Shades of Community and Conflict: 
Biracial Adults of African-American and Jewish-American Heritages 

by
Josylyn C. Segal


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SHADES OF COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT: BIRACIAL ADULTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND JEWISH-AMERICAN HERITAGES

A dissertation submitted to the Wright Institute Graduate School of Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology.

by

JOSYLYN C. SEGAL

FEBRUARY 1997

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ABSTRACT

February 1997

SHADES OF COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT: BIRACIAL ADULTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND JEWISH-AMERICAN HERITAGES

by

JOSYLYN C SEGAL

This study of eighteen adults of African-American and Jewish-American heritage explores how biracial subjects of two minority parents negotiates mixed race heritage and identity in a society that maintains a hostile attitude toward interracial unions. Data collection included 1) a semi-structured interview to determine subjects' own sense of racial/ethnic identity, 2) a measure of parental closeness, and 3) a series of twelve anecdotal hypothetical situations as a stimulus to revealing subjects' affective, cognitive and behavioral responses in contexts in which the subjects mixed-heritage might be expected to evoke conflict.

A qualitative analysis, incorporating socio-cultural, psychodynamic, and historical perspectives, was utilized to investigate 1) racial and cultural stereotyping, 2) a hierarchy of color and racial categorization, 3) racial tolerance, 4) Black and Jewish relations, 5) biracial (Black and Jewish) identity, as mediated by parental and familial closeness.

Factors that influenced racial/identity development in the subjects' lives were identified. Five of the six hypotheses were supported:

1) Phenotype is related to interpersonal perception. The biracial adult phenotypically perceived as African-American is more likely to identify as such, whereas the biracial adult phenotypically perceived as White is more likely to identify as either White or "mixed." 2) Closeness to the African-American parent is not necessary for children of mixed-race/Jewish heritage to identify with African-American heritage. 3) Closeness to
the Jewish parent is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for children of mixed-race/Jewish heritage to identify with Jewish heritage. 4) For those who are close to their Jewish parent, the degree of closeness affects the degree to which they identify as Jews. 5) The extent to which respondents experience themselves as integral parts of their extended families will increase the extent to which they identify with that half of their cultural heritage. The sixth hypothesis, which stated that to the degree that respondents express negative stereotypes of one part of their heritage they will also minimize their identification with that part of their heritage was not supported due chiefly to the lack of negative stereotyping by most of the respondents.
Acknowledgments

Clearly, my decision to embark upon this study was inspired by my own experiences as a mixed-race Jewish woman. The funny thing is that although the respondents reflected some diversity in terms or social class and lifestyles, my personal family background was not represented in the demographic histories of the subjects. Regardless, it was the manifestations of prejudice and racism that bonded me with my subjects. Feeling impassioned about the topic helped fuel me through the process of writing the dissertation. Choosing something so close to heart had its advantages and heartaches. The degree to which racism has affected the lives of my ancestors, contemporaries and subjects, the intent of trying to effectively capture the depth of the pain and experience, was, at times, quite challenging. How could I informatively capture perspectives on racial/ethnic identity in a society that is not only inherently color and race conscious, but is embedded in a history of institutionalized and internalized oppressions. On the other hand, being in the position to welcome, solicit and gather perspectives on life experiences that have been curiously ignored or omitted amid the many discourses on race relations has enabled me feel much gratitude towards everyone who has participated.

Since the desire to write about biracial Black/Jewish identity issues has endured for many years, attempting to thank all who have supported and sustained me is no short list, but a deep one, from my emotional and collegial soul-mates to my academic mentors. Foremost among these is my companion, Ines Meyer-Kormes, to whom I am inextricably indebted for her unequivocal support, and who was by my side to see me cry and weather the dance of constitutional insecurity through the whole process. I am also grateful for my chair, Dr. Anne C. Bernstein, who has an amazing capacity to exude a much needed aura of calm, encourage critical thinking and independent ideas, and advise as appropriate. Her editorial guidance has been prodigious and invaluable. Thanks are due to my Dissertation Committee, in it's entirety, Anne C. Bernstein, Mimi Lou, and Terry Wilson, for encouraging me and believing in my work, despite the many challenging and demoralizing circumstances that came in my path. To my new
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Special thanks are due to Zariama Harat, for reminding me that the reader often needs repetition in order to "get it"; to Fanny, for himself and his anti-academia protagonist eyes; to Laurencia Strauss, for the eyes that didn't tire; to Shawnese Tilmon, for making the connections over the waters; to Ginny Morgan for her unconditional and consistent moral and practical support; to Dr. Donna Weston, for helping me tackle the unbearable and to Carolyn Yuzon, the only one available and willing to help me overcome the impracticality of a the love-hate relationship with software programs. And to all the new folks out there, who are still dealing and will have to deal with emotional and psychological battles of prejudice and colorisms, I say don't lose courage, you are not alone. Finally, although they don't know it, I would like to thank my parents for giving me the sense of awareness I have of my cultures. I applaud my mother and my father for their ability, in spite of their short lived marriage, to bestow upon me courage, in their separate and unique ways. And for all those left, who said "Why make such a issue about identity?" and threw darts, I say, thanks, anyway.
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Dedication

To all who are open enough to hear how one hundred percent of half and one hundred percent of whole could be synonymous, as long as we don't count.

and

Ella Fitzgerald
"Why is I?
Is I Why?
I is Why."

