Egalitarian Socialization and Subjective Well-Being

in Multiracial Individuals:

A Moderated Mediation Analysis

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2016 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

August 2016

ABSTRACT

Scholarly interest in racial socialization is growing, but researchers' understanding of how and when racial socialization relates to subjective well-being is underdeveloped, particularly for multiracial populations. The present study investigated the possibility that the relationship of racial socialization to subjective well-being is mediated by racial identification and that this mediation depends on physical racial ambiguity. Specifically, the proposed study used a moderated mediation model to examine whether the indirect relation of egalitarian socialization to subjective well-being through racial identification is conditional on physical racial ambiguity among 313 multiracial individuals. Results suggested egalitarian socialization was positively correlated with subjective well-being. The results provided no support for the moderated mediation hypothesis. The present study examined the complex interaction between racial socialization, racial identification, physical racial ambiguity, and subjective well-being among multiracial individuals. Despite receiving no support for the moderated mediation hypothesis, this research helped to further explicate a distinct pathway through which egalitarian socialization impacts well-being through racial identification for multiracial individuals independent of physical racial ambiguity.

DEDICATION

For my parents, Amalia Villegas and Robert Gold, who provided my foundation, and for whom an educated child was better than a large savings account. And for Michelle, who showed me that beautiful things still happen, and who believed in my writing, which meant more to me than I will ever say.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the abolishment of antimiscegenation laws in 1967, marriage across racial lines has increased, leading to a sizeable and growing multiracial population (Lee & Bean, 2004; Wang, 2012). The growth of the number of individuals claiming membership in multiple racial categories has corresponded to a growth in the literature examining multiracial identity, socialization, and well-being (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Of particular interest are the predictors and consequences of racial socialization, a term used in the literature to refer to the collective messages parents transfer to their children regarding race (Hughes et al., 2006). Although associations of racial socialization practices with racial identification and well-being have been demonstrated among monoracial groups, empirical attempts to explain the influence of racial socialization strategies for multiracial individuals have been limited (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). Emerging research suggests that the various racial socialization strategies may have distinct and differential effects on racial identity, adjustment, and well-being (Liu & Lau, 2013). As a racial socialization strategy, egalitarianism practices are notably absent from the literature (Hughes et al., 2006). To fully understand the consequences and correlates of racial socialization strategies, particularly egalitarianism, there is a need for researchers to move beyond global measures and examine specific socialization strategies for multiracial individuals and their relation to well-being.

Although researchers have empirically established that racial socialization relates to a variety of well-being outcomes, less attention has been paid to the conditions of these effects. A growing body of literature exists that examines the effects of physical

appearance, specifically physical racial ambiguity, on racial categorization and identity (Young, Sanchez, Wilton, 2013). This work suggests that there is a complex interplay between other-perceived appearance, socialization, and racial identification (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001). Despite the burgeoning research on racial ambiguity, there is little research on physical racial ambiguity in concert with racial socialization and racial identification (Young et al., 2013). Thus, important questions remain about the relationship of these variables, particularly for multiracial individuals.

The current study will evaluate whether egalitarian socialization is associated with subjective well-being, and determine if the relationship between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being is mediated by racial identification. Further, the current study uses a moderated mediation model to examine whether the indirect relation of egalitarian socialization to subjective well-being through racial identification is conditional on physical racial ambiguity among multiracial individuals.

Background and terminology

According to the 2010 Census, of the 308.7 million people residing in the United States, 9 million people reported more than one race, making up 3% of the total population (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). From 2000 to 2010, the multiracial population was one of the fastest growing groups increasing by approximately 33% (Humes et al., 2011). Despite the growth and increasing visibility of this population in the United States, persons of multiracial background are underrepresented in the literature (Jackson, Wolven, & Aguilera, 2013). In addition, the vast majority of existing research on biracial and multiracial individuals has focused primarily on one group of individuals,

African American or Black and White mixed individuals, with less attention to other racial compositions.

In general, there is no consensus on the definitions of race and ethnicity (Lin & Kelsey, 2000). Ethnicity and race generally aim to capture different phenomena, though there is considerable overlap between the two. The uses and definitions of race began based on exclusively biological and genetic dimensions (Quintana, 2007). The use of race in most of the current literature, particularly in counseling psychology, is socially-constructed based on perceived differences or social distance between different racial groups and derives largely from the way in which one is responded to by others, on the basis of visible racial characteristics, most often skin color and other facial features (Phinney, 1996; Quintana, 2007). Ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct that refers to one's identity, or sense of self, as a member of an ethnic group (Phinney, 2003). Phinney (2003) described ethnicity as a dynamic identity that develops in the context of a subgroup that claims a common ancestry, and shares a similar culture, religion, language, kinship, or place of origin.

Due to the specific interest of the present study in understanding the experiences of mixed identity individuals in the context of a racialized U.S. society, we use the term *multiracial* to focus our investigation on persons whose parents are of two or more different socially designated racial groups (e.g., Black and White, Asian and American Indian; Jackson, 2009; Jackson et al., 2013; Phinney, 1996). The term multiracial is inclusive of derivative terms such as biracial, mixed-race, mixed origin, and mixed heritage (Aspinall, 2009; Jackson, 2009; Jackson, Yoo, Guevarra, & Harrington, 2012). Individuals who are *multiethnic*, or who identify with more than one ethnic group, were

not included in this study because many of those who identify as multiethnic are of a singular racial heritage (e.g., Irish and French, Japanese and Vietnamese).

The current study is interested only in those from multiple racial heritages. However, we do include persons of mixed Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino heritages (e.g. Mexican and White or Latino and Asian), because this group is often included in research on multiracial identity (Edwards & Pedrotti, 2008) and has been found to share similar identity formation processes and experiences of racial discrimination as other multiracial groups (Jackson et al., 2013; Jimenez, 2004; Romo, 2011; Vasquez, 2010). Although Hispanics/Latinos are not treated as a racial group on the U.S. Census, in 2010, Mexican, Hispanic, and Latin American were the most popular write-ins on the "some other race" category on the census form (Lee & Bean, 2004). Hispanics/Latinos have been often treated as a separate racial group by the U.S. government: as a racial minority group who qualifies for and receives benefits from federal programs, and as a group protected by Civil Rights legislation and the Voting Rights Act, both of which are aimed at helping racial minorities (Lee & Bean, 2004).

Finally, this study includes all foreign-born multiracial individuals who have resided in the United States since the age of 12 because the research has demonstrated that they experience similar processes of racialization to native born populations due to their mixed race status (Omi & Winant, 1994; Root, 2002; Jackson et al., 2012). Foreign-born is used to refer to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth, including naturalized U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (i.e. immigrants). Native born is used to refer to anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. island area, or abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial socialization and well-being

The increase in the racial diversity of the U.S. population has corresponded with a rise in scholarly interest in cultural, ethnic, and racial socialization (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Humes et al., 2011; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). The terms cultural, ethnic, and racial socialization are used interchangeably within the literature to refer to the transmission of information regarding culture, ethnicity, and race from parents to children (Hughes et al., 2006; Tran & Lee, 2011). When necessary, this study uses the broad term *racial socialization* because of our focus on multiracial individuals in this investigation. The present study uses the term racial socialization when referring to the broad literature base, and more specific terms (e.g., cultural socialization or egalitarian socialization) in lieu of the broad term to refer to distinctions in the nature of the messages parents give their children about race.

Researchers have attempted to outline the strategies and practices that racial minority parents use to help children understand the meaning of their race within the sociohistorical and political climates at any given time. Hughes and Chen (1997) proposed a model of racial socialization with four dimensions: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarianism, and promotion of mistrust. In this model, *cultural socialization* refers to any parents' efforts to teach children about their racial heritage and history, and promote cultural customs and traditions (Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes et al., 2006). Examples of cultural socialization include: exposing children to cultural music, celebrating cultural holidays, eating ethnic foods, and use of native language

(Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes et al, 2006). *Preparation for bias* refers to parents' efforts to increase their children's awareness of discrimination and prejudice (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes et al., 2006). Examples of preparation for bias include parents discussing the expectations their children might face based on their race and talking about the unfair treatment that occurs because of their race (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes et al, 2006). *Promotion of mistrust* refers to practices that warn children about other racial groups or emphasize the need for wariness and distrust in interracial interactions (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes et al., 2006). Examples of promotion of mistrust include parents encouraging their children to maintain a distance from people of other races and cautioning children about trusting people of other races (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Theoretically, messages of preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust are distinct because promotion of mistrust does not contain any messages or advice regarding how to cope with or manage discriminatory experiences (Hughes & Chen, 1997). *Egalitarianism* refers to parents' efforts to increase their children's appreciation of all racial groups (Hughes et al., 2006), and promote cross-race friendships for the purpose of the appreciating diversity. Parents providing messages regarding egalitarianism teach their children about other cultural groups, educate their children about the value of interactions with a diverse group of people, and encourage their children to celebrate all people (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). Examples include encouraging interactions and getting to know people of other races or explaining to children the importance of getting along with others regardless of race (Hughes et al., 2006).

