BIRACIAL AND BIETHNIC WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES REGARDING THEIR BODIES: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION INTO BODY IMAGE

by

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ABSTRACT

Statistics on body image suggest that most women struggle with negative feelings about their appearance. However, there is disagreement as to what aspects of body image are most salient to women of different racial/ethnic groups. Moreover, body image research has traditionally examined the influence of peers, the media, and family on White and monoracial Women of Color. The experiences of body image development with biracial women, as well as how racial identity influences body image, has largely been ignored. The current study utilized a grounded theory qualitative design to explore the impact of parental messages on biracial women's body image, and to examine how racial identity and biracial women's body image are related. Thirteen biracial women between the ages of 18 and 40 were interviewed and asked about the parental messages they received, as well as their impact, in addition to being asked about racial identity development and how they felt their racial identity influenced their body image. Participants also identified women in the media that they felt espoused their body image ideal. Results indicate that biracial women received messages from their parents in both direct and indirect ways. Mothers' messages tended to be more negative and less balanced than fathers' messages, though fathers had also communicated some damaging appearance-related messages. Participants reported internalizing these messages and developing their own critical voice with regards to their appearance. Further participants described how their racial identity helped them to accept features that were not

considered “beautiful” by Eurocentric beauty standards. This, in turn, contributed to greater body acceptance. In sum, it appears that both direct (e.g., verbal) and indirect (e.g., behaviors) parental messages influence biracial women’s body image and racial identity. Further, espousing a biracial identity can help foster more positive views on appearance in biracial women. Implications for interventions with parents of biracial children, as well as suggestions for counselors working with biracial women, are discussed.

To my mother, whom I had promised this degree to, and to my father, for helping me fulfill this last promise.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statistics reflect severe issues women have with their body image. For example, as many as 80% of U.S. women are dissatisfied with their appearance (Mond et al., 2013; Smolak & Levine, 1996). Equally disturbing, this concern begins at a very young age. In fact, this issue is so prevalent that dissatisfaction with one's appearance has been termed "normative discontent," implying that body dissatisfaction is not an unusual experience (Grogan, 2008). For the purposes of this study, body dissatisfaction is defined as negative evaluations regarding one's appearance, usually described by the discrepancy between that person's perception of their appearance and their ideal self (Grogan, 2008). Some examples of body dissatisfaction include being unhappy with one's weight, shape, facial features, abdomen, and hips, to name a few (e.g., Mintz & Kashubeck, 1999; Warren, 2014). Body dissatisfaction is related to a variety of mental and physical health outcomes, including binge eating behaviors (Johnson & Wardle, 2005), depression, and low self-esteem (Sarwer, Thompson, & Cash, 2005), and an overall lower quality of life (Mond et al., 2013).

The concept of body image is a multifaceted construct and has been defined in a variety of ways in the literature, most of which emphasize physical appearance to some degree. These definitions vary based on researcher aims as well as areas of interest

(Grogan, 2008). For example, Cash, Ancis, and Strachan (1997) defined body image as a set of f-attitudes towards one's body, especially as it pertains to "size, shape, and aesthetics." According to this definition, individuals evaluate their physical attributes against a set ideal (usually culturally or societally defined), which in turn informs self-worth, mental health, and investment in appearance. Other researchers posit that body image depends upon inner biological as well as psychological components, which interact with social and cultural influences (Sira & Ballard, 2009). Still other researchers define body image as a "psychological experience of the appearance and function of his/her body" which is one aspect of a person's mental representation of themselves (Friedman et al., 2002, p. 33). Perhaps the simplest and most inclusive definition of body image was introduced by Sarah Grogan (2007), who defined body image as, "A person's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body" (p. 3).

All of the above definitions suggest that body image involves an individual's evaluation and perception of their physical attributes (e.g., size, muscle tone, skin color) as well as the attitudes they hold about their bodies. This multidimensional concept has been generally accepted by body image researchers (Cash, Ancis, & Strachan, 1997; Friedman et al., 2002), though there is disagreement as to which dimensions are most important in classifying body image (Banfield & McCabe, 2002). Also inherent in all of these definitions is the conceptualization of body image as being socially and culturally constructed, as well as including an individual's internal psychological and biological components (Sira & Ballard, 2009). Perhaps part of the disagreement regarding which dimensions of body image are most important are due to cultural differences in the salience and valuation of different physical attributes. This disagreement may be

remedied by understanding these sociocultural influences, for example, within racial and ethnic groups.

The research on women's body image has repeatedly identified salient influences on women's body dissatisfaction and the subsequent development of eating disorders, including media (Ata, Ludden, & Lally, 2007; Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994), peer influences (Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004; Smolak, 2004), and familial influences (Warren, 2014). These mechanisms are collectively examined under sociocultural theory. Originally posited to explain how the above mentioned mechanisms are related to bulimia nervosa in adolescents (Stice, 1994), sociocultural theory suggests that women and men internalize unrealistic Western standards of ideal beauty, and compare their appearance to these standards. As a result, individuals begin to experience body dissatisfaction and may alter their behaviors in order to try to meet these standards (Stice, 1994; Stice & Shaw, 2002). Other researchers have used this theory as a framework to determine whether peers, media, and familial influences impact racial/ethnic minorities in the same way (e.g., Shaw et al., 2004; Warren et al., 2005).

Most of the literature in this field has examined influences on the body image development of White women, children, and to a much lesser degree, monoracial and monoethnic minority women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006) Researchers who have examined these constructs with racially/ethnically diverse samples have made comparisons between racial/ethnic minority participants and White participants (e.g. Gordon et al., 2010; Lovejoy, 2001). While there are potentially damaging implications of making White experiences the norm, the extant body image literature suggests that racially/ethnically diverse women may be internalizing the Western beauty norm to varying degrees (Grabe

& Hyde, 2006). Therefore, it may be beneficial to examine how these traditionally "White experiences" compare with the experiences of these severely understudied groups.

However, the racial and ethnic make-up of the United States is shifting, to where a significant proportion of the population are identifying themselves as being of two or more races or ethnicities (US Census Bureau, 2014a). This was not captured until the 2000 U.S. Census, when a "multiracial" category was included in order to measure how many people in the United States identified with two or more races (Townsend, Fryberg, Wilkins, & Markus, 2012). Moreover, this trend is expected to increase substantially in the coming years (US Census Bureau, 2014b). While research is helping us understand how multiple influences interact to inform Caucasian, monoracial, and monoethnic women's body image development, it can be premature to assume that these influences inform the body image development of biracial and biethnic women in the same way. Given that body image is affected by many cultural and societal components, it would be expected that a person's body image is open to change through new experiences and information (Grogan, 2008).