Jerry Segal, 1968

(Sprayed in silver on the black refrigerator)
Introduction

Much has been written acknowledging the presence of Blacks and Jews together on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties. Over the past thirty years, however, increased hostility and resentment has emerged between the two communities. Although there are some individuals who are attempting to encourage healing between Black and Jewish communities, present day themes in the media primarily reflect the two communities as harboring hostility and mistrust towards each other. There has been little or no research focusing on psycho-social development of adults of Ashkenazi (Jews of European descent) and African-American parentage. Essentially, amid the purported "Black-Jewish" conflict, the voices and perspectives of biracial adults of African-American and Jewish-American heritages have been curiously ignored. Consequently, while Black/Jewish biracial adults embody this conflict, recognition of and validation for their mixed-heritage identity and has not been welcome for consideration. How does the biracial Black/Jewish adult develop with an invisible, unacknowledged mixed identity, where he/she is not only not immune to the conflictual issues between African-Americans and Jewish-Americans (of European descent), but whose identity often challenges issues of color and power in the African-American community? How does the biracial adult of African-American and Jewish-American parentage manage multiple identities in a society where internalized and institutionalized racism and anti-semitism abound in forms ranging from subtle stereotyping and ill-informed assumptions to blatant discrimination? Is the closeness to one's parents and/or extended family directly related to the extent to which these biracial adults manage their multiple identities?

As evidenced by growing numbers of college support groups such as Prism (Harvard), Spectrum (Stanford), and Miscellaneous (Berkeley), organizations that bring together students of mixed-race heritage, more and more biracial (Black and Jewish) young adults are claiming both parts of their ethnic heritage in spite of socio-political definitions of Black identity and the "white-skin" privilege of most Jewish-Americans.
This trend towards embracing cultures of both parents seems to come at a time when acceptance and tolerance of interracial marriage and the willingness to reside in mixed-race neighborhoods is higher than it has ever been in the United States (Morganthau, 1995). Morganthau claims that the racial dialogue has changed so rapidly that the "familiar din of black-white antagonism seems increasingly out of date partly because of immigration and partly because diversity is suddenly hip" (Morganthau, p.63).

Therefore, as a new wave of multi-racial people or a baby boom of biracial adults (Root, 1993) become more prevalent in this country, the need to understand the experiences of the many combinations of biracial individuals becomes increasingly significant.

Although multi-racial people are not a new phenomenon in United States, the new wave of multi-racial people is the first generation to stake a claim to mainstream status, discomfiting in the process Blacks and Whites who are reluctant to reconsider familiar racial categories. Claiming a new racial category presents many implications to American society, and specifically to the African-American community. For example, African-Americans represent a history marred by sexual exploitation resulting in African-American identified individuals who phenotypically reflect various shades and labels of "Black". Thus, a new assertion of Black/White biracial categorization implicitly challenges and threatens Black solidarity for social equality where racial identity is not only political and public, but deeply personal.

The overall purpose of this study is an attempt to understand and explore how the biracial person of two minority parents, each with long histories of oppression and a history of conflictual inter-group relations negotiates mixed-race heritage and identity. Implicit in the study is the assumption that the processes by which biracial adults of African-American and Jewish-American parentage manage multiple identities is multi-dimensional and complex. In this regard, the strategy for this study incorporates social-cultural, psychodynamic, and historical perspectives concurrently. The aim of this research is to 1) elucidate how institutionalized and internalized anti-semitism and racism influence biracial identity development; 2) better understand and assess the
potential for alliance building between African-Americans and Jewish-Americans and 3) contribute to the growing literature on biracial issues.

To provide a framework for a formal presentation of this study's objectives, methodology and analysis, issues relevant to 1) Black and White racial tolerance; 2) stereotyping; 3) Black and Jewish relations; 4) the hierarchy of color and racial categorization; 5) biracial, Black and Jewish identity; and 6) parental closeness will be explored.
Historical Tolerance of Black/White Unions

Despite laws prohibiting race-mixing, biracial children resulting from Black/White unions date back to the early days of the American colonies. These multi-racial Americans have historically faced unique identity issues because of the respective dominant and subordinate positions of their two ancestry groups in the social hierarchy of the races in United States. Daniels (1992) discusses that as a way of preserving dominant status, European Americans enforced a policy of "hypodescent" which designated everyone as Black who was not "pure" White. This policy resulted in maintaining both legal and informal barriers restricting the contact between individuals of African descent and European descent in both private and public sectors. Individuals of mixed-heritage for the most part, accepted the racial status quo. However, a significant number of individuals resisted this racial status quo. The primary manifestation of resistance took the form of "passing", where individuals of a more European phenotype and cultural orientation made either a clandestine or overt break from the African-American community, in order to enjoy the privileges the dominant White culture. Collective resistance has included the formation of pluralistic elites within the African-American community, as seen in the phenomenon of blue-vein societies or the formation of pluralistic enclaves on the periphery of both African-American and European communities, i.e., the triracial isolates (Daniels, 1992). Membership in these communities was determined by the individuals phenotype and cultural approximation to the European Americans.