The literature examining the relationship between racial socialization and mental health outcomes is still new and underdeveloped (Hughes, 2006). In general, the literature suggests that racial socialization practices are associated with several adaptive outcomes for racial minority youth (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006; Liu & Lau, 2013; Stevenson, 1995). Among the most important goals of racial socialization is the promotion of psychosocial adjustment, functioning, and well-being (Liu & Lau, 2013). As such, scholars have examined the psychosocial outcomes of racial socialization practices such as internalizing and externalizing symptoms, depression, anger management, and well-being among monoracial minority groups (Banerjee, 2013; Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997). These studies demonstrate support for the relevance of racial socialization practices to a variety of mental health outcomes, although the relationships vary according to types of measures used and the type of racial socialization assessed (Hughes et al., 2006)

Of the racial socialization strategies reviewed above, egalitarianism is the most underdeveloped within the current literature, with little existing knowledge regarding egalitarianism and its impact on adjustment and well-being outcomes (Hughes et al., 2006). There are a number of reasons for the lack of development of this particular strategy in the literature. First, although egalitarianism as proposed by Hughes and Chen (1997) was a theoretically distinct dimension of racial socialization, empirically this has not been supported (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Tran & Lee, 2010). In a study examining racial socialization processes among African American parents and their children, Hughes and Johnson (2001) tested the multidimensional model of racial socialization using principal components analysis and demonstrated that cultural socialization and

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egalitarianism were not distinct dimensions, thus only three dimensions were used. In this study, cultural socialization and pluralism/egalitarianism messages were conceptualized as distinct dimensions of racial socialization (Hughes and Johnson, 2001). There are a number of reasons proposed explaining this result. Hughes and Johnson (2001) suggested that the measures created to distinguish racial socialization practices may not be able to differentiate between cultural socialization and egalitarianism. Hughes and Johnson (2001) and other researchers (Tran & Lee, 2010) have proposed that cultural socialization and egalitarianism practices may co-occur within racial minority groups. Discussions about prominent people and events in their own group may simultaneously involve discussions about other groups (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Further, it may be that racial minority parents perceive the purpose of cultural socialization to be an appreciation of all cultures, similar to the purpose of egalitarianism strategies (Tran & Lee, 2010).

Second, researchers have not developed a common terminology or common operationalization of egalitarianism, using instead different conceptualizations and definitions ranging from mainstream socialization (Stevenson, Herrero-Taylor, Cameron, & Davis, 2002; Thornton, 1997); silence about race (Branch & Newcombe, 1986; Brega & Coleman, 1999); humanitarian values (Brega & Coleman, 1999); cultural endorsement of mainstream (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002); self-development (Sanders Thompson, 1994); pluralism (Hughes & Johnson, 2001); and colorblindness (Hamm, 2001; Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). Although important to study, the varied operationalizations present in the literature offer a challenge and limitation. Different conceptualizations and measurement of egalitarianism yields different information, thus thwarting synthesis of

the socialization literature (Hughes et al., 2006). To understand the range of messages that parents transmit, future studies need to clarify the content of the messages and provide a clear conceptualization and rationale for the use of each dimension (Hughes et al., 2006).

The studies examining specific egalitarianism socialization strategies and adjustment outcomes have yielded mixed results. For instance, Bowman and Howard (1985) found that Black youth socialized using equality and egalitarianism strategies reported higher personal efficacy than those whose parents provided no racial socialization. In this study, egalitarian socialization was conceptualized as an emphasis and recognition that all races are equal and skin color is not a factor in one's worth (Bowman & Howard, 1985). In their examination of the role of racial socialization as a cultural compensatory and protective factor against discrimination experiences, Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) concluded that egalitarianism strategies appeared to allow African American adolescents to see the world optimistically, counteracting their experiences of discrimination. This study conceptualized egalitarian socialization as the importance of Blacks and Whites understanding each other so they can get along (Neblett et al., 2006). Another study conducted by Banerjee, Harrell, and Johnson (2011) involving egalitarian socialization measured as cultural exposure to diverse cultures, has linked egalitarianism to more cognitive competence and achievement among African American youth.

Findings regarding the positive association between egalitarian socialization practices and adjustment are tempered by research that suggests the opposite (Hughes et al., 2006). Relationships vary somewhat according to the conceptualization of egalitarian

socialization used. For instance, in a study of Black adolescents, Constantine and Blackmon (2002) found a negative relationship between egalitarianism socialization and school self-esteem. In this study, egalitarian socialization was conceptualized and measured as cultural endorsement of mainstream and included messages related to the importance of majority culture institutions and the values and benefits African Americans can receive by their involvement with these institutions (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002). Further, theorists have proposed that to the extent that egalitarianism strategies leave children unprepared for the racial realities they encounter, these strategies may attenuate well-being outcomes (Hughes et al., 2006).

The aforementioned studies demonstrate the importance of racial socialization to psychosocial and adjustment outcomes. They also suggest the differential impact of racial socialization strategies on adjustment outcomes. To elaborate the consequences of racial socialization strategies, it will be important for researchers to distinguish between types of racial socialization and provide a clear rationale for the specific examination of that strategy. Taken together, these studies underscore the importance of moving beyond global measures and examining the multidimensionality of racial socialization. In order to fully understand the impact of racial socialization on adjustment and well-being, researchers must move beyond global measures of racial socialization and examine specific socialization strategies and their outcomes (Hughes et al., 2006).

Apart from examining the influence of racial socialization on racial identity, the racial socialization and adjustment literature is limited by its frequent use of negative adjustment measures in understanding the effects of racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). In understanding the effects of racial socialization on well-being, many

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researchers have used the absence of negative adjustment concerns or low negative adjustment reports as a proxy for well-being (Hughes et al., 2006), assuming that they are equivalent to looking at positive outcomes and positive adjustment. The theoretical shift away from negative adjustment measures to subjective well-being allows for the subjective appraisal of individual experiences conducted by individuals themselves, rather than relying on the expert evaluation of quality of life and negative effects. Subjective well-being, or the evaluation of one's life satisfaction and frequency of positive and negative affect, for example, moves beyond the paradigm of negative adjustment (Diener, 2000). Instead, it focuses on positive elements, assuming that individuals do more than try to avoid misery (Diener, 2000; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). For example, in a study by Tran and Lee (2010), perceived cultural socialization-pluralism was found to be significantly related to social competence through ethnic identity. This study is one of the few that have moved beyond negative adjustment measures, demonstrating the positive effects of racial socialization strategies. When researchers shift their thinking from negative adjustment, they may uncover the positive impact that racial socialization strategies have on functioning, rather than simple acknowledgement that it helps prevent negative adjustment outcomes (Rumbaut, 1994; Stevenson et al., 1997). The present study attempts to provide insight into the mechanisms behind racial socialization that contribute to subjective well-being. By focusing on subjective well-being, the proposed study will help to elucidate contributing factors of psychological and physical function and dysfunction among multiracial individuals. The study of subjective well-being and its relation to racial socialization marks a departure from traditional pathologically-based models and conceptualizations

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that are present throughout the literature. This study proposes that egalitarian socialization messages will be positively related to subjective well-being. This effect is expected due to the research (e.g., Banerjee et al., 2011; Bowman & Howard, 1985; Neblett et al., 2006; Tran & Lee, 2010) that has found associations between egalitarianism messages and positive adjustment outcomes such as social competence, self-efficacy, and academic achievement.

Another limitation present in the racial socialization literature is that the vast majority of the studies examining racial socialization and adjustment have focused on African American populations. Only three studies were identified that examined racial socialization and adjustment among multiracial individuals (Chong, 2013; Jourdan, 2004; Nolfo, 2009). In a qualitative study conducted by Nolfo (2009), multiracial participants reported that their parents communicated messages of egalitarian socialization, often going out of their way to tell their children not to judge others by the color of their skin and not to pay attention to people who would judge them because of their racial composition. However, in this study the connection between socialization practices and adjustment was not examined (Nolfo, 2009). Jourdan (2004) found that for multiethnic individuals, those who scored high on racial socialization reported higher self-esteem. Finally, in a study of cultural socialization practices in biracial young adults, a relationship between minority cultural socialization and psychological adjustment and positive affect was demonstrated among Asian-White biracial young adults (Chong, 2013). Minority cultural socialization was defined as a socialization practice aimed at exposing children to the cultural experiences of their Asian heritage, including traditional events and foods, and orienting them to their minority status within White culture

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(Chong, 2013). The positive impact of minority cultural socialization was likely due to the self-pride that it instilled in the participants, especially regarding their racial identity. The results from this study (Chong, 2013) mirrors findings from other studies using monoracial samples suggesting the impact that racial socialization strategies have on self-esteem and self-efficacy (Nolfo, 2009). Overall these studies suggest the importance of examining racial socialization and adjustment for multiracial groups in order to fully understand the dynamics of these messages.

As our society becomes increasingly multiracial, it is paramount that researchers understand the complex processes associated with racial socialization for those occupying a multiracial space (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). Although multiracial families confront similar barriers in racial socialization as other minority groups, they also have unique challenges and opportunities inherent in the formation and integration of their multiple heritages (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). Addressing the implications of egalitarian socialization practices for multiracial individuals is important to help elucidate ways this socialization strategy positively contributes to multiracial identity development and adjustment. Parents providing messages regarding egalitarianism teach their children about other cultural groups, educate their children about the value of interactions with a diverse group of people, and encourage their children to celebrate all people (Rollins & Hunter, 2013). The goals of egalitarian socialization as the appreciation of different racial groups and the understanding that those groups are not treated equally in society may be particularly important for multiracial individuals. Through egalitarian socialization, parents may encourage their children to recognize the equality of all races, while recognizing that both individual and institutional racism exists (Barr & Neville,

2008). Theoretically, this strategy may be important to multiracial individuals in allowing for flexibility and fluidity in their racial identity and subsequent adjustment. The examination of egalitarian socialization as conceptualized and distinct from racial color-blindness is important to fully understand the impact that specific socialization strategies have on adjustment. Ultimately, the socialization processes occurring within multiracial populations must be better understood because these messages influence how they understand their racial status and how they choose to resolve questions about identity.

The present study advances the literature by providing insight into the potential positive outcomes related to racial socialization and extending racial socialization to multiracial populations. Examination of this group will highlight the salience of racial issues, social status, and beliefs about race for multiracial individuals, and may illuminate additional features of the socialization process or mechanisms through which they operate. Further, the current study attempts to explicate the mechanisms through which egalitarian socialization influences well-being, positing that racial socialization influences outcomes indirectly through its effects on racial identification and is conditional on physical racial ambiguity.

Racial identification

The proposed positive effects of egalitarian socialization on psychosocial, adjustment, and well-being outcomes may be due, in part, to its influence on more proximal processes such as racial identification. Given that racial socialization messages are thought to be the primary manner in which children learn about their racial background, racial socialization has often been examined as it relates to racial

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identification (Hughes et al., 2006; McHale et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2009). Racial identification is conceptualized as a personal, psychological awareness of one's ancestry, and a personal affiliation with various racial groups (Choi-Misailidis, 2010).

