified by three common phrases bi/multiracial individuals may receive: “What are you”; “Mixed-raced people are so beautiful”; and “We will all be like you someday” (p. 133). In the statement above, the participant has been objectified and the observation that identifying as biracial should not “instill a certain thing immediately in me” is a salient result of what Johnston and Nadal (2010) term “monoracism.” Monoracism will be analyzed further below and can be defined as, “a social system of psychological inequality where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and interpersonal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories” (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 125).

It is important to note how regardless of what they self-identified as (e.g. mixed), there was a distinct pride conveyed among the study’s participants. When discussing any external expectations or tensions around participants’ racial identification decisions, participants voiced pride in identity. “I consider myself mixed race. I don’t think I’m White or Black, I think I’m both... it’s just that I am mixed race and that’s important to me.”

**Classification based on appearance.** Poignantly reflecting on their biracial-ness, one focus group participant stated, “It’s strange how it’s almost skin color and the

way you look, your identity is chosen for you, rather than you yourself.” Physical attributes appeared to play a significant role in the development of the study participants’ biracial identities. Most if not all focus group participants appeared to possess, to some degree, specific physical attributes (hair, facial features, skin, somatotype) attributed to people of color with African ancestry. These corporeal distinctions did not seem to provide either group inclusion or exclusion, as can be seen in the following statement from a first year biracial student: “As someone who doesn’t look Biracial, doesn’t look white, doesn’t look African American, I find a hard time fitting in anywhere.”

Making a statement that could have been either appearance or socialization based, a participant reflected on one of the survey questions exclaiming, “... I don’t, I don’t know, I feel like I can like there’s this thing here that says I consider myself a chameleon, which I think is true, but there are definitely moments when I’m like ‘wow, I am too Black for this crowd, or I am too white for this crowd.’” The impetus for this statement was the divulgence of conversations held with other Black/white biracial students where they would consider how a surrounding monoracial group might classify them (e.g. a white group considering the Black/white biracial student too Black and a Black group considering them too white). If monoracially white groups at the University provided a white classification to Black/white biracial students it was received as an insult. The classification of “white,” for Black/white biracial students, could also be designated by monoracial Black groups at the University, however from monoracial Black groups this did not appear to be disparaging. Simply, some participants in this study described incidents where they were classified as white by both monracially white and Black groups however these participants were never classified as Black by either group.

Acceptance from white groups may come in the form of statements like, “you’re definitely white” or “you’re such a white girl” from monoracial white students. Rejection from monoracial Black groups came in the form of the same sentiments being expressed, e.g. you’re “really white.” Whether this classification resulted strictly from ocular perception is unknown and was not a goal of this study.

**Additional sample group identity.** More generally, all of the survey respondents identified within the gender binary with sixty-six selecting female and thirty-four selecting male. As a parameter of the study, all students were undergraduates and the breakdown was fairly consistent at twenty-nine percent first year, twenty-five percent second year, twenty-two percent third year and twenty-five percent fourth year. Two respondents were international students and seventy-five percent of all participants were in-state (25% out of state) residents. Of those in-state respondents, forty-one percent claimed they hailed from the most affluent part of the state. Sixty-eight percent of those out-of-state were from the East coast and the farthest west residence claimed was the state of Wisconsin.

The survey respondents were members of high school graduating classes of various sizes from <100 (10%) to 600-699 (5%). The largest percentage of participants claimed a graduating class of 500-599 (26%) with the second largest (20%) claiming 300-399. The participants had the opportunity to rate their high school’s diversity on a range of, Some diversity (36%), Very little diversity (23%), Diverse (38%) and Monoracial (3%). When asked to identify the diverse (racial) groups comprising their high schools the mean values were 32% Black, 46% white, 8% Asian, <1% Native American, >1% Native Hawaiian, 5% multiracial and 13% Latino.

And, eighty-four percent of respondents indicated they would either “Strongly disagree” or “Disagree” that their friends and associates “growing up before coming to college were mostly bi/multiracial.” Sixty-eight percent of respondents felt a bond with Black/white biracial students. Seventy-six percent thought “assisting B/W biracial students in locating/meeting other biracial students” was “Very Important” or “Important.” Twenty-nine percent of respondents reported “Rarely” or “Never” interacting with people of two or more racial groups. Sixty-six percent of survey respondents either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that race and racial identity plays a significant role in their life at college. Almost eighty percent (78.7) of respondents thought that “raising awareness of multiracial issues among mono-racial student organizations” was either, “Very Important” or “Important.” Sixty-five percent of respondents identified “professional development for faculty and staff on multiracial issues” as either “Very Important” or “Important.”

It has been noted above when referencing the Weidman (1989) model that students’ *In-college Normative Pressures* are similar to *Pre-college Normative Pressures* as both involve **PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION** and **NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS**. However, In-college pressures also involve the **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE**. It has also been established that pre-college norms affect students’ adoption of college norms (Van Maanen, 1983); students will be impacted by *In-college Normative Pressures* since this concept includes external stakeholders.

Pre-socialization in terms of Weidman’s **STUDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS** involved **Socio-Economic Status (SES), Aptitude, Career Preferences, Aspirations** and **Values** and this study did not collect data on all of these

components. However, the data on SES, aptitude (measured by SAT score) and career Preferences were recorded. The mean SAT scores for Critical Reading, Math and Writing were 640, 627, 626, respectively; the maximum scores were 780 (Critical Reading), 730 (Math) and 740 (Writing). The average ACT score was 29. Sixty percent of respondents indicated having a career goal when entering the college and 34% indicated that this career goal had changed while at college.

In response to the survey item, “What personal goals have you achieved or do you plan to achieve while at college” the majority of write-in replies focused on academics (e.g. graduation, obtaining certain GPA, admission to a certain school and specific such as, “I am writing a senior thesis on biracial perspectives in novels”) however professional development and community interests were also abundant as can be seen below in the text responses in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Participants’ personal goals at college

Text Response
Find myself spiritually. My mother is baptist and my father is muslim. I am currently reading both to seek out the best of both and pave my own way. went backpacking
joining a sorority, taking classes I enjoy, making good friends
I've learned how to better venture outside of my comfort zone through study abroad opportunities to Germany. I learned to challenge my preconceived ideas via classroom debates with my classmates. Finally, I learned how to be more independent.
Confidence, Self Acceptance, Forgiveness
Learning as much as I can about social issues and being able to incorporate that well into film
Becoming Involved
personal development, leadership skills, life skills,
Becoming intrinsically motivated and proactive.
I have met a lot of diverse people at the university, and I plan to meet many more
Learn to backflip
Internship experience, weight loss, enlightenment.
broaden my academic horizons

**Belonging.** An intent of this research was to examine the recognition of the Black/white biracial student population in higher education as well as the socialization

efforts that may or may not exist for this target group. And while the intrapersonal identity development of Black/white students (often brusquely addressed with a ubiquitous “what are you?”) was not a direct focus of this study, groups are comprised of individuals; it is difficult to study a group without examining the individual. Logically, data on groups contain individual perspective, perspectives likely to involve intrapersonal development. In transparency, some qualitative data included in the analysis can be viewed as intrapersonal identity development. However this data is extremely relevant in ascertaining participants’ feelings of belonging, classifications, and experiences with the University’s normative contexts (norms) while seeking membership in the University community.

***Feelings of belonging.*** One simply comprehensive yet succinct statement from a participant in this study may have best captured Black/white biracial students’ feelings of belonging at the University, “I think that here people don’t consider Biracial a category to put you in.” Experiences with belonging (or fit) are apparent in statements like the following from a second year participating in the study:

I’ve been in groups of like all White girls and I’m kind of seen as inferior and then I’ll be in a group of only like African American girls, and there is just something weird where like I’m like too, like I don’t know what it is, like too White? But then, that kind of like, just because of the way things are, that I’m kind of like elevated and arrogant because of that, just automatically, so then I don’t fit in as well.

Maintaining Hurtado & Ponjuan’s (2005) parameters for belonging established in the review of literature, the above statement is not illustrative of membership in white and

Black groups/communities. In fact, the observation that “I don’t fit in as well” may be detrimental to the student’s level of morale at the University. The belonging felt or not felt by this participant seemed to be precipitated by their appearance. Again, the appearance factor of biracial identity when combined with Weidman’s (1989) conceptions of the *Formal* (Institutional Size, Residences, Organizations) and *Informal* (Peer Groups) social contexts of college could be perceived as integral to the study of participants’ sense of belonging.

***Belonging and appearance.*** In response to the question “how does your identity affect your experience at the University,” a single word in a participant’s response potentially represented the sentiment of belonging shared by many focus group members—“My friends, like my best friends are Native American, mixed, Black, white, Asian like I have a *misfit* group of friends. I feel like that’s the only place I fit in the biracial mixed-identity” (*italics added*). This third year elaborated on their description of misfits as “people that don’t really belong in different social categories at the university.”

This concept of not belonging in any of the University’s various “social categories” may be foundational to Black/white biracial students’ sense of belonging at the University according to this data. Another key element may be gender. The impact of sex, or socially recognized gender, on Black/white biracial belonging or acceptance at the University was unexplored in this study due to the extremely small sample of male participants. However, Aladdin, the sole male focus group participant did provide the following perspective on being a biracial man at the University: A “fourth year that I know who is Biracial...was talking about how it’s from his experience, just his four years here, he feels like it’s a little bit easier being a Biracial guy because if you’re funny,

witty, or crack a joke every once in a while, you're kind of just like a 'bro.'" Aladdin's word choice gave the impression that the term "bro" was one of endearment or unity used by the male majority—white—community at the University. This may be similar to the Black community's use of the words "brother" and "sister" and while cultural linguistics and idioms are beyond the scope of this research, the implied group acceptance, by white males, is notable.

The relationship between appearance and belonging may become more complex for the "ambiguous" labeled biracial. While discussing where Black/white biracial students may go to feel comfortable or be around people like them, one focus group participant remarked, "Um, as someone who doesn't look Biracial, doesn't look White, doesn't look African American, I find a hard time fitting in anywhere." This was the only student in the study who made a reference to looking biracial. That is to say, while students consistently referenced their appearance it was always in relation to which monoracial group they either did or did not look like. What a biracial looked like appeared to be implied when determining how much they did or did not look white or Black. These unspoken racial implications manifest themselves as frustration with official racial self-identification procedures for one participant:

I never really felt the need to like be comfortable within my race, it was just one of those things I was comfortable with like I know that I am Black and White, and I would never fill out a form, like I hated it, when you only have the option of filling out one like just Black or just White, like I put Other just because.

The above statement illustrates an intersection of self-identity, motivated by appearance as well as psychosocial experience and classification. The later of these motivations—classification—potentially represents the reification of racial being or identity for the Black/white biracial student. The data below continues to illuminate the role Black/white biracial student appearance plays in their classification by others.

***Belonging, classification and appearance.*** The previously presented survey data indicated sixty-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they looked “Black mixed with something else.” More specifically, 22% identified as looking white or the way white people historically look. The focus groups revealed that participants felt visibly classified as people of color. That is to say a majority of the participants self-identified as looking like a person of color and being seen as a person of color but not all.

In response to the question, “How does people’s perception of you affect you at the University?” another focus group member identifying as a Border (white) type indicated, “... there is like this assumption that at [the University] anybody who is not like White, maybe won’t be accepted in the [the University] community, but I feel like the opposite; I’ve never been accepted in the Black community at [the University].” Interestingly, this participant (Sally) noted that if asked in high school how she would racially identify in college her plan would have been to identify as exclusively biracial, just as she did in high school.

However, more so than with any other participant, physical appearance apparently factored into Sally’s feelings of belonging—“I know that there is a lot of acceptance among people who are like more clearly Biracial, but because I like appear more White, there was less acceptance, or at least in my opinion.” There were two other notable

differences undergirding Sally's responses, (1) her decision to identify as exclusively white was in direct response to her experience at the University and (2) she in no way implicated the University (as an institution) as culpable for her type identity or any racial dynamics that may have precipitated it.

Sally was an outlier in this sample, and in fact. The notion that most of the people participating in this study were likely perceived as Black was discussed above and addressed by a first year transfer student in the focus group who exclaimed, "... people just like they automatically assume like 'oh, your skin is darker, so you have to be African in some way.'" This participant has commented on how skin tone is used by others as a marker to visually identify people of African heritage (the attribute of skin tone and hue, along with hair texture and facial features are often used as physical markers for racial identification). This particular biracial student disclosed that their parents identified as white and Caribbean. Accordingly, the student's sentiments regarding categorization based on their skin tone may be gauged by this follow-up statement, "People will like call me African American and I'm like 'I'm not African and I'm barely American.'"

Nationalism and the degree to which a biracial person feels a part of the country are beyond this research. However, a biracial person dissembling the ubiquitous term "African American" to reinforce how they do not identify with either parts of the term let alone feel comfortable with the term as a descriptor, would appear to resonate with many in this study. Non-compliance with racial identification (racial identification either consciously chosen or categorically imposed) appeared to impact the identity of this study's participants.

***Belonging and OOSAH.*** Another concern thematic in the research is the impact of the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage's (OOSAH) peer program. This advisor program enlists sophomore, junior and senior year students to mentor and advise matriculating first year students who may have identified, and been classified, as Black during the application/enrollment process. The OOSAH peer program is an opt-out program. Simply, students are automatically enrolled in the program and their membership maintains unless they deliberately take steps to remove themselves. As a result, all students who select Black as a racial identifier when entering the University are classified as Black, enrolled in this mentoring program and subsequently assigned an unsolicited advisor.

The data indicate this OOSAH initiative provided participants an unappreciated classification: "It wasn't like 'oh, you have a peer advisor,' it was like you have a Black student peer advisor and just like the way it was categorized was like, you were specifically like being brought into the school into a certain lump of people and that was who they were going to make you be with." Another participant, a third year who identified as an "RA" (Residence Advisor) recalled their feelings upon learning they would have an OOSAH peer advisor, "I was so pissed. I remember getting the e-mail and being so like livid and screaming at my mom...they just automatically assumed that I was going to like need someone else to help me assimilated to the school." (Interestingly, OOSAH's mentoring program if not their very existence at the University is guided by intragroup identity or solidarity [Gurin & Nagda, 2006] a particular model of inter-group relations aimed at providing students an alternative to assimilation with the University's macroculture and historical authority.)

The Black/white biracial students participating in this study readily noted their discontent with being grouped into a population with which they may not identify; this resentment is consistently shared when participants reflect on experiences with OOSAH. Analyzing the data on OOSAH and particularly the peer program that all Black classified first year students enter, it is beneficial to consider the input of a Black/white biracial student participant in this study who was also an advisor in the OOSAH peer program.

Yeah, so I applied to be a peer advisor and I think the reason they do that is because they want, they think that giving you the option to opt out means that everyone is automatically included, and then you can select to be more involved or not, so at least you have the option. Whereas opposed to, there are a lot of people who might like find the Black community here through P.A.s [Peer Advisors], but if they weren't automatically put in the [program], they wouldn't find that. So it's like I think of it as giving you the option to immerse yourself in the Black community if you want to, but if you don't want to, then you don't really have to talk to your P.A. It's definitely an interesting program.

Part of what may make this program “interesting” is that it is strictly based on classification and as a result it may extend to students who do not identify as Black and some who are not Black (international white students from South Africa have been enrolled in the peer program). However, there has been a noted upswing in the enrollment of Black/white biracial students as advisors in this program. This may help future biracial first years with an increased chance of being contacted by a biracial OOSAH advisor. Potentially broadening the spectrum of blackness among the students

associated with the OOSAH may also be helpful for biracial students seeking belonging in University offices.

The student sentiments noted above are representative of a general discontent and annoyance conveyed by focus group participants regarding the OOSAH mentoring program. In fact most focus group participants acknowledged this mentoring initiative, with, at the very least non-verbal, aversion. Only two participants expressed feeling that rose above indifference. One identified as a second year Border type biracial student who worked as an peer mentor with the OOSAH (whose inside perspective on the peer program is noted above) the other identified as a third year Singular (white) type biracial—Sally—with no continued affiliation to the OOSAH.

Similar to all the other focus group participants, the OOSAH assigned Sally a peer advisor upon being accepted to the University. Like her fellow first-year Black/white biracial classmates, Sally participated in this OOSAH initiative as well as other Black Student Collective (BSC) events. Unlike her peers in this study, Sally expressed appreciation for the socialization efforts of offices and organizations at the University, including those focused on Black students. Sally identified how both Black and white students at the University impacted her feelings of racial connectivity:

I think that like others perceive me as exclusively White and that's like changed my experience at [the University] just because, like mostly in social situations and not in like more formal like [OOSAH] or [BSC] events. Rather, in social situations, the Black community would see me as just another White girl. So, it's, I think it's been hard for me to connect with like the Black community, but it's easy for me to connect with the

White community because they are just like oblivious to me not being just White.

To be clear, Sally whole-heartedly expressed satisfaction with her college experience—“yeah, this is like my university”—when discussing her membership in the academic community. And, when reminiscing on her OOSAH advisor experience and any continued affiliation with that Office, she notes, “I guess like I haven’t really felt that like accepted by the Black community at [the University]. So, I just haven’t really reached out or made an effort, or I haven’t made an effort since first year.” This concept of acceptance or fit was consistent among all focus group participants; the overwhelming sentiment was one of concern for belonging as a Black/white biracial student.

***Belonging and administrators.*** The interviews with University senior administrators were not expected to contribute much insight on the concerns and feelings of belonging that Black/white biracial students may be experiencing. This is not to say they would be oblivious to Black/white biracial students or issues of student belonging and classification in general. It does assume that as these administrators are not students and do not identify as Black/white biracial (as defined in this study) they may not have the necessary perspective to provide an accurate first hand account of the Black/white biracial student experience.

**Socialization.** Many events of childhood socialization contributing to racial identity formation were shared through memories of the first time participants noticed they looked different than their Black parent or white parent. Or the first time they heard a racial slur directed at a Black person and the slow realization that this epithet also targeted them. And while these data are important for early racial identity development

(familial interaction and provision of racial cues is almost exclusively the type of socialization referenced for Rockquemore and Brunzma's (2002) typology) this study considered broader adolescent experiences when examining pre-college racial socialization.

This focus evolves from Attinasi's (1989) declaration that all generalized expectations of Hispanic college students were formed in the primary category/stage of "initial expectation engendering" (p. 257). This primary stage and initial expectation is accompanied by familial reinforcement and parental insistence on higher education. The primary stage (initial expectation engendering) speaks to students' ascribed values as potentially impacting college success and perhaps transcending college belonging and socialization (read Van Maanen, 1983, below). These ascribed values are adopted prior to college going and are affected by ecological experiences.