Despite regional variations, European Americans had little inclination to recognize phenotypical distinctions among individuals of African descent. Daniels (1992) discusses how in each census, from 1850 to 1920, except 1880 and 1900, an attempt was made to count African-Americans as Black or mulatto; in 1890, the count was further broken down into quadroon and octoroon. As census takers used
subjective visual criteria to define racial categories, Daniels assumes that the numbers of Blacks of partial European descent was in fact, inaccurate.

The Civil War and Reconstruction brought an end to the previous distinction between slave and free among African-Americans. Implementation of segregation at the turn of the twentieth century forced a sharper line between Black and White. Tolerance for racial ambiguity and mulatto privilege, gradually began to fade (Daniel, 1992). For example, prior to the Civil War all free mulattos were not considered Black (Daniel, 1992). Daniel discusses how after the Civil War the number of Black genes allowed to be considered "White" had decreased. For example, in the 1800's, in Virginia, someone with less that one-fourth "Negro blood" could be White. In 1910, the state of Virginia codified what had become the custom: White was defined as having less than one-sixteenth "Negro ancestry". By 1924, urged on by White supremacists, legislators prohibited Whites from marrying anyone with a "single drop of Negro blood". As a result, the idea that one drop of African heritage was sufficient to label a person Black set strict criteria for "Whiteness" that prevail to this day. Under the one-drop rule, it was difficult for biracial Black/White individuals to gain either social or political acceptance for their mixed-heritage identities.

The loss of a few privileges that had been enjoyed by light-skinned Blacks during the ante-bellum period, coupled by an increasing hostility of the European-American world, led to a marked shift of political consciousness of the multi-racial elite in the direction of an alliance with Blacks. Due to the relatively better social, cultural and intellectual advancement given to them as a result of their color, compared to other Blacks, a significant number of multi-racial individuals became leaders in the early fights for civil rights (Berlin, 1976; Mencke, 1976). Williamson (1984) points out that by the 1920's the manifestation of forced endogamy and internal miscegenation, the census ceased to enumerate multi-racial individuals separately from Blacks. Officially and informally, as more Blacks became multi-racial, individuals of a more European phenotype gradually came to regard themselves, and were regarded, less as multi-racial and more as light-skinned Blacks (Mencke 1979; Williamson, 1984).
Nevertheless, as with many other individuals of non-White descent conditioned by the unequal social and economic valuations ascribed to race, "passing" as White remained as strategy for many biracial individuals whose phenotype did not identify them as Black (Fanon, 1967).

**Black/White versus Black/Jewish**

There is an extensive scholarly literature concerning Black identity, Jewish identity, and Black and Jewish relations (e.g., Hentoff, 1969; Berson, 1971; Diner, 1977; Kaufman, 1989; Lerner & West; West, 1993). Although not all Jewish-Americans of European descent identify as White per se, skin color and the ability of many to pass as White has afforded many Jewish-Americans the social and economic privileges that come with having white skin, hereafter referred to as "white skin-privilege". Consequently, the history and influence of anti-semitism have been largely overlooked as a salient consideration of the biracial adult having a Jewish parent, precisely because their Jewishness is often invisible. In spite of the increasing number of articles which continue to address children of Black/White unions, (e.g., Adams, 1973, Gordon, 1964; Henriques, 1974; Gay, 1987), the psychosocial development of children coming from Black/Jewish interracial parenting per se has not been addressed. When attention has been given to the offspring of Black/White unions, where one parent is Jewish, the Jewish component of a biracial identity is frequently subsumed under White identity and is not addressed as a separate culture or ethnicity (Jacobs, 1977, Miller, 1990). Furthermore, when there has been any acknowledgment of how interracial parenting affects biracial children of African-American and Jewish-American cultures, issues of race and culture have been subsumed under common issues confronting interfaith couples. These issues range from relations with immediate and extended family members to expression of religious traditions (Cowan & Cowan, 1987). An earlier work, The Negroes and the Jews (Berson, 1971), suggests an appalling dynamic of internalized oppressions at play that account for a greater prevalence of
intermarriage between Blacks and Jews. However, Berson does not include issues of identity for the children. She writes,

> Among interracial marriages, Jews figure prominently as the white partners. These marriages are most frequently among the best-educated whites and Negroes. They are often the end result of a college romance. A complex of reasons makes Jews more likely than other whites to marry Negroes. Jews seek higher education in greater numbers than other groups. They are more inclined to be intellectual and committed to civil rights. They are frequently in rebellion against stifling familial bonds, breaking the taboo against marriage with an outsider is a tempting form of revolt. A Negro partner represents extreme defiance. In addition, Jews suffer from feelings of generalized guilt, which tends to make them identify with Negroes, and they have feelings of physical inferiority that are lessened by associating with Negroes. (pp. 205-206)

Thus, it appears that the history of the relationship between African-Americans and Jewish Americans is one that has included a desperate search for a personal identity.