Although theories of racial identity are helpful in informing the development of multiracial identity (Choi-Misailidis, 2010), the study of multiracial identity warrants attention because of the complex negotiation and integration necessary within two or more racial contexts. Historically, the multiracial literature has failed to acknowledge the challenges and opportunities inherent in the multiracial experience particularly when it comes to developing a normative and healthy identity (Jackson, 2012). This is partially due to the challenges that these identities present to the false notion of race and the belief in the existence of separate races (Edwards & Pedrotti, 2008). Prior to the civil rights movement, identity was primarily based on the one-drop rule and hypodescence, which stated that the identity of a child of mixed-race ancestry was assigned based on their socially subordinate parent (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). The rise of interracial partnerships and the biracial baby boom occurring after the legalization of interracial marriage forced a reconsideration of multiracial identity options (Jackson, 2012). Although more identity options were available, the historical emphasis on monoracial categorization was still evident. Until the 2000 Census, multiracial individuals were often forced to choose to identify with one of their component racial categories, rather than recognizing the possibility that they belong to multiple categories (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Since societal opportunities have tended to be given on the basis of one's race, many multiracial individuals felt the urge to "pass" as monoracial, as members of their

more privileged race (Dhooper, 2003). While passing may open doors and offer opportunities, it also means denying an aspect of one's racial heritage (Dhooper, 2003).

Growth of the multiracial population has shifted the literature to incorporate the development and integration of a multiracial identity (Root, 2003). Researchers are beginning to recognize the complex nature of multiracial identity, and have discarded past linear models of racial identity (Jackson, 2012). These models have been replaced with more fluid ecological models that provide an understanding of the interconnectedness of individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors that impact multiracial identity development (Jackson, 2012; Rockquemore, Brunsma, & Delgado, 2009). Further, research has examined the challenges and opportunities embedded within the multiracial experience such as experiencing discrimination, shifting racial identification over time and context, and psychological well-being (Jackson, 2012). A review of the historical trajectory of racial identity theories for multiracial individuals will demonstrate the ongoing challenges in racial identity formation, racial categorization, and racial identification (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

Thornton and Wason (1995) described the historical literature on multiracial identity as following one of three approaches: *problem*, *equivalent*, or *variant*. Rockquemore et al. (2009) expanded their framework to include a fourth approach, which they called the *ecological approach*. The *problem approach* assumes that in a racially-divided world, being a multiracial individual is, in and of itself, a problematic social situation that is plagued with hardships and problems (Rockquemore et al., 2009). The origin of this approach lies in Jim Crow era politics and the one drop rule, where researchers attempted to explain identity development of multiracial individuals in an

explicitly racially segregated country (Rockquemore et al., 2009). The problem approach

focuses explicitly on the deficits, dilemmas, and negative experiences associated with

being multiracial in a racially segregated society (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Examples

include Park's (1928) marginal man theory and Stonequist's (1937) work on racial

identity development. Park's (1928) marginal man theory posited that due to the rigid

color line in the United States, mixed individuals must accept the status of Black despite

their dual ancestry, and thus are perpetually in a state of crisis, marked by mental turmoil.

Elaborating on this theory, Stonequist (1937) described three predictable stages in the life

cycle of the marginal man. During the introduction stage, the marginal man experiences

assimilation into the two cultures of his parents (Stonequist, 1937). In the crisis stage the

individual has one or more defining experiences that indicate the irreconcilable nature of

the conflict that makes the marginal man's existence (Stonequist, 1937). Finally, during

the adjustment stage, the marginal man understands his social location, and adjustment

occurs toward the subordinate group where marginal man is likely to become a leader or

experience withdrawal and isolation (Stonequist, 1937).

The *equivalent approach* began in the context of the civil rights and Black power

movements, which reoriented researchers to thinking about the one drop rule

(Rockquemore et al., 2009). Researchers accepted that multiracial individuals were part

of the Black population and in this context multiracial individuals were expected to

develop a Black identity just like any other African American or Black person

(Rockquemore et al., 2009). The reasoning was that because the vast majority of the

Black population was racially mixed, there was no reason to differentiate between those

groups (Rockquemore et al., 2009). The development of a healthy and positive Black

identity was seen as an ideal outcome, and negative outcomes were associated with

internalizing racist views about Blackness (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Racial identity

models assumed the multiracial experience was a linear progression toward a centered,

meaningful Black identity similar to that of monoracial Black individuals (Rockquemore

et al., 2009).

The *variant approach* stemmed from a new generation of researchers who viewed

the mixed race population as distinct from any monoracial group (Rockquemore et al.,

2009). Unlike past research, this newer research attempted to explain the psychological,

clinical, and developmental activities that multiracial people use to construct a biracial or

multiracial identity, and the positive outcomes related to this process (Rockquemore et

al., 2009). Examples of this research include Root's (1992) work on the multiracial

population as a distinct group worthy of study with unique, non-pathological experiences.

Gibbs (1989) and Herring (1992) suggested that multiracial individuals must successfully

integrate their racial and cultural identifications while developing a positive self-concept.

Second, multiracial individuals must develop the ability to synthesize their identifications

into a coherent a stable personal identity and racial identity (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

Failure to resolve conflicts of their dual racial identity, social marginality, sexuality and

choice of sexual partners, separation from their parents, and conflicts about their

educational and career aspirations would lead to developmental problems (Rockquemore

et al., 2009). Researchers using this framework adopted the idea that an integrated

biracial or multiracial identity is the end goal (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Poston's

(1990) biracial identity developmental model (BIDM) exemplified the variant approach

and identified five stages in the BIDM, theorizing that developmental processes culminate in an integrated multiracial identity.

The *ecological approach* is the most recent approach to racial identity development for multiracial individuals (Rockquemore et al., 2009). This approach focuses more attention on the context surrounding identity development than on any one particular racial identity outcome (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Operating from an equivalent approach, theorists follow three assumptions: (1) that mixed race people construct different racial identities based on contextually specific situations, (2) there are no predictable stages of identity development because the process is not linear and there is no single optimal endpoint, and (3) privileging any racial identity over another only replicates the essentialist problems of previous models (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Models adopting this framework also allow for the possibility that multiracial individuals may refuse to have any racial identity whatsoever, and instead identify as human (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

Stemming from the ecological approach to multiracial identity, the conceptualization of multiracial identity used in the current study is based on the multiracial-heritage awareness and personal affiliation (M-HAPA) theory proposed by Choi-Misailidis (2004). This theory builds on Helms' (1994) model for understanding mixed-race identity. Helms (1994) described identity as being more complex than a dichotomous commitment to one group over others. This model also proposed a dynamic nature of identity, suggesting that stage models neglected the transactional and dynamic nature of identity formation (Helms, 1994). Identity may be conceptualized as developing in a successive pattern and is fluid and context specific. Correspondingly,

one of the advantages of the M-HAPA theory is the use of a status model, in which multiracial individuals identify with a status, and the strength of their identification with each status changes according to and across contexts (Choi-Misailidis, 2004). This status model departs from many of the racial identity models that have posited that identity forms through stages (Choi-Misailidis, 2004). Stage models assume identity development to be linear, unidirectional, with each stage seen as discrete. Unlike stage models, status models allow for the possibility that individuals may utilize previously used strategies in negotiating their identity (Helms, 1994). In accordance with the ecological approach, status models also allow individuals to adapt their strategy for negotiating their identity based on contextual factors. Because statuses are not mutually exclusive, it is possible for an individual to vary their behavior and interactions with others based on context specific factors (Helms, 1994). Finally, in the status model there is no single optimal endpoint (Choi-Misailidis, 2004).

M-HAPA theory proposes that each identity status is composed of two components, an internal identity and an external identification (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). The internal identity is often experienced as an individual's feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about their racial heritages, or the sense of belonging with various racial groups (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). The external identification includes participation in cultural events and practices and selection of friends and significant others (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Greater distance between the internal identity and external identification leads to problems with adjustment, whereas greater internal identity and external identification accordance is related to healthier outcomes (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Each identity status identified by M-HAPA theory is composed of an internal identity and an external identification. The

M-HAPA theory of multiracial identity consists of three identity statuses: marginal identity status, singular identity status, and integrated identity status.

The *marginal identity status* is described as an awareness of the differentness of an individual based on race (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). It is characterized by disconnection from all aspects of one's multiracial heritages and includes lack of participation or even avoidance of cultural practices, an inability or disinterest in affiliation with one's racial heritages, and lack of affiliation with any racial group (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Individuals who ascribe to the marginal identity status may feel disconnected because they view themselves as very different from others, especially monoracial individuals. These individuals may also perceive their physical racial ambiguity as a further barrier to connecting with others and feel alienated because they cannot be classified by commonly used racial categories (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Originally coined by Park (1928) to represent a person who lives in two or more cultural contexts, historically, the marginal man was interpreted as a negative outcome of being biracial or multiracial. Although marginal identity status can be differentiated from the term marginal man used in early multiracial literature, there is some overlap in that people who predominantly ascribe to the marginal identity status will lack a sense of belonging and may neither appreciate nor understand cultural practices (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). The marginal identity status does not necessarily translate into identity problems. For instance, Daniel (1996) described marginal identity status as a way for multiracial individuals to negotiate their identity while not being limited or committed to any one group.

The *singular identity status* stems from the exclusive racial categorization system in United States society. Historically, multiracial individuals were unable to claim

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membership in multiple groups, thus they were assigned to single racial groups. Frequently, this assignment occurred based solely on physical appearance (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). When affiliation with a single racial group is internalized, and identity is constructed from belongingness to one group, the person has developed a singular identity status (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Singular identity status is described as an individual's affiliation with one racial group, to the exclusion of others in his or her heritage (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). It is characterized by an immersion in the cultural practices of only one racial group, and a perception that their position in society is equivalent to that of their reference group, regardless of their actual racial composition (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). These individuals feel strongly about their identification and sense of belonging in their chosen racial group, and appreciate the cultural practices and beliefs of that group. Although this status reflects an immersion in only one group, the identification with one racial group may shift over time. Thus, individuals may explore and examine each aspect of their composition in an exclusive manner.