While research with biracial and biethnic women is in its infancy, there is some evidence to suggest that familial messages play a role in body image development (Workman, 2011) although this process may be more complicated. For example, it is possible that biracial and biethnic women may internalize the messages they receive from siblings and parents regarding their bodies much like White, monoracial, and monoethnic women do, which in turn informs body image and identity. However, given that biracial and biethnic women have parents that are part of different cultural groups, they may

receive conflicting messages regarding their bodies (Guan, Lee & Cole, 2012). It is unclear how these conflicting messages are understood or processed; it would seem they could be confusing and have damaging effects. I argue that there is a large segment of the population we are not addressing in research and this negligence could make biracial and biethnic women particularly vulnerable to mental health problems (Workman, 2011). Moreover, the lack of research on this population continues to perpetuate the idea that body dissatisfaction is a "White girl problem" (Grogan, 2008) and consequently may not be identified or addressed by clinicians who are working with biracial or biethnic women.

In sum, the issue regarding biracial and biethnic women's body dissatisfaction is two-fold: On the one hand, there is evidence that suggests this population is experiencing body dissatisfaction at rates similar to White women, yet, we have no framework or model for understanding how biracial and biethnic women develop this dissatisfaction and thus no culturally appropriate methods of intervention. To begin contributing to the literature on this topic, it seems important to explore the messages biracial and biethnic women receive regarding their bodies. Given the the saliency of parental and familial factors in the lives of Women of Color (Flynn & Fitzgibbon, 1996; Workman, 2011), this study will focus on messages received from parents. More specifically, "parental effects" will be conceptualized as any influences communicated by the participants' biological mother and father, either directly or indirectly. Further, qualitative methods were used as they allow themes to emerge from the data (Hill, 2012). Given that the literature on this topic is in its infancy, exploratory research methods will help us understand messages these women received from parents and how they made meaning out of these messages.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of how body image is defined, research suggests it begins to form early in childhood. In fact, as many as 50% of 8- to 13-year-olds report concerns about their weight and an overall dissatisfaction with their appearance (Schur, Sanders, & Steiner, 2000). Body dissatisfaction has traditionally been measured by examining behaviors (e.g., dieting, exercising, and avoiding situations where their bodies are under scrutiny), cognitions (e.g., negative attitudes about their body), and perceptions of body size discrepancy from an ideal (Ata, Ludden, & Lally, 2007). Davison, Markey, and Birch (2003) examined the longitudinal pattern of body dissatisfaction and weight concerns in a sample of girls from 5 to 9 years old. Participants filled out questionnaires and answered questions about their weight concerns, body dissatisfaction, eating attitudes, weight status, and dietary restraint and status every other year for 4 years. The researchers discovered a consistent pattern of girls' body dissatisfaction, whereby girls' reports of body dissatisfaction and weight concerns at 5 years old predicted concerns about their bodies and weight at 7 and 9 years old. These concerns were also related to their dieting, eating behaviors, and attitudes, as they got older. At the time, the study by Davison et al. (2003) was the first to suggest the stability of such attitudes using longitudinal methods, and warned of the effects that such attitude

have as girls move into adolescence and adulthood. Children with body dissatisfaction and eating disturbances are at an increased risk of eating disorders, depression, and other mental health conditions in adulthood (Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). Additionally, body dissatisfaction correlates with significant declines in self-esteem among adolescents, as they become increasingly aware of and internalize sociocultural attitudes regarding ideal body size (Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar, 2005; Furnham, Badmin, & Sneade, 2002). Moreover, the variables associated with children's body image concerns are similar to those found in adult samples, including sociocultural (peers, media, and parents) and individual (race, eating attitudes, and self-esteem) predictors (Clark & Tiggemann, 2008; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). These influences are present in tandem, so teasing out true individual effects would be difficult.

It is well documented that peers play a significant role in the development and maintenance of body image and body dissatisfaction (Clark & Tiggemann, 2008; Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004; Smolak, 2004). Peers engage in appearance-related conversations (Clark & Tiggemann, 2006) and appearance-related teasing (Smolak, 2004), which are often congruent with sociocultural messages regarding appearance. Clark and Tiggemann (2008) examined sociocultural and individual psychological predictors of body image in a sample of 9- to 12-year-old girls over a 1-year time frame. Using linear panel analysis, they found that peers are a relevant source of information, via appearance-related conversations, that influence how girls may develop beliefs about themselves and their bodies. Girls in the sample who had internalized appearance ideals desired a thinner body and had more negative feelings regarding their body. These authors also identified BMI as a significant predictor of lower "body esteem" (a term that

is synonymous with body image), concluding that individual psychological as well as biological variables interact to influence body image in children. Furthermore, higher internalization of appearance ideals predicted poor body esteem. Similar studies attest to the mediating effect of internalization on the relationship between appearance conversations by peers and body dissatisfaction (Jones et al., 2004).

Rieves and Cash (1996) argued that appearance-related teasing in childhood and adolescence plays a role in negative body image and body dissatisfaction in adulthood. These authors obtained a sample of 111 female college students and asked them to recall experiences of appearance-related teasing and criticism. They utilized Likert scale, checklists, and qualitative responses. Results indicated that this form of teasing was quite common in childhood and early adolescence, where 72% of the sample endorsed experiences of teasing. The form of teasing included being given a nickname referring to some physical attribute, teasing about facial features, stature, and weight. Interestingly, women in the sample did not regard their peers as the worst offenders of teasing, instead identifying members of their families, particularly their mothers and brothers, as engaging in more severe appearance-related teasing. The authors also found that the frequency, emotional impact, and duration of the teasing were significantly related to poor body image, rather than the presence or absence of the teasing. It was posited that teasing occurs on a continuum, which includes constructive feedback or joking about appearance, to name calling and taunting. Such results point to the significance of how the individual *perceives* the teasing or messages about their appearance. This perspective has received markedly less research attention despite being an invaluable source of information.

In addition, it can be argued that adolescence is a time in which teens worry about what their peers think of them, possibly further compounding the effect that appearance-related conversations and teasing have on body image and self-worth (Ata et al., 2007; Michael et al., 2014; Peterson, Paulson, & Williams, 2007). Research suggests that almost half of adolescent females talk with their friends about their weight and dieting options (Levine et al., 1994). Adolescent females become more peer oriented and seek out advice and support from their peer circle (Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994), and engage in greater amounts of body comparison (Paxton, 1996). An adolescent's peer circle provides and maintains a subculture that can serve to enhance or mitigate the importance of socially accepted norms regarding appearance, such as valuing thinness and engaging in weight loss behaviors, or actively rejecting these norms (Paxton, 1996). Peers can show their investment in thinness by conversations regarding popular diets, engaging in diets to lose weight, and openly idealizing the appearance of thin models and actresses (Levine et al., 1994). Levine, Smolak and Hayden (1994) found that a peer group's investment in thinness and dieting contributed to an adolescent girl's own investment and behaviors. This effect is further compounded when the girl perceives similar norms within several subcultures (e.g., family, different peer groups, media, etc.). However, peer groups can also serve a protective function from the development of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Paxton, 1996). The literature is growing with regards to adolescent eating disorder prevention programs utilizing peer groups and friendships as a crucial component (Paxton, 1996; Stice et al., 2013). Peers can be taught skills to identify triggers on body image dissatisfaction and provide support to other peer group members.