**A Psychodynamic View of Stereotyping**

Fundamental to how the confluence of identity and racial/cultural oppression affects individuals of African-American and Jewish-American parentage is an understanding of the role of stereotypes in our intrapsychic organization. Gilman (1985) discusses that stereotypes involve an immutable designation of images through which one categorizes the world. He affirms that the creation of stereotypes accompanies the process by which all human beings become individuals and can be traced to the early stages of human development. Levin (1975) discusses how everyone creates stereotypes and that we cannot function without them. In thinking about Kernberg’s (1980) stages of human development, the genesis of stereotypes can be seen as we examine the earliest stages. Kernberg discusses how the infant moves from a state of being in which everything is seen as an extension of the self to a growing sense of a
separate identity, which takes place between the ages of a few weeks and about five months. At this time, a new sense of "difference" is directly acquired by the denial of the child's demands on the world. The world is no longer felt to be a mere extension of the self. As the child comes to distinguish more and more between the world and self, anxiety arises for the perceived loss of control over the world. Kohut (1971) discusses how very soon the child learns to combat anxieties associated with the failure to control the world by adjusting his mental picture of people and objects so that they can appear "good" even when their behavior is perceived of as "bad". Gilman (1985) contends that the child's sense of self is shaped to fit this pattern. He states that this sense of self splits into a "good" self, which is the self mirroring the earlier stage for the complete control of the world and is free from anxiety. And there is the "bad" self, which is unable to control the environment and is thus exposed to anxieties. This split has been identified as a single stage in the development of the normal personality. However, Gilman proposes that the root of stereotypes is in this split. With this split of both the self and the world into "good" and "bad" objects, the "bad" self is distanced and identified with the mental representation of the "bad" object. This act of projection saves the self from confrontation with the contradiction at hand, i.e., how to integrate both "bad" and "good" aspects of self. He states that this deep structure of our own sense of self and the world is built upon the illusionary image of the world divided into two camps, "us" and "them". Individuals are either "good" or "bad". However, Gilman acknowledges that although this splitting is a very primitive distinction occurring in most individuals, it is replaced early in development by the illusion of integration. Gilman writes:

Stereotypes are a crude set of mental representations of the world. They are palimpsest on which the initial bipolar representations are still vaguely legible. They perpetuate a needed sense of difference between the "self" and the "object", which becomes the "Other". Because there is no real line between self and the Other, an imaginary line must be drawn; and so that the illusion of an absolute difference between the self and the Other is never troubled, this line is dynamic in its ability to alter itself as is the self.
The line between the "good" and the "bad" representations of the world occurs. One can move from fearing to glorifying the Other, from loving to hating. Thus, the most negative stereotype always has an overly positive counterweight. The degree to which stereotyping preserves the illusion of control over the self and the world and to pathological stereotyping must be elucidated. The pathological personality's mental representation of the world supports the need for the line of difference between self and other, all the time, whereas for the non-pathological individual the stereotype is a momentary coping mechanism, one that can be used and then discarded once anxiety is overcome. (pp. 17-18)

Even though Gilman suggests that stereotyping takes place outside the self, in the world of the object/the Other, he contends that the act of stereotyping is in fact a reflection of the intra-psychic world, which draws upon mental representations for its structure. Consequently, stereotypes arise when self-integration is threatened and serve to mitigate dealing with one's perception of the world.

Although the deep structure of stereotyping may sound simple, its realization is much more complex, for stereotypes result from social, racial and cultural contexts. Gilman points out that the contexts are parallel, but are not identical to the earlier symbiotic context in which the child begins to differentiate him/herself from the world. In this regard, stereotypes reappear in adults as a response to anxiety. Horney (1937) discusses how anxiety has its roots in the potential disintegration of the mental representations the individual has internalized. She remarks that the sense of order an adult maintains is much like the structure of order which precedes the earliest stages of individuation. It is an unconscious sense of symbiosis with the world, a world under control of the self. Thus, according to Gilman, anxiety arises as much through an alteration of the sense of order (real or imagined) between the self and the Other (real or imagined) as through the strains regulating repressed drives.