The *integrated identity status* stems from an integration of all aspects of their racial heritage (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Integrated identity status is described as a blending of all aspects of their racial composition, and connections with multiple racial groups simultaneously. It is characterized by personal affirmation of one's identification with all component racial groups, and incorporation of multiple groups into one's identity (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). It is also characterized by holding simultaneous membership to multiple groups and participating and affiliating with each group. Individuals holding an integrated identity status are likely to possess increased tolerance and appreciation of differences between groups, while also maintaining a broader understanding of

commonalities. Through integration of all component groups, the individual holding this status transcends racial categorization (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). In empirical testing of the integrated identity status, two component factors were identified: integrated identity status- combinatory factor, and integrated identity status- universality factor (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). The *combinatory factor* describes an integrated identity in which both parents' racial heritages are integrated into the individual's identity. The *universality factor* is an integrated identity status in which an individual identifies with people of diverse racial groups, with the emphasis placed on appreciation of commonalities among all people (Choi-Misailidis, 2010).

M-HAPA theory provides a theoretical framework for identity based on the experiences of multiracial descent. Accordingly, the healthiest outcomes of the identity process for multiracial individuals would be anticipated when there is greater congruence between an individual's internal identity and their external racial identification (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). To demonstrate, a multiracial individual who feels a sense of belonging and wholly identifies with one of their component racial groups and who subsequently selects friends and dating prospects from that racial group has greater congruence between internal and external identity. In contrast, where there is greater disparity between an individual's internal identity and their external racial identification, M-HAPA theory proposes that there would be greater problems with adjustment, mental health, and interpersonal difficulties. A multiracial individual who incorporates multiple groups seamlessly into one's identity, yet who avoids the cultural practices and has an inability or disinterest in affiliating with one's racial backgrounds has greater disparity between internal and external identity.

Damann (2008) investigated the relationship between multiracial identity status and life satisfaction and psychosocial functioning using M-HAPA. As predicted by M-HAPA theory, the Damann (2008) study found that marginal identity status was associated with less reported life satisfaction, negatively correlated with self-esteem and social functioning, and positively correlated with depression. Notably, for the proposed study, the integrated-combinatory status was associated with greater reported life satisfaction, positively correlated with self-esteem and social functioning, and negatively correlated with depression. Although large scale research studies have not been completed using the M-HAPAs, initial evidence suggests a link between integrated identity status and well-being, thus the importance of examining integrated identity status more thoroughly.

Racial socialization and racial identification

Racial identity has been among the most commonly investigated outcomes of parents' racial socialization strategies (Hughes et al., 2006). Many racial socialization practices are believed to be directed at instilling a sense of pride and group knowledge (Hughes et al., 2006). That is, messages received by children from parents about their racial group and about the meaning of their race play a critical role shaping racial identity processes (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), racial identity develops as a function of interactions with family members. The literature has repeatedly indicated a strong relationship between racial socialization and racial identity (Umana-Taylor, 2001). In fact, research suggests that the type of racial socialization messages received may impact the degree of exploration and commitment to racial identification (Demo & Hughes, 1990). Umana-Taylor, Bhanot, and Shin (2006)

found significant positive associations between family ethnic socialization and ethnic

identity across Asian Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Salvadoran adolescents. Studies

have found that children whose parents emphasize their ethnic group's culture, history,

and heritage report more knowledge about their ethnic group and more favorable in-

group attitudes (Knight, Bernal, Cota, Garza, & Ocampo, 1993; Marshall, 1995;

Stevenson, 1995). Sanders Thompson (1994) and Thornton, Chatters, Taylor and Allen

(1990) also described the importance of racial socialization to the development of

positive identity development. In studies of African American, Latino, Asian, biracial,

and cross-racially adopted youth and adolescents, empirical relationships have been

documented between racial socialization and racial identity (Hughes et al., 2006).

Likewise, Rivas-Drake et al. (2009) demonstrated that parental ethnic socialization was

associated with higher levels of ethnic centrality, and more positive private and public

regard for ethnically diverse adolescents.

 While various aspects of racial socialization have been researched as they

associate with racial identity, the relationship between many of the specific strategies of

racial socialization and identity are not well-established. Cultural socialization, as one of

the more researched strategies of racial socialization, has consistently been demonstrated

to be associated with a strong ethnic identity in diverse Latino groups (Umana-Taylor &

Fine, 2004; Umana-Taylor et al., 2006). Similarly, Demo and Hughes (1990) and Knight

et al. (1993) found a relationship between cultural socialization and identity exploration

and more advanced stages of identity among African American and Mexican adolescents

and adults. Less is known about the other dimensions of racial socialization in relation to

racial identification. In one study using preparation for bias strategies, Hughes and

Johnson (2001) examined racial socialization processes among African American parents and their children, finding that children's ethnic identity exploration was associated with preparation for bias messages (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Absent from the literature is the role of promotion of mistrust and egalitarianism in racial identification.

Despite the literature demonstrating the link between racial socialization and racial identity, there are several limitations that need to be addressed. First, the research has overwhelmingly focused on cultural socialization and preparation for bias strategies, and to the author's knowledge only a limited number of studies exist examining the role of egalitarian socialization on racial identification. For example, a study conducted by Tran and Lee (2010) examined the relationship between egalitarian socialization and ethnic identification for Asian American late adolescents. In this study, Tran and Lee (2010) found a significant association between cultural socialization-egalitarianism and ethnic identity; however they demonstrated that cultural socialization and egalitarianism reflected one latent factor, resulting in a combined cultural socialization and egalitarianism subscale. In a study of biracial individuals, Crawford and Alaggia (2008) found that participants that reported contact with or exposure to both of their parents' heritages demonstrated more freedom to choose between various racial identity options.

The limited research in this area suggests a link between racial socialization practices and multiracial identity formation. In a study conducted by Crawford and Alaggia (2008), the participant's discussion regarding the importance of exposure to both parents' heritages and the freedom to choose between identity options further support the link between racial socialization and an integrated identity. Framing these results in M-HAPA theory, the racial socialization practices used appear to allow for an individual's

integration of the racial heritages of both parents. The resulting identity could be characterized in M-HAPA theory as an integrated identity status (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). Theoretically it follows that when parents provide messages regarding the importance of all racial groups and emphasize an appreciation of all racial groups, as in egalitarian socialization, the individual will place more importance on integrating all aspects of their racial heritage (Choi-Misailidis, 2010; Kich, 1992). As individuals receive more messages regarding egalitarianism, they may value and maintain connections with multiple racial groups, while incorporating multiple groups into their identity and subsequently reporting an integrated identity status.

The current study attempts to address the need for research on this specific racial socialization strategy and its relationship to racial identification. To our knowledge, limited research has investigated this relationship with multiracial populations. Only one study was identified that investigated the relationship between racial socialization and identification. Chong (2013) examined racial identity, family, and psychological adjustment among Asian-White biracial young adults. This study found an association between minority cultural socialization and higher scores on integrated and singular minority identity subscales and lower scores on singular majority subscale (Chong, 2013). A parallel finding was identified for majority cultural socialization, which Chong (2013) described as practices which expose children to the cultural experiences of their White heritage, including traditional events and foods, and instilling pride in one's White heritage. Chong concluded that cultural socialization influences biracial individual's identification with their cultural heritages (Chong, 2013). The Chong (2013) study suggests the power of racial socialization messages in shaping racial identification. More

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importantly for the purposes of the current study, it demonstrates that parents are providing racial socialization according to each racial heritage and suggests that parent's encouragement of their children to explore and choose their identity provides a positive environment in which identity development can occur. Further, it implies that egalitarianism practices may have a similar impact, where parents express their flexibility and openness to racial identification, thus providing the encouragement necessary for multiracial individuals to develop an integrated identity status. In light of the nature of experiences associated with identifying as multiracial in the United States, it is important that empirical studies continue to elaborate the ways in which these processes may differ.

While attempting to explicate the relationship between racial socialization, racial identity and well-being, researchers have recently posited that racial socialization practices influence outcomes indirectly through its effects on racial identification (Brown & Ling, 2012; Choi, Tan, Hiong, Yasui, & Pekelnicky, 2014; Hughes et al., 2009; Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, & Chen, 2009; Rodriguez, Umana-Taylor, Smith, & Johnson, 2009; Tran & Lee, 2010). To the extent to which racial socialization precedes racial identification, it is possible that racial identification serves as a mediator between racial socialization and subjective well-being (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2009). For instance, Rivas-Drake (2011) found ethnic identity to be a partial mediator in the association between ethnic socialization and self-esteem. Tran and Lee (2010) also found that ethnic identity is a mediator in the relationship between cultural socialization/pluralism messages and social competence. Hughes et al. (2009) demonstrated cultural socialization and preparation for bias were associated with adjustment through ethnic affirmation. Similarly, Murry et al. (2009) found that racial

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socialization was related to greater self-pride in racial identity, which in turn was associated with less negative behaviors in African American youth.

Although previous studies have examined the relationships between racial socialization, identification, and well-being, none have examined specific types of racial socialization strategies in conjunction with racial identification among multiracial individuals. The present research attempts to bridge the gaps in the literature base by testing a conceptual model in which the relationship of egalitarianism messages on subjective well-being is mediated through racial identification. Specifically, it is hypothesized that egalitarian socialization will be associated with stronger endorsement of integrated identity status. Stronger endorsement of an integrated identity status, in turn, will be associated with higher reported levels of subjective well-being. This relationship is hypothesized to exist in part due to the emphasis of egalitarian socialization. In egalitarianism practices, parents explicitly encourage their children to view all racial groups as equal and appreciate all racial groups (Hughes et al., 2006). The present study proposes that egalitarianism practices lead to positive adjustment outcomes, such as higher subjective well-being, because they encourage identification and appreciation for members of all groups. Egalitarian socialization may also provide multiracial individuals more flexibility in responding to the traditional monoracial classification practices found in American society, providing appreciation of and subsequent integration of their multiple heritages. The perceived egalitarian socialization practices encourage appreciation of all racial groups thus increasing the sense of connection, openness to identification, and ultimately the integration of all groups in the individual's racial heritage.