Furthermore as this pre-college socialization is only in small part detailed by the Weidman model, Van Maanen's (1983) description of socialization may be more appropriate. In this regard, socialization includes the "Specific skills, knowledge, and values that transcend particular socialization settings" (Van Maanen, 1983, p. 4). Put another way, socialization is commonly thought to be the transformation of new members through the adoption of the company culture, however it is new members' "ascribed attributes" (e.g. personality, morality, language) (p. 4) that when transferred may exceed the environment's setting. Similar to Attinasi's (1989) expectations of engendering, Van Maanen's (1983) ascribed attributes can often be the result of ecological factors and themes. An example of this early socialization's impact can be seen in the following remark from a focus group participant: "because of where I was raised, it was harder for

me to assimilate into the White community here [at the University]. Just like socioeconomically, um, viewpoints, culturally, the way they dress, I didn't fit into that visually."

The last observation may be attributable to what Rockquemore and Brunσμα (2002) deemed a validation by others in a Border type biracial person's social network. In this phenomenon, a Border identifying biracial has their decision to identify with the liminal categorization of "Border type" (strictly biracial) validated (p. 61) by others in their social network. If these others do not accept the biracial classification the biracial may resort to identifying as monoracial Black or white.

***Pre-socialization and existing college normative contexts (norms).*** The question, "are there existing norms shaping the socialization of Black/white biracial students in the University?", is perhaps best introduced and addressed by the following reflections made by Regina during a focus group:

I think that's like one of my biggest complaints today; I'm not going to like throw myself in this Black community and pretend to be something I'm not. I wasn't raised by a Black woman, I was raised by a White woman and most of my friends growing up were White. I didn't have like the struggles that are considered to be traditionally African American struggles and like America.

During this discussion Belle added, "I agree completely, like I don't even know my Black side of the family. I was raised by a little German blonde lady. So like, yeah, I agree with that completely. I don't consider myself White, but I don't consider myself Black in any sense culturally."

These statements reveal the importance of what Weidman (1989) labeled **PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION** which is linked to **STUDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS**. Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) also state the significance of “parental socialization” in the racial identity development of their student study participants. Whether labeled parental, familial or community socialization, survey participants displayed affect linked to pre-college experiences. In some instances, pre-college socialization factored into how they pursued friendships at the University,

Coming to school here, I didn’t feel the need to be comfortable with one or the other [being Black or being white] and find that group of people and just be friends with whomever I met and we had like similar backgrounds in growing up and things to talk about, rather than we’re Black and we need to automatically be friends or White and we should be friends.

In recounting their mind frame when entering the University this participant appears to be focused on what they may have in common with another rather than how they look. This is almost a counter-narrative to the appearance/socialization causation of the Black/white biracial student in this study. Along similar lines, this participant feared they might only have the option of being friends with Black people at the University. This is likely due to the classification they expect based on their physical attributes and past experiences. Perhaps more interestingly, the implication is that because they will be seen as Black, not only will they be relegated to Black friends but that others may not have the opportunity to ascertain this student’s true identity. In another example along these lines, a student reflected:

I remember being afraid that I was going to have to reassert my identity at school like talking to my friends, and that was a real fear for me. I was like, what if I can only hang out with Black people? What if everyone makes an assumption about me 'cause I've gone to this school my whole life and it's like, I never had to tell people like 'oh, I'm not a Black girl' like so, that was a real fear for me.

The fear of having to “reassert” her identity, which appears linked to not being Black, is interesting from an intrapersonal perspective however and focusing on this research the salient subtext here is that this participant exists in an environment (the University) where they were in perpetual fear due to issues of identification and classification.

How you are identified and classified are central issues of group membership and allegiance. For Black/white biracial students in this survey, this was an important consideration as can be seen in the following recollection of a hypothetical racial conflict scenario:

On my football team, there was one other kid that was mixed or Biracial and I remember having this conversation in like tenth grade about like, I don't know if we had just won a game or if there was outrageous hype in the locker room, but there was some sort of like loud and crazy music going on. We were just talking like what would happen if something like broke out like a hypothetical race war, like Black/white, and I was like what side do we go to? We were sitting there talking and we kind of like paused and like looked at each other and were like we gotta go to the Black side right? I don't know. I remember I had this weird thought like,

we will never be white to society and it's like I guess we're half white, but we would have to go Black.

This focus group participant notes the “outrageous hype” happening and potentially contributing to the atmosphere wherein this scenario was imagined. However, and while primal (although primal thoughts are very much a part of college life), this high school scenario contains the raw emotion and affect study participants expressed is at the core of struggles with belonging at the University. This may in no small part be due to the normative contexts undergirding and reticulating the University.

**Normative contexts.** The data reveal how Rockquemore and Brunma's (2002) four factors affected participants' (individually and as a composite) understanding of their Black/white biracial being (and potentially, their type selection). Remaining cognizant of potential causation<sup>27</sup> around Black/white biracial involvement, data also indicates the **Normative Contexts** of the institution played a significant role in students' classifications and feelings of belonging. This is aptly captured in a third year's declaration that, “I like can't stand, I really don't like being put into like a box of only being Black or only being White or feeling the need that you have to do that in order to make me feel more comfortable.”

Some participant concerns regarding belonging were pervasive to the point of emerging in interactions with external stakeholders, what Weidman (1989) terms **NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS** as illustrated by the following comment from Elsa: “I go home and have to pretend to everybody that you know ‘oh, it's great’ and you

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<sup>27</sup> A Black/white biracial person may have a racial identity (personally ascribed) different than their racial identification (assigned by others) each having a different effect on their group affiliation and feelings of belonging. That is to say, various causes (physical attributes; group acceptance) may have different effects on a biracial persons identity and identification.

know ‘there’s never race incidents at [the University]’ and ‘I never feel like I don’t fit in’ and ‘it’s great’ sort of thing.” Elsa’s reflections were delivered while making no eye contact, reflexive yet visibly impacted by her own thoughts, non-verbally conveying futile exasperation. Importantly and driven by a force(s) not clearly communicated, she was observed to have found no solace through non-college friends or family; Elsa’s concerns about being Black/white biracial at the University were not shared beyond the University.

*Normative contexts, administration and pre-socialization.* The administrators gave various examples of early college socialization and according to the Weidman model these examples would not directly fall into the category of “Pre-college normative pressure.” However, the University hosts outreach events for prospective and admitted minority students and their families to attend during the fall and spring semesters. The fall event is for potential applicants, applicants who are still in high school and would not be attending the University until the following fall. The spring event also targets—admitted—high school minority applicants who if they accept, will be attending the University in four months. These outreach events are opportunities for the University’s pre-college socialization.

The events are hosted by the New Student Welcoming Office housed in the Admissions Office and happen concurrently with other orientation events involving student affairs as well as the University’s various schools and offices. The administrators interviewed for this research are integrally aware of and involved with these outreach/open house efforts. And, while the events were not part of interview questions posed to administrators, this researcher was a panelist during one such fall outreach to

University applicants; on the same panel was one of the administrators (who is referred to here with the pseudonym, Dr. Pepper) previously interviewed for this study.

During the question and answer session with Black identifying students and/or their families (the event targets Black identifying applicants) an audience member inquired as to the resources the various University entities (represented by the panelists) could provide their son or daughter. Dr. Pepper was the last on the panel to respond to this question and made the lengthiest comment. Dr. Pepper's reply acknowledged the other panelist and their office's initiatives then enumerated the reasons why Dr. Pepper's office provided the essentials for the parent's children (personal observation, November, 14, 2015). The audience provided vocal affirmation and applause.

This observation is important for two reasons further explored at various points in this analysis. Firstly, Black/white biracial students who select a racial designation of Black when enrolling at the University are from that point forward classified as Black at the University. Secondly, these classified students are then contacted by the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH) during the summer prior to their first semester; these outreach efforts by OOSAH may be misunderstood and unappreciated by Black/white biracial students and ultimately incite disdain and distance.

**Question 2** - *How do Black/white biracial students and institutions of higher education, through university/college administrators, perceive and engage their respective roles regarding socialization?*

**Black/white biracial perceptions of socialization.** Descriptive statistics from the survey were used to examine differences between the perceptions and perspectives on any efforts toward socialization the University may have provided or endorsed and the

Singular, Border, Protean, and Transcendent types of biracial students participating in this study. The sample sizes for the types selected in this study were too small to run a significant analysis. An alternative approach chosen was to utilize the eight questions in the “Context” survey grouping to provide descriptive statistics. These descriptive statistics and the questions are in Appendix I.

The items in the “Context” section of the survey allowed participants to quantify their perceptions of socialization at the University. The data in tables (3-7) below provide perspective on the creation of an environment conducive to socialization at the University. In the survey, students were presented with a sliding scale tool that could be manipulated to a number from 0 to 100. Respondents were asked to utilize this scale instrument to quantify their response to the following six prompts (all beginning with the stem, “Indicate what percentage at the University you feel...”): 1. A bond with white students; 2. Like part of the University; 3. Comfortable at the University; 4. A bond with other mono-racial students; 5. A bond with Black students; and 6. A bond with Black/white biracial students.

Since the survey respondents also answered questions allowing them to select into one of the four Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) Black/white biracial types, the tables below indicate the minimum, maximum and average values (from 0-100) given by survey respondents, grouped by type, in response to each of the six prompts listed above. There are five tables to illustrate the variance in response between the different types (Singular, Border, Protean, Transcendent) of Black/white biracial (there are four types but five tables because Singular could be either Singular Black or Singular white).

**Table 3. Singular Black**

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Responses
1	a bond with White students	7.00	100.00	58.67	6
2	like part of the University	52.00	100.00	78.17	6
3	comfortable at the University	29.00	100.00	68.67	6
4	a bond with other mono-racial students	0.00	100.00	66.17	6
5	a bond with Black students	71.00	100.00	91.33	6
6	a bond with Black/White biracial students	16.00	100.00	76.50	6

Table 4. **Singular White**

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Responses
1	a bond with White students	40.00	93.00	71.33	3
2	like part of the University	50.00	100.00	77.00	3
3	comfortable at the University	30.00	91.00	67.00	3
4	a bond with other mono-racial students	19.00	80.00	49.50	2
5	a bond with Black students	2.00	29.00	13.67	3
6	a bond with Black/White biracial students	58.00	100.00	79.00	2

The Singular Black identifying biracial students in this study indicated a ninety-one percent average bond with Black students, seventy-eight percent was the average degree to which these students felt “part of the University” and sixty-eight percent was the average score for feeling “comfortable at the University.” Comparatively, Singular white identifying biracial students averaged a score of thirteen percent on “Bond with Black students,” seventy-seven percent was the average degree to which they felt “part of the University” and sixty-seven percent was the average score for feeling “comfortable at the

University.” Singular Black biracial students, self-reporting a strong bond with Black students, submitted a higher level of belonging and comfort at the University than did those biracial students identifying as singular white. Of the respondents who identified as singular Black type, one-hundred percent selected either Strongly Agree or Agree to the statement, “I look the way Black people are historically thought to look; most people think I am Black.” Of the respondents who identified as singular white type, one-hundred percent selected either Strongly Agree or Agree for the statement, “I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am a person of color but not Black or Black mixed with something else” and thirty-three strongly agreed, “I look the way White people are historically thought to look; people assume that I am White/ have a white ethnicity.”

Physical characteristics may play a significant role in a biracial student choosing a Singular (Black or white) type (Rockquemore & Brunσμα, 2002) making the perceptions of socialization from these two groups of participants particularly compelling. It has been noted in the Initial Document Analysis how the University in this study is a Predominately White Institution (PWI) with a salient history of racial segregation; the struggle and discomfort of Black undergraduate students is perennially documented in various campus literature. Researchers have been consistent in stating the importance of appearance on intrapersonal identity (Poston, 1990), with in-group perception and acceptance and out-group perception and classification (Root, 2009). Broadly, the research posits that an individual is racially grouped/classified by others based on the physical characteristics traditionally attributed to a various race and/or ethnicity that the individual may or may not possess.

A conclusion may be that if an individual looks Black, identifies as Black and feels a strong bond with Black students, they would be perceived and treated as Black by others. If this were the case an expectation may be for these Black identifying biracial students to feel a similar comfort and belonging with the University as Black students. While this study does not have data on the percentage of comfort and belonging felt by Black students at the University, it seems logical for the reasons listed above, that the Black students at this University would not feel more comfort and belonging than white students. However, this data shows that singular Black identifying types of biracial students express a stronger alignment with the University than singular white identifying types.

**Table 5. Border**

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Responses
1	a bond with White students	10.00	100.00	67.74	23
2	like part of the University	6.00	100.00	78.08	24
3	comfortable at the University	21.00	100.00	72.46	24
4	a bond with other mono-racial students	10.00	100.00	53.54	24
5	a bond with Black students	10.00	100.00	51.83	24
6	a bond with Black/White biracial students	0.00	100.00	59.61	23

Seventy percent of participants identifying as a Border type also checked “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the statement, “I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am Black mixed with something else.”

**Table 6. Protean**

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Responses
1	a bond with White students	29.00	100.00	58.13	25.72	8
2	like part of the University	13.00	100.00	54.25	30.14	8
3	comfortable at the University	26.00	100.00	54.63	20.80	8
4	a bond with other mono-racial students	23.00	61.00	42.00	14.28	8
5	a bond with Black students	30.00	82.00	57.75	20.20	8
6	a bond with Black/White biracial students	50.00	92.00	72.75	17.47	8

As the group name might suggest, students who identified with a Protean type were divided on their appearance with no one prompt being overwhelmingly selected. The prompts “I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am a person of color but not Black or Black mixed with something else” and “I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am Black mixed with something else” were both strongly agreed or agreed with by sixty-six percent of respondents. However, twenty-two percent selected either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” for the statements, “I look the way Black people are historically thought to look; most people think I am Black” and “I look the way White people are historically thought to look; people assume that I am White/ have a white ethnicity.”

Table 7. **Transcendent**

#	Answer	Min Value	Max Value	Average Value	Responses
1	a bond with White students	13.00	80.00	57.33	3
2	like part of the University	23.00	100.00	74.33	3
3	comfortable at the University	25.00	93.00	69.33	3
4	a bond with other mono-racial students	14.00	85.00	52.67	3
5	a bond with Black students	34.00	85.00	59.00	3
6	a bond with Black/White biracial students	51.00	85.00	70.33	3

Seventy-five percent of the participants who chose the Transcendent type also selected “Strongly agree” or “Agree” for the statement, “I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am Black mixed with something else.” A small number of survey participants (n=4) selected the Transcendent type making it the second smallest of the type groups (the smallest being Singular white, n=3). The table above indicates a response rate of three however this is because there was one respondent who selected “Do not know” in each prompt and “Do not know” was not assigned a value. Participants who identified with the Transcendent or non-racial type in Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) study were also sparse. However, unlike the Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) study where the transcendent identifying participants were white in appearance, most (75%) of the transcendent identifying participants in this study either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they “look the way White people are historically thought to look.”

**Normative contexts and socialization.** In consideration of the literature and the Weidman (1989) socialization model<sup>28</sup> employed in this research, Pre-College Normative Pressures, In-College Normative Pressures and **Normative Contexts + Socialization Processes** will be appropriately highlighted below (Weidman undergraduate socialization model, 1989, Appendix E).

*Pre-college normative pressures.* These pressures can involve Socio-Economic Status (SES), aptitude, career preferences, aspirations and values along with parental socialization and non-college reference groups (Weidman, 1989). Some of these data (Socio-Economic Status [SES], aptitude, career preferences) were captured in the survey however focus group participants also noted pre-college pressures in responses to the questions: Does your affiliation or connection with the community (other than University communities) or groups outside of college impact your experience at the University?

*In-college normative pressures.* Similar to the *Pre-college* normative pressures experienced by matriculating students, In-college pressures involve **PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION** and **NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS**. Unlike *Pre-college* normative pressures, In-college pressures also involve the **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE**. While there may be an understandable overlap, it was important to parse out the *external* pressures felt during college from the simultaneous in-college experience.

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<sup>28</sup> As can be seen in Appendix E, Weidman's (1989) socialization model illustrates (1) external forces of Parental Socialization and Non-college reference groups along with Student background characteristics as contributing to *Pre-College Normative Pressure*. And, (2) the same forces of Parental Socialization and Non-college reference groups combined with Socialization Outcomes contribute to *In-College Normative Pressure*. Both external phenomena (Pre-College and In-College Normative Pressures) occur concurrently with the Collegiate Experience comprised of the **Normative Contexts** and **Socialization Processes**.

For example and in response to the question, “how do you see your race [*and/or racial identity*] as impacting your experience at the University,” a student’s response may involve the impact of their race when interacting with the community beyond the University. This reinforced that some students viewed external and non-college reference groups as part of the college experience. Perhaps logically, the college community may not include *non-college* reference groups however the research reinforced how non-college reference groups remain salient in the Black/white biracial college student experience.

Patty, who identifies with a Singular (white) type notes that her father (who identifies as Black) has hopes for her being “slightly more involved in the Black community at [the University].” However, she concludes this thought by asserting that her dad is aware that not being involved in Black focused groups or initiatives is not tantamount to a lack of self-awareness. The interaction of her father was described as being more about ensuring she was aware of the various opportunities available to her. In that regard, it was revealed that her father would be just as likely to encourage her to participate in a women’s club event. It would seem that she viewed her dad as being more indifferent racially and more of the mind frame that (as Patty reflected and spoke on what her father might say) “well this is like applicable to you so do this.” The plausibility of the “colorblind” dad became questionable when it was disclosed how her father had worked for years in banking along side white graduates of the University with a “fraternity bond;” a relationship resulting in “animosity toward [the University].”

Other focus group members spoke specifically about the support they did or did not have when interacting with non-college reference groups. When discussing how

much she does not see her high school friends anymore, Tiana reflected fondly on going home after her first year at the University and feeling “relieved” about it being so “welcoming.” Conversely, Anna felt no respite from racial pressures even when returning home during breaks from the University. Anna’s insight was tempered by her experience as an international student who had moved every two years before arriving at the University. In short, for Anna being biracial (or mixed as she self-identified) in the United States “has just not been comfortable.” In what can be noted as an isolated experience, Elsa stated that she had no one outside of the University she could “go and openly talk to about stuff like this [biracial socialization at the University].” Two different perspectives on non-college reference groups were offered by Ariel, who discussed her family, and Aladdin, who shared a high school story that continues to reoccur in his thoughts even as a junior at the University.

Ariel’s Black family members were denizens of the University’s regional area and worked at the University prior to its student integration. Ariel stated that this ancestry engendered a connection to the University although this connection could be perceived as cautious in consideration of the University’s history with race—“Whenever I hear about Black history at [the University] I think, that could have been my great-grandfather.” Reflectively she concluded, “...like it’s always a weird way and I feel like connected to [the University] from one side but on the other side...it’s a weird way of feeling connected here.”

Aladdin shared a story anchored in a high school experience. This story itself was analyzed above in the research however this story appeared to have a bigger backdrop

involving issues of community infrastructure, politics and redistricting. These issues potentially play a significant role as a non-college reference group.