The models for control and power are linked to structures in society which provide status and meaning to the individual, structures that can easily incorporate the
inclusion of some, to the exclusion of others. In this regard, self-esteem is attached to
the image of the self and of the meaningful objects or Others in the social world. Objects
in the world are reduced to images which are centrally altered by the interaction with the
realities upon which they are based. However, when this sense of order, the self's ability
to control the internalized world it has created for itself, undergoes stress, doubt and
anxiety appear. This anxiety mirrors the earlier affective coloring for the period of
individuation. The self projects that anxiety onto the Other, externalizing our loss of
control. The Other is thus stereotyped. (Gilman, 1980). The Other is invested with all
the qualities of the "bad" or the "good". Gordon Allport (1958, p. 364) discusses how
each society has a distinct "tradition" that informs its stereotypes. Allport describes how
an elaborate web of signs and references for the idea of difference arises out of a
society's communal sense of control over its world, no matter how the sense of control
or lack of control is articulated. Or in other words, stereotyping can also be viewed as an
attempt by society to maintain social and economic stability or control, however illusory.

Regarding Jewish identity and negative attitudes towards self, Kaufman (1987),
explored in his qualitative study how being Jewish in a non-Jewish society potentially
creates a conflict of identification whereby Jews frequently feel lesser in comparison to
non-Jews and are also shamed for being different. Messages from the wider culture
become internalized through scenes of shame and are experienced in varied contexts
which are later transformed by language, creating enduring beliefs and concomitant
stereotypes about self. Kaufman states that shame is a principal source of identity and
contends that in order to understand the self, we must examine shame. He writes:

Identity is not merely the sense of self, but includes our enduring beliefs
and feeling about ourselves translated into action: the active relationship
the self comes to have with the self...through identification, we internalize
the actual ways we are treated by others. (pp. 33-34).

Similarly, Greene (1990) points out how many African-American women have
internalized a narrow choice of roles that have been acceptable to and often created by
the dominant culture. Greene discuses how African-American women may either be 1)
the Mammy, who knows her place and happily remains resolute, denying her own needs and pain, thus appearing cheerful and content to take care of others or 2) the shrewish, hostile and angry person who is never satisfied with anyone. Greene also discusses how many African-American women consequently experience, for example, a reluctance to express overt anger, lest they be viewed as one of the stereotypic characters.

Evidently stereotypes play both an unconscious and a conscious role in shaping one's identity. How does the process of identity development evolve when parents represent two oppressed races and cultures defined and identified by both unconscious and conscious stereotypes?

Historical Overview of Black/White Race Categorization

From both an anthropological and a biological view, human history records many contacts among people from all areas of the world (Molinar, 1992). The frequent and free interbreeding of these populations is a matter of record. Such evidence has destroyed many of the myths of the last two centuries and has long established that we all belong to the same species. However, although this situation has probably existed for hundreds of thousands of years, ever since ancestral humans’ mobility overcame geographical barriers, confusion still arises over what are races, how races can be defined and how one should identity.

The term race was applied to varieties of Homo Sapiens in the middle of the eighteenth century by a French naturalist by the name of Bufon (Molinar, 1992). Molinar addresses how the term has been used in a variety of social and biological contexts and has become encumbered with contradictory and imprecise meanings. Many people take for granted that they know what race means and assume that scientific investigation has long ago proved the existence of significant human differences. The number of races and their boundaries remains a subject of dispute partially because of the lack of agreement on which traits identify a person's' racial identity. Just what constitutes a race is a difficult question to answer because one's
classification usually depends on the purpose of classification. While historically, race-
ethnic classification has served both social and political purposes, the question of
biological differences remains unclear. Nevertheless, the debate of race continues and
is under attack amongst contemporary scientists. In the recently published book, The
Bell Curve, (1995) Herrnstein and Murray revive but do not settle the old controversy
about Black and White differences in intelligence. Clearly, the boundaries between race
depend on the classifiers’ own cultural norms and is thus highly subjective.

In an earlier study, (Lewontin,1984) it was found that if one selects at random
two African-Americans walking along a street and analyze their 23 pairs of
chromosomes, one will probably find that their genes have less in common than do the
genes of one of them with that of a random "White" individual. Irrespective of the whole
range of biological variation within the human species and the extent to which race-
mixing has occurred in United States, scientists continue to try to establish sets of
differences that distinguish one racial group from another.

Begley (1995) discusses how social constructs of race, which are a mixture of
prejudice, superstition and myth, can in fact have biological consequences. She
addresses the high incidence of hypertension amongst Blacks.

Consider hypertension among African-Americans. Roughly 34 percent
have high blood pressure, compared with 16 percent of Whites. But
William Dressler finds the greatest incidence of hypertension among
blacks who are upwardly mobile achievers. That’s probably because in
mundane interactions, from the bank to the grocery store, they are treated
in ways that do not coincide with their self-image as acceptable
achievers...the upwardly mobile are more likely to encounter
discriminatory White culture.” Lab studies show that stressful situations-
like being followed in a grocery store as if you were a shoplifter-elevate
blood pressure and vascular changes that cause hypertension....
hypertension has more to do with society than biology...(p. 69)
On the issue of hypertension and race, Molinar (1992) discusses that African-Americans as well as other minority groups around the world, encounter many stressful situations in their daily lives, and how there is ample physiological evidence that anxiety and tension brought about by racism and discrimination can elevate blood pressure. He also states that populations living in isolated rural communities frequently show lower average blood pressures than their relatives living in urban areas. To further elucidate the erroneous assumption that there is a genetic pre-disposition to hypertension amongst people of African descent, sociologist William Dressler found that Black Africans have among the lowest rates of hypertension in the world. (Dressler, 1982).