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Physical racial ambiguity as a moderator

Adopting an ecological approach, the present study will additionally examine physical racial ambiguity as an individual characteristic that potentially interacts with both racial socialization and racial identification, with regard to subjective well-being. Although researchers have empirically established that racial socialization relates to a variety of well-being outcomes, less attention has been paid to the conditions of these effects. This study proposes that physical racial ambiguity is a critical moderator. Physical racial ambiguity is conceptualized as physical appearances that defy easy categorization within traditional racial categories (Young et al., 2013). Physical racial ambiguity is often experienced as getting questioned or wrongly classified by others due to having physical features of multiple racial groups. Multiracial individuals often report being asked questions such as, "What are you?" or, "Where are you from?" connoting the importance of monoracial categories and the attempt at an either/or categorization (Chen & Hamilton, 2012). Oftentimes these questions stem from having combinations of physical characteristics, such as hair texture, nose width, lip thickness, and eye and skin color, which are not congruent with monoracial categorization.

When people are racially designated as members of a specific group, they are expected to look a certain way. Omi and Winant (1994) referred to this preconceived racial notion as a compass for understanding the social world and navigating race relations. When this racial compass fails, the question "What are you?" is prompted to reorient the perceiver. This question unveils the social disorientation of the person asking the question as much as it dislocates the person being asked. Bradshaw (1992) suggested that this question also assumes foreignness, nonbelonging, and marginalization of

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phenotypically ambiguous individuals. This question serves as a momentary crisis of

racial meaning, according to Omi and Winant (1994). For multiracial individuals, this

question becomes a concrete, identifiable experience that strengthens their sense of

ambiguity, and in many cases may also help to materialize and fortify their sense of a

publically-articulated identity (Williams, 1997).

Multiracial individuals are embedded in a world that is stratified by race, where

mutually exclusive racial group categorizations and identity are strongly based on

physical characteristics and phenotypic signals. The construction and maintenance of

racial identity is tied to one's physical traits (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2004). Root

(1990) and Rockquemore (1999) both demonstrated the problem for multiracial

individuals to develop a singular identity if physical appearance did not match the chosen

identification, or if they were physically racially ambiguous. Lopez (2008) provided

further support of this by arguing that having an appearance that is not considered

authentic for one's group can negate the individual's racial identity. This point is

particularly salient for multiracial individuals who are physically racially ambiguous, as

their appearance may preclude a good "fit" with any racial group identity.

In Reynolds and Pope's (1991) multidimensional identity model,

acknowledgement is given to the possibility that some individual's choice in

identification is passive, where society, community, or family determine one's primary

group. Most social interactions are based on assumptions made by the observer, rather

than the more inaccessible self-identification that researchers can examine through

empirical study (Campbell, 2009). Oftentimes our physical characteristics are the only

reference others have about identity. Our physical characteristics, such as hair texture,

nose width, lip thickness, and eye and skin color, are a collection of ethnic, racial, and cultural information which others use to generate interpretations about identity (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). Irrespective of racial identity, the possibility that a multiracial individual will be invalidated or questioned about their identity persists (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). Experiencing validation or invalidation of one's racial identity significantly affects psychological well-being, which is particularly important for multiracial individuals (Rockquemore, 1999, 2002).

Incongruence between perceived racial categorization and self-identification is a unique problem encountered by multiracial individuals. Although Reynolds and Pope (1991) stated that all options of identity, even if other-ascribed, are acceptable and create opportunities for positive self-esteem and pride, they may also present challenges and barriers to an integrated identity status and well-being. For example, a multiracial individual with primarily Black phenotypic features who identifies as multiracial may still experience treatment as if he/she is exclusively Black.

Physical racial ambiguity may also influence the salience of family racial socialization in the context of racial identity (Padilla, 2006). A study examining the role that physical appearance played in the relationship between ethnic socialization and ethnic identity found ethnic socialization to be positively associated with ethnic identity (Gonzales-Backen & Umana-Taylor, 2011). More importantly, this study demonstrated that all indices of physical appearance moderated the relation between family ethnic socialization and affirmation of ethnic identity among Latinos (Gonzales-Backen & Umana-Taylor, 2011). Specifically, the relationship between family ethnic socialization and ethnic identity affirmation was positive among adolescents who were rated as

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looking more Latino, less European, and having darker skin (Gonzales-Backen &

Umana-Taylor, 2011). Padilla (2006) suggested that parents may choose to socialize

their children to identify with their phenotypical race to prepare them for treatment and

acceptance in society. By socializing their children to identify with their phenotypical

race, these parents believe they will prevent or reduce the pain of societal invalidation of

their children's identity (Padilla, 2006). Identity development for these children is

influenced by their respective parents' racial socialization practices, with more racially

sensitive parents choosing to socialize their children according to how they believe

teachers, peers, or strangers may racially categorize their children based on phenotypic

signifiers (Padilla, 2006). Reddy (1994) echoed this, stating that parents often assume

their multiracial children will identify with the race they phenotypically resemble.

For physically racially ambiguous individuals, the physical cues informing

parents how to socialize their children may not be present. Monoracial parents in

interracial relationships have a difficult time preparing their multiracial children for what

they will experience in society (Reddy, 1994). In many instances, monoracial parents are

unable or unwilling to communicate the barriers and difficulties of being multiracial,

instead relying on assumptions or ignoring the complexity of their children's identity

altogether (Padilla, 2006). The question of what happens when children do not possess

phenotypic signifiers placing them firmly in a monoracial category is left unanswered.

Thus, it is imperative that we examine the intricate interplay between racial socialization,

identity and well-being for those individuals who are perceived to be physically racially

ambiguous.

Although researchers have begun to empirically establish the relation between racial socialization and various adjustment outcomes, little attention has been paid to the conditions of these effects. The current study proposes that the indirect relation of egalitarian socialization to subjective well-being through racial identification is conditional on physical racial ambiguity, due to a greater disparity between one's own physical appearance and phenotypic characteristics belonging to one's component racial groups. Individuals possessing more racially ambiguous physical traits who perceive more egalitarian socialization are more likely to embrace all of their component racial heritages and as a result endorse an integrated identity status. The endorsement of an integrated identity status and the congruence between self-perception of physical racial ambiguity and socialization among multiracial individuals is thus expected to result in higher subjective well-being. Conversely, individuals who report low physical racial ambiguity have a physical appearance that is more consistent with one of their component monoracial groups and may be more motivated to preserve their identification to the group to which they more phenotypically correspond. Thus for these individuals, the relation between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being will not be mediated by integrated identity status.

Current Study

The current study uses a moderated mediation model to examine whether the indirect relation of egalitarian socialization to subjective well-being through racial identification is conditional on physical racial ambiguity among multiracial individuals. First, it is hypothesized that multiracial individuals who report more perceived egalitarian socialization strategies will report higher subjective well-being. Second, it is

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hypothesized that the relationship between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being will be mediated by racial identification and this indirect relation is conditional on physical racial ambiguity (see Figure 1). Specifically, for individuals who are more physically racially ambiguous, as perceived egalitarian socialization increases, identification as integrated identity status will increase, and increased integrated identity status will be associated with more subjective well-being. For individuals who are less physically racially ambiguous, the relation between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being will not be mediated by integrated identity status.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Participants

The analyzed data sample consisted of 313 multiracial individuals living in the

United States. To qualify for inclusion in the analyses, participants must have resided in

the United States since the age 12 and have biological parents who represent two or more

different racial groups. Arrival to the United States by age 12 has been used in the

literature as an age to delineate familiarity with U.S. racial dynamics (Tran & Lee, 2014).

Those who arrived in the U.S. by age 12 have spent the majority of their lives in the

United States and have been oriented to racial dynamics in the United States differently

than those who arrived at a later age (Tran & Lee, 2014; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). To be

included in the analyses, participants were also asked to identify the race of their

biological parents, and they were asked to check the racial categories that they identify

with. Identification of biological parents' race and self-identification of race was based

on a modified census format, allowing participants to choose one or more of the

following racial groups, including White, African American / Black, Asian American /

Asian, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic

/ Latina/o, and Other. We included persons of mixed Hispanic/Latino and non-

Hispanic/Latino heritages (e.g. Mexican and White or Latino and Asian), because this

group is often included in research on multiracial identity (Edwards & Pedrotti, 2008)

and has been found to share similar identity formation processes and experiences of racial

discrimination as other multiracial groups (Jackson et al., 2013; Jimenez, 2004; Romo,

2011; Vasquez, 2010). With the exception of those identifying as mixed Hispanic/Latino

and non-Hispanic/Latino heritages, individuals who identified as multiethnic were not included in the study unless they also indicated that they have biological parents who represent two or more different racial groups. Participants self-identified with 24 different combinations of multiracial identities. Those self-identifying exclusively as Other described their unique multiracial identity (e.g., Hapa, Blaxican, Mixed). Of the total sample, 37% self-identified as Hispanic and American Indian; 21% as Hispanic and White; 9% as Asian and White; 5% as Black and White; 4% as White and American Indian; 4% as Black and Hispanic; and 3% as White, Hispanic, and American Indian. The remaining 17% of the total sample self-identified as other combinations of multiracial identity.

The majority of participants were women, accounting for 66.5% of the sample. All participants were over the age of 18, and the sample age for participants ranged from 18 to 79, with a mean age of 28.22 (SD = 13.35). Eighty-eight percent of participants reported living in the West, 4.5% reported living in the Midwest, 3.5% reported living in the Northeast, and 3.2% reported living in the South. Approximately 95% of the sample was U.S. born. All participants in the study have resided in the United States since the age of 12. Sixty-two percent of respondents reported having some college, 15% reported having a college degree, and 11% reported having an advanced degree. Approximately 32% of respondents reported being unemployed, 38% holding a part-time job, and 28% employed full-time. Personal income was distributed between $0 to $100,500, with 61% reporting personal income less than $20,000, 16% between $20,001 and $40,000, 10% between $40,001 and $60,000, and 11% reporting more than $60,001.