The high school Aladdin attended “was about 50/50 Black White” and located in the middle of a town where “the further you go west, the whiter it gets like newer developments and towards the east and the city is like definitely Blacker.” In a location between this high school and the other (white) end of town a new high school was constructed—a result was racial shifting in Aladdin’s high school. The Black students from east of town stayed at the existing high school and the white students gravitated to the new school. During the time of the story Aladdin is a sophomore and his high school is fifty percent white and fifty percent Black. When he graduated the school was eighty percent Black and twenty percent white. It stands to reason that prior to attending the University, Aladdin had developed thoughts around education and racial segregation as well as what a biracial student’s fit may be in such a racial binary.

**Normative Contexts + Socialization Processes.** Put simply, **Normative Contexts** plus **Socialization Processes** equals the **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE** (Weidman, 1989). The data captures an array of student perceptions of the *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts*, both *Formal* and *Informal*. Many of these perceptions of norms can be married to **Socialization Processes** (*Interpersonal Interaction*, *Intrapersonal processes* and *Social and Academic Integration*) experienced at the University. As it concerns normative contexts, focus group data specifically provided insight on both formal and informal Social norms.

Focus group questions such as “In your experience, how do University administrators, faculty, and staff react to your racial identity?” elicited a few responses

concerning a class or professor. However for the most part neither Weidman's (1989) *Formal* nor *Informal Academic Normative Contexts* (Institutional Quality, Institutional Mission and the Hidden Curriculum) were directly referenced by students participating in these focus groups (Weidman socialization model, Appendix E). To reiterate, the focus groups revealed social norms but not academic norms. Accordingly, the data presented here will aim at the *Formal* or *Informal Social Normative Contexts* (Institutional Size, Residence, Organizations, and Peer Groups) as a supplement to students' **Socialization Processes** (*Interpersonal Interactions, Intrapersonal Processes* and *Social and Academic Integration*).

The combination of organizations and peer groups (i.e. **Social Normative Contexts**) with interpersonal interactions—**Socialization Processes** (Weidman, 1989)—is exemplified in this statement by Elsa, a third year student sharing a response to the question, “how does your biracial identity affect your experience at the University?”:

I think it just makes me more conscious like when I'm, you know, going out and like trying to be cool. I remember like during sorority recruitment like especially like definitely went out and bought stuff, you know, clothes that I wouldn't have otherwise worn, just because, you know it makes you kind of feel like you'll be more accepted that way. Um, at the same time though, I feel really, really conscious of it. I generally like don't go to like the groups or events that are hosted by the African American organizations. I remember one time my White friend actually took me to a party that they were having and just the looks you get from some of the people that are there, girls especially...

The beginning of Elsa's recollection incorporates sorority organizations at the University (***Social Normative Contexts***) and the *Intrapersonal Processing* (one of the ***Socialization Processes***) resulting from attempts to fit in with these groups. She shares her decision to buy clothes that "I wouldn't have otherwise worn" because it provides a feeling that she will be more accepted.

Seeking acceptance or a feeling of belonging is arguably a rite of passage undergone by many experiencing student development. Belongingness is a dimension of the perceived feeling of cohesion an individual may experience with a group (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Reinforced by Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005), a sense of belonging illustrates the students' relationship with the university "including whether students feel part of campus life" and "are a member of the community" (p. 239). Being accepted in a group is not a challenge faced exclusively by Black/white biracial students. However, Elsa's reflection appeared driven by a need to be not just accepted but to be considered acceptable.

This idea of being acceptable is augmented toward the end of her account, where Elsa describes a college experience involving a University organization ("African American organizations") as well as subsequent interpersonal interaction ("just the looks you get from some of the people that are there"). Elsa's perception was not indicative of a strong feeling of connection with the African American organization. The Interpersonal Interaction where Elsa is interpreting non-verbal expressions from African American students is the impetus of a "cognitive evaluation" of "her role in relation to the group" resulting in "an affective response" (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p. 328). An

example of Interpersonal Interactions impacting Intrapersonal Processes both of which are components of students' **Socialization Processes** according to Weidman (1989).

The above is one example of the ***Social Normative Contexts***, *Peer Groups* and *Organizations*, being negotiated as part of the **Socialization Processes** encountered by this study's Black/white biracial students' **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE**. There were several accounts of experiences with organizations and peer groups that illuminated the college experience and socialization processes of the Black/white biracial students in this study. Accompanying student experiences with organizations and peer groups at the University were interactions at residence halls.

Students participating in this study provided descriptions of residence hall activities from the perspective of both resident and resident advisor (RA). Multiple vantage points display the Black/white biracial student as both vulnerable to and supportive of the University's ***Social Normative Contexts***. For example, Regina, an RA at the University proudly explains how the rooms and students under her supervision are diverse.

I have three different suites and one suite I like consider my like  
multiracial suite because there are nine girls including me and I have a girl  
from Nigeria, from Venezuela, the inner city, they are all in this suite  
together; I move one suite over and they are all from [an affluent area of  
the state] and I move one suite over and they it's like all my girls went to  
private boarding school.

Reginia's satisfaction with the racial and ethnic differences of "my girls" is indicative of sentiments expressed by the University senior administrators interviewed for this study

when reflecting on the Black/white biracial student population. In fairness, she continues by questioning how this homogeneity (each room having a common thread tying the roommates together) can occur, promptly acknowledging it as the product of students' exercising their privilege to choose roommates. In fact Regina states, "I think housing is a way that when you come in, you're forced to be in this group and it's one way the university can take a stand and force everyone to be more integrated."

It appeared Snow was in this type of "forced" arrangement in her first year where she had five roommates, three white, one Asian and one Latina. As one of six living in the same space she enjoyed learning about different people "their culture and history" and feels "lucky" to have made "so many different friends from different backgrounds." Snow, a sophomore, is still a friend of all her roommates from first year, save one. This approach may be less than favorable in consideration of other study participants' experiences. Other study participants expressed reactions to a more traditional one-person roommate scenario in their residence hall.

Asked to reflect on time when they may have felt the weight of being considered a representative for people of color, Anna described the following orientation episode in the residence hall:

They had these things that they did where they would have like situations played out where there is a Black roommate and a White roommate and they are not getting along and then we all talked about it with our R.A.'s group. Our R.A. would be like "so what do you guys think about this?" and everyone kind of turns to me because I'm the one Black student on my hall. I was like "okay, well I think, you know..." I was trying to say, "I'm

mixed race, but I think that etc. etc. etc.” It was definitely uncomfortable and a very awkward first week.

The circumstance Anna gives differs from the previous residence hall accounts because (1) the scenario in this recollection involves a one-on-one roommate encounter, (2) the roommates would seem to have been randomly and heterogeneously paired and (3) the scenario can be assumed fictitious and is provided for the purposes of training a large number of student participants.

From the observed expressions of incredulousness accompanying this story, Anna encountered social norms that communicated, not only are people of color to be categorized together at the University but, corporeally she was a person of color and would be expected to speak for a group of people with whom she may not identify. Perhaps more importantly her rumination on trying to declare a mixed race status while being looked on as the sole identified person of color in a group of incoming college students, gave the impression of a disenfranchised University student in the midst of a “very awkward first week.” Anna found herself tacitly categorized early on at the University. Other study participants also experienced categorization at residence halls but through blatant and derogatory labeling.

Recalling a heterogeneous roommate arrangement, Belle notes, “My friend just changed roommates because his roommate called him nigger.” This type of incident is neither unique nor unfamiliar to Belle as she has personally experienced similar reactions in residence halls.

There is this one girl and she’s Latina and I’m not sure what, but she keeps calling me niglet and it’s really starting to bother me. She’s like one of

those people that claims it's okay and that she has the right to say it because she grew up in like the ghetto, I guess, I mean I don't really know that much about her, but it's really starting to bother me and she uses the 'N' word like constantly. Like, I don't even say that.

In this instance a person with an uncertain identification is addressing Belle using a racial epithet—"niglet." "Nigger" is considered a dysphemism and "niglet" is "nigger" extrapolated then bandied almost as a dysphemistic term of endearment. In either case, the racial slur and its derivatives remain heavily used in the African American population as terms with "ethnic connotation for intragroup self-reference" (Rahman, 2012, p. 138). "Intragroup" is an important word as it concerns Belle's story. Her cohabiter in the residence hall is described as "Latina and I'm not sure what" giving the impression they may be multi-racial/ethnic. As the focus group was comprised of students with Black parentage an assumption can be made that this interloper has not been identified as having African ancestry since that observation would have been extremely relevant to the discussion. Regardless, Belle has stated, "I don't even say that" indicating a discomfort with this term regardless of its user's Black heritage.

In sum, strong examples of Weidman's ***Social Normative Contexts*** involving Organizations, Peer Groups and Residence Halls were all integral to the **Socialization Processes** (*Interpersonal Interactions, Intrapersonal Processes* and Academic and Social *Integration*) of the Black/white biracial students participating in these focus groups. That is to say, participants' confrontation with normative contexts can be viewed as socialization processes according to Weidman's construct of the **COLLEGE**

**EXPERIENCE** in his socialization model. Accordingly, the focus group participants did express perceptions of Weidman's **Socialization Processes** within the University.

**Attraction to Normative contexts.** The Black/white biracial students in this study did indicate an attraction to the University's **Normative Contexts** as defined by Weidman (1989). While there was considerably more data involving *Social Normative Contexts* than *Academic Normative Contexts*, since the *Academic Normative Context* involve the University as an institution, it is reasonable to assume that most students who chose to attend the University are attracted to the *Academic Normative Contexts*. Although the students in this study chose to attend the University (assumed attraction), two members in the focus groups definitively stated they would not want their siblings to attend the University. These declarations were the culmination of participant's thoughts on and attraction to the University's normative context. However on the other end of this spectrum of attraction were participants' recollections of University sponsored events of student solidarity as well as spontaneous and unpredictable events that also brought students together for a unified purpose (e.g. a fire drill in the residence hall at 3am; a snowstorm that shuts down the University). In both the University sponsored and spontaneous events participants seemed to find themselves overwhelmingly united with others as University students as opposed to the prominent portrayal of students as classified members of various, distinct groups attending the same university.

**Normative contexts, student governance and belonging.** As it concerns student governance, a social and racial classification did appear to be acknowledged by the study participants. Specifically, the focus group members shared opinions on the University's student government committee, considered by one administrator interviewed in this study

as an indicator of values at the University. Focus group participants revealed this committee as being all white, perhaps more conceptually and traditionally than structurally. It was discussed as an entity they were not part of and that perhaps any values emanating from this committee may at worst not relate to students of color and at best be intentionally disparate. This is neatly illustrated in the following exchange between two focus group participants:

**Belle:** What I don't like is the fact that like [Name of the Committee] and like their organizations are automatically being seen as the White thing. So if you're going to make something that's going to be the Black ball and the White ball, then have an organization that is going to be strictly focused on White historic background and that's music that is theirs.

**Jasmine:** That *is* [Name of the Committee] though (italics added to show emphasis).

In this exchange the two students are discussing dances (Balls) sponsored by certain student groups and thought to racially target specific students. Belle's next response is revealing. Not only does she elaborate on the fissure committees that are not diverse seem to perpetuate but also encourages Black/white biracial student activism before providing a confession.

**Belle:** But I'm saying we need to change that, we need to change the idea that we can have, that there are two different groups here is all I'm saying. If we keep perpetuating that is what [Name of the Committee] is, it's just going to continue that way. If we don't start having people feel comfortable and that they can join these organizations and we are

perpetuating the fact that [Name of the Committee] is this White organization, it's never going to be anything different than the White organization. This is the same reason that a lot of White students don't feel comfortable going to [a Black student group] or people that don't feel like they can identify with being Black, and I'll take credit because I don't really feel comfortable going to [specific Black student group sponsored] events and I don't have those same strong feelings that they necessarily carry. I think if you keep placing them in those organizations, it's just we're not moving anywhere and we are doing the same thing that was done before.

Belle presents [Name of the Committee] as an artifact of the University's culture. There is a perceived dichotomy of white and Black at the University and organizations like [Name of the Committee] provide inertia necessary for the separation of white and Black students to continue unchallenged; in this way it is a normative context (a norm) of the organization. Participant views of the University's culture are likely not illustrative of the moral authority the senior administrator had in mind when referencing how the [Name of the Committee] helps "inculcate" core values at the University.

Along the lines of moral authority and organizational culture, Jasmine makes the following observation, "So if you look at like [Name of the Committee] right... [Name of the Committee] was all about these southern white guys stepping and moving 'morally and ethically' and like they all owned slaves and they all were like, it's this very southern idea of Whiteness that is the foundation of the idea of the [Name of the Committee] at [the University]." Jasmine concludes her thought by considering how it may be their

responsibility as students to change “what [Name of the Committee] means for us now as opposed to before.” However, this responsibility does not come without a challenge, “I think the problem is how do you embrace that idea of tradition if you want to keep it going? The problem is like it’s a tradition of exclusive whiteness, which is not what we want it to be.”

**Student governance and administration.** In response to the question, “Would you say student governance is integral in that socialization at this particular institution?” The OOSAH administrator affirmed with a succinct, “Yes.” All three of the administrators shared events and initiatives either sponsored or co-sponsored by their offices yet also led by students. This support of student governance implied the development of attractive normative contexts however, as has been noted above, there are no recognized efforts supporting Black/white biracial students. Therefore, it may be difficult to attribute any normative contexts that Black/white biracial students may find attractive to the actions of administrators interviewed in this study. The data show that the enjoyable social contexts were not normative at all but instead the result of spontaneous events or occurrences. As these events were not formally recognized it cannot be said whether they were supported by administration or the result of student governance.

While the data show this sample employed Weidman’s **Socialization Processes** at the University, the norms encountered during their college experience may have been detrimental to their socialization at the University. This sample demonstrated consistent struggles with the Weidman’s **Social** norms of Residences, Organizations and Peer Groups at the University, however the effects of integrating these norms are unknown

and undoubtedly impact student socialization as defined in this study. That is to say, involvement in Weidman's **Socialization Processes** may not be tantamount to achieving socialization. Also, the *Academic Normative Contexts* did not appear to provide similar discord for these students.

**Supports and aids to socialization.** The theoretical view that socialization involves an individual's adoption of an organization's norms as well as the organization's investment in the individual, tempers the framework of this research. Socialization is a bidirectional phenomenon and as such can be viewed from the perspective of (1) the individual being socialized and (2) the organization or community within which the individual seeks membership. Weidman's (1989) conceptual framework and use of **Socialization Processes** is ubiquitous throughout this dissertation and it is also valuable to consider Mortimer and Simmons's (1978) definition of socialization as involving "learning the appropriate (i.e., normative) modes of 'social behavior and/or role enactment' within the groups in which membership is desired" (p. 422).

The data were analyzed to ascertain any supports and aids that may have been relied on during students' college experience. The Weidman model (Appendix E) provides the framework from which the data can be arranged in the following sections: **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE, PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION and NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS**. All of the methodologies (survey, focus group, interview) provided data on students' **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE**. However the survey data also revealed supports and aids to socialization students may have found beyond the University.

Study participants noted involvement in several initiatives and programs that could be viewed as socialization supports or aids. However, the descriptions of these supports revealed study participants' perceptions that these supports were not specifically biracial focused or in most cases intentionally created socialization efforts. Perhaps the strongest support group/initiative/efforts noted by participants derived from "international" students and efforts.

***International supports and belonging.*** A sentiment of solace and acceptance appeared to result from participants' interactions and experiences with international students and international student activities. Several participants appeared to embrace a general notion of multicultural acceptance abroad and specifically with international students domestically. When sharing feelings of comfort and people's perception of them as biracial one participant shared their experience living abroad, emphasizing, "it was like race didn't exist. Everyone has a culture." Another focus group member provided a succinctly broad reason for their ease around international students, "It's not about your skin color because everyone is different and everyone is celebrated."

Indeed several of the participants claimed a more international family life, upbringing and socialization (e.g. having dual citizenship; being the child of a diplomat; having parents who immigrated from the Caribbean) that may have contributed to any predilection toward international supports at the University. Another participant noted, "I've had international experience and went abroad for some time, so I really got to understand that community." Regardless of the motivation for these study participants, international life, activities and people equaled less racial weight and judgment.

Providing a different view, a second-year international student's statement was sweeping in its indictment of the country (U.S.), "I've only lived in the States for two years now and honestly just being in the States is not, has just not been comfortable." Unlike the views offered by other Black/white biracial students participating in this study regarding international students or being abroad, this student is international. Interestingly, although beyond the scope of this research, their comment proposes difficulty socializing as a Black/white biracial in the United States. They concluded their observation pondering, "Coming here has been very interesting. Race is something that I'm constantly thinking about as I'm here, because it's definitely a factor of who I am, whereas it really never has been. Um, so, yeah, I don't know."

Combining with the mind-frame of international racial equality, these study participants also appeared to experience acceptance among international students. When discussing their exposure through employment at the International Studies Office, a participant remarked, "I think that I get along really well with that group of people just because they do kind of have that international experience and realize that there is a world outside of [the University] where race is not this huge thing." Another participant provided what could be insight to their increased comfort with international students when stating, "the international students I've been around usually are mixed race; not necessarily Black and White, but like whatever else."

This comfort may have been best illustrated when participants were asked, "Where would you go at the University if you wanted to interact with people who identify similarly?" Anna's response was, "I would go to somewhere where international students congregate ... I would consider myself an international student and grew up in

Africa... race has never really been a thing that I think about. Coming here [to the University] has been very interesting. Race is something that I'm constantly thinking about as I'm here." This answer revealing her status as an international student perhaps expresses any attachment she may have to the international student group. Indeed, the University's international community appeared to also have helped Elsa make a post graduation decision, "I mean I came in knowing I wanted to go down the international route and I have just reaffirmed that I am definitely getting out of here when I'm done. I mean, it's not about like not wanting to experience anything here, I'm not trying to close myself off, but like I definitely know I need to be working somewhere where there are more people like me."

Importantly, as it is for mono-racial minorities who are pan-racialized (read African Americans, Asian American, Latino Americans), Black/white biracial students in this study did not identify with one type of Black. That is to say, the Black parent of some of the participants in this research may not have identified as African American but Afro-Caribbean or African. This international detail informed students' reactions at the University: "For me, like my mom is not an American and she's from Trinidad, and I feel like that gives me a whole other perspective...we don't have slavery in our ancestry and during those moments in class I'm like, I don't know. That's not me and, I don't know, like people, like I don't know." Poignantly, this ancestral fact appears to further impede the participant from identifying with the one racial group—African American—with which Black/white biracial students are often identified. Thus, further distancing them from socialization resources and supports. This is perhaps why those Black/white

biracial students who have international heritage or exposure feel more comfortable with international students at the University.