Regarding the mixed-race individual in American society, people of mixed-race heritage are assigned to the race of the non-White parent (Molinar, 1992). When neither parent is White, the child is assigned to the race of the father unless the mother is Hawaiian. This follows a long tradition that mixed-race individuals will possess behavioral traits of the parent who is from the socially disadvantaged group. (Molinar, 1992). Again, social and political norms have not permitted interracial children to let "mixedness" define them.

Although Molinar argues that the amalgamation of socially derived traits with inherited traits causes great difficulty for all those who deal with diversity, from the census taker to the biologist, artificial constructs of race have prevailed and implicit prejudices and stereotypes have prevailed for several political and economic purposes. Despite the numerous proposed racial taxonomies of Homo Sapiens, with the preponderance of stereotypes, the concept of race has been reduced to a few useless and grossly inaccurate categories. Furthermore, Molinar discusses that as a result of the overuse and use of the term race, it is often arbitrarily replaced by ethnic group, which in fact applies to a wide variety of groups sharing certain traits, i.e., common language, traditions, etc. To ameliorate the problems that arise with the term race, psychologist Dole (1995) proposes that,

....applied and scientific psychologists drop race because it is a hopelessly ambiguous and politicized descriptor of alleged human species.
Psychologists should retain race only in relation to attributed group membership or studies of attitudes. Thus racism is certainly of interest when it refers to a popular belief that some group is superior, inferior, or different in some characteristic. (p. 40)

Given the extent to which racial mixing has occurred in the United States, and the ambiguity of the term race, the term biracial is also biologically inaccurate, and thus a misnomer. However inaccurate the label, it's entry into the lexicon of social scientists and American society has allowed individuals of Black/White parentage as well as Black/Asian, and Asian/White, to acknowledge the wholeness of their parentage (Kich, 1982). By acknowledging both their parents and identifying as biracial, the individual refutes, for example, the "one drop rule" which labels anyone with a trace of African ancestry as Black. As pointed out earlier, race is primarily a socio-political construct. Thus, in keeping with the limiting constructs and assumptions of race, this study uses the term biracial to refer to those individuals who embody two distinct socially-defined groups.

Biracial Identity Formation

The exploration of biracial identity formation requires an understanding of historical attitudes towards racial mixing, the process of identity formation in each group, and how marginality (the social experience of not belonging to one group) affects ones attitudes. Interracial families are a relatively new phenomenon in American society. Many southern and northern states passed laws before and after the Civil War prohibiting marriage between Whites and non-Whites. As Gay (1987) points out, these laws were based on theories of White supremacy and myths about racial mixing. Even after the Supreme Court struck down the last anti-miscegenation law in Virginia in 1967, social sanctions continued to operate against interracial marriages. The costs of defying these sanctions were very high. They included family disapproval and alienation, social exclusion, discrimination in housing, and public accommodation. Social and economic discrimination against Blacks and other non-Whites resulted in the development of two
essentially separate caste like communities, so that Blacks and Whites had few opportunities for social relationships and shared activities (Gibbs, 1988). Although informal contacts between Blacks and Whites occurred despite barriers, marriage between these groups were illegal and relatively rare from colonial times through just before World War II.

As a result of American society experiencing a new wave of multi-racial people since 1967, United States has been gradually forced to confront and re-evaluate the meaning of race (Root, 1992). The increased number of intermarriages occurring in the mid-70s' resulted in formative discussions concerning the individual of mixed-race, as well as the individual of mixed cultures (Adams, 1973). Payne (1977) was a forerunner in examining racial attitude formation in children of mixed Black and White heritage. In the 1980's more studies evolved focusing on biracial children. Included among several is one by Gibbs (1986) which examined clinical and cultural issues that biracial children face. In another study (Gibbs, 1987), she discusses issues of "marginality" and myriad psycho-social issues that confront biracial adolescents. However, it wasn't until 1992 that comprehensive research was undertaken focusing on the historical, political and psychosocial ramifications of biracial adults of many racial configurations. Previous research that had been done on biracial individuals (Teicher, 1986) had been conducted on children in psychiatric hospitals or clinics. As a result, research on this population yielded data that indicated maladjustment.

Park (1928) coined the phrase "marginal man" to describe a person who lives in two cultural worlds. Stonequest, a student of Park, focusing on the pathology of mixed people, introduced the first model of biracial identity development, the Marginal Person Model, (Stonequest, 1937) and popularized the term "marginal man". He is poised in psychological uncertainty between two or more social worlds; reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds, one of which is often 'dominant' over the other; within which membership is implicitly based on birth or ancestry (race or
nationality); and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relation. (Hall, 1992, pp. 250-251)

Even as late as 1988, in a study where children of Black-White unions were studied (Brandell, 1988), the marginalized theme as identified by Stonequist was again reflected. Brandell contended that children of Black-White unions suffer all the disadvantages of being Black, including diminished opportunities in both education and employment, discrimination in housing, economic disadvantages and racism in its cultural, individual and institutional forms.