Recruitment

The researcher obtained IRB approval, and contacted professors and leaders from major universities and community colleges with emphasis placed on those who teach classes in racial and ethnic studies, race/racism, immigration and ethnicity, racial and ethnic relations, multiculturalism and similar relevant classes. Leadership from university and community college cultural and ethnic clubs and organizations were also contacted. National multiracial organizations were targeted, including MAVIN foundation, Multiracial Americans of Southern California, Swirl, and the Biracial Family Network. The researcher contacted these organizations and asked them to distribute an announcement with a link to the survey. Those interested in participation were provided with a link to complete the survey online. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participants were informed about confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw at any time, and informed consent was obtained. At the completion of the survey, participants were entered into a raffle with the opportunity to win one of four Visa gift cards with a cash value of $50.

Measures

      Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire was included in the survey packet asking respondents to self-identify age, gender, race, racial background of biological mother and biological father, generational status, education, work status, personal income, years lived in the United States, and what region of the United States they currently reside in.

      Egalitarian Socialization. A measure of egalitarian socialization was developed for use in the current study by combining items from the Racial Bias Preparation Scale (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000) and items from Barr & Neville's (2008) exploration of

the content of self-reported racial socialization experiences. The full Racial Bias Preparation Scale and Barr & Neville's work explore broader socialization strategies and practices. Six items were adapted for the current study that reflected egalitarian socialization. Fisher, Wallace, and Fenton (2000) developed the Racial Bias Preparation Scale (RBPS) as a measure of the frequency that adolescents perceive messages from their primary caretakers about living in a multiracial society. The RBPS is a 30-item measure, although for the current study, 3 items from the 10-item Contrast subscale were adapted to ask participants to indicate the extent to which each parent has ever engaged in each of the egalitarian socialization activities indicated. To maintain consistency each item was reworded to begin with "Talked to you about," or "Told you about." Responses are made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *never* to (5) *very often*. Sample items include "Told you that you need to learn to get along with others?", "Talked to you about all races being equal?", and "Told you that going to school with individuals of other races will make you feel good about yourself?" Barr and Neville (2008) conducted an examination of parental racial socialization messages by asking participants open-ended questions exploring the content of self-reported racial socialization experiences. Themes were identified from the participants' responses, and three messages reflecting egalitarian socialization were adapted for use in the current study. Each item was reworded to begin with "Talked to you about," or "Told you about." The questions were rephrased for the current study by asking participants to indicate the extent to which each parent has ever engaged in each of the activities indicated. Responses are made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *never* to (5) *very often*. Sample items include "Talked to you about how you should treat all people the same regardless of their race?", "Told you not to judge

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someone based on their skin color?", and "Told you that we are all equal and that no race is greater than the other?" Participants were given the 6-item egalitarianism scale two times, assessing frequency of egalitarian socialization from each parent. The scored scales were summed to arrive at an aggregated score for egalitarianism for each participant, with higher scores reflecting more perceived messages about egalitarian socialization across both parents. For the current study, the total scale score demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .92$).

Racial identification. The Multiracial-Heritage Awareness and Personal Affiliation Scale (M-HAPAs) developed by Choi-Misailidis (2004) was used to assess multiracial identity. The M-HAPAs is a 43-item self-report inventory devised to assess individuals' awareness of their multiracial heritage, affiliation with their parents' racial groups, beliefs about race, behaviors as a racial being, and relationship to people of various racial groups (Choi-Misailidis, 2004). The M-HAPAs is composed of four factors that correspond to three identity statuses: marginal identity status, singular identity status, and integrated identity status. For the current study, only the integrated identity subscale was used. The integrated identity status is composed of two subscales. The integrated identity status - combinatory factor subscale is composed of 11 items and describes an identity characterized by an individual's integration of the racial heritages of both parents. The integrated identity status – universality factor subscale is composed of 6 items and describes an identity in which an individual identifies with people of diverse racial groups and demonstrates an appreciation of commonalities among all people. Responses are made on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Sample items include: "I identify with both my mother's and father's

racial heritages" and "I am open to being a member of many groups." Respondents

received a score on each subscale which was then summed to provide a total score

reflecting their awareness of their multiracial heritage, affiliation with their parents' racial

groups, and behaviors as a racial being. Higher scores indicate a stronger endorsement of

an integrated identity status and stronger attitudes and beliefs related to that identity

status. The M-HAPAs was developed and empirically tested on a sample of 364 mixed-

race individuals, ranging in age from 17 to 58 (Choi-Misailidis, 2004). The M-HAPAs

demonstrated good internal reliability estimates, with subscale alpha reliabilities ranging

from .71 to .85, in this sample of mixed-race individuals from multiple universities,

suggesting it is appropriate for use with the current sample. For the current study, the

total scale score demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .94$).

Physical racial ambiguity. A measure of physical racial ambiguity was

developed for the current study by asking respondents to what degree they physically

resemble African American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic, Native

American, and other racial groups, with responses ranging from (1) *not at all* to (4) *a

great extent*. The scale was scored by summing each response. Higher scores were

interpreted as self-perceived resemblance to more than one racial minority group and

coded as more physical racial ambiguity. Lower scores represented self-perceived

resemblance to few racial minority groups and were coded as less physical racial

ambiguity.

Subjective well-being. Subjective well-being includes three primary

components: satisfaction with life, presence of pleasant affect, and absence of negative

affect (Diener et al., 1999). In this study, a composite score of subjective well-being was

determined by combining the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Participants' subjective well-being score was obtained by standardizing the positive affect, negative affect, and Satisfaction with Life Scale scores, then subtracting negative affect from the sum of positive affect and Satisfaction with Life (Diener, 1984; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Higher scores in subjective well-being represented more positive affect, absence of negative affect, and a more positive appraisal of one's life satisfaction. This formula has been utilized by numerous researchers evaluating subjective well-being (e.g., Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1999; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Villegas-Gold & Yoo, 2014). For the current study, the total scale score demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .85$).

Diener et al. (1985) developed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) to assess life satisfaction. The SWLS is a 5-item, self-report measure, in which items are rated on a 7-point Likert format ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Sample items include: "In most ways my life is close to my ideal," and "The conditions of my life are excellent." A higher score on the SWLS indicates a higher level of Life Satisfaction. The SWLS demonstrated high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha exceeding values of .80 for a college student sample (Diener et al., 1985). Test-retest reliability over an 8-week period was .82 for the SWLS. Studies using Hispanic college students suggest that the SWLS is likely appropriate for use with the current sample, reporting coefficient alpha estimates from .82 to .88 (Ojeda, Flores, & Navarro, 2011). For the current study, the total scale score demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .89$).

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was constructed by Watson et al. (1988) as a self-report measure of present-moment mood. The measure is comprised of two scales, the Positive Affect scale reflects the extent to which a person is active and enthusiastic and the Negative Affect scale measures psychological distress attributes of anger, disgust, fear, and nervousness. PANAS is a 20-item measure, with each item rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *slightly or not at all* to (5) *extremely*. Higher scores on PANAS reflect greater positive or negative affectivity. Alpha reliabilities for Positive Affect range from .86 to .90, and .84. to .87 for Negative Affect (Watson et al., 1988). For this study, the total scale scores for both the PA subscale and NA subscale demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .92$ and $\alpha = .89$, respectively).

Analysis

A moderated mediation model was used to examine the indirect effect of racial identification on the relation between racial socialization and subjective well-being in the context of the moderating variable of physical racial ambiguity. Moderated mediation is a statistical approach that allows for the assessment of the strength of a mediation model under different conditions, such as with different values of the moderator. The moderated mediation analysis is used when the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable is constant, but the effect of the mediator variable depends on the moderator variable. This analysis is a more robust method for examining differences in mediation models than separate mediation analyses (Preacher et al., 2007).

Preacher et al. (2007) developed a framework for testing moderated mediation that builds on product of coefficients and bootstrapping strategies. This is implemented

through an SPSS macro called PROCESS, analyses were conducted utilizing PROCESS version 2.15 for SPSS (Hayes, 2012). This approach estimates the sampling distribution of the conditional indirect effect through bootstrapping and then uses information from the bootstrap sampling distribution to generate bias corrected 95% confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effect (Preacher et al., 2007). Confidence intervals that exclude zero provide evidence of significant indirect effects (Preacher et al., 2007). PROCESS produces an index of moderated mediation, from which an inference can be made as to whether this index is statistically different from zero (Hayes, 2015). The index of moderated mediation is the formal test of moderation of the indirect effect by the moderator in the model. This index quantifies the effect of the moderator on the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator.

We tested the conditional indirect effects (i.e., moderated mediation) with Model 7 in the PROCESS bootstrapping approach (Hayes, 2012). This approach estimated the sampling distribution of the conditional indirect effect nonparametrically through bootstrapping using 10,000 resamples, and then generated bias corrected 95% confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effect from the bootstrap sampling distribution as recommended by Preacher et al. (2007). The model is presented in Figure 1, and specifies that the path from egalitarian socialization to subjective well-being is mediated by racial identification and this indirect relation is conditional on physical racial ambiguity. The conditional indirect effect of racial identification on the relation between racial socialization and subjective well-being was examined in three conditions of the moderator variable, physical racial ambiguity (at the mean, and at one standard deviation above and below the mean to represent high and low physical racial ambiguity).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

A summary of the correlation matrix, mean item scores, standard deviations, and

response scale for the main study variables is presented in Table 1. The present study

examined if there were significant demographic group differences (i.e., Age, Gender,

Generational Status, Education, Work Status, Personal Income, and Region of the United

States they currently reside in) on the main study variables (i.e., Egalitarian Socialization,

Racial Identification, Physical Racial Ambiguity, and Subjective Well-being). We were

not able to test for possible racial group differences (e.g., Black and White, Hispanic and

American Indian, Hispanic and White) due to the small sample size of each group.

Bivariate correlational analyses were conducted for ordinal and ratio variables,

and independent *t*-tests were conducted with nominal variables. The alpha level for the

bivariate correlational analyses was adjusted to .01 to reduce the likelihood of Type I

error due to multiple analyses. Personal Income was significantly positively correlated

with Physical Racial Ambiguity. Bivariate correlational analyses also indicated that Age

was significantly positively correlated with Education, Work Status, and Personal Income

(see Table 1), but no significant correlation was found with main study variables.

Subsequently, in the primary analysis, we controlled for Personal Income.

Primary Analyses

The first hypothesis predicted that multiracial individuals who report more

egalitarian socialization strategies would report higher subjective well-being. The signs

of the path coefficients and the indirect effect were analyzed to determine if they were

consistent with the interpretation that more perceived egalitarianism was positively related to subjective well-being. Direct effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable were significant ($p < .001$).

The second hypothesis predicted that the relationship between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being would be mediated by racial identification, and that this indirect relation would be conditional on physical racial ambiguity (see Figure 1). Specifically, the effect of egalitarian socialization on racial identification was expected to differ as a function of physical racial ambiguity (i.e., path a varies, see Figure 1). We hypothesized that for individuals who are more physically racially ambiguous, as egalitarian socialization increases, identification as integrated identity status would increase, and increased integrated identity status would be associated with more subjective well-being. For individuals who are less physically racially ambiguous, the relation between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being would not be mediated by integrated identity status.

The results of the regression analysis for components of the moderated mediation model are presented in Table 2. For each regression analysis, personal income was held constant. Egalitarian socialization was positively and significantly associated with subjective well-being ($c' = .26$, 95% CI $= .12$ to $.40$, $p < .001$). Egalitarian socialization was positively and significantly associated with racial identification ($a_1 = .48$, 95% CI $= .31$ to $.64$, $p < .001$). Racial identification was positively and significantly associated with subjective well-being ($b_1 = .42$, 95% CI $= .32$ to $.51$, $p < .001$). Holding constant egalitarian socialization, physical racial ambiguity was related to higher racial identification ($a_2 = .63$, 95% CI $= .05$ to 1.22, $p < .001$). The test of moderation of the

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effect of egalitarian socialization on racial identification by physical racial ambiguity was

nonsignificant (a_3 = .01, 95% CI = -.03 to .06, p = .51).

As reported in Table 3, the bootstrapped results of the conditional process

analysis for the indirect effects were inconsistent with hypothesis two. There was a

significant positive indirect effect of egalitarian socialization on subjective well-being for

those with low, moderate, and high physical racial ambiguity. Thus, egalitarian

socialization was positively related to racial identification, which in turn, was positively

related to subjective well-being. Countering predictions, though, the indirect effect did

not differ between the three levels of physical racial ambiguity. The index of moderated

mediation indicated that none of the conditional indirect effects at each value of Physical

Racial Ambiguity were statistically different (*index* = .01, 95% CI_{BC} = -.01, .02). As this

confidence interval does include zero, the conclusion is that the indirect effect of

egalitarian socialization on subjective well-being through racial identification as

integrated identity status is independent of physical racial ambiguity. Thus, the results of

this analysis provided no support for the moderation mediation hypothesis.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The current study examined the previously unexplored relationships between egalitarian socialization, racial identification, physical racial ambiguity, and subjective well-being among multiracial individuals. We tested a moderated mediation model in a sample of multiracial individuals who varied in their physical racial ambiguity. This study extends the literature in a variety of different ways. First, the use of egalitarian socialization underscores the importance of moving beyond global measures of socialization to fully understand the differential impact racial socialization strategies have on adjustment and well-being. This study adds to the burgeoning literature on egalitarian socialization as a distinct socialization strategy. Second, this study used positive adjustment measures, which highlighted the beneficial impact that egalitarian socialization may have on functioning and life satisfaction. Finally, this research helped to further explicate a distinct pathway through which egalitarian socialization impacts well-being through racial identification for multiracial individuals independent of the level of physical racial ambiguity.

The present study used a moderation mediation model to examine if the relationship between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being was mediated by racial identification, and if this indirect relation is conditional on physical racial ambiguity for multiracial individuals. Results suggested that egalitarian socialization was directly correlated with subjective well-being. Moreover, this study demonstrated that egalitarian socialization was positively associated with racial identification, which in turn, was positively associated with subjective well-being for our multiracial sample. No

previous studies known to the researchers have examined the relationships between specific racial socialization strategies in conjunction with racial identification and their subsequent effects on well-being among multiracial individuals. However, the results provided no support that the indirect effect of egalitarian socialization on subjective well-being through racial identification is dependent on physical racial ambiguity for our multiracial sample.

As expected, multiracial individuals who perceived more egalitarian socialization from their primary caretakers reported higher subjective well-being. This finding is consistent with the literature suggesting that racial socialization practices are associated with adaptive outcomes for other racial minority youth (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006; Liu & Lau, 2013; Stevenson, 1995). There are multiple explanations for this result. First, this finding supports the potentially pivotal role that parents play in their communications to multiracial children about ethnicity and race. It is through these communications that children begin to interpret the meaning of their racial composition and develop "various postures toward racial restrictions and opportunities" (Bowman & Howard, 1985, p. 139). Being socialized to appreciate all racial groups may have the effect of providing access to a wider range of values, lessons, and cultural views to draw upon when multiracial individuals are faced with race-based stressors. If egalitarian socialization results in greater exposure to a wide range of cultural practices and traditions, it may foster a greater sense of community, belongingness, and inclusiveness that would increase subjective well-being for multiracial individuals.

Another explanation for this finding may be related to perceptions of being multiracial. Cheng and Lee (2009) suggested that holding a belief that one's racial

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heritages are separate and feeling tension between them is associated with less multiracial pride. In a similar study, ambivalence towards multiracial status predicted poorer psychological adjustment (Sanchez, Shih, & Garcia, 2009). Multiracial individuals who are more connected with all their heritages have been demonstrated to experience better psychological health (Choi-Misailidis, 2004; Chong & Kuo, 2015; Lusk et al., 2011). It may be that after receiving egalitarian socialization, multiracial individuals see their component identities as compatible, feel less ambivalent about being multiracial, and appreciate their unique racial composition. Thus, they may be more likely to report overall well-being. Indeed, the results of the current study demonstrated that egalitarian socialization was positively related to racial identification as integrated identity status, which in turn, was positively related to subjective well-being. This indirect effect suggests that egalitarian socialization is positively associated with subjective well-being in part due to its association with the more proximal process of racial identification. Although the indirect effect of racial socialization on subjective well-being through racial identification has not yet been demonstrated with multiracial groups, this finding is consistent with the literature among monoracial groups, which suggests that racial socialization practices influence outcomes indirectly through their effects on racial identification (Brown & Ling, 2012; Choi et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2009; Murry et al., 2009; Rodriguez et al., 2009; Tran & Lee, 2010).

Contrary to the hypothesis, we did not receive support for the moderation of the indirect effects of racial identification on the relationship between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being by physical racial ambiguity. Specifically, the effect of egalitarian socialization on racial identification was expected to differ as a

function of physical racial ambiguity. We contended that multiracial individuals with lower physical racial ambiguity have a physical appearance that is more consistent with one of their component monoracial groups, and we hypothesized that these individuals may be more motivated to preserve their identification to the group to which they more phenotypically correspond. Contrary to our predictions, though, the indirect effect did not differ between the three levels of physical racial ambiguity. For all levels of physical racial ambiguity, perceived egalitarian socialization was positively associated with racial identification, which in turn, was positively associated with subjective well-being. There are multiple explanations for this unexpected null result.

A possible explanation for not finding support for the moderated mediation model may be that individuals perceiving more egalitarian socialization are identifying as multiracial regardless of their physical racial characteristics. Racial identification is among the most commonly investigated outcomes of parents' racial socialization strategies (Hughes et al., 2006), and racial socialization practices are believed to be important to shaping racial identity processes. As the literature has repeatedly demonstrated, increasing racial socialization messages impacts the degree of exploration and commitment to racial identification (Demo & Hughes, 1990).

In the current study, perception of greater egalitarian socialization messages was associated with an increase in the individual's likelihood to demonstrate an appreciation of commonalities among all people, integrate the racial heritages of both their parents, and identify with diverse racial groups. Through egalitarian socialization practices, the individual may learn about the racial heritages, history, customs, and traditions of all their identity options (Hughes et al., 2006). Egalitarian socialization messages encouraging

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engagement with diverse groups and celebration of all people, most likely resulted in participants reporting that they identify with diverse racial groups, and this effect may occur regardless of one's physical racial characteristics. Evidence of the strength of socialization messages was provided by Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson, & Harris (1993), who found that mixed race identification was more likely to emerge if parents encourage identification with both races or if parents call the child by a biracial label such as mixed or biracial. It may be possible that egalitarian messages specifically nullify any effects that physical racial characteristics could have due to the emphasis of these messages on appreciation of all groups. As Padilla (2006) suggested, the exploration and participation in diverse communities is associated with a stronger sense of bicultural ethnic belonging. Thus, when multiple identification options are available, and parents encourage positive exploration and active examination of those options such as through egalitarian socialization, the individual is less likely to rely only on congruence between component racial groups and physical characteristics to guide identification.

Along those lines, parents may have not chosen their specific socialization strategies because of their children's physical characteristics. Instead, parents of multiracial individuals may have chosen egalitarian socialization strategies due to their awareness and understanding of anti-miscegenation laws and other forms of monoracism, or the systematic and interpersonal oppression of multiracial persons based on underlying beliefs in singular racial categorization (Kenney et al., 2015). Padilla (2006) suggested that parents choose socialization strategies that best prepare their children for treatment and acceptance in society. Monoracial parents may assume that egalitarian views provide the best path to success for their multiracial children. We can surmise that regardless of

physical racial characteristics, parents encouraging their multiracial children to explore all aspects of their identity and result in their children being more comfortable assuming an integrated identity.

Despite the results of the current study, it is important to consider that physical racial ambiguity may be a significant moderator if operationalized differently. By asking respondents to rate their physical racial ambiguity according to the degree to which they physically resemble various racial groups, this study indicated no moderation of the indirect effects of racial identification on the relationship between egalitarian socialization and subjective well-being. However, it may be that the use of a measure conceptualized as getting questioned or wrongly classified by others due to having physical features of multiple racial groups would more closely approximate the operational definition utilized by the current study. Multiracial individuals report being questioned about group membership and receiving questions such as, "What are you?" or, "Where are you from?" that connote the importance of monoracial categorization (Yoo, Jackson, Guevarra, Miller, & Harrington, 2015; Tran, Miyake, Martinez-Morales, Csizmadia, 2015). Measuring the experience of getting questioned, stared at, or wrongly classified by others due to having an ambiguous racial appearance (e.g., Yoo et al., 2015) instead of relying on self-perceived similarity to other racial groups may have yielded different results. Being physically racially ambiguous increases the likelihood that multiracial individuals become exoticized (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Several studies have demonstrated that these experiences lead to feelings of confusion and discomfort (Jackson, 2013; Miville et al., 2005), and reinforce the importance of monoracial categories (Chen & Hamilton, 2012). Due to social reactions and categorizations

imposed on them by others, multiracial individuals may choose to identify as monoracial, particularly if their appearance fits with this option (Thekkedam, 2013).

Limitations and Future Directions

There are a number of limitations in this study to be considered and addressed. First, the measure of egalitarian socialization used was developed and normed on a monoracial minority group and based on monoracial experiences; therefore, there is no psychometric research on the measure to date. To the researcher's knowledge, no published measures of racial socialization exist for use with multiracial populations. Thus, a major limitation of the current study is attempting to apply this measure across groups to capture multiracial experiences. Furthermore, a more comprehensive investigation of racial socialization would incorporate both parent and youth perceptions regarding the practices and messages received. The current study used only respondent's perceptions of racial socialization, leading to potential bias regarding the delivery and internalization of the messages.

Second, our recruitment strategy may have limited the diversity of multiracial individuals participating in our study. In an effort to increase our sample the authors used a convenient sampling procedure focusing on recruitment via online member distribution listservs and national multiracial organizations. Thus, we oversampled individuals who are largely active in the multiracial community and organizations. As active members in the multiracial community and organizations, these individuals are more likely to identify as multiracial and not with only one of their component identities. Those who were motivated to participate in the study may have had stronger feelings, opinions, or interests related to the study variables. The recruitment methods may have yielded more

polarized responses than would be found in the general multiracial population. It may be then, that the interpretation of the results and outcomes in this study vary as a function of the social environment and context under consideration.

Finally, our study was cross-sectional, and interpretation of directionality in our effects must be read with caution. For example, it could be that there is a reciprocal relationship between the proposed mediator and egalitarian socialization. It is possible that the associations observed could be interpreted differently, with alternative models likely to be empirically equivalent. Future studies should consider the use of longitudinal or experimental designs to examine causal relationships further.

Clinical Implications

The results of this study have clinical implications for the understanding and treatment of mental health issues as they relate to racial socialization and identification for multiracial individuals. This study's examination of differences in egalitarian socialization and identification within the multiracial population encourages clinicians and researchers to attend to the diverse needs of the multiracial population. It is important that clinicians and researchers understand that for members of the multiracial population, status as mixed in racial heritage may not be the impetus when presenting for services (Kenney et al., 2015). In fact, the present study suggests that egalitarian socialization and racial identification can serve as protective factors, with potential to incite positive outcomes and increase overall well-being among multiracial individuals. Strength-based interventions focused on helping multiracial individuals to become aware of these protective factors would also be helpful.

This study confirms how critical it is for clinicians to recognize how family, community, and society can affect developmental decisions and milestones in identification through socialization in the lives of multiracial individuals. Mental health practitioners can assist clients in exploring egalitarian socialization practices and validate these experiences, while also bringing attention to other processes that may be impacting well-being, such as racial identification. Specifically, the present research suggests the need for clinicians to understand racial socialization practices and attend to the impact that they have on racial identification.

Due to the unique experiences of multiracial populations, clinicians and researchers are encouraged to understand how monoracial identity development models do not fully account for individuals living with multiracial identities (Renn, 2008). Racial identification is complex and unique to each multiracial individual, and therefore, clinicians and researchers are encouraged to demonstrate understanding of the many ways multiracial individuals' self-identify and work to validate those identities. The current study demonstrates that identifying as multiracial and learning to integrate and appreciate all of their component heritages can be beneficial to improving and sustaining overall health and well-being for multiracial clients across their lifespan. Clinicians are advised to be open to helping clients to explore and better understand their racial identification. Specifically, awareness of the different identification options that are available for multiracial individuals and the influence that these options have on presenting problems with regard to treatment is imperative (Renn, 2008).

This study can serve as a reminder to clinicians that phenotype expression varies from individual to individual, and therefore, a multiracial individual's phenotypic

expression may influence identity development, personal identity preference, and well-being (Kenney et al., 2015). Physical appearance is a salient concern among multiracial individuals, and in particular, how phenotypic expression relates to identity formation (Ahnallen, Suyemoto, & Carter, 2006). Although we did not find support for the moderated mediation model, the overall results highlight the importance for clinicians and researchers to become familiar with general themes of the multiracial experience.

Conclusions

Collectively, the study findings support a small but growing body of research on multiracial well-being, and stress the importance of examining the role of racial socialization and racial identity when assessing overall well-being among these communities. The current study reflects the importance of beginning to examine and recognize the unique racial composition of multiracial individuals, and how the surrounding environment, parents, and experiences influence their personal identity development (Ahnallen et al., 2006). Seeking a greater understanding of the systemic, psychosocial, ecological, and biological (phenotype) influences that shape the multiracial individual's identity is of critical importance in work with multiracial individuals (Ahnallen et al., 2006; Kenney et al., 2015).

Table 1

Bivariate Correlations and Descriptives of Main Study Variables

	Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Age	--								
2.	Generation	.01	--							
3.	Education	.25*	.10	--						
4.	Work Status	.21*	-.09	.39*	--					
5.	Personal Income	.38*	.08	.58*	.48*	--				
6.	Egalitarian Socialization	-.01	.05	-.09	-.11	-.10	--			
7.	Racial Identification	.12	.00	.01	-.04	.01	.35*	--		
8.	Physical Racial Ambiguity	-.00	.10	.08	.07	.16*	.26*	.23*	--	
9.	Subjective Well-being	.13	.03	.06	.03	.10	.34*	.52*	.32*	--
M		28.22	3.81	4.49	3.14	1.66	3.20	5.50	2.13	2.87
SD		13.35	1.24	1.37	1.47	1.09	.51	.29	.47	1.10
Response Scale							1-5	1-7	1-4	1-7

Note. N=313 after listwise deletion. *$p < .01$

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Table 2

Model Characteristics for the Conditional Process Analysis of the Indirect Effect of

Egalitarian Socialization to Subjective Well-being through Racial Identification for

Physical Racial Ambiguity.

		Racial Identification (M)			Subjective Well-being (Y)	
		Coeff.	95% CI		Coeff.	95% CI
Egalitarian Socialization (X)	a_1	.48* (.08)	.31, .64	c'	.26* (.07)	.12, .40
Racial Identification (M)				b_1	.42* (.05)	.32, .51
Physical Racial Ambiguity (W)	a_2	.63* (.30)	.05, 1.22			
$X \times W$	a_3	.01 (.02)	-.03, .06			
Personal Income (U_1)	a_4	.35 (.93)	-1.49, 2.18	b_2	1.35 (.77)	-.17, 2.86

<div align="center">

$R^2 = 0.14$ $R^2 = 0.30$

$F (4, 308) = 12.96, p <$ $F (3, 309) = 44.22, p < .001$

.001

</div>

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients with confidence intervals (Standard errors in parentheses). *$p < .05$

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Table 3

Bootstrapped Indirect Effects of Egalitarian Socialization to Subjective Well-being through Racial Identification for high, moderate, and low Physical Racial Ambiguity.

Moderator Levels	Racial Identification			
	B	*SE*	LL CI	UL CI
Low Physical Racial Ambiguity	.18*	.05	.08	.29
Moderate Physical Racial Ambiguity	.20*	.04	.12	.28
High Physical Racial Ambiguity	.22*	.05	.13	.34

Note. LL CI and UP CI = lower and upper level of the bias corrected confidence intervals for α = .05. *$p < .05$
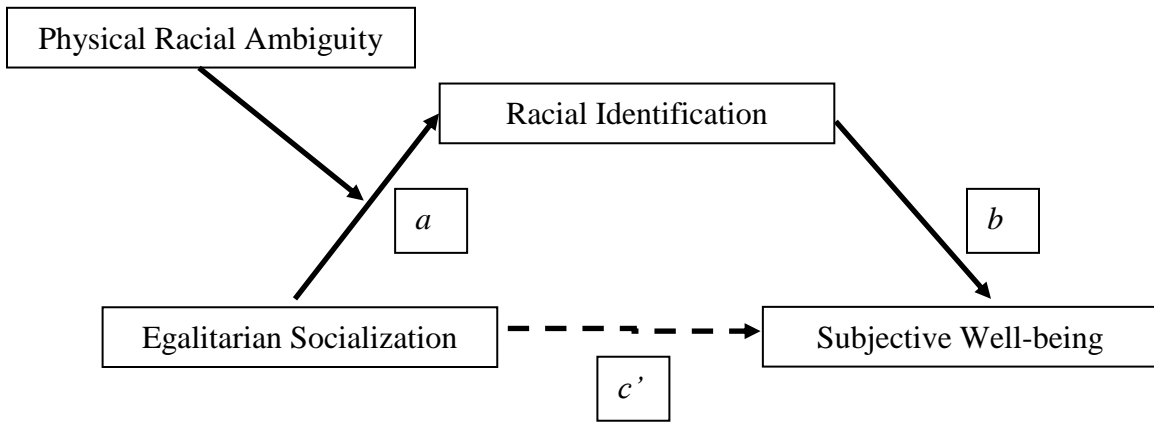
Figure 1. Conceptual moderated mediation model.

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