The participants did discuss other socialization supports and aids experienced that were interest specific. Several participants claimed membership in a sorority while others were involved with various clubs (e.g. yoga, theater) and services (e.g. the campus tour guide services and the University's transit service) at the University. Also, along with the international students, the study participants connected with and were involved in other student communities, for example the Hindi, Jewish, and Gay community groups.

No examples of specific Black/white biracial support or aid (a group, service, person, etc.) were noted by these study participants as being available to students. Regarding the utilization of other existing resources, one participant's sentiment was particularly revealing, "I just wish more organizations would respect and understand that we can't necessarily identify and we shouldn't have to choose to identify with one side of ourselves in order to be in the organization." What appears to be noted here is a feeling of isolation "we can't necessarily identify" along with one of conflict "we shouldn't have to choose to identify with one side." These feelings may be stereotypically central to the biracial experience. Overall, the potential experience for Black/white biracial students at the University is perhaps captured here rather succinctly, "if you think about it in racially feeling uncomfortable here or feeling like you and your racial identity can feel comfortable here, I don't think [the University] provides that at all."

**University socialization efforts.** As college occurs for many at a time—18-25 years of age—of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2006) it stands to reason that college, as

an environment of social context interaction, would be a source of socialization as may be inferred through Rockquemore and Brunnsma's (2002) research. However, the effects of college on biracial socialization do not seem to be explored in detail by Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) and furthermore the researchers note, "the extent to which social context influences racial identity formation of biracial respondents remains complicated" (p. 105). This study intended to address such complications by using Rockquemore and Brunnsma's (2002) Black/white biracial classification types to provide a valuable point of view in framing the effect of a college's socialization efforts on students.

Data from the survey illuminates the University's socialization as defined using the Weidman model and perceived by the respondents. Survey data was scaled into groups to assist with analyzing student experiences that are examples of socialization as well as the experiences students may have acquired as a result of University socialization efforts. These scales include the "Context" and "Class and Academic" sections of the survey noted below.

**Context.** The "Context" section of the survey provided a prompt "Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements" followed by eight statements. Participants could select one of five choices ordered as Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Do not know. The overall responses are recorded and illustrated below in Table 8.

Table 8.

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know	Total Responses
1	I enjoy/have enjoyed my residence hall experience at the University.	16	22	9	1	0	48
2	I find the physical structure and layout of the University appealing.	19	25	3	0	1	48
3	I appreciate the art, decorations, and historical artifacts in and around the University.	21	24	2	0	1	48
4	Around campus I am presented with many opportunities to meet and interact with other students.	20	26	1	1	0	48
5	Around campus I am presented with many opportunities to meet and interact with University faculty and staff.	12	31	4	1	0	48
6	I support student governance at the University.	10	30	5	1	2	48
7	The University responds well to student needs and/or complaints.	4	22	8	7	6	47
8	I am actively involved in student services (e.g. counseling, advising, orientation team, tutoring, etc.).	6	14	24	3	1	48

There was an overwhelmingly positive response (Agree and Strongly Agree) to the University socialization efforts referenced in the “Context” section of the survey. As a group or scale, seventy-eight percent of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in the “Context” section and eighteen percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Two percent of respondents did not know.

***Class and academic.***

Table 9.

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know	Total Responses
1	Structurally, I find my classrooms to be suitable.	15	30	3	0	0	48
2	My classes are designed in a way that allows me to participate.	14	25	9	0	0	48
3	My classes address bi/multiracial issues in the curriculum.	2	5	22	16	3	48
4	There are discussions about bi/multiracialism and bi/multiracial issues in my classes.	2	5	24	16	1	48
5	Bi/multiracial authors and scholars are often a part of the required reading in my classes.	1	4	20	17	6	48
6	At this time, I can name three bi/multiracial authors or scholars in my field of study or interest.	3	1	23	20	1	48
7	In class I have the opportunity to racially identify or explore my racial identity.	1	13	17	16	1	48
8	In general the teaching methods in my classes match well with my learning style.	5	35	5	3	0	48
9	I identify with the instructors of my courses.	5	25	11	1	6	48
10	I racially identify with the instructors of my courses.	1	4	26	15	2	48
11	I am provided with opportunities to meet and speak with faculty outside of class.	14	31	2	1	0	48

Unlike the “Context” section, the “Class/Academic” section of the survey provided a wider range of responses the majority of which were negative (Disagree and Strongly Disagree). As a group or scale, forty-six percent of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in the “Class/Academic” section and fifty-one percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Three percent of respondents did not know.

**Belonging and normative contexts.** The study participants’ experiences with the University’s Social Normative Contexts contributed to sentiments that these initiatives may be self-segregating. Specifically noted was the OOSAH’s peer program. This mentoring initiative can impact Black/white biracial student socialization in both roles

(advisors as well as advisees). When discussing discomfort with or the segregationist aspect of this advising program many participants appeared to be addressing the program's concept, creation and targeting intent; these can be labeled programmatic/departmental/office issues. However, it is valuable to recognize the occasions when participants' observations on the peer program pin-pointed the advisors. One participant for example, when discussing their advising experience and the advisor they received, noted, "...if you have someone that is... self-segregating that community; are you really getting, you know, the [University] experience, are you being involved?" Another participant followed up with the observation, "I feel like a lot of the African American resources that are made available to me almost feel a lot like self-segregation, and I really didn't like that."

Along with perpetuating the lack of acknowledgment of the Black/white biracial student population, providing opt-out resources (e.g. the OOSAH peer program) to mono-racial identifying groups can imply that members of this group have an academic debilitation requiring assistance. This sentiment was shared by several in the focus group who expressed agitation with the University lumping them in with a group of students (African Americans) delineated from the majority (white) and designated for assistance.

Why, like why can't we just exist in a place where there are White students, African American students, mixed race students, multicultural students and we just go to class and come back and that's it. It's overwhelming to constantly get bombarded by e-mails and reminding me constantly that I'm like the minority that I need extra help and attention.

This sentiment was confirmed in the focus group along with insight on how this type of effort may be better received if focused directly on the Black/white biracial population: “I agree with the whole not wanting to constantly be reminded that you’re different, but...if I had maybe gotten like a “welcome to [the University]” from some biracial student organization... I would’ve felt really welcome if that was the case.” The benefit of having a biracial organization or initiative was mentioned several times in the focus groups. Another example was this focus group member who stated, “I think it would be really cool if there was a program for mixed people. If you could kind of do that? I think it’s definitely interesting as a mixed person, like navigating [the University] and like trying to figure out where you belong. Like, every time I meet mixed people, it’s like ‘oh my,’ like I want to be friends with all of you.”

It has been revealed below how one of the most prevalent African American resources (OOSAH) made available to the Black/white biracial population creates dissonance for these research participants. A disconnect manifests through the actions and intent of OOSAH (e.g. assigning a first year mentor) for Black/white biracial students and the actual experiences realized by these students. For example, Snow shared:

Yeah, like a lot of stuff that the [Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage] puts on, or just the [Black Student Collective]... I don’t really do any of the events that they have. My brother, who is much more involved in the Black community, is always like you need to go and do this stuff, but I always feel like I wouldn’t really fit in because I’m not as Black as they are, so...I just don’t go to them.

Although Snow selected the Border type she was of a fair complexion and admitted during the focus group that she could have easily selected Singular white. This appearance and perhaps cultural awareness may have influenced her thoughts and experiences with African American events and people. On a similar note, another focus group member who was also very light remarked, “I remember going to the office [Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage] and at one point someone followed me around and asked me ‘excuse me, can I help you with something?’” This gives the impression of another instance of appearance/socialization causation.

The importance of Appearance in the classification of the Black/white biracial was discussed however with Snow it can be seen how appearance may perhaps be a physical marker for a perceived (by others) lack of cultural knowledge, awareness and identity. Snow perhaps best described it with her statement that “It’s just this weird thing where all of those kind of like values I say or the things that people tend to identify with, I just don’t have any of that, but like I’m still not White. I just have this weird like, it’s just kinda me thing.”

The reality of this uniqueness and feeling of potential loneliness in the face of misguided outreach efforts, is illustrated by a participant’s reflection on attending “Black” events on campus, “if you go to one of their events and you just feel like you don’t fit in and they don’t want you there” and its juxtaposition with the first year OOSAH peer program, “how are you going to, you know, claim me and pull me this way, if you don’t want me anyway?”

Providing administrators’ input on socialization as well as insight on the University’s role, an OOSAH administrator noted, “socialization here means that if you

are a product of this university, you should be able to graduate and continue participating in leadership as a function of a purpose or a function of a cause.” This administrator clearly presented their expectations for the OOSAH to impact—Black (as defined and differentiated above)—students’ development in regard to leadership. In fact, programs “generated from” the OOSAH are proposed to instill in their students “a qualitative and a quantitative balance between investment in self and deferral to others. That is the balance that will allow you to be able to pick your fights correctly or position yourself strategically so you can make high impact.” More exactly germane to this research, students participating in OOSAH programs should “come away feeling like there is a qualitative and quantitative balance between when to *claim* yourself regardless of what color or shape you are, and when to defer to others.”

The administrator from OUSE appeared to answer more holistically in relation to student demographics and less protective or defensive focused (this will be discussed further in Chapter Five as these administrative sentiments allude to the moral authority of the University): “in the fall... there will be a big resource fair and... it’s a big part of the socialization ride... What all these groups are doing is really making a larger place feel small.” This fair is intended to showcase the support and interest groups available to undergraduates in an effort to provide necessary resources and furnish opportunities for fellowship.

Similarly foundational and extra-curricular are activities and life at the University residence halls. Unlike the resource fair, residence hall activity can be mandatory and continuous (throughout the academic year). For many the residence halls may provide the first interaction with the University’s culture, norms and other students. These

interactions are potential socialization opportunities and “that’s where the R.A.’s come in. Their job is very much focused on socialization.” Although residence life was mentioned as being rife with socialization opportunities, the OUSE administrator, in noting the R.A.’s responsibility appeared to focus more on student-run groups and organizations as the vehicles of socialization for students in general.

The OUSE administrator’s focus on student groups and organizations along with the mention of residence life perhaps gave perspective to how vehicles of socialization may be weighted by University administrators as well as the resultant amount of focus each receive. For this administrator socialization involved an understanding of student maturity level upon matriculation and the awareness of the college environment and population of which the students are now a part. Greeting the various student levels of awareness are “student run” University extra-curricular programs and organizations. Students also play a role in residence life activity where RAs are thought responsible for socialization. This student governance creates a separation from administration and potentially a plausible deniability with respect to University accountability. This is not to say the University is not responsible, all administrators interviewed in this study acknowledged some degree of University responsibility. However, what appeared to be lacking, at least from the administrator at the OUSE, was accountability for the University’s role in establishing and promoting a culture and context of attenuating support for Black/white biracial students. This support comes in the form of *other* students who may or may not be representative of the Black/white biracial group.

When asked whether broad University efforts toward socialization of the general student body were sufficient for specific populations like Black/white biracial students or

whether a specific initiative focused on multi-racial identity development would be more beneficial, the OOSAH administrator remarked, “I think it can be very beneficial yes.” The logic motivating this administrator’s position appears based in cognitive developmental and social psychological reasoning as illustrated in the following observation: “the question of self-coherence, self-regard, and self-esteem, when you have one parent or the other that is Black and one parent or the other that is White, in a community that filters respect, privilege through color schemes, is very important thing to negotiate.”

**Normative contexts and University socialization efforts.** The research data revealed that University socialization efforts exist. As displayed by this comment, Black/white biracial students are noticing socializing opportunities:

I think, you know, like having a background that is more like, you know, American Black, I think like one thing I have liked about coming to [the University] was like getting exposed to the Black community... my best friends here aren’t in the Black community, but I think it’s been a cool experience to see that other part of like, I don’t know, like my background, which is what I can think of my background is.

The data show University socialization efforts acknowledged by Black/white biracial students participating in the study. These University efforts have either focus on the student body in general or target a specific mono-racial/ethnic student group; the later of which, the data show, are potentially detrimental to Black/white biracial student socialization. In either case, socialization processes endorsed by the University were not

perceived by this study's participants to be efforts conscious of the Black/white biracial student specifically.

**Belonging and group membership.** In response to the survey item "If you are an active member of a group(s) on campus please list the group(s) in which you are a member," thirty students wrote in their reply. Of that total the most frequently named groups were: [A particular social] fraternity or sorority (20%); [A particular] advisor/mentor program (16%); Black Student Collective (13%); and a specific volunteering program that works with the University's immediate community received 13% however, this volunteering entity is not officially a part of the University and is not therefore "on campus."

**Greek life.** Providing detail to the survey data, membership in various groups was discussed in the focus groups. The most popular of these groups were the University's Greek life organizations. When recalling their experience as a Black/white biracial student and member of the Greek system at the University one participant noted, "It is such a small number, like, I probably know every mixed person in a sorority at [the University]... It's just like a really cool connection that is like you do the same things as me and I automatically like you." When speaking on their affiliation with the Greek system and meeting other biracial people in the Greek system, a shared sentiment was that being a part of the same extra-curricular entity provided a favorable bond. However, and as noted previously, experiences with Greek organizations could also be unfavorable. For example, Snow commented that,

I mean I never was very interested in Greek life, but I never even thought about it because I saw all the girls going to rush and I was like, well

they're all White, so I'm not going to fit in. It wasn't until my second year that I found out about the minority sororities. One of my Hispanic friends rushed for them and she was like 'oh you should for Black ones.' I was like 'I'm not going to fit in with them either.' So I kind of had no one.

However, the Greek system did appear to provide support for several of the participants who otherwise may have been "misfits" at the University, a fact evidenced in this statement, "I think I had kind of a difficult first semester adjusting. I mean I think as soon as I joined a sorority, it was a whole different situation, but I think the first semester was definitely kind of difficult to, um, I don't know, form friendships with people."

However, the Greek system was not a panacea, "Like, when I went to events ... I didn't look like I belonged ... But, even like, I go to a lot of the Greek events and even there, it's hard." However, even though the participants generally expressed a feeling of belonging and comfort when affiliating with a sorority, they did experience external pressures that may have influenced their thoughts on Greek life in general and more likely, types of Greek organizations specifically.

I think the minority sororities are kind of interesting too. My sister goes to [another university in-state] and she tried to join just like a Black sorority there and she just dropped it and hated it; she had a terrible experience because she felt like they were just like trying to get her to be someone she's not. She was like, I don't identify with you guys at all like I have nothing in common with you. She's in like, she's kind of in like a Whiter or regular Greek life sorority now and she likes it a lot better there.

At other times association with Greek organizations appeared superficial or costly as can be seen in this statement, “I’m in a sorority and I feel pretty comfortable there; we always kind of joke that we have 1 ½ Black people.” While this joke was presented as shared bemusement the participant did not provide indication of appreciating its humor. It seemed as though it is “kind of” a joke because she may not be comfortable with it at all times or at least when conveying the story in a focus group.

**Question 3** - *In what ways is the concept of social justice reflected in the narratives of Black/white biracial students, their racial identities and college socialization?* As may be seen with many injustices, the study participants did not appear to be actively revolting against the policies and practices of the University. Perhaps the best indication that these students experience an injustice can be seen in the inequity of resources provided to the Black/white biracial student. Various incidents of social injustice experienced by the study’s participants have been thematic throughout this chapter (e.g. forced classification; erroneous, unsolicited, unwanted, conditional identification; expectation to be a minority group representative; general separation; etc.). For this reason this section will highlight two social justice situations not yet fully examined. The first considers the interactive facet of Jost and Kay’s (2010) social justice framework and the second situation is offered as a direct result of institutional, academic action or inaction.

It was noted above how the study participants appreciated the idea of having a University recognized group/organization either for them or that they could fully and comfortably align themselves with as a racialized being. Previous comments revealed

perceived benefits of a biracial peer advisor who contacts students prior to freshman year to help with transition, while the following statement goes beyond this bridge concept:

If there was some sort of like, you know, multiracial student group or something like that, I think that would be very beneficial and that would've made me something that was excited to come here and a group that I actually felt I would've been excited to go to events and things like that; I think it's hard to meet mixed people. Maybe not framed in the sense that 'you're mixed, you need all of these resources from [the University], but just some kind of organization that, you know, exists I guess."

This statement addresses a need for aspects of social justice termed by Jost and Kay (2010) as *distributive* and in some regards *procedural*. Illuminating beyond these two elements of the Jost and Kay (2010) social justice framework to the *interactive*, another participant added, "So, if there were a Biracial resource, that would be really helpful and you could opt in for the advisor thing. But, it's the integration without the stigma attached to it in the Black community that you're Bouche or better than or this isn't good enough for you." Thoughts around a stigma being attached to the Black/white biracial students participating in resources designated for Black identifying students reveal potential intergroup conflicts that have not been presented thus far. The descriptor "Bouche" (short and slang for Bourgeoisie) introduces a trope historically applied to not only Black/white biracial people but light-skinned Blacks thought to be of (or be able to attain) an elevated class due to their lighter pigmentation.

Through her work in women's studies, Peggy McIntosh (1988) noted the privileges enjoyed by white people—"skin privilege" (p. 1)—that people of color may not readily claim. While she addresses the systemic power differential involved in white privilege, her oft-referenced, influential essay heavily draws on skin color and the advantages reaped by the "light-skinned" (p. 3); a phenomenon more contemporarily, and in the Black community, explained by colorism, or skin color stratification (Hunter, 2007, p. 237). The white privilege McIntosh illustrates has a conceptual connection to the privilege shared by many people of color who may, due to accepted traditional physical attributes and racial markers, be able to claim membership in a particular group without having to defend their membership or fear being ostracized.

According to data in this study, the liminal status and "ambiguous" appearance associated with Black/white biracial people occupying a higher status in the racial hierarchy is an ideology that remains active in the college environment today. This fissure between Black/white biracial students and Black students may result in the former not being "treated with dignity and respect" (Jost and Kay, 2010, p. 1122). Furthermore, the University may also be culpable in perpetuating disrespectful treatment when creating an environment where a participant states, "I feel like people get mad at me when I say I'm Biracial. White people don't get mad at me when I say I'm Biracial, but Black people get mad at me when I say I'm Biracial." It may be argued that this is the result of an interpersonal conflict and not institutionally influenced however, institutional resources may help to ameliorate it.

In what could be viewed as an effect of academic norms at the college as well as society, one student noted, "...going to [the University], I imagine you're going to have a

good high ranking job, you're going to be working with a lot of important people, and the way dynamics are right now, there aren't a lot of Biracial important people." This statement is a bit counter-intuitive as the U.S. presently has a Black/white biracial president (who identifies as Black). Indeed, the president's name was invoked as the participant's statement was challenged by others in the focus group. However, what remains critical is the fact that this study participant potentially has not had enough exposure to Black/white biracial people at the University and/or in the curriculum to identify "Biracial important people" in their immediate environment. This reality at the University could inform their thoughts and observations regarding prominent Black/white biracial people beyond the University.