In a more positive light, Hall (1992) re-defines the marginal person as someone who is biologically or culturally from two or more races or cultures. She writes that marginal status exists when an individual occupies a position somewhere between cultures but does not wholly belong to any. The individual has a marginal personality when he or she has trouble dealing with the marginal status position, is torn between two cultures and develops psychological problems. As pointed out by Goldberg (1941), the mere fact of being a marginal person does not lead to a marginal personality. Hall contends that marginal people may be able to identify with more than one culture and acquire a wide range of competencies and sensitivities.

Studies on Biracial Identity

Only a small number of studies have specifically addressed issues of racial and ethnic identity and their role in child and adolescent identity development. Regarding this exclusion, Miller states that Eriksonian and social theories assume that the ascribed racial or ethnic identity and heritage of an individual match. Most theories cope with the possibility that some people’s heritages might not match their ascribed identities by the qualification that one can develop an identity that is legitimate within the social structure. Thus, these theories were developed with monoracial case in mind. By not describing the process of identification for persons whose backgrounds do not match the ascribed categories, the theories fail to explain how a multiracial person develops an identity. These assumptions often lead to the belief that the mixed-race person are "mixed up" or
"maladjusted". What is the nature of the process of exploring self when self is not neatly reflected in the labels others assign? Understanding the process by which individuals develop racial and ethnic identities is therefore and important part of understanding the total person (Miller, 1992, p. 33-34)

Parsons (1965) speaks of identity as being exclusive or inclusive of other identities while maintaining that the pluralistic conception of American identity is "neither one of separation--with or without equality-nor of assimilation, but one of full participation combined with the preservation of identity". Echoing Parsons, Herman (1981) discusses how Jewish identity exists nowhere in isolation as the sole ethnic identity of individual. In particular, the Jewish identity of an American can only be understood in the context of his/her Americanism. In addition, Herman (1981) states that ethnic identity relates to that which the individual "shares in common with others along with whom he/she is distinguished by others resulting from the possession of certain attributes". The question is which kinds of attributes characterize an ethnic group? For individuals of mixed-race heritage, specifically, African-American and Jewish-American, a precise definition of ethnicity becomes not only less precise but more ambiguous as the attributes are multi dimensional and complicated.

In two separate but related studies, using thirty-six hand painted wooden dolls of different hair texture and color combinations and skin color variations, Jacobs (1977) explored racial and personal identity of biracial children ages 3, 5, and 8 years old of Black-White interracial couples. Over seventeen subsequent years, he extended his study of biracial identity development to children up to the age of twelve, not only of Black/White parentage, but Black-Asian, and White-Asian parentage. He found that biracial children were seen to go through three stages of racial identity development: 1) pre-color constancy/play and experimentation with color; 2) post-color constancy/biracial label and racial ambivalence and 3) biracial Identity. Jacobs found that a positive biracial identity in the face of racism depends on early ego-enhancing treatment of the child in the family. In this regard, Jacob found that it was important to understand the parents’ responses to the social stigma of being an interracial couple.
Specifically, how the parents come to terms with their own relationship was reflected to some extent in the stage at which the child tried on and experimented with each parent's racial identity and with an interracial label unique to the child (Jacobs, 1977).

In 1982, the first study on the ethnic/racial development of biracial Japanese/White adults was undertaken (Kich, 1982). Kich's study included an analysis of the influences of family, peer, and social factors. He found that the attainment of an interracial identity was a significant and difficult developmental achievement. His study identified three developmental stages in interracial identity formation. The first stage was characterized by feeling different from others and by very little family discussion about race in the homes. Paralleling developmental periods where respondents moved beyond their homes for support and validation, the second stage reflected more complex and explanatory interracial self-labels that were influenced by their supportive peer groups. The third stage evidenced an integration of dual-racial and cultural heritages and an ability to create self-definition rather than to rely solely on other's definitions and stereotypes.

Root (1992) proposes a schematic model with which to understand the process of identity development. She characterizes the model as "schematically spiral, where the linear force is internal conflict over a core sense of definition of self, the importance of which is largely determined by socialization (e.g., race, gender)" (p. Root, 198). Root identifies that the strongest recurring conflict at critical periods of development is the tension between racial components within oneself.

More recently, Funderberg (1994), compiled the first contemporary non-clinical study on the perspectives of biracial adults specifically of Black and White parentage. She did not define racial identity by either pseudoscientific measurements or by appearance, but by how people chose to define themselves. She interviewed adults who had one biological parent who identified as Black and another who identified as White. Funderberg discussed how the question "But what about the children?" has been the inferred or stated question that has accompanied Black and White interracial unions in American society. Implicit in the question is not mere curiosity but a warning
that assumes the chasm between Blacks and Whites is so vast that the children are
 destined to be victims of a racially polarized country and will inevitably suffer due to the
 assumed irresponsibility of the parents.