Evidence has mounted in the argument of the damaging effects of media (e.g., magazines, music videos, TV shows and movies, to name a few) to the development of body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Ata, et al., 2007; Levine et al., 1994). Adolescent girls use fashion magazines as important sources of information regarding what is beautiful and attractive (Levine et al., 1994). It is argued that adolescent girls internalize messages from the media and alter their behaviors to emulate and attain those unrealistic standards of beauty (Levine et al., 1994; Littleton & Ollendick, 2013). In a study by Field and colleagues (2001), 69% of preadolescent and adolescent girls report their body image is influenced by female models in magazines. Forty-seven percent of this sample expressed a desire to be thinner because of the images in magazines. Magazines are not the only media outlet which influences the body image of adolescent girls; studies have also examined the effect of television viewing on eating disorder and body dissatisfaction, suggesting similar effects to those of magazines.

Harrison and Heffner (2006) explored the relationship between media exposure and internalization of the thin body ideal in a sample of 257 preadolescent girls. They argued that this population is exposed to more damaging media images, especially television. The authors asked preadolescent girls how many hours of television they watched recently as well as their present and future body ideals (by showing adult figure drawings), then measured their body ideals and disordered eating one year later. They found that television viewing was a stronger predictor for future thinner body ideals than magazine viewing. Specifically, television viewing was related to an increase in problematic eating behaviors. While this study failed to find a significant relationship between television watching and current preadolescent body ideals, the girls in the

sample still preferred to be thinner. The authors suggested that this could be due to the saliency of other influences, such as peer groups and parents, which has been supported in the literature (Ata et al., 2007; Peterson et al., 2007; Smolak, Levine, & Schermer, 1999). It is possible that media influences become problematic when the messages are reinforced by parents or peers (Ata et al., 2007).

Research also points to families as being paramount in the development of their child's body image (Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003; Michael et al., 2014; Ricciardelli et al., 2001; Schur et al., 2000). At younger ages, families are the primary source of cultural messages about body size, via control of what their children watch on TV as well as communicating messages about dieting, body size, and their own body dissatisfaction (Schur et al., 2000). Parents may communicate body image messages indirectly, via their own dieting behaviors and body dissatisfaction, as well as directly, such as comments regarding their child's size and encouragement to lose weight (Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003; Peterson et al., 2007). However, the literature is mixed with regards to the impact that these familial messages have on children, which is similar to peer effects on body image. It appears that through these messages parents, in particular, can serve either a protective or damaging function in the development of their child's body image. Some studies suggest that parents' nurturance and support of their children is related to lower levels of body dissatisfaction. These factors have a lasting effect, possibly as far as into adulthood (Michael et al., 2014).

Pressure to lose weight to be "attractive" from mothers seem to have ample influence on an adolescent's view of their physical appearance. Peterson, Paulson, and Williams (2007) were the first to examine the combined influence of media, peers, and

mothers on eating disorder symptoms. They posited that environmental contexts rarely occur in isolation; thus they examined these three influences in tandem. The researchers obtained a sample of 333 male and female adolescents and asked them to complete Likert-type scales of their perceptions of being pressured by their peers, media, and their mothers. Canonical correlation statistical analyses were used to determine the extent to which pressure from peers, media, and mothers was related to eating disorder symptoms and behaviors, both cumulatively as well as individually. Their results indicated that less pressure from these sources was related to fewer eating disorder symptoms. The authors also found that adolescents who felt more pressure from their mothers than their friends to lose weight showed greater body dissatisfaction and higher bulimia symptoms. These authors suggested that adolescents who receive messages to lose weight from their mothers had likely heard these messages since childhood, making mother's messages more influential than peer and media messages alone. This study contributed to the growing literature on parental influences on children's body image, and was another study to highlight the importance of examining these influences from the viewpoint of the individual.

Other empirical work suggests that both parents have a significant but differential impact on their child's body image (Field et al., 2001; Keel et al., 1997), prompting the need to examine the impact of both parents' unique messages. For example, Lowes and Tiggemann (2003) found that fathers' level of body dissatisfaction did not correlate with their child's body dissatisfaction, regardless of the gender of the child. However, the participants in the Keery, Boutelle, van den Berg, and Thompson (2005) study reported more appearance-related teasing from their fathers compared to their mothers. Further,

father's teasing increased the risk that a sibling would also engage in teasing. According to the authors, father's teasing also led participants to engage in more social comparison and internalization of sociocultural ideals of thinness. Given these findings, it would be incomplete to assume that only mothers affect their daughter's feelings about their appearance. Such findings also draw attention to the need for more research on each parent's unique contribution. Perhaps fathers influence their daughter's body image development in other ways, given potential gender differences between sociocultural ideals with women's bodies.

Additionally, research by Geller et al. (2003) suggests that parents may overestimate their daughter's feelings about their bodies, and arguably may not fully comprehend the impact that critical messages may have. This is understandable given that body image is a private experience not often shared with parents. Parents were aware of their daughter's feelings of being heavier than they actually were despite this overestimation. The study by Geller and colleagues (2003), however, suffered from several key limitations. The reliability and validity of the single item figure rating scales they used was not established. Further, the findings may have been confounded by the fact that the body esteem measure used (the Body Esteem Scale; Mendelson et al., 2001) was much more comprehensive than the other, single-item measures used. Nevertheless, the authors did not find significant differences between the mother's and father's levels of awareness of their daughter's body esteem, indicating that neither parent is more or less aware of how their daughter feels about their body. While mothers are implicated as playing a larger role in their daughter's body image, there is evidence that father's teasing is related to their daughter's body dissatisfaction and internalization of sociocultural

ideals of thinness (Keery et al., 2005). Of note, it appears that the risk factors of body dissatisfaction in children are similar to those in adults (Smolak, 2004).

Body Image Development in Racial/Ethnic Minorities

In reviewing the literature, it is readily evident that the majority of body image research has utilized primarily White female samples (Ganem, de Heer, & Morera, 2009; Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Studies that utilized diverse samples either under-sampled racial/ethnic minorities, and/or compared Women of Color to White women (Capodilupo & Kim, 2014). This is problematic, given the well-known increase in racial/ethnic minorities in the United States (U.S. Census, 2014b), as well as the implications of assuming that White women and Women of Color internalize Western standards of beauty in the same way (Gordon et al., 2010; Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Some of the existing literature comparing White women and Women of Color reports that White women have higher levels of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating than their African American (Barry & Grilo, 2002; Grabe & Hyde, 2006), Hispanic (Barry & Grilo, 2002), and Asian-American counterparts (Mintz & Kashubeck, 1999), while other research contradicts these findings (Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Shaw et al., 2004). Among White women, the literature suggests that family is influential in the development of eating disorders (Pae, 2001). Overall, it appears that the evidence for greater body satisfaction among African American women when compared to White women is fairly consistent, however, the literature is mixed with regard to the body dissatisfaction among White, Hispanic, and Asian American women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006).

Some of the literature which supports the claim that there are cultural differences

in body dissatisfaction have argued that racial and ethnic minorities do not internalize the same sociocultural ideals for thinness as White women. This sociocultural model helps explain why some women are at increased risk for developing eating disorders while others are protected, or "buffered" against it (Shaw et al., 2004; Stice, 1994). Cash and colleagues (2004) did a major review of the literature on racial/ethnic differences in women and men's body image from 1983 to 2001. These authors examined not only racial/ethnic differences, but also how body image has changed in a span of 19 years. Using a cross-sectional research design, they analyzed the findings of 22 studies with a total of 3,127 college-age participants. Additionally, all 22 studies utilized some subscales within the same measure, the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ; Cash, 2000). Specifically, they focused on the Appearance Evaluation, Body Areas Satisfaction, Overweight Preoccupation, and Appearance Orientation subscales. The authors analyzed the data using a series of ANOVAs, and found that White women had significantly higher levels of body-image dissatisfaction compared to non-White women, $F(2, 2483) = 102.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. This trend remained stable over time.

It should be noted that although the Cash et al. (2004) study corroborated one of the major trends in the literature regarding differences between White and non-White women's body image, the study suffered from severe methodological flaws. The studies chosen were only studies conducted by the author and colleagues, using a measure that the author created, and using samples obtained at the same University, calling into question the generalizability, as well as the possible researcher bias inherent in the Cash et al. (2004) study. Furthermore, they separated their sample into "White" and "Non-

White" women to facilitate comparison, rather than exploring within-gender racial/ethnic comparisons. A White and non-White comparison is problematic because it obscures potential differences between racial/ethnic groups (Gordon et al., 2010). This is also problematic given that such a method inadvertently assumes White as the normative group under which other groups are compared.

While some studies attest to the discrepancy between White and non-White women's body image, other studies have not found significant differences (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). In a meta-analytic review, Grabe and Hyde (2006) synthesized the literature on ethnic differences in women's body dissatisfaction. They statistically aggregated the results of 98 studies from 41 different journals. They focused on studies which examined the *evaluative* component of body image, namely body dissatisfaction, because this aspect of body image has been implicated in a variety of mental health outcomes, as discussed later. Additionally, their standards for inclusion as well as analyses were more rigorous than previous meta-analyses (e.g., Cash et al., 2004); included were studies that had analyzed original data, reported on the samples' racial/ethnic background as well as included more than one racial/ethnic group, and contained participants who were not selected based on assessment scores (e.g., individuals who meet criteria for an eating disorder). These researchers also compared Women of Color (specifically, Black, Hispanic, and Asian American) with each other rather than just with White women in their analyses. The authors corrected the effect sizes for bias with regard to estimating population effect sizes, so that studies with more participants were assigned more weights, and all effect sizes were weighted by an inverted variance. Using mixed-effects models in order to account for both random and systematic effects, the authors found a

small effect size ($d = 0.29$, $p < .05$) indicating overall that White females have slightly higher levels of body dissatisfaction than Black females. This difference became even smaller as females got older, suggesting age as a potential moderator variable. Grabe and Hyde (2006) did not find a significant difference between White Asian American ($d = 0.01$), White Hispanic ($d = 0.09$), and Asian American Hispanic ($d = -0.07$) women's level of body dissatisfaction. Small differences were found when Black and Asian American ($d = -0.12$) as well as Black and Hispanic women ($d = -0.18$) were compared.

The Grabe and Hyde (2006) study suggests that body dissatisfaction and subsequent likelihood of developing an eating disorder may not just be a *Golden Girl Problem,* such that only White women are vulnerable, as was originally thought (Mastria, 2002). In other words, the authors concluded that both White women and Women of Color experience similar levels of body dissatisfaction. More recent work supports this notion (Grogan, 2008), indicating that the desire for thinness is becoming more common across cultures, as these cultures are increasingly exposed to Western beauty ideals (Gordon et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2004). The results of this study lend support for adopting more affirmative racial and ethnic specific body size and shape norms among diverse groups. A similar trend was found in a study which examined ethnic differences in eating disorders (Shaw et al., 2004). However, minority women may not have the same issues with their body as White women despite reporting similar levels of dissatisfaction. Alternatively, it is possible that the lack of statistically significant differences are due to how body dissatisfaction and eating disturbances in minority women are being studied. For example, some researchers have approached the concept of body satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as measured with such variables as BMI (among others), as if they were

constructed in the same way by different racial/ethnic groups. It is possible that racial and ethnic differences in body image, body dissatisfaction, and eating disorders are more complex than originally thought (Sira & Ballard, 2009), where women of different racial and ethnic groups are defining their body image in different ways. Further, Women of Color may be differentially affected by the influences on body image and related constructs that are cited in the literature. This notion warrants a brief review of the literature with specific racial and ethnic minority groups, namely, African American, Hispanic, and Asian American women.

Body Image in African American Women

As indicated above, most of the research on comparing African American women's body image with those of White women suggests that African American women espouse larger body size ideals than White or Hispanic women (Cox et al., 2010; Gordon et al., 2010; Grabe & Hyde, 2006). In general, African American women endorse less pressure to be thin or lose weight (Cox et al., 2010), which makes it less likely that they will develop eating disorder symptoms (Gordon et al., 2010). Perhaps one reason for this difference is that African American females may deemphasize external beauty as a way to reject Western beauty ideals, and may instead emphasize personality traits (e.g., attitude, style, and confidence; Parker et al., 1995), or otherwise have more flexible perceptions of ideal beauty (Sira & Ballard, 2009). Capodilupo and Kim (2014) identified four subcategories of African American women's body image: skin, hair, physique, and attitude. Lovejoy (2001) supported this argument and drew on feminist literature to posit that African American women may construct femininity differently in their communities.

This author also alluded to a potential downside to these differences, indicating that African American women may hold themselves to different beauty standards in order to avoid addressing health problems such as obesity. Conflicting research suggests that African American women do experience pressure to conform to Western beauty ideals to be thinner (e.g., Shaw et al., 2004), and do manifest symptoms of eating pathology (Gilbert et al., 2009). In light of these contradictory findings, one can conclude that there is no dominant pattern of development of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders in this population. How do we explain this heterogeneity in study findings?

In reviewing the literature on African American women's body image, it becomes apparent that most researchers assume race is the protective factor that "buffers" some African American women, though this does not explain why some African American women still hold themselves to Western beauty standards. One possible alternative is examining racial identity, rather than race, as a potential protective factor in the development of body image for African American women (Capodilupo & Kim, 2014). A growing amount of research supports this argument. For example, Watson and colleagues (2013) recently examined how having a positive and affirming racial identity influences African American women's internalization of Western beauty ideals, which subsequently influences the development of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. They obtained a sample of 278 African American females and surveyed them about their racial identity attitudes, sexually objectifying experiences, body shame, body surveillance (which the authors defined as the degree to which women monitor their body and consider how it looks), and internalization of sociocultural standards of beauty, among other variables. Sexual objectification was examined as it had previously been linked to disordered eating

behaviors in women via the internalization of Western beauty standards (e.g., Moradi et al., 2005).

The authors conducted a moderated measured variable path analysis and controlled for age and BMI, and examined the moderating role of racial identity in the relationship between internalized standards of beauty, body surveillance, and sexually objectifying experiences. This method was preferred as it estimates moderated mediation effects, or the degree of an indirect effect at particular moderator values (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Results indicated that internalized multiculturally inclusive racial identity moderated the relationship between internalized Western beauty standards and sexually objectifying experiences; the indirect relationship between body surveillance and sexual objectification experiences became nonsignificant when inclusive racial attitudes were one standard deviation above the mean ($M = 34.39$, $z = 0.81$, $p = 0.42$, indirect effect = 0.05, $SE = 0.06$). They concluded that women in the sample were "buffered" when they had higher levels of a multiculturally inclusive racial identity. It should be noted that the authors used quantitative measures, most of which were normed on White undergraduate females. In some cases, Watson and colleagues (2013) were the first to use the measures on an African American sample.

While the above-mentioned findings are preliminary, they corroborate other studies that attest to the role that racial identity plays in the development of body image in African American females (Sira & Ballard, 2009). Capodilupo and Kim (2014) used qualitative measures in their exploration of Black women's body image, which addresses the limitations of using quantitative measures that have not been normed for African American females, as was the case in the Watson et al., (2003) study. The authors

recruited 26 Black females to participate in a total of six focus groups discussing body image, culture, and body ideals. Using grounded theory, the authors noted that Black women are also susceptible to body dissatisfaction, and discussed three main influences on body image: media messages, interpersonal influences (of Black men and family members), and experiences of oppression. Participants spoke about the positive and negative effects of interpersonal influences, as well as the negative influences of media and experiences of oppression. Black women may receive social support and acceptance regarding their appearance from family members that may prepare them to challenge and resist Western beauty ideals. This and other studies add support for the argument of examining parental and familial contributions to minority women's body image (Flynn & Fitzgibbon, 1996).

Body Image in Hispanic and Latina Women

Similarly to studies with African American women, Hispanic/Latina women have been primarily compared with White women in the body image literature, even when other race and ethnic groups were included (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Additionally, the literature regarding Hispanic/Latina females' body image (and related constructs) is also somewhat inconsistent. As indicated above, a meta-analysis aggregating 31 effect sizes by Grabe and colleagues (2006) found no difference between White and Hispanic women's level of body dissatisfaction (d = 0.01), and 26 independent effect sizes indicated a small difference between African American and Hispanic women's body dissatisfaction (d = -0.18). In the same study, 17 effect sizes were averaged and weighted to determine that Asian American and Hispanic women did not differ in their levels of

body dissatisfaction (d = -0.07). In support of this finding, Latinas were found to have similar levels of body dissatisfaction and desire for thinness as White women when examining cultural body shape ideals (Gordon et al., 2010).

While the vast majority of studies with this population have not found significant differences in body dissatisfaction when compared to White women, one study cited significant difference between Hispanic and White females' body image (Barry & Grilo, 2002). This study examined body image disturbances and disordered eating among a large sample (n = 715) of adolescent psychiatric inpatients (who were not necessarily admitted because of eating-related disturbances). This study included males and females from White, Latin@, and African American groups. The authors conducted a factor analysis on 13 symptoms related to body image disturbances and disordered eating drawn from the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI), then examined the gender and ethnicity patterns in the factors. The three factors were titled "restriction," "body image disturbance," and "binge eating." All factors had at least adequate internal reliability (.84, .86, and .60, respectively). Hispanic females, in comparison to White females, obtained significantly lower scores on body image disturbance (mean difference = 0.47, $p < .05$) as well as on the MACI Body Disapproval subscale (mean difference = 2.83, $p < .05$). However, notable methodological and sampling flaws are evident. Specifically, the population under study (male and female psychiatric inpatient adolescents) could not easily be generalized to nonpsychiatric populations. Additionally, less than 11% of the sample identified as Latin@ American, which included males and females, calling the generalizability of the findings to Hispanic/Latin@ populations into question.

Just like racial identity may act as a "buffer" against internalizing Western beauty

ideals in African American women, a strong affiliation with one's ethnic identity may be similarly protective in Hispanic/Latin@ populations (Warren et al., 2005). Ethnic identity has been defined as a subjective sense of belongingness and identification with an ethnic group (Phinney, 1996). Warren and colleagues (2005) posited that this occurs in two ways; an individual's ethnic identity may involve less focus on physical appearance as central to a woman's worth, and that ethnic group may not idealize thinner body sizes. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that Hispanic/Latin@ cultures find larger, curvier women more attractive than the ultrathin standard found in Western cultures (Chamorro & Flores-Ortiz, 2000; Gordon et al., 2010; Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Hispanic/Latina women living in the United States are likely aware of Western beauty ideals but may not as readily internalize them because of the strength of affiliation to their ethnic group.

Alternatively, it is also possible that Western beauty ideals do not emphasize the same physical attributes that are important to Hispanic/Latina women. Western culture emphasizes having a thin body, light skin and eyes, and long legs. Research over time supports the notion that cultural ideals of appearance vary between racial and ethnic groups (Altabe, 1998; Warren, 2014). It is possible that existing research does not adequately capture the physical elements of body dissatisfaction in Hispanic and Latina women. For example, is leg length as salient in Hispanic/Latin@ cultures as it is in Western culture? The findings of a recent study suggest that facial features, particularly lips and eyes, as well as lower body proportions are salient components informing body image among Latinas (Warren, 2014). Such findings draw attention to whether using established quantitative measures of body dissatisfaction accurately capture the unique

contributions of those constructs in diverse populations.

Another potential major issue with measuring body image in Hispanic/Latinas involves the grouping of all Hispanic/Latinas into one category despite the large amounts of within-group heterogeneity. This can easily obscure unique influences on body image and related constructs (Warren et al., 2005). Additionally, some Hispanics/Latin@s may racially identify as White; one study found that 58% of Hispanics surveyed as part of the Latino National Political Survey regarding their identity identified themselves as White (Falcon, 1995). Finally, recent research attests to Hispanic/Latin@ cultural values regarding close family relationships (Warren, 2014). Therefore, it may be a mistake to study Hispanic/Latina body image without also examining the role parents and family play, as Hispanics/Latinas may be particularly vulnerable to internalizing messages received from these sources.

Body Image in Asian Women

There is a severe scarcity of research on Asian women's body image, which makes it difficult to identify elements of Asian women's ideal body type (Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Pae, 2001). Additionally, some research focuses on Asian American women rather than Asian women; however, this term appears to refer to Asian women who were born in the United States as opposed to a woman born from parents of different races. As with the other groups discussed, the literature on Asian women's body image and dissatisfaction and eating pathology are mixed. Some studies (e.g., Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Mintz & Kashubeck, 1999; Shaw et al., 2004) argue that Asian American women's level of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders were similar to White women's, while a

smaller amount of studies (e.g., Akan & Grilo, 1995) have purported that Asian American women have lower levels of eating disorders. Additionally, some research has examined the degree to which acculturation and racial/ethnic identity impact body image and its related constructs (Akan et al., 1995; Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Phan & Tylka, 2006). Overall, the research seems to indicate that acculturation may not be relevant, at least with regard to eating disorders (Akan et al., 1995; Ogden & Elder, 1998).

As with African American women, Asian women may adopt self-protective strategies in order to deidentify and avoid internalizing Western beauty ideals (Evans & McConnell, 2003). However, it is possible that they respond differently to Western standards than other minority groups (Evans & McConnell, 2003). For example, Asian women may be more likely to conform to Western beauty standards because they may be more likely to conform to salient cultural norms (Evans & McConnell, 2003; Phan & Tylka, 2006). Therefore, they may not employ self-protective strategies like the literature indicates other racial and ethnic groups do. In African American and Hispanic/Latina women, these self-protective strategies were associated with a strong racial/ethnic identity (Warren et al., 2005; Watson et al., 2013).

One research study on Asian American women's disordered eating found that ethnic identity predicted higher self-esteem, though did not directly predict internalizing Western beauty ideals (Phan & Tylka, 2006). The authors measured perceived sociocultural pressures, internalization of attitudes towards appearance, self-esteem, body image attitudes, disordered eating, and ethnic identity. Their findings indicated that the relationship between body preoccupation and pressure for thinness was stronger for women with high ethnic identification. Instead, self-esteem was found to "buffer" the

body preoccupation and pressure to be thinner relationship. Using these findings, the authors concluded that ethnic identity had little impact on this relationship. However, one could also argue that because women who endorsed a stronger ethnic identity had higher self-esteem, ethnic identity would then indirectly influence "the pressure to be thin–body preoccupation" relationship. Given that this was one of the only studies to find conflicting results with regard to ethnic identity as a protective factor, more research examining the role of ethnic identity on body image needs to be done. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that a stronger ethnic identity may not lead to self-protective strategies among Asian and Asian American women.

Evans and colleagues (2003) examined how exposure to Western beauty ideals impacts self-esteem in a sample of White, Asian, and Black men and women (n = 170) using a series of one-way and between groups ANOVAs. The researchers measured participants' self-esteem, then showed three photos of attractive "mainstream" models (who fit Western beauty ideal standards) and asked participants to choose which model was the most attractive. Following this, participants filled out the Body Esteem Scale (BES; Franzoi & Shields, 1984) and asked to rate themselves on their own perceived attractiveness. In the second portion, participants were shown three photos of an attractive Black, White, and Asian woman and asked to rate the degree to which they desire to look like each. Additionally, participants completed measures assessing the discrepancy between their actual and ideal self, as well as their level of conformity to norms.

A main effect of race was found, F (2,167) = 9.75, $p < 0.001$, and a follow-up multiple comparisons test indicated that Asian women rated the mainstream model as

more attractive than Black women, and rated them similarly to White women. Additionally, the authors conducted a mixed-design ANOVA to test for racial differences in self-esteem between pre and post exposure to the model photos, and found a significant main effect, F (2,167) = 10.93, $p < 0.001$. This indicated that Asian women who endorsed exposure to mainstream standards reported lower levels of self-esteem (M = 19.5) when compared to Black women (M = 21.9). There was also a main effect of race regarding conformity to cultural norms, where Asian women showed the highest need to conform to mainstream ideals, F (2,167) = 10.13, $p < 0.001$. The authors also found that Asian women had the highest degree of mismatch between their actual and ideal self, not surprising given their high conformity scores combined with their exposure to Western beauty ideals. Taken together, this study lends support for the notion that Asian women are not engaging in protective strategies similar to those that members of other minority groups use. Although the results were not pertaining to Asian American women in particular, the findings highlight the notion that Asian women likely internalized standards of beauty that are unattainable for them, which could lead to poor body image and self-esteem. Perhaps a strong in-group racial identity is not as "buffering" and salient in Asian and Asian American women in the United States. It is notable that the authors did not distinguish between Asian groups, only stating that they recruited some participants from the Chinese Student Coalition. As highlighted in other studies above, this obscures intraracial and intraethnic differences. The notion that identification with only certain minority groups "buffers" against internalizing Western beauty standards has been discussed by other researchers (e.g., Evans & McConnell, 2003; Mintz & Kashubeck, 1999).

Other studies have attempted to discern the physical features which Asian American women are most dissatisfied with. For example, Mintz and Kashubeck (1999) found that, compared with White women, Asian American women were more dissatisfied with their eyes, overall facial features, arms, height, and breasts. Although not significantly different from White women, Asian American women in the sample endorsed that their feelings were strongly affected by their appearance. Similarly to the findings by Evans and McConnell (2003), Asian American women reported lower levels of global self-esteem. These findings are of interest because it suggests that the features that Asian American women are more dissatisfied with are features that cannot be altered by healthy lifestyle changes (such as exercise).

In Asian cultures, there is a high value placed on the family unit and harmony in relationships (Pae, 2001). Therefore, it is possible that the family unit within these cultures plays an influential role in the development of a daughter's body image, though there is little research in this area. One older study indicated that such a relationship exists, particularly when there is a high degree of maternal control (McCourt & Waller, 1995). Pae (2001) examined this in a study of family factors (control and conflict) and body image factors (drive for thinness and body dissatisfaction) in Asian American college women. They failed to find a significant relationship between the two sets of variables, indicating that family does not play a role in body image. However, when the variables were compared individually, there was a significant relationship between family control and drive for thinness. In addition, most studies examining this topic have been conducted in the United Kingdom where different standards of beauty may be held than in the United States. While research appears to support the role of family on women's

body image (Pae, 2001), not enough research exists with this specific minority group to draw clear conclusions. The literature would undoubtedly benefit from examining the role of parents on women who identify with who different racial/ethnic groups.

Body Image and Biracial/Biethnic Women

An individual's body image is not static. Rather, it is open to change and is in large part determined through social and cultural experiences (Grogan, 2008). But what if someone identifies with more than one racial or ethnic group? Unfortunately, biracial and biethnic individuals are largely ignored in the body image and eating disorder literature, making it difficult to infer a pattern one way or the other. The only published study examining binge eating and body dissatisfaction in biracial women included this sample as an afterthought, with only 6.1% of the sample identifying in this group. Ivezaj and colleagues (2010) included bi/multiracial men and women in their examination of levels of depression, anxiety, and body dissatisfaction, evaluating these variables across sex and racial groups. Given that there was no previous research with his group, the authors provided a tentative hypothesis that bi/multiracial individuals would report similar to greater binge eating behaviors when compared to White and Black individuals in the sample. The authors used an undergraduate student convenience sample and asked participants to fill out demographic, depression, anxiety, body image, and weight history measures. They defined binge eating as answering "yes" to the question, "During the past six months, did you often eat within any two hour period what most people would regard as an unusually large amount of food" and endorsing a loss of control over eating.

Chi-square analyses did not find a significant difference between racial groups on

binge eating behaviors, though 41.8% of the bi/multiracial sample reported such behaviors. Among those who reported binge-eating behaviors and were not overweight, bi/multiracial women endorsed similar levels of appearance evaluation with White women. These levels were greater than Black women and White men, and accounted for 15 % of the variance. Bi/multiracial women who were not overweight and did not report binge-eating behaviors reported the greatest levels of overweight preoccupation. Overweight bi/multiracial women reported binge eating behaviors had higher levels of anxiety than any other group, and had higher levels of depression than White men and women. Additionally, these women also reported engaging in more appearance evaluation than Black women, as well as more overweight preoccupation than White men.

This study provides a number of significant findings that informs the scant biracial and biethnic body image and eating disorder literature. It appears that biracial and biethnic women are engaging in binge eating behaviors at rates that are similar to or greater than White women. Further, biracial and biethnic women appear to have similar body shape concerns and levels of appearance evaluation to White women, and reported the highest levels of overweight preoccupation than all other groups. Such findings are startling given that most body image and eating disorder literature points to the severity of body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptoms in White women. Taken together, biracial and biethnic women appear to be at risk for developing depression and anxiety as a result of appearance-related variables similarly to White women. It is possible that these similarities are due to the women in the sample conceptualizing body image in the same way (Erickson & Gerstle, 2007). However, these and other variables may affect biracial

and biethnic women in different ways. For example, sociocultural variables, such as the ones previously discussed, may have also contributed to the findings in this study, though they were not directly measured. Ivezaj and colleagues (2010) recommended that future research include variables pertaining to identity, as biracial and biethnic women may struggle with identifying with more than one racial group (Hall, 2001).

Parents have been shown to play a vital role in the racial and ethnic identity formation of their children, which can have lasting effects well into adulthood (Qian, 2004). Parents instill their children with a racial identity in overt as well as covert ways. For example, racial identity can be communicated by the schools that parents send their child to and the neighborhoods they live in, to name a few (Qian, 2004). Additionally, the literature suggests that biracial women in part rely on others' perceptions of which racial group they belong in rather than identifying based on their racial composition (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001). Outsider opinion is usually based on the phenotypical appearance of the biracial individual, which may be ambiguous (Workman, 2011). Ultimately, a biracial individual has to navigate social mores and cultures that oftentimes conflict with each other, and may feel like they don't belong to any one racial group. With regard to beauty standards and body image, biracial women may find themselves trying to meet the beauty standards of both parents simultaneously despite the fact that they may contradict each other (Workman, 2011).

It is interesting that some research supports the notion that the mother is the primary means of socialization in the home (e.g., Rockquemore, Laszloffy, & Noveske, 2006), while other research points to the father's primary role in racial socialization given that he is the family patriarch (e.g., Qian, 2004). Such inconsistency supports the notion

of examining the influences of both parents. Nevertheless, the key perspective missing in the research on parental influences on their child's racial/ethnic identity is that of the child (Lao-Arthur, 2011). Therefore, the current study examined parental influences to the body image of biracial and biethnic women by interviewing the women about their experiences, rather than interviewing the parents. Specifically, the current study sought to understand biracial and biethnic women's perceptions of parental attitudes regarding their bodies, as well as the effect that these attitudes had on their body image and identity.

Biracial Identity Development

The literature on monoracial (e.g., African American, Asian, White, etc.) identity development is well developed. A variety of identity development models were created to help understand the processes by which an individual comes to racially identify. Typically, all of these models suggest that monoracial individuals progress through a sequence of stages of increasing complexity throughout their lifetime. What these models share in common is that they are developmental, linear models, and that each "stage" is induced by a critical encounter or experience that leads one to reevaluate their racial status (Spanierman & Soble, 2010). For individuals who identify with a minority race, their ultimate goal is to recognize and overcome the effects of internalized racism, and to develop an overall secure and positive sense of identity; the individual can recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both their own and other cultures as well as espouse an appreciation for diversity (Chae & Larres, 2010).

Monoracial identity development models do not adequately consider the unique experiences of biracial individuals and therefore have a number of shortcomings (Gaither,

2015). Poston (1990) highlighted the shortcomings inherent in these models, including that they do not allow for integrating two or more racial identities. Additionally, monoracial identity development models (particularly for minority groups) purport that an individual will initially reject their minority culture in favor of the dominant (e.g., White) culture, then later reject the dominant culture. However, biracial individuals may belong to both the dominant and minority groups. Further, monoracial identity models imply that the minority group accepts an individual and this individual subsequently experiences a sense of community and solidarity with this group, particularly in the Immersion/Emersion stages (Poston, 1990; Richardson, Bethea, Hayling, & Williamson-Taylor, 2010). However, it has been found that many biracial individuals are not fully accepted by their parent cultures as fully "one of them"; in other words, they often receive the message that they are "not [fill in the blank] enough" (Poston, 1990, p. 153).

In addition to the above-mentioned limitations, existing identity development models do not fully consider systemic and social factors that uniquely influence biracial individuals. Historically, racial groups have been stratified according to the "one-drop rule," in which children of interracial unions were categorized as belonging to the minority or marginalized group (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005; Rockquemore, 1998). For example, a child of a union between a Black parent and a White parent was considered to be black. However, this antiquated rule fails to take into consideration the potentially dynamic nature of biracial identity, as well as the notion that identity is in large part a choice.

Biracial Identity Development Models

The first biracial identity model was developed by Stonequist (1937), termed the Marginal Person Model, in order to account for the assumption that a mixed race individual is "associated with both worlds but do not wholly belong to either" (Poston, 1990, p. 153). Thought of in the identity development literature as a deficit model, the Marginal Person Model was created by comparing the experiences of Black individuals to White individuals and using the responses of the White individuals as the norm. Stonequist (1937) viewed biracial identity development as being fraught with problems because biracial individuals could only be marginal members of their respective racial groups (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995). One of the flaws of this initial model is that it situates the source of identity disturbance within the individual rather than considering the possibility that the biracial individual may not receive mentoring and support from their parent cultures (Poston, 1990).

Several researchers have begun to posit biracial identity models that are closer to better capturing the process of identity formation for biracial individuals. Poston (1990) created a developmental, five-stage model of biracial identity development that considers a biracial individual's reference group orientation (RGO). Reference group orientation can be thought of as encompassing an individual's group identity that includes racial preference, self-identification, and attitudes (Cross, 1987). This model also posits that a biracial individual will experience some maladjustment as they navigate the identity formation process. The first stage, *personal identity,* typically occurs during childhood where the individual has a basic sense of self outside of awareness of their mixed racial or ethnic background. At this point, the biracial child has not developed their RGO

attitudes, and their family primarily influences their sense of self. During the second stage, *choice of group categorization*, the individual chooses a monoracial identity from one of their parent cultures. Their decision of which parent's culture to choose depends on personal, social support, and status factors, including physical appearance, parental influence, peer group influence, demographics of neighborhood, and participation in each groups' cultures, to name a few. Eventually, the biracial person (usually in adolescence) moves towards the *enmeshment/denial* stage, characterized by guilt over having chosen one racial group over another, as well as cognitive dissonance at choosing an identity that does not fully capture one's background. They may feel as if they betrayed the parent whose race they did not identify with. In the following stage, *appreciation*, the biracial person begins to learn about and appreciate both parent's racial groups and consequently broaden their reference group orientation. However, they typically continue to identify with one racial group and are still influenced by the above-mentioned factors. In the final stage, *integration*, the individual may continue to identify primarily with one racial group, though they recognize, value, and integrate their multiple identities.

Kich (1992) also posited a model of biracial identity development, based on his findings from interviewing Japanese/White adults. He noted that a biracial person will move through a sense of self-devaluation and dissonance toward a valued and integrated racial identity throughout their lifetime. Kich ultimately developed a three-stage model corresponding to different age groups, beginning with *Awareness of Differentness and Dissonance*. In this initial stage (which lasts from ages 3 to 10), a biracial person will have a sense of being different from others. This noted difference can be perceived both positively (when with a supportive family) or negatively (when with peers who may tease

or reject). Kich (1992) maintained that parents helping to develop a positive self-concept for their child during this stage are essential in fostering an integration of their racial identities. Biracial children between ages 8 through late adolescence pass through the second stage, *Struggle for Acceptance*, where their peer group exerts more influence than previously. A biracial teen may get questions regarding their background given the perception of being different, and they likely will identify more with one parent's culture than the other. In the final stage, *Self-Acceptance and Assertation of an Interracial Identity*, the biracial young adult develops a congruent identity rather than having their identity be determined by others' expectations and stereotypes. Although a relevant and promising model, Kich's model was developed based on the experiences of 15 Japanese/White adults.

Shortly after Kich published his model, Kerwin and Ponterotto (1995) reviewed, synthesized, and addressed some of the shortcomings of predecessor models to create a six-stage model of biracial development that illustrates the progression of racial awareness. Unlike previous models, this model acknowledged the possibility that an individual's identity may differ between their public and private lives, and further acknowledged that a biracial individual might feel rejected by groups of color as well as Whites. Further, this model asserts that identity formation is dependent on various societal, personal, and environmental factors, similar to Poston's model. Also similar to previous models, Kerwin and Ponterotto's model connects the stages of identity development and formation to different age ranges.

From birth to 5 years of age, a biracial child is said to be in the *Preschool* stage, where they begin to notice the physical differences between each parent that is of a

different race and might start to develop concepts of their parents' races depending upon how open each parent is to addressing race-related issues. The child enters the second stage (titled *Entry to School)* during their early school years where they are exposed to different social groups that may question where the biracial child comes from (e.g. they begin to be asked "What are you?"). Additionally, children at this age often attempt to classify themselves and others according to their physical features (e.g. cookies and cream, café con leche), though are more likely to use labels provided by their parents when parents discuss these labels. As the biracial person enters the *Preadolescence* stage, they become more aware of the social meanings ascribed to different racial groups based on physical features as well as exposure to racism or more diverse environments. In *Adolescence*, the biracial person feels pressure to identify with one parent's racial group over another. They are more likely to pick the racial group that most fits within societal expectations. In the *College/Young Adulthood* stage, they are more likely to accept their biracial background but there may be continued immersion primarily in one culture. However, biracial adults at this stage are more likely to understand the advantages and disadvantages of being a part of more than one racial group. In the final stage, *Adulthood*, the individual has greater flexibility in how they identify themselves, and exhibit an openness and interest in continuing to explore race and culture.

Most of these models make the assumption that a fully integrated biracial identity is the ideal, when it is clear that biracial identity formation is fluid and hypothesized to be context specific (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). In order to account for this, Root (1999) presented an ecological model of biracial identity development, which considers racial identity development in tandem with other statuses (e.g. gender, sexual orientation,

class). This model breaks away from polarized racial frameworks (such as Asian–White) and considers how environments lead individuals to have to renegotiate their racial identities via three lenses: inherited influences, traits, and social contexts with community (Root, 1999). Inherited influences include environmental as well as biological inheritances, such as phenotype, parent's racial identity, and presence or absence of extended family, among others. These inherited influences will expose biracial individuals to very different experiences in life that will in turn influence their identity formation. The second lens, traits, includes social skills, coping skills, temperament, and talents. These qualities will interact with environmental factors as well, and in turn affect learning and identity formation. Finally, social interactions within the local community, including work, school, and friends, provide the biracial individual with information on how they are being perceived. This is salient given that research has shown that the perception others have of us influences identity formation (Williams, 1996). Taken together, racial identity is co-constructed with other important aspects of an individual's life, meaning that there are many possibilities with regard to how biracial persons, even originating from the exact same racial groups, will ultimately identify.

Rockquemore (1998) also presented findings pertaining to biracial identity development based on data collected from biracial Black/White adults, concluding that biracial individuals have different understandings and meanings attached to their identity. She identified four ways that