To this point the data has revealed how, to some degree, the University is aware of Black/white biracial students. This question helps to gauge the degree or level of that awareness by analyzing University reactions to Black/white biracial students' presence. For example, Jasmine discusses her in class experience as a Black/white biracial when noting, "I think it's kind of weird sometimes 'cause like I'll be coming from a perspective of like having like a Black parent and like Black family members, but like people in the class don't realize that; sometimes I feel like people look at me like 'how did you come up with that answer?'" There were only a few similar comments offering insight to Weidman's (1989) category of *Academic Normative Contexts*, however particularly relevant insight was the following reflection of a focus group participant who when asked by a faculty member how they were enjoying the History class as a Black/white biracial (it is not known how the faculty member knew this), responded:

I actually liked it because I enjoy learning the history that they don't teach you in high school; you get the rudimentary there were slaves, it was bad and now we're here. So I like understanding where like our history comes from, but I'm also massively hugely resisting against people who are so into Black culture because I don't like it and I don't like what it perpetuates.

This student had previously revealed a very limited exposure to or acceptance of Black culture. They did not appear to be phased by the professor asking for input on the class from a biracial perspective, however it would be interesting to know whether the perspective provided was different than any white identifying student. Did this interaction have any impact on the *Academic Normative Contexts* beyond perpetuating the existing norms?

It may be unreasonable to expect students participating in this study to have insight to the University's level of awareness of their existence and culture. Perhaps the only way to do so would be to extrapolate from participants' statements what other's level of Black/white biracial-ness awareness may be. Examples of this may be seen in participant statements noting available resources, "Black people have a place to call their own, their community, their support system, White people honestly have a lot of the Greek system and there are a lot of White people here...I don't fit into either of those perceptions." This remark addresses more of the social norms however, similar intimations can be found in academic instances. Similar to the reflection above where the student shared the reaction of others to their Black-influenced perspective, another participant shared that, "I'm in an anthropology class and I met this girl outside of class

from an OOSAH event and she was like ‘I didn’t know you were Black’. It was like all of a sudden like my response in class like took this different turn because like she knew.” This observation by a focus group participant may indicate that, because the incident happened in a class facilitated by a professor and could be considered reflective of the **Academic Normative Context**, the University’s level of awareness of the Black/white biracial is low. However, any directly indicting remarks were sparse in the focus group data.

Toward addressing any procedural and interactive elements of social justice, administrators were asked, “Historically, what has been the awareness/outreach/acknowledgement of the bi/multi-racial student population?” Most responses were similar to that of a senior administrator in the OUSE—“Not much of which I am aware.” This lack of awareness was reaffirmed by the Office of Respect, Equality and Difference (ORED) where the administrator invoked the institution’s legacy and moral authority when framing any neglect the Black/white biracial student may experience as the result of what they termed, being “historically overlooked.” The Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage seemingly dismissed the premise of the question through their administrator’s previously noted response that “We make no distinction between biracial and other African American students.” Senior administrators’ responses regarding Black/white biracial student types, nay Black/white biracial students as a population was perhaps best captured in the OUSE,

So, to answer now your fundamental question to me about Biracial students, certainly speaking from my own knowledge base, I don’t know that there is a lot of thought given to them as being distinct or different in

terms of the support that should be given. Maybe that's a missed opportunity.

This administrator displays a stance on the Black/white biracial student population that can be best described as impartial yet tentative, uninformed while also unapologetic. A junior named Nahla, participating in one of the focus groups, expressed a rejection of the African American community at the University and at times resentment for being categorized with African Americans. These two expressions would appear to be indicative of a shared component of rejection in this research.

When expressing the extent to which she was “pissed” about receiving a peer mentor from OOSAH, Nahla clearly conveyed that she abhorred the University categorizing her with a group whose identification came with a mentor, as if the need for help was predetermined. An administrator acknowledged that not identifying Black/white biracial students was a missed opportunity, while other more historical views provided by administrators portrayed biracial students as overlooked or attempted to categorize them with the African American group. All may be examples of individual or organizational rejection.

The social injustice experienced by Black/white biracial students in this study is best described as an effect of what Johnston and Nadal (2010) term monoracism. Monoracism is “a social system of psychological inequality where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and interpersonal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories” (Johnson & Nadal, 2010, p. 125). It has been established in the review of literature that the Black/white biracial is a historically oppressed population. Although the Black/white

biracial is a person of African descent (with a potential African blood quantum higher than many Blacks) there is no intent to compare historical oppression between the two groups (Black and Black/white biracial). Nor is it beneficial to quantify the amount or degree of abuse in an effort to validate it as oppression. If in its most basic form oppression involves one person or group's domination of or the exertion of power over another, biracial people, like most minorities, are oppressed.

It is proposed here that, as evidenced in this study, the use of the word "mixed" to describe biracial people is a socially unjust term perverted to the point it is embraced by the very population it demarcates. The fact that America's Black population is mixed (Bryc, Durand, Macpherson, & Mountain, 2015; Spenser, 2006) notwithstanding, the data presented here show Black/white biracial students embracing the term "mixed." A reasonable explanation for this nomenclature being welcomed may be seen in Black people's use of the word "nigga" to describe themselves, as a developed "linguistic" strategy "marginalized communities" employ "to deal with labels and dysphemisms imposed on them that target characteristics such as gender, region, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnicity" (Rahman, 2012, p. 39).

## CHAPTER 5-DISCUSSION

### **Introduction**

This chapter begins with a summary of the statement of the problem along with the methodologies employed. The remainder and majority of this chapter will be devoted to the findings, conclusions and discussions of the research questions.

### **Summary: Statement of the Problem and Methodologies**

#### **Problem Statement**

This dissertation represents a study's investigation into whether an environment of integration and involvement exists for biracial students in higher education and particularly, to what degree such an environment was created by a specific University's effort to provide socialization. More exactly, does the University as an organization provide the awareness and support required for biracial students to negotiate normative contexts and experience involvement and integration—are Black/white biracial students socialized at the University? The concepts of higher education, belonging and identity are also addressed in researching this issue. As noted in the literature review, socialization of the individual often involves one appropriating the required role and norms within an organization while displaying acceptable behavior and establishing desired relationships. Socialization from the perspective of the organization involves the establishment of an environment where individuals can readily identify and embrace that organization's norms such that the individual becomes a valued member of the organization's future.

#### **Methods**

The Black/white biracial population in this study was comprised of undergraduate students attending a large, residential, four-year university. Undergraduate participants were self-identified Black/white biracial students responding to research announcements seeking students with interracial parentage (where one parent identifies as Black and one parent identifies as white). This purposeful sample was culled from the contact information on students who have identified as anything other than white, Asian, Latino/Hispanic, Native American/ Native Alaskan, or Pacific Islander provided by the Office of the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer (VPSA). This approach was taken because all Black/white biracial students as defined in this study (students with one Black and one white parent) may not self-identify as biracial during admissions and registration. Importantly, regardless how students' identified upon matriculation, the initial email along with the survey knockout questions communicated and insured Black/white biracial participation.

In alignment with the social justice foundation of the transformative view, the study followed the recommended "cyclical model" supported by a "transformative methodological belief system" (Mertens, 2010, p. 472). An explanatory mixed-methods model was used for this research. The research began with a document analysis informing the development of survey questions helping to structure focus group questions that informed interview questions posed to administrators before concluding with another document analysis.

The theoretical models undergirding the research were Rockquemore and Brunson's (2002) biracial typology and Weidman's (1989) model of undergraduate socialization. Metaphysically the research was guided by the Transformative worldview

with its ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings and expectations and basis in axiology (Mertens, 2010b). Having a foundation in axiology (morals and ethics) makes the transformative worldview “an umbrella for research theories and approaches that place priority on human rights and social justice” (Mertens, 2010b, p. 473) and therefore highly applicable to the present study.

The review of literature discussed several of the highly influential studies of racial minorities and particularly Black/white biracial people toward providing an understanding of the bent of studies involving racial minority identity and belonging. Specifically as it concerns Black/white biracial people, the historical literature focuses on identity development with the issue of belonging as a logical byproduct; this is visible in researchers’ ruminations on Black/white biracial people’s identity versus identification.

This extant research’s focus on Black/white biracial socialization is, when ingroup/interpersonally focused, based on an appearance/acceptance causality and when discussing outgroup or societal perceptions, is historically motivated and broad. In other words, research is largely based on how Black/white biracial people develop and associate as a direct result of their physical appearance and the liminal status provided by others. That is not to question the quality or relevance of extant research only to note that it may come from a perspective of symbolic interactionism in which society, and social (in)justice, should be properly examined.

This dissertation contemplated social justice in the review of literature en route to declaring the transformative worldview as a metaphysical lens. The focus in this study was the socialization of the Black/white biracial by the society of the University. To achieve this focus it was necessary to examine inter-personal and, at times, the intra-

personal identity and development of the Black/white biracial student as they experience the normative contexts of the University.

### **Discussion of the Findings, Conclusions and Themes of the Study**

Following up from the findings and subsequent themes of the data introduced in Chapter 4, the discussion here will focus on three main conclusions: (1) Membership in University groups is driven by students and classification while belonging at the University is driven by administrators and racial categorization; (2) Black/white biracial student perceptions of socialization are the result of intergroup relations models that may be ineffective.; and (3) Social (in)justice for Black/white biracial students is prominent.

Institutionally, these findings involved the University administration's historically reactive stance on issues of equality noted in the initial document analysis (above) along with the cascading of the University mission to other administrative offices illustrated in the secondary document analysis. Also conspicuous was the structural separation of and consequential gap between the Office of University Student Engagement (OUSE) and the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH). In this regard, the University's employment of socialization processes founded on traditional racial classifications (hypodescent) and historical perceptions (ocular determination) impacts students' college experience. One finding in this research is that there was a failure in the University align students' Black/white biracial-ness and experiences with necessary/equal resources.

From the individual student perspective the findings confirmed student identification and alignment with the Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) Black/white biracial "types." These four Black/white biracial types were found to be fluid and of the

factors thought to contribute to Black/white biracial identity (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002) appearance and socialization were found to be key. Students participating in this study offered the descriptor “mixed” as a widely accepted name for Black/white biracial students. It was also shared that the Black/white biracial students participating in this study may feel like “misfits” at the University as a result of University socialization efforts and their potential impact on student development initiatives (as it concerns diversity and serving diverse populations).

**Conclusion 1- Membership in University Groups is Driven by Students and Classification While Belonging at the University is Driven by Administrators and Racial Categorization**

**Findings.** There is no classification for exclusively biracial students at the University. Initial communication of the survey and study went out to any undergraduate student racially selecting an identifier of Black during enrollment. The University allows selection of multiple racial identifiers and ninety-five percent of the survey participants identified as Black with sixty-five percent identifying as white. The next highest racial classification chosen by these survey respondents was “Race not specified in this list” at seven percent.

Concerns of most study participants ranged from racially motivated interpersonal confrontation, to denial of group inclusion, to University-driven omission and oppression. The participants in this study experienced belonging from a variety of extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs and work as well as academic endeavors and Greek life—a very specific extracurricular. There was no one recognized group, program or office acknowledged by study participants in the data as a place where they could go to see people like themselves or engage in biracial fellowship.

The Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH) may pointedly, if not prematurely, perpetuate classification at the University. This office was consistently referenced in data provided by the University biracial students participating in this study as a divisive entity. At the University, the OOSAH is a resource that potentially plays a significant role in the lives of students of African decent, as well as biracial students with Black parentage.

For example, the OOSAH peer program focuses on incoming first year Black students and students with (self-disclosed) African ancestry by having student advisors contact first years during the summer of their matriculation. The Black/white biracial students in this study provided an overwhelmingly negative reaction to the peer program. The thought process that went into the activities of the program as well as the methodology of this program as it concerns any effects on Black/white biracial students (or any other bi/multiracial student selecting Black as a racial identifier), may be worth pursuing in later research.

The use of Rockquemore and Brunnsma's (2002) typology generated from their study of Black/white biracial students provided a suitable framework of type options to present to the student participants in the study. The four types and options used in the study are Singular, Border, Protean and Transcendent. The majority of study participants chose a Border type, identifying as exclusively biracial. Five percent of students in the study did not identify with one of the four Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) types however they all used the word "mixed" to describe themselves. "Mixed" or "mixed race" is also the nomenclature used by Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) and indeed many if not most researchers of bi/multiracial people.

In consideration of the survey data proffered above “mixed” may be a potential discernable type of biracial. That is to say, the descriptor “mixed” may be used by members of the group as a synonym for “Black/white biracial,” these group members potentially represent a type of Black/white biracial. This type is an ecological evolution. Throughout history, Black/white biracial people have been referred to as mixed-breed, mixed-race, half-caste, half-and-half, colored, maroon, to name a few (that are not completely derogatory and/or a direct reference to an inanimate object or sub-human animal). Perhaps none of these monikers are as well known or (at one time) officially accepted as “mulatto.” However, the favor of the term “mulatto” is dynamic with most regarding it as an archaic, also sub-human, relic of slavery.

The term “mixed” currently appears to be more digestible for Black/white biracial people and others. As a general descriptor for people “mixed” is not race specific. Mixed can represent a combination of many attributes; individuals can be mixed beyond race (Spencer, 2006). This last point speaks to an aspect of the post-racial U.S. and the argument around color-blindness and color-blind racism presented by Bonilla-Silva (2013). Combined with the ever increasing number of U.S. people identifying as two or more races (Census, 2010) mixed potentially becomes a catchall phrase in which people can be glommed to create a prospective new group of people (supra, Bonilla-Silva, 2013). The participants in this study appeared to take pride in the term “mixed.”

Embedded in this pride was an interesting concept of “mixed” people being able to find one another. It brings to question the importance of physical attributes within this group of people—how is a biracial person’s ocular perception of another more keen or different from a non-biracial? How does a biracial person’s experience and self-image

regarding physical appearance impact one's perception of another? Questions more germane to this research include: Stating an ability to "find each other" implies a degree of concealment or invisibility, which one do you think is most at work (concealment or invisibility) and why? If biracial people garner support from other biracial people, how do institutions or society make it easier for biracial people to find each other?

The appearance of this study's Black/white biracial participants factored into their identity development and logically may have impacted the type of Black/white biracial they select. Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) also noted that parental socialization was a major contributor to identity of the students in their study. This present study was not focused on Black/white biracial identity development and while the impact of familial socialization on the racial identity of the Black/white participants in this study can be assumed no empirical evidence was analyzed.

That is to say, in the present research the utility of Rockquemore and Brunsma's (2002) four Black/white biracial types was reinforced. The students who did not identify with one of the four types did not reveal a preferred group name or a consistent theme that would generate a different type. Although the term mixed was used in the write in responses of all the participants choosing not to identify as one of the four types, it is unclear how pervasive the descriptor "mixed" may have been even among those who chose a type. Simply, everyone in this study's sample may have readily identified as mixed if provided the opportunity.

The data show University socialization efforts acknowledged by Black/white biracial students participating in the study. These University efforts have either a general focus affecting the student body or they target a specific mono-racial/ethnic student group

and are at times detrimental to Black/white biracial student socialization. In either case, the socialization processes endorsed by the University were not perceived by the study's participants as being conscious of the Black/white biracial student specifically.

Acknowledging the limited awareness the University *displays* regarding the Black/white biracial student population creates a frame from which to view any normative contexts affecting or attracting this population. Participants in this study did find University norms attractive. And, as these favored normative contexts are not race specific, support from administration and students does not appear problematic. The Black/white biracial student sample participating in study did not generally appreciate the University's race specific supports. However, this population is also not categorized as a race at the University. In other words, if these norms were focused on the Black/white biracial student group, the reception might be favorable:

**Discussion.** When discussing the difference and importance of identity, identification and classification, Rockquemore, et al. (2009) provide a hypothetical example involving the racial classification (the racial group officially selected on the application) choices of three Black/white biracial students upon college matriculation. These students have varied appearances, pre-college socialization experiences and, subsequently, racial identities (the racial group, if any, they have chosen to align with). It is posited that racial identification (the way these students are viewed by others) will impact these students' interactions with others and that their racial classification will "result in a concrete decision that will affect his or her opportunities, resources, and mobility" (Rockquemore, et al., p. 20, 2009).

The present research around socialization addresses the components of opportunities, resources and mobility presented in the Rockquemore, et al. (2009) article. That article leaves a hypothetical scenario inconclusive providing only questions and a call for researchers to “consider how racial identity, racial identification, and racial category interact, overlap, and contradict each other when working with the mixed-race population” (Rockquemore, et al., p. 20, 2009). Despite the repetitive use of the word “mixed” (discussed in the “Implications”) the Rockquemore, et al. (2009) article provides sage general direction regarding multiracial identity development as well as reinforcement for the current discussion.

***Belonging and the Black/white biracial.*** The construct of belonging interplays strongly with socialization and should be discussed. In the literature review for this study, Hurtado and Carter (1997) are cited for their research on belonging and Latino students in higher education. While not robustly discussed or accompanied by an elaborated model, Hurtado and Carter’s premise on belonging—“background characteristics and college experiences” (1997, p. 324) contributed to their [Latino students’] sense of belonging—is not far removed from Weidman’s posit around socialization. The researchers specifically posed three questions that need to be asked when examining racial/ethnic students’ views of participation in college. The questions are as follows: (1) How does one account for the success of students who encounter educational environments in which few understand their culture; (2) do some students perceive themselves as marginal to the mainstream life of a campus; and, (3) what contributes to students’ sense of marginality, and does this sense of marginality contribute to students’ lack of success in college? (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p. 325).

For today's minority and oppressed populations these questions remain relevant. When posed to, or in consideration of, the Black/white biracial student population, they are sobering. These questions can be applied to data of Black/white biracial student socialization collected in this study. The answers would be revealing for the target population and speak to the endurance of Hurtado and Carter's questions for a new generation in consideration of a growing group of peoples—multiracial identified students—potentially not considered “historically excluded” when the above questions were first posed.

There is a need for resources and awareness of monoracial minority groups or other underrepresented and/or historically oppressed populations in higher education.<sup>29</sup> Words such as “pluralism,” “separatism,” “diversity” and “inclusion” host concepts used by those opposed to providing equal awareness and resources to all; those people may miss the point of this thesis. Perspectives on not providing separate resources for Black students on a college campus (or Black people on a whole) are extremely unpopular.

Ingram, Chaudhary, and Jones's (2014) survey (using an instrument modeled after Rockquemore and Brunsma's (2002) survey) of 201 “biracial” college students provides recent insight on what these students felt their university could do to support biracial students; the Ingram, et al. (2014) survey provided a format for the survey used in this research. Many write-in responses commenting on the “creation and existence of biracial programs” in the Ingram, et al. (2014) survey expressed a sentiment shared by students participating in this study's focus groups—a university sponsored biracial program/office/club would be beneficial. Although the students participating in the

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<sup>29</sup> As illustrated in the recent attention focused on LGBTQ, Black Lives Matter and Title IX issues in United States higher education.

Ingram, et al. (2014) survey were not exclusively Black/white biracial and in fact may have been multiracial (the survey was sent to all students who selected a racial identification of “two or more races”), it proves useful as a point of comparison for descriptive statistics.

***Regarding Rockquemore’s Typology.*** Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) propose four factors shape students’ understanding of their biracial identity: (1) appearance; (2) social networks; (3) socialization factors- childhood and adult socialization; and, (4) familial context (2002, p. 60). The survey used in the present study shows that when provided different categories, the majority of respondents chose a Black/white biracial type however this research has illustrated these four “factors” or variables break down discretely into two—appearance and socialization. Beyond appearance the remaining three factors are either explicitly labeled socialization (“socialization factors”), immediate contributors to socialization (“social networks”) or allusions to broad socialization influences (“familial context”). Indeed there is an implication of discernable types of Black/white biracial students. However, the unanimous use of the descriptor “mixed” by those who selected “Other” provides potential pause. The “misfit” concept is also an imperative to grasping the institutional socialization of the Black/white biracial at the University.

Black/white biracial students participating in this study recognized the existence of University socialization efforts for other groups and none for the Black/white biracial group. As noted in chapter four, *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* are in fact as integral to the college’s efforts toward socialization as they are to students’

**Socialization Processes.** A catch here may be that because Black/white biracial students

are not in the fabric or normative order of the University they must acquiesce to and participate in norms that do not include them. The result can go beyond not having a feeling of belonging to a having feeling of solidarity.

In reviewing the antecedents to their “sense of belonging” concept, Hurtado & Carter (1997) examine Van Gennep’s (1960) theory of separation, Attinasi’s (1989, 1992) research on integration and T. Newcomb’s (1962) theory of the formation of peer groups. For the purposes of this research, Hurtado and Carter’s (1997) review of Newcomb’s theory is quite relevant, specifically as it concerns the “importance of transitional experiences” (p. 329). In referencing Newcomb’s peer group formation theory, it is noted that student peer groups can result from shared space, interest, and common conflict not to mention pre-college associations (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). The “logical extension” and suggestion from this theory is that students can form peer groups and assemble in a “stance against conformity” and in such manner minority students may “feel a part of the campus community” without becoming a part of the community through the adoption of values and norms of the majority (Hurtado & Carter, 1997, p. 329).

In other words, while students may not align with the university’s mission, values, and culture—*Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts*—they may find acceptance among similar *others* who share their despair, vision, or activity. This may be illustrative of individual socialization when a student may experience a university’s normative social and academic contexts, realize they are not aligned with their own and rejects conformity to the majority opting to adapt for survival as an individual (or in this case small group). This decision (to conform or adapt) is noted in Weidman’s (1989) model.

Solace and support can be found at the University when participating in personal interests. Another level of belonging is added when membership in interests includes other biracial students. This has the potential to move internal supports from traditional contexts to a new normative context—change the climate to impact the culture.

**Conclusion 2- Black/white Biracial Student Perceptions of Socialization are the Result of Intergroup Relations Models that may be Ineffective**

**Findings.** The survey and focus group yielded data that evidenced the study participants' perceptions of the socialization process at the University. The intent was to match those perceptions with the types of experiences and events covered within Weidman's **Socialization Processes** construct (concerning Weidman's model, the use of capitalization and font in this chapter is identical to chapter four). In this regard, the study participants' *Interpersonal Interaction* and *Integration* of the *Academic* and *Social* (**Normative Contexts**) largely contributed to their socialization at the University.

Black/white biracial students enrolling at the University are registered through a system that does not allow them to identify as exclusively biracial. Selection of Black or Black and another race automatically relegates them to a Black racial status and enrollment in a peer program provided through the Office of Operations for Students of African Heritage (OOSAH). This *Formal Social Normative Context* (according to Weidman's model, Appendix E) greets Black/white Biracial students prior to their first day at the University. This norm is encountered and absorbed so early it is difficult to understand how it might not affect all subsequent experiences with the University's organizations, residences and groups.

The study participants experienced an orientation with an *Academic Normative Context* that is responsible for and perpetuates a mission and moral authority pledging an

“unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community” while displacing the responsibility for support of “Black” students on the quasi-autonomous and separated OOSAH. The University separates the responsibilities of the OUSE (responsible for the support of all students including all minority and historically underserved groups) from OOSAH. Interviews with senior administrators confirmed a disjointed effort in serving the student body. This moral authority originating from the *Academic Normative Context* would appear to have permeated the college experiences of this study’s participants. Consequently, through a lens of socialization (as opposed to identity development) many *Interpersonal Interactions* experienced by the Black/white biracial students participating in this study are motivated by an, at times unconscious, integration of the University’s *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts*.

Survey group data focused on items addressing Weidman’s dimensions of **COLLEGE EXPERIENCE, PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION** and **NON-COLLEGE REFERENCE GROUPS**. The focus group data yielded three broad groups of initiatives and programs cited by the study participants as potential supports and aids to socialization. These groups can be labeled, international; interest specific; and African American intended. Although not consciously acknowledged by the students as aids, Greek life, residence life, varsity sports, intramural recreational events, and working with various offices and departments, were all integral to the socialization of the study’s participants.

Weidman’s (1989) model contains two components important to the socialization of Black/white biracial students: *Integration* and *In-college Normative Pressure*. In consideration of these two components and the data analyzed in the present study,

socialization at the University for Black/white biracial students may be better conducted through the application of a model with a conceptual framework modified from that of Weidman (1989). This revised model would incorporate the Black/white biracial type modification discussed above as well as an integration component of anticipatory identification socialization.

***Integration.*** This is one of Weidman's (1989) three **Socialization Processes** involving student acceptance of the *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts*.

Weidman (1989) notes that students' interaction with various college stakeholders and aspects affects their allegiance to the college and any subsequent university endeavors or education goals. It is briefly mentioned that the integration of **Socialization Processes** may differ for students of historically underrepresented and oppressed populations and one of the closing notes "suggest that it is necessary to adapt conceptual frameworks to the differing patterns of socialization that may be represented among specific ethnic and gender groups" (Weidman, 1989, p. 313). Also, important is that, "the less favorable a student is in his or her perceptions of the college environment, the less likely that student is to be socialized toward the norms of the college" (Weidman, 1989, p. 310). This research shows that the ability for a Black/white biracial student to understand, accommodate or embrace the *Academic* and *Social Normative Contexts* at the University placed a considerable amount of pressure on these students.

***In-College Normative Pressure.*** This concerns students' "change or reinforcement of values" (p. 310) as an undergraduate. In Weidman's model this component was impacted largely by interactions with faculty and departments—the Normative Order (p. 304). In fact, Weidman (1989) provides variation on socialization

when specifying how it is collegiately “a process that results from the student’s interaction with other members of the college community in groups or other settings characterized by varying degrees of *normative pressure*” (p. 304, italics added). Examples of formal *Normative Pressure* as it is recognized and defined by Weidman (1989) were consistent in data provided by the study participants.

Embedded in these pressures, Weidman (1989) notes a distinct feature he labels *Anticipatory Socialization*. *Anticipatory Socialization* is a pressure students feel during college and involves making choices that will concern activities after college completion as well as identifying and preparing to attain post college goals (Weidman, 1989). This particular pressure involves the values students bring to college and those absorbed at college. In keeping with Weidman’s (1989) model *Anticipatory Socialization* involves student interaction with and pressures felt from all college aspects and stakeholders. Weidman (1989) discusses this phenomenon specifically as it provides students with more “generalized orientations toward work and leisure activities” (p. 296) upon graduation. In this regard it is labeled “anticipatory occupational socialization” (Weidman, 1989, p. 296).

Universities, as with many organizations, want new members to feel included and experience opportunities to be productive; toward this end socialization efforts are made. These efforts reflect the culture and values affecting all members of the organization—any individual reaction to socialization efforts is spurred by affect. That is to say, Black/white biracial students in this study were affected by the University’s socialization efforts and all members affected are among those participating in any environment of inclusiveness and productivity for new members.

Most of the data does not illustrate that these Black/white biracial students had consistent positive socialization encounters (a persisting feeling of belonging to along with welcoming inclusion and involvement in University culture and opportunities). However, it is not known whether any group at the University has positive socialization encounters. *Positive socialization* may be an arguable concept.

The data collected for this research evidenced both pre-college socialization and existing University normative contexts that may affect the University's socialization of the Black/white biracial participants in this study. Pre-socialization in terms of Weidman's **STUDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS** involved **Socio-Economic Status (SES), Aptitude, Career Preferences, Aspirations and Values** (Appendix E); this study did not collect data on all of these components. However, the data on SES, aptitude (measured by SAT score) and career preferences were recorded as provided by the respondents. The mean SAT scores for forty-seven students who completed the survey, in Critical Reading, Math and Writing were 640, 627, 626, respectively; the maximum scores were 780 (Critical Reading), 730 (Math) and 740 (Writing). The average ACT score for the thirty-two reporting ACT scores on the survey was 29. Sixty percent of respondents indicated having a career goal when entering the college and 34% indicated that this career goal had changed while at college.

In response to the survey item, "What personal goals have you achieved or do you plan to achieve while at college" the majority of write-in replies focused on academics (e.g. graduation, obtaining certain GPA, admission to a certain school and specifics scholarly endeavors such as, "I am writing a senior thesis on biracial perspectives in novels") however professional development and community interests were also abundant

as can be seen in responses ranging from “finding myself spiritually” to “learn to backflip.”

**Discussion.** As noted in chapter four, one of the interviews for this study an administrator stated, “just looking at you, I would not think you are multiracial.” This statement speaks to the administrator’s apparent comfort during the interview while simultaneously implying multiracial people look a certain way. To provide a bit more context, this observation was in response to the question of “What is student socialization?” to which the administrator cited the need for inclusion in and fit with others and other groups. The idea seems to be that any fit or inclusion for biracial people is dependent on the degree of experience or familiarity others may have with biracial people.

This administrator for example, based on their experience and familiarity, felt secure noting how the physical attributes and features of this researcher did not match the mental models or images they held of a person who is a racial minority (or multiracial minority). The scope of this perception/identification quandary became clearer when they added that “some may think you’re Black some may think you’re white but until you tell them they do not know.” Interestingly, this administrator’s (or any observer according to their statement) awareness of multiracial status becomes the responsibility of the multiracial target—“until *you* tell them they do not know.” In this instance the idea is one of individual responsibility and self-advocating.

Indeed, administrators’ acknowledgement of the intra/inter-personal psychological components (individual development and social interaction) involved in bi/multi-racial student identity development and socialization in this research has not

been overlooked. The “question of” Black/white biracial students’ “self-coherence, self-regard and self-esteem” while “straddling two divides not feeling particularly accepted by either” is contemplated by administrators as a phenomenon to which it would appear they are powerless to do anything but observe. For these observations, either a biracial outlier is chosen (a student who holds an executive position in student government is considered “... certainly a very confident young man”) or the significance of biracial-ness is minimized with an assumption “that most African Americans are historically mixed in one form or another.” In either case, a student’s Black/white biracial-ness is deemed insignificant. Therefore, what is rendered valuable and expected by the University is Black/white biracial student adjustment—intra/inter-personal psychological adjustment. This expectation is as convenient and reasonable as it is facile.

Revising their influential 1985 research on racial formations, Omi and Winant (2015) deftly discuss race, racial formation and the importance of physical appearance in the process of “racialization” (p. 247). The authors present “corporeal dimensions” (p. 111) and the ocular interpretation of race as essential components in racial formation. As a result, race is defined by ocular dimensions and physical attributes; it is socially formed and as such is dynamic. Omi and Winant’s illumination on the significance of ocular perception and physical attributes in the racialization process is not a novel concept and in fact physical appearance is a key factor in Black/white biracial identity (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002).

***The Corpo-REAL-ity of Black/white student socialization.*** What then is the relevance of Omi and Winant’s (2015) posits on race in consideration of Black/white biracial student socialization? The following excerpt is important when considering

Black/white biracial socialization because it goes beyond the physical categorization and racialization to the essence of Black/white biracial socialization in higher education, particularly this University.

These phenomic traits, initially associated with African bodies or with indigenous bodies in the Americas, were soon elevated to the status of a fundamental (and later biological) difference. The attachment of this process of ‘othering’ to immediately visible corporeal characteristics facilitated the recognition, surveillance, and coercion of these peoples, these ‘others.’ This phenomic differentiation helped render certain human bodies exploitable and submissible. It not only distinguished Native Americans and Africans from Europeans by immediately observable ‘ocular’ means; *it also occupied the souls and minds that inhabited these bodies, stripping away not only peoples origins, traditions, and histories, but also their individuality and differences* (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 247, italics added).

Socialization of Black/white biracial students at the University cannot be dismissed as a result of psycho-social engagement, belonging or even the creation of environments and opportunities where such events may happen. It is about an institutionalized belief, an unconscious bias, grounded in historical processing of the Black/white biracial person. In this process, if the Black/white biracial is identified (visually or otherwise) they are summarily overlooked, leading to omission. Black/white biracial students can be omitted and excluded or omitted and included; either option provides no indication of involvement. This cannot be tidied up with an “in short,” “in

other words” or “put another way,” therefore this discussion section will attempt to illustrate why Black/white biracial people (particularly students) are not involved and how this lack of involvement is so readily offered as and accepted to be their fault.

A finding in this research is that in attempting to socialize Black/white biracial students, the University provides them no means to develop a Black/white biracial identity or experience belonging as a Black/white biracial. To be sure, surrogate identifiers are provided and obligatorily used by Black/white biracial students to the benefit of participating offices/departments. Meanwhile, administrators confirm that efforts to connect with this population do not exist. This is stated unapologetically with an eager assurance that such initiatives are necessary. The result is the Black/white biracial student population goes unrecognized. Indeed, when “the biracial person is not recognized at all as belonging to any identifiable human group: this has a dehumanizing effect on the person” (Hershel, 1990, p. 172).

How can an unrecognized, dehumanized, person achieve belonging? Furthermore, how is it that a sample of students, sharing the same racial markers, provide data indicating that they feel belonging at the University while individually and in small groups display apathy, indifference and despair regarding the University’s efforts to involve them? Equally important, would such organizational behavior be perpetuated and outcomes brooked, if this group were any of the mono-racial minorities? This discussion considers the disparate identity formations of the Black/white biracial student as a result of their socialization, the University’s socialization efforts, and the historical contexts that propagate the liminality and subjugation of the Black/white biracial student. In the case of Black/white biracial students the institution of an identity must be taken.

Having to take something like racial identity that is so freely bestowed on all, subjects one to constant liminality while rendering perpetual other/outsider-ness. What aids to socialization might such a person be able to readily identify?

Socialization for (not the *socialization of*) the Black/white biracial student logically begins with authentic acknowledgement of this population followed by provision of the appropriate supports. As one study participant remarked, “I feel definitely more comfortable around someone that’s mixed race, whatever it is, then someone who is exclusively one thing or another. I just feel more comfortable in those kinds of groups.” However, a student entering the University and not identifying as Black/white biracial or mixed is less likely to reveal her/himself as Black/white biracial or mixed. In turn they may be less inclined to participate in events targeting “mixed” students or seek membership in groups for “mixed” students. Regardless, there was no evidence in this study of such groups existing at the University.

This may be indicative of an understandably nuanced yet vicious cycle involving identity. The University’s historic oversight of Black/white biracial students and their needs result in the provision of no Black/white biracial student-specific resources. Concurrently, perennial dehumanization and injustice perpetuates the Black/white biracial student expectation that no resources will be provided. Simply, it’s never provided and therefore there will never be an expectation; the University’s ongoing lack of supply is met by students’ continuous lack of demand.

### **Conclusion 3- Social (In)justice for Black/white Biracial Students is Prominent**

**Findings.** In 2009 the University allowed students to select more than one option when racially identifying and since then has been able to classify the multi/bi-racial

attendance at the University. In this regard the University has a quantitative awareness of the biracial student population. However this research has shown administrators do not acknowledge this population as distinct and there are no University supported resources, groups or other supports provided explicitly for biracial students.

Jost and Kay's (2010) definition of social justice states that the concept can be distributive, procedural, and interactive and is at its most intra-personal level where "human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors including fellow citizens" (p. 1122). The narratives provided by the Black/white biracial students participating in this study indicate that as individuals and a biracial collective they may not feel the respect and dignity experienced by other racialized minority groups at the University. The experiences and issues of interactive social justice, shared by these study participants are directly connected to the more institutionally influenced distributive and procedural aspects of social justice.

Issues of distributive social justice can be seen when Black/white biracial students are automatically enrolled in an opt-out mentoring program and assigned peer mentors prior to their first year. This mentoring program is an attempt to allocate benefits to students who identify as Black in an effort to "level the playing field." However, as many Black/white biracial participants in this study do not identify as Black, this social justice service may not be appreciated by the Black/white biracial group. Furthermore, because they are automatically enrolled in this program and must opt-out, the peer program continues the obfuscation of the Black/white biracial identity while concurrently making it the responsibility of the Black/white biracial student to decline the unsolicited

advances of a University office refusing to see them as a discrete people; this can be oppressive for a first-year student and the data collected for this study show resultant resentment.

While modifying the procedure for students to racially identify, the University has not addressed the moral authority. Accordingly, procedures or practices affecting the normative contexts that may exist as a barrier to Black/white biracial students' basic right to freely identify as well as be acknowledged and fully involved in the University, are not incorporated. The moral authority, racial classification and displacement of mission responsibility are elements of tacit, implied and unconsciously endorsed institutional power playing out beyond the highly visible, easy initiatives of OOSAH and their opt-out programs. Perhaps similar to many University students, the Black/white biracial students participating in this study could readily indicate what they did and did not appreciate, however rarely did it seem to be critical input shared from a student about *their* University.

**Discussion.** Unlike other racial minorities<sup>30</sup> and due to the historical application of the “ambiguous” physical descriptor along with the propagated belief that biracial individuals can capriciously “choose” a racial identity, Black/white biracials are historically racialized people. Racialization is used here as defined by Omi & Winant (2004), “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship,

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<sup>30</sup> In Shaun R. Harper's 2012 article he notes a choice not to use the word “minority” along with the position that underrepresented people of color are in fact “rendered minorities in particular situations and institutional environments that sustain an overrepresentation of Whiteness;” a process he terms being “minoritized” (p. 1). A key premise in Harper's position is that people are not born as minorities nor do they achieve this subservient status as a result of their involvement with family, friends and daily chosen social networks. Instead they are “minoritized” by institutions. With respect to Harper's supposition, this research proves and I would counter, that Black/white biracials *are* “minoritized in every social context.” In consideration of data and literature presented while following Harper's postulation, an argument can be made that Black/white biracials are both born a minority and recipients of universal minoritization.

social practice or group” (p. 18). Ironically counterintuitive, the union of two races is racially unrecognized and while embroiled in racial identity contemplations these individuals remain racially unclassified.

***Racialization and balkanization.*** At the University the racialization of Black/white biracial students manifests as balkanization. Resulting from a classification policy shift in 2009 allowing students to identify as multiple races, the University reports a four percent multiracial population. Students who identified as specifically Black and white races comprise nineteen percent of this multiracial population; this is less than 1% of the total undergraduate student body. Combined with the present study, these numbers reveal two things: (1) there is a small number of students who registered at the University as Black/white biracial and receive courtesy socialization (illustrated through Black/white biracial student inclusion in services and initiatives intended to serve the officially recognized minority groups, e.g. OOSAH’s peer program) while experiencing isolation and perceiving disdain, and (2) there is a large number (over 80%) of students who identify as multiracial (i.e. the 81% of multiracial students who do not select the Black and white race categories) and who could potentially have similar experiences. While this second conclusion is fodder for implications the first is brined in inertia and ignorance. The result of this first conclusion is the racialization and subsequent balkanization of Black/white biracial students at the discretion of the University.

In introducing a flaccid “multiracial” classification bereft of recognition or support, the University has applied “racial meaning” as a tacit companion to the socialization of Black/white biracial students. From enrollment on they (Black/white biracial students) are racialized and experience racism, from an institutional level, at the

University. As utilized by Harrell (2000), Jones (2000), and Harper (2012), racism is defined here as “structures that determine and cyclically remanufacture racial inequity; and institutional norms that sustain White privilege and permit the ongoing subordination of minoritized peoples” (Harper, 2012, p. 10).

The Black/white biracial student exists as a minority at a University that does not recognize its racial/ethnic relevance. Historically (save the recent move to allow students to choose more than one race upon enrollment) Black/white biracial students have not been recognized and this study has revealed key administrators’ acknowledgement that this group is not directly served, by the University. Ironically, while all minoritized groups are targets of University equity efforts, Black/white biracial students either do not receive these efforts or they are granted to them inequitably. What is perhaps just as interesting is how this social injustice reaffirms not only white privilege but the privilege afforded to all monoracial people.

The data from this study has shown that Black/white biracial students at the University suffer from what will be labeled here as an ethnitizing of race. This term—ethnitizing of race—is a logical conclusion based on Omi and Winant’s (2015) discussion of ethnicity wherein they state that to “treat race as a matter of ethnicity is to understand it in terms of *culture*” (italics in the original) and that “ethnicity theories of race tend to regard racial status as more voluntary and consequently less imposed, less ‘ascribed’” (p. 22). It has become clear through the analysis of student and administrator feedback that the choices students make are based on the non-decisions the University provides. These non-decisions are founded on a racist ideology that multiracial students—ambiguous

individuals—do not require their own racial choice, only the opportunity to choose among the provided governmentally recognized mono-racial options.

***Oppression and deculturalization.*** The oppressed have a course of action just as the oppressor has an agenda (Friere, 1998). Subjugated peoples in a controlled environment are left with little recourse but to adopt the dominant belief and norms. This scenario initiates deculturalization, a “process of destroying a people’s culture (cultural genocide) and replacing it with a new culture” (Springs, 2008, p. 7). It can be argued that the sample of students in this study had been indoctrinated to and adopted or developed a specific culture, either biracial or monoracial. And while it would be extreme to implicate the University in razing Black/white biracial culture, the research and data reveal that the Black/white biracial student is not provided the opportunity to develop such a culture and if one exists it cannot be nurtured, at the University. Indeed, even the typology created to assist in providing nuanced identity to Black/white biracial students plays a role in disempowering their culture and impeding socialization.

It has been noted that Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) Black/white biracial typology has a foundation in Mary Waters’s (1990) research on white ethnicity. Waters’s (1990) research targeted white middle-class Americans giving rise to Waters’s hypothesis of “symbolic ethnicity” (p. 147). While the concept of “choice” may be attributable to the Black/white biracial population (as it was Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) sample and in this study) Waters’s (1990) premise that ethnicity fulfills a white person’s need to maintain both individuality at no cost and selective community status, is not transferrable to this study’s Black/white biracial sample. The participants in this study

did not express a desire to have a special individuality while selectively remaining part of a group nor did they appear to be selecting an option free of cost.

The Black/white biracial students in this study consistently revealed they do not have a group at the University from which to selectively identify and that being individualized (more accurately, exoticized, as discussed in chapter four) is not their choice. The choice they make may be the result of insufficient options provided by the University. That is to say, accepting “symbolic ethnicity” as generalizable to Black/white biracial people discounts the historical and institutional racial structure contributing to the issues surrounding Black/white biracial identity, classification and socialization. Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002) decision to anchor their biracial identity factors to Waters’s (1990) research appears indicative of institutional practices potentially stymieing Black/white biracial socialization (i.e. provide the same resources delegated, methods applied and theories relating, to other monoracial groups to Black/white biracial students with the expectation of their mimetic response).

***Diversity and Biracialness.*** The institutional model of diversity began from a deficit position where minority groups—thought to be inferior—were expected to assimilate with the majority group (Williams, 2013). Presently diversity is popularly labeled a concept comprised of multiculturalism and inclusion that leads to equity for the historically oppressed and underserved. According to this evolving definition of diversity, Biracial students have yet to reap the benefits of this most recent iteration. If diversity is an “affirmative identity connotation that champions the importance of maintaining one’s cultural identity even as one participates fully in mainstream society”

where the ultimate goal is “a nuanced position of cultural respect and identity affirmation” (Williams, 2013, p. 91), has the University embraced diversity?

This study of a sample of its biracial students would suggest the University has not embraced diversity. However, it cannot be ignored that the previous statement is made in response to a loaded question involving a complex concept—diversity.

Significant work has been done on diversity in higher education and more specifically, higher education’s conceptualization, embrace, and responsibility regarding diversity (Cujet, Howard-Hamilton, Cooper, 2012; Jones, 2012; Smith, 2009; Williams, 2013).

While diversity is not a concept or framework anticipated to be researched, the data necessitates that diversity be defined.

***Diversity.*** What diversity has become is a ubiquitous term for the popular practice of inclusive multiculturalism in search of equity. In this sense diversity espouses a preemptive understanding and embracement of different peoples coexisting in a community of equality where equity is righteously leveraged as needed to ensure harmony and equitable outcomes.

Diversity is more palatable than social justice. Social justice implies a wrong has been done for which there must be accountability. Diversity is what is offered to avoid the conflict for social justice. Universities are much more receptive to the fair-haired diversity than to its rabble rousing cousin, social justice. Note the small number of Offices (not majors or schools) of Social Justice in higher education.

### **The Institutional Mission**

#### **Mission/Institution**

If a university’s mission is philosophically student focused any goals, activities, initiatives, strategies or commitments, cascading from the mission to a greater or lesser

degree is one of student development. Therefore any goals, activities, initiatives or strategies specifically addressing socialization in the university can also be considered a student development initiative (social development). Recall the four dimensions of student development as presented by Rodgers (1990) and examined earlier in the review of literature to restate that: In higher education there is a philosophical directive to provide students with holistic learning and increased capacity (student development) and this effort is supported by faculty, student affairs and student affairs professionals who develop and maintain programs, policies, and initiatives that may be constructed from student development theory(ies).

Rodgers (1990) suggests that an atheoretical examination of ecology sans a theoretical measurement of student growth and capacity building (or alignment with goals for student growth and capacity building) is not truly measuring student development. True ecological study examines the (1) person, (2) environment and (3) the interaction between person and environment; student development requires all three of these elements are examined and measured guided by at least one theory. The symbiosis of student development and socialization has been discussed above and it could be argued that true study of socialization has similar requirements to a study of student development—an examination of the (1) person, (2) environment and (3) the interaction between person and environment utilizing a theoretical framework and measurement. This combined with student development being embedded in and promulgated by the university's mission and the subsequent moral authority and normative contexts (Weidman, 1984), provides sufficient reason to examine the University's missions as the potential epicenters against which the current environment can be compared.

**Mission and student development.** Historically, in non-profit higher education, the mission presents the university's purpose in society as well as its philosophy and identity inclusive of the goals, activities, and values that comprise the university's vision and strategic plan (Camelia & Marius, 2013). Mission goals are established to achieve outcomes and educational values including student development—the “concern for the development of the whole student” (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27). Furthermore, Rodgers (1990) postulates, and research cited in the review of literature confirms that, philosophically, programs and initiatives in higher education are created in pursuit of student development. Simply, the goals and activities in a university's mission target student development.

Accordingly, in order for socialization efforts (efforts promoting student acquisition of “the knowledge, skills and disposition that make them more or less effective members” [Brim, 1966] of the University) to be considered student development they must be aligned with the goals and activities set forth in the university's mission. Therefore, if socialization efforts can be identified in the university's mission they are in fact student development initiatives in the form of goals, activities, values, objectives, etc.

It is proposed here that efforts to analyze student socialization initiatives (social development) must consider any mission goals from which they may cascade. This follows Rodgers's (1990) rationale when distinguishing between person/environment scenarios and student development scenarios. The former is an ecological phenomenon involving programs, classes, or activities (environments) created to operationalize student development but may or may not be anchored in student development theory (Rodgers,

1990). The latter addresses the conceptual and philosophical foundation of student development—“the way a student grows, progresses or increases his or her developmental capacities” (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27)—that has produced theories on adolescents and emerging adults (Rodgers, 1990). These theories and research undergird the concept and higher education imperative of student development. Potential student development initiatives around socialization can be ineffective if they only involve student feedback on those initiatives and do not consider an undergirding development theory and the goals set in pursuit of the student development initiative (e.g. socialization for the Black/white biracial) (see Perry, 1970 below).

### **Limitations**

The research site for this study of Black/white biracial socialization was conducted at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) with limited diversity. It was difficult to accurately identify Black/white biracial students on campus due to the classification system construct and its lack of a Black/white biracial identity option. Also, students with one Black and one white parent may not choose to be forthright with this information or it may conflict with their racial self-identification. This study is mixed methods with a small sample size being conducted at a public university; the data is not representative of all biracial students at this University or beyond.

It would have been beneficial to provide data on other universities attracting, retaining, and graduating biracial students to serve as a baseline or point of comparison for the biracial population at the target university. However, a limitation of this research path is that Black/white biracial is not a specific category recognized by the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB), it is not on the census and may not be an

option on most if not all college applications. Thus, the availability of this particular data would be dependent on not only student self-identification of an officially unrecognized classification but also students' willingness to write-in their identity on a line for "Other" or to specify exactly which "two or more races" are being chosen. "Check all that apply" is also an option available for some on the college application and this illuminates another potential issue—the university's recording of the information provided. Without a single category for Black/white biracial students, colleges and universities are relied on to accurately transfer multiple selections of racial identity or identities that have been written in.

In a 2008 presentation, Weidman posed as an "important assumption" the fact that college was not an "encapsulated" environment; there are external factors and forces impacting student socialization. This study used Weidman's (1989) model and minimally addressed external factors opting to place the majority of the focus on University pressures.

It is important to establish an environment of student social development where the ability to interact, belong and be involved is enhanced; achievement of goals established in such an environment involve student development. Student development in this regard—( $B=f(P,E)$ ) (Lewin, 1936)—is focused on progress and growth as well as expanding the "developmental capacities" in "the whole student" (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27). This compared with a person, environment ( $P \times E$ ) scenario where students (Person) may be dissatisfied with an aspect of University life (Environment).

Following Rodgers's (1990) reasoning while contemplating a hypothetical ecological case presented by Perry (1970), the alleviation of student dissatisfaction may

lead to satisfaction or even student growth; or it may not. The initiative implemented to alleviate dissatisfaction would only be a reaction to student feedback (dissatisfaction) and not necessarily aligned with student development theory or in this case, the goals established for an environment of student social development. According to Rodgers' (1990) rationale, promotion of student development results from subsequent efforts (a class, program, department, institution) aligned with an environment rooted to social development goals.

### **Parental Influence**

Students' parental influence and socialization is a contributing consideration in the conceptual framework of Weidman's student socialization model. Beyond one item asking respondents to select an answer that best described their family's SES (Low, Middle, High), the variable of parental influence was not explored in this research for two reasons. First, while Weidman notes the importance of the relationship between students' parental socialization and students' "lifestyles" as well as parental socialization's "interaction" with students' "college experience," his attention to parental influence/socialization is largely dedicated to its effect on students' career decisions and career development (1991, p. 302). The survey used in this research contained two "Career goal" items however the intention was to note any changes in students' career path as a potential result of *college impact* not to ascertain parental influence on students' career paths.

It can be argued that independent of the institution of higher education, the parental socialization (SES, marital status, lifestyle and relationship with children [Weidman, 1989]) would be consistent. Secondly, Weidman clearly notes a decline in

parental influence on students from freshman (when students first leave home to arrive at college) to senior (when students have spent more time away from “home”) year —“This suggests an important temporal dimension to parental influence, with parents decreasing in importance during the college years” (Weidman, 1991, p. 302). It is for the above reasons that any normative pressure resulting from the socializing influence of parental influence was not investigated or pursued in this research.

### **Implications/Future Research**

#### **Black/white Biracial People and the Use of “Mixed”**

Rahman’s (2012) research on the history and use of the words “nigger” and “nigga” in, and in reference to, the African American community provided insights potentially transferrable to the Black/white biracial population. These insights resonate most when considering Black/white biracial students’ preferred use of the word “mixed.” As mentioned in chapter four, Rahman’s (2012) article provides “insight into the ways in which other marginalized communities develop linguistic strategies to deal with labels and dysphemisms” (p. 139). This could address the use/ownership of “mixed” as part of an understanding that Black/white biracial people are going to be labeled and that historically this label has been (1) pejorative, inaccurate or otherwise inappropriate, and (2) used to reinforce an ideology of interracial mating as racial adulteration and resulting in inferior offspring to be sub-humanized (in some cases further than their minority parent). “Mixed” may provide an opportunity to (re)claim identity as a racial entity deserving the respect provided to monoracial people.

There is also the idea that “mixed” is the remnant or start of a “counterlanguage” (Rahman, 2012, p. 149). Counterlanguage is employed by oppressed peoples who

“covertly resist domination” (Rahman, 2012, p. 149) and form an “antisociety.” Such an antisociety may resist the expectation that they “display an attitude that reaffirms the dominator/dominated relationship” (Morgan, 2002, p. 23). In other words, and as it relates to this study, the Black/white biracial, in an effort to defy traditional racial classification and the liminal status imposed by the majority, may have formed an antisociety for whom words like “mixed” are descriptors whose use illustrates a speaker’s identity, group membership and agency. Researching the existence and viability of these ideas in the Black/white biracial student population may prove beneficial to revealing more about this culture while also considering the impact these phenomenon may have as the bi/multi-racial population of the United States grows.

Along with the a consideration of alternative living spaces similar to those presently existing living locations that target student populations, a space for bi/multi-racial students can be established where a focus may be on exploring and respecting cultural differences. Also, broached in conclusion one above, there are several questions that could be pursued concerning the importance of physical attributes within the Black/white biracial community (intra-group)—how is a biracial person’s ocular perception of another more keen or different from a non-biracial? How does a biracial person’s experience and self-image regarding physical appearance impact one’s perception of another? Stating an ability to “find each other” implies a degree of concealment or invisibility, which one do you think is most at work (concealment or invisibility) and why? If biracial people garner support from other biracial people, how do institutions or society make it easier for biracial people to find each other?

**The ethnic alternative.** Similar to the ways in which Hispanics and Latinos identify on the census, Black/white biracial people could have the choice to select “Are you multiracial<sup>31</sup>” and if “Yes,” “Please check the races that contribute to your multiracialness.” This identifies Black/white biracial people as members of an ethnicity and similar to policies and procedures implemented to serve Latino and Hispanic students, Black/white biracial people would be more readily acknowledged. Also, there would still be racial identifications made meaning this classification would not suffer. As people of Hispanic origin can be any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015) logistical issues may arise if one identifies as Latino/Hispanic and also is required to do a similar process for a multiracial identity.

A concluding recommendation is fueled by the data collected here and founded on Omi and Winant’s (2014) concept of a “Racial Project” as “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along particular racial lines” (p. 125). To address the inequities of socialization, the University would be well served to incorporate a biracial “racial project” or a biracial project.

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<sup>31</sup> This could utilize a similar definition as the criteria presented in this study when gathering a sample of Black/white biracials, “Does on parent identify as Black and one identify as white?” Perhaps this could be changed to “Do you descend from members of two distinct racial groups (Black, White, Native American/Alaskan, Pacific Islander, Asian)?”

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**APPENDIX A****Black/white Biracial Student Survey**

(The first two questions are intended to maintain integrity of the intended population (Black/white biracial undergraduate students. Any “No” response to either question would exit the participant from the survey.)

1. For the purposes of this survey, are you a Black/white biracial (of your two biological parents, does one parent identify as Black and one parent identify as white?) student presently enrolled at the University?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

2. Are you a full-time undergraduate student?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

General

3. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female (1)
- ☐ Male (2)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (3)
- ☐ Prefer to identify gender below (4) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What year are you at the University?

- ☐ First year (1)
- ☐ Second year (2)
- ☐ Third year (3)
- ☐ Fourth year (4)
- ☐ Other (5)

5. What college/school are you enrolled in at the University?

- ☐ Arts and Sciences (1)
- ☐ Education (2)
- ☐ Public Policy (3)
- ☐ Business (4)
- ☐ Architecture (5)
- ☐ Engineering (6)
- ☐ Nursing (7)

6. When enrolling at the University how did you respond to the question "Are you Hispanic/Latino"?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Did not answer (3)
- ☐ I do not remember how I answered (4)

7. How did you identify your race when enrolling at the University (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Black/ African American (1)
- ☐ White (2)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (3)
- ☐ Native American/ Native Alaskan (4)
- ☐ Asian (5)
- ☐ Race not specified in this list (6)
- ☐ None (I did not identify or answer the question) (7)
- ☐ I do not remember how I answered (8)

Black/ white biracial identity

8. Based on your experience as a Black/white biracial person which one of the racial identity statements below do you feel best describes you (check the one that best applies)?

"I consider myself exclusively Black—I am Black." (*Singular*); "I consider myself exclusively white—I am white." (*Singular*); "I consider myself exclusively biracial—I am mixed, I am a blend, I am half-and-half, etc." (*Border*); "I consider myself somewhat of a chameleon—In certain company or groups I may identify as white, in others I may identify as Black and still others I may identify as mixed. My identity can shift between any two or three of these [Black, white, mixed] depending on the situation." (*Protean*); "I consider myself a composite of many descriptors [scholar, friend, human, daughter/son, sibling, artist, athlete, etc.] and do not use race to identify. In an effort to not have my identity defined by the constructs of race, I have chosen to not identify with any racial category." (*Transcendent*); Other (You racially identify or do not identify in a way that is not covered in one of the four options above.) If "Other" please write in how you racially identify.

## Appearance

9. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Agree (3)	Agree (4)	Do not know (5)
I look the way Black people are historically thought to look; most people think I am Black. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am Black mixed with something else. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not look the way Black people are historically thought to look; people assume I am a person of color but not Black or Black mixed with something else. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look the way white people are historically thought to look; people assume that I am white/ have a white ethnicity. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Background

10. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Agree (3)	Agree (4)	Do not know (5)
My race and racial identity play a significant role in my life in general. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am drawn to other biracial people (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am drawn to white people (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am drawn to Black people (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I form friendships with mono-racial minority people (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not accepted by other racial groups (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I seek romantic relationships with white people (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I seek romantic relationships with people of color (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I attend multicultural events and gatherings on campus (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I attend multicultural events and gatherings in the community (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I follow bi/multicultural sites (e.g. Mavin, Mixed folks, Swirl, etc.) and stories online (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am connected to bi/multiracial individuals through online social media (Facebook, twitter, etc.) (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I create my own space with other bi/multiracial people (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I create my own space with Black people (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I create my own space with white people (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am active in cultural organizations or social groups on campus (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am active in cultural organizations or social groups in the community (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. If you are an active member of a group(s) in the community please list the group(s) in which you are a member.

## Family

12. I would describe my family's social-economic status (income, education, and occupation) as (choose one):

- ☐ Low (1)
- ☐ Middle (2)
- ☐ High (3)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (4)

13. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Strongly Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Do not know (5)
There was a strong presence of Black culture in my home growing up (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was a strong presence of general multiculturalism in my home growing up (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There was not a strong presence of any discernable culture(s) in my home growing up (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was raised to identify as Black (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was raised to identify as bi/multiracial (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was raised to identify as white (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not raised to identify as any one race—I feel that I had a choice (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I remain in regular contact with my family (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Friends

14. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Strongly Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Do not know (5)
My friends and associates outside of my family played a large role in my racial identity. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The friends and associates I had growing up and before coming to college were mostly Black. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The friends and associates I had growing up and before coming to college were mostly white. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The friends and associates I had growing up and before coming to college were mostly bi/multiracial. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The friends and associates I had growing up and before coming to college were a wide array of races (both mono- and mixed race) and ethnicities. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I remain in regular contact with the friends and associates I have outside of college (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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## Collegiate experience

15. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Strongly Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Do not know (5)
My race and racial identity play a significant role in my life at the University. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have more than three pieces of apparel that represents the University (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am active in mono-racial minority organizations or groups (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am active in organizations whose members are predominantly white (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have more than three pieces of apparel that represent a University organization or group (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt unwelcomed/not included in groups or organizations that are predominately white (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt unwelcomed/not included in mono-racial minority groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

or organizations (7)					
I have felt uncomfortable in mono-racial groups or organizations (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have felt uncomfortable in groups or organizations that are predominately white (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been denied membership in predominantly monoracial minority groups or organizations (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been denied membership in predominantly white groups or organizations (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoid joining organizations (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. If you are an active member of a group(s) on campus please list the group(s) in which you are a member.

17. Which of the following college related descriptors would best describe you (check all that apply):

- ☐ [University's] nickname (1)
  - ☐ [University's] mascot (2)
  - ☐ [a University] student (3)
  - ☐ College student (4)
  - ☐ Other college related descriptor (if "other", please write it) (5)
-

## Context

18. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Strongly Disagree (4)	Disagree (5)	Do not know (6)
I enjoy/have enjoyed my residence hall experience at the University (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find the physical structure and layout of the University appealing (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I appreciate the art, decorations, and historical artifacts in and around the University (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Around campus I am presented with many opportunities to meet and interact with other students (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Around campus I am presented with many opportunities to meet and interact with University faculty and staff (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support student governance at the University (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

University responds well to student needs and/or complaints (7)					
I am actively involved in student services (e.g. counseling, advising, orientation team, tutoring, etc.) (8)	○	○	○	○	○

19. Please use the sliding scale below to indicate what percentage (0-100) you are...

\_\_\_\_\_ Similar to other students at the University (1)

\_\_\_\_\_ A part of the University (2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Comfortable at the University (3)

Class/Academic

20. Please mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Strongly Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Do not know (5)
Structurally, I find my classrooms to be suitable (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My classes are designed in a way that allows me to participate (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My classes address bi/multiracial issues in the curriculum (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are discussions about bi/multiracialism and bi/multiracial issues in my classes (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bi/multiracial authors and scholars are often a part of the required reading in my classes (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At this time, I can name three bi/multiracial authors or scholars in my field of study or interest (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In class I have the opportunity to racially identify or explore my racial identity (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In general the teaching methods in my classes match well with my learning style (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I identify with the instructors of my courses (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I racially identify with the instructors of my courses (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am provided opportunity to meet and speak with faculty outside of class (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. To the best of your recollection, please indicate your SAT scores when applying to the University.

\_\_\_\_\_ Critical Reading (1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Math (2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Writing (3)

22. If you used a standardized test other than the SAT (e.g. ACT) on your application, please indicate the test and the score below.

23. How important do you feel each of the following is to creating a welcoming environment for Black/white biracial students at the University?

	Very Important (1)	Important (2)	Very Unimportant (3)	Unimportant (4)	Do not know (5)
Courses on multiracial identity/ multiracial studies (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development for faculty and staff on multiracial populations (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raising awareness of multiracial issues among mono-racial student organizations/groups (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting B/w biracial students in locating/meeting other biracial students on campus (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating opportunities for open dialogue and cross-cultural communication (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Film and book series focused on bi/multiracial peoples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hosting guest speakers on multiracial topics (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Did you have a specific career goal when entering the University? If “Yes,” what was your career goal (what did you want to work doing after college)?

- ☐ Yes (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ No (2)

25. Has your career goal changed from when you first entered college? If “Yes,” what is your career goal now?

- ☐ Yes (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ No (2)

26. What personal goals have you achieved or do you plan to achieve while at college?

27. In the space provided write in anything you would like to share that has not been asked or that has been asked and you would like to expand on.

Thank you for participating in this survey. The next phase of this study involves a focus group with Black/white biracial students where participants will have an opportunity to share their experiences and thoughts on the socialization processes at the University in greater detail. If you would like to participate in this focus group discussion please indicate “Yes”; below and enter your email address (all information you have provided will remain confidential) into the box.

Yes-- I would like to participate in the focus group discussion

## APPENDIX B

### Black/white Biracial Student Focus Group Questions

1. How do you racially identify yourself?
  - a. Is this racial identification the same used when applying to the University?
2. Do you feel it is more or less important at college to identify yourself as Black? As white? Or, as biracial?
3. In your experience, how do others typically perceive you racially (i.e. what do you think people think your race is?)? Is this different from how you expect to be perceived racially? How do you feel students typically react to you? What do they assume about your racial identity?
4. In your experience, how do University administrators, faculty, and staff react to your racial identity? (for example, in class or at the Registrar, the Dean's office, Student Affairs, or a University event, how would you describe the interactions with college administrators, faculty?) Can you provide examples?
5. Besides club and group meetings or special events, where would you go on campus if you wanted to see people who look like you?
6. If you attended a historically Black college [examples of HBCUs here], how would your identity be different? Do you think that identity would be as easily recognized/accepted there as it is here at college?
7. Do you have friends who are biracial? Did you talk about being biracial with each other?
8. Has there been a point or occasions during your college going experience when you were very conscious of being your race? (If the participants ask "what do you mean" or are not respondent, you may be able to probe a bit here by asking if there was a specific incident; a phase in the college going process: application; orientation; classes) Or, another way to ask this question:
9. Was there a point in your college experience where your racial identity felt more salient or when you were more conscious of your race?

**APPENDIX C**  
**Senior Administrator Interview Questions**

1. What is student socialization at the University?
2. How would you say socialization aligns with the mission?
3. Historically how is socialization operationalized/achieved with diverse student groups?
4. Historically what has been the awareness/outreach/acknowledgement of the bi/multiracial student population?
5. How would you say bi/multi-racialism traditionally fits into the socialization agenda at the University?

## APPENDIX D

### Black/white biracial socialization study

Do you have one Black parent and one White parent?

If one of your biological parents is Black and one is White and you are a [University] undergraduate, we would like you to participate in a study of socialization in higher education.

Please access the survey [here](#).

In this study we hope to learn more about experiences of belonging and integration for Black/White biracial students at the University. The study involves a [survey](#) intended to provide Black/White biracial students (students with one Black and one White parent) the opportunity to share their expectations, experiences, and perceptions of socialization at the University. More specifically, the survey is designed to contribute to a better understanding of identification, interaction, and involvement for this specific student group when pursuing a degree at the University.

This survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, responses will be confidential, and the findings will be reported in aggregated.

If you have one Black and one White parent and would like to participate in this survey, please follow this link to the [survey](#) (or cut and paste the address-  
[https://education.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_8kUPCqnKPlio233](https://education.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8kUPCqnKPlio233)).

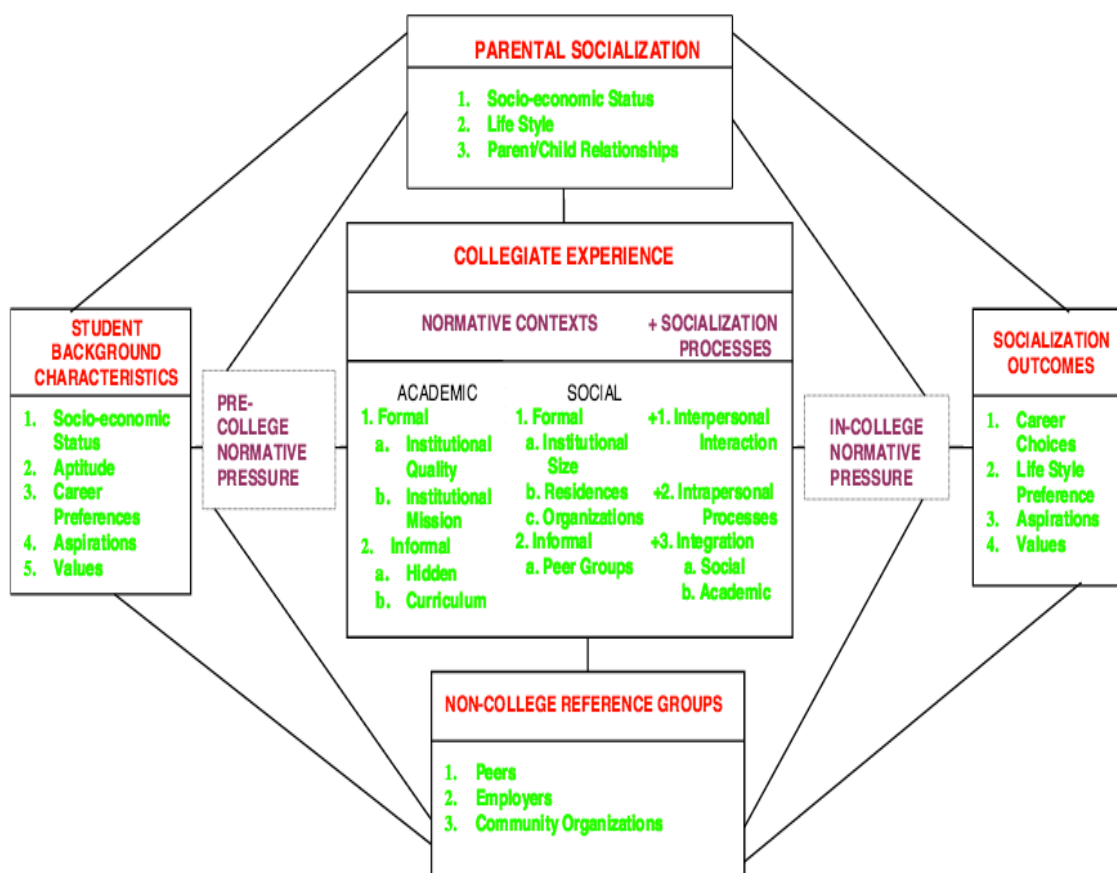
Thank you for your time and participation.

If you have any questions please contact Lee Williams, [wlw2n@virginia.edu](mailto:wlw2n@virginia.edu) or (610-986-3000).

IRB# 2014-0394-00

## APPENDIX E

### Weidman model of undergraduate socialization (1989)



## APPENDIX F

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Mean Context Score	Singular Black	6	3.0139	.74799	.30537	2.2289	3.7989	1.83	4.00
	Singular White	3	3.2143	.13947	.08052	2.8678	3.5607	3.13	3.38
	Border	24	2.9933	.48616	.09924	2.7880	3.1986	2.00	4.00
	Protean	8	2.7563	.55449	.19604	2.2927	3.2198	1.80	3.50
	Transcenda nt	3	3.1786	.38631	.22304	2.2189	4.1382	2.75	3.50
	Other	3	2.7937	.18028	.10409	2.3458	3.2415	2.67	3.00
	Total	47	2.9688	.50176	.07319	2.8214	3.1161	1.80	4.00
I am active in mono-racial minority organizations or groups	Singular Black	6	2.3333	.81650	.33333	1.4765	3.1902	2.00	4.00
	Singular White	3	1.3333	.57735	.33333	-.1009	2.7676	1.00	2.00
	Border	24	2.1667	.86811	.17720	1.8001	2.5332	1.00	4.00
	Protean	9	1.8889	.60093	.20031	1.4270	2.3508	1.00	3.00
	Transcenda nt	3	2.6667	1.15470	.66667	-.2018	5.5351	2.00	4.00
	Other	3	3.0000	1.00000	.57735	.5159	5.4841	2.00	4.00
	Total	48	2.1667	.85883	.12396	1.9173	2.4160	1.00	4.00
I am active in organizations whose members are predominantly White	Singular Black	5	2.8000	.83666	.37417	1.7611	3.8389	2.00	4.00
	Singular White	3	4.0000	.00000	.00000	4.0000	4.0000	4.00	4.00
	Border	25	2.9200	.81240	.16248	2.5847	3.2553	1.00	4.00
	Protean	8	2.2500	.70711	.25000	1.6588	2.8412	1.00	3.00
	Transcenda nt	3	3.0000	1.00000	.57735	.5159	5.4841	2.00	4.00
	Other	3	3.0000	.00000	.00000	3.0000	3.0000	3.00	3.00

	Total	47	2.8723	.82402	.12019	2.6304	3.1143	1.00	4.00
I have felt	Singular	6	3.0000	1.26491	.51640	1.6726	4.3274	1.00	4.00
unwelcomed or	Black								
not included in	Singular	3	2.0000	1.00000	.57735	-.4841	4.4841	1.00	3.00
groups or	White								
organizations	Border	25	2.2800	.93630	.18726	1.8935	2.6665	1.00	4.00
that are	Protean	8	2.2500	1.28174	.45316	1.1784	3.3216	1.00	4.00
predominately	Transcenda	3	2.3333	1.15470	.66667	-.5351	5.2018	1.00	3.00
White	nt								
	Other	3	2.3333	1.15470	.66667	-.5351	5.2018	1.00	3.00
	Total	48	2.3542	1.04147	.15032	2.0518	2.6566	1.00	4.00
I have felt	Singular	3	1.6667	.57735	.33333	.2324	3.1009	1.00	2.00
unwelcomed or	Black								
not included in	Singular	3	2.3333	1.52753	.88192	-1.4612	6.1279	1.00	4.00
monoracial	White								
minority groups	Border	25	2.0000	.76376	.15275	1.6847	2.3153	1.00	4.00
or organizations	Protean	7	2.2857	1.25357	.47380	1.1264	3.4451	1.00	4.00
	Transcenda	3	1.6667	1.15470	.66667	-1.2018	4.5351	1.00	3.00
	nt								
	Other	3	1.3333	.57735	.33333	-.1009	2.7676	1.00	2.00
	Total	44	1.9773	.90190	.13597	1.7031	2.2515	1.00	4.00
I have more	Singular	6	3.8333	.40825	.16667	3.4049	4.2618	3.00	4.00
than three	Black								
pieces of	Singular	3	3.0000	1.73205	1.00000	-1.3027	7.3027	1.00	4.00
apparel that	White								
represents the	Border	25	3.2800	.89069	.17814	2.9123	3.6477	1.00	4.00
University	Protean	9	3.3333	.86603	.28868	2.6676	3.9990	2.00	4.00
	Transcenda	3	3.6667	.57735	.33333	2.2324	5.1009	3.00	4.00
	nt								
	Other	3	3.3333	.57735	.33333	1.8991	4.7676	3.00	4.00
	Total	49	3.3673	.85863	.12266	3.1207	3.6140	1.00	4.00
In class I have	Singular	6	1.5000	.83666	.34157	.6220	2.3780	1.00	3.00
the opportunity	Black								
to racially	Singular	3	1.6667	.57735	.33333	.2324	3.1009	1.00	2.00
identify or	White								
explore my	Border	24	2.0833	.82970	.16936	1.7330	2.4337	1.00	3.00
racial identity	Protean	7	2.1429	1.21499	.45922	1.0192	3.2665	1.00	4.00

	Transcenda nt	3	2.3333	.57735	.33333	.8991	3.7676	2.00	3.00
	Other	3	1.6667	.57735	.33333	.2324	3.1009	1.00	2.00
	Total	46	1.9783	.85607	.12622	1.7240	2.2325	1.00	4.00
My classes address bi/multiracial issues in the curriculum	Singular Black	6	1.8333	.75277	.30732	1.0433	2.6233	1.00	3.00
	Singular White	3	2.0000	1.00000	.57735	-.4841	4.4841	1.00	3.00
	Border	24	1.8333	.76139	.15542	1.5118	2.1548	1.00	4.00
	Protean	7	1.8571	1.21499	.45922	.7335	2.9808	1.00	4.00
	Transcenda nt	2	2.0000	.00000	.00000	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
	Other	2	2.0000	.00000	.00000	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
	Total	44	1.8636	.79507	.11986	1.6219	2.1054	1.00	4.00
The University responds well to student needs and/or complaints	Singular Black	4	2.7500	1.25831	.62915	.7478	4.7522	1.00	4.00
	Singular White	2	3.0000	.00000	.00000	3.0000	3.0000	3.00	3.00
	Border	18	2.6667	.97014	.22866	2.1842	3.1491	1.00	4.00
	Protean	7	2.2857	1.25357	.47380	1.1264	3.4451	1.00	4.00
	Transcenda nt	2	3.0000	.00000	.00000	3.0000	3.0000	3.00	3.00
	Other	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	Total	33	2.6364	.99430	.17309	2.2838	2.9889	1.00	4.00