Hierarchy of Color

As mixed-heritage identity involves a multi-dimensional process of
development, Parham (1969) urges researchers to incorporate several strategies for
understanding it. First they must know the impact of a culture's history and inherent
stereotypes. Biracial development is however, further complicated by a by-product of
that history, what Root (1989) identifies as the hierarchy of color. In explicating the
hierarchy of color, she exposes the inconsistencies of the positive images created by
the "melting pot" philosophy in United States. She discusses how these images are
only relevant to White ethnic groups, e.g., Irish, French, Scandinavian, but not Africans,
American Indians or Asians. She contends that, in actuality, United States is founded
on a history of dividing people into White and non-White, where White is considered
superior to non-White and the privileges and the power assumed by Whites are coveted
by non-Whites. Because of the assumed superiority of White, attempts are made to
prevent racial mixing because free interaction assumes equality. Root elucidates that a
corollary of this assumption is that mixed-race persons who are part White and can
phenotypically and socially pass as such, will most likely strive for this racial identity in
order to gain greater access to social power and avoid the oppression directed towards
people of color.

Another assumption to be made concerns a hierarchy of racial/cultural groups
based upon their similarity with middle class White social structure and values. The
hierarchical social status system oppresses people of mixed-race descent in distinct
ways which stem from American society's fear of "racial pollution" (Henriques, 1975).
Namely, mixed-race individuals are given very little choice in how they are identified.
Any person with non-White ethnic features or traceable non-White blood is considered
non-White. As mentioned earlier, any person with one Black parent and one non-Black
parent is considered Black. In this regard, Root (1992) discusses how mixed-race persons having parents that represent two minority groups are likely to experience racial oppression from the racial group with the heritage with the perceived higher social status. Consequently, Root contends that this 'irrational' and incomplete method of racial identification impedes identity resolution for the biracial individual.

Understanding the hierarchy of color is a significant component in the development of marginality in biracial individuals who are part White. Root (1989) maintains that mistrust has evolved by people of color towards those accepted by or identified as White because Whites have historically oppressed people of color in the United States. As a result, biracial individuals who are part White and look White, and manifest an attitude of the dominant culture, often experience difficulty gaining acceptance by people of color by virtue of their White heritage and the oppression it symbolizes.

Racial and ethnic identity are fundamental parts of the psychological profile of any individual who is a member of a racially or ethnically heterogeneous society. Miller (1992) explores the economic implications and experiences of biracial identity. Contrasting biracial individuals whose parents hold a similar racial status in society (neither one who is of the dominant group), with biracial individuals where one is of the dominant group, she discusses the role of economic class. Miller asserts that the adversarial or cooperative nature of the relationship between the parents' groups by in large depends on whether or not the groups are economic competitors and economically interdependent, dependent, or independent. Miller states that when groups are economic competitors, interracial or inter-ethnic people may be pressured to adopt a single identity, because multiple affiliations represent a threat to both groups.

On the other hand, Miller argues that if one group controls the economic well-being of another, it is likely that the dependent group will be stigmatized and the controlling group will determine the other group's access to housing, employment, and basic resources. Miller states that when a relationship exists of economic dependency by one group on another group, an interracial or inter-ethnic background may be
stigmatized because it represents a threat to the controlling group's power. Miller suggests that the "one drop" rule for Black identity was not only to preserve racial "purity", but to limit access to economic and political control by people other than Whites. Although Miller does not distinguish Jewish-Americans from other Whites having White-skin privilege, many Jewish-Americans of European descent have in fact a higher social status than African-Americans and have frequently been implicated by African-Americans as controlling their economic situation (Baldwin, 1969; West, 1993).

Black and Jewish Relations

What happens when the marginal person's parents reflect two cultures/races that have histories of alliance building as well as histories of harboring stigmatizing hostility toward each other? Katz (1994) discusses how the media has exaggerated the conflicts between African-Americans and Jewish-Americans while giving minimal coverage to the larger racial problems in the United States. Furthermore he criticizes journalists for rarely reporting how average Black and White American citizens feel about race relations, and instead, rely on so-called expert opinions. Wiess (1994) states "some of the conflicts between Blacks and Jews have been false; but a false comity is not much better than a false conflict" (p. 29). West (1993) asserts that, in spite of the formidable anti-Semitic barriers, Jewish-Americans have colluded with the American racial caste system. Like Wiess, West exposes the inaccuracy of the myth that there ever existed a period of harmonious relations between Blacks and Jewish-Americans. However, West does acknowledge that American society did, in fact, witness a period when the relationship between the two communities was less strained than evidenced today.

In another perspective on the discussions of Black/Jewish relations, Bell Hooks (1992) points out that when relations between Blacks and Jews are usually discussed, what is really evoked is the relationship between Black men and White Jewish men. She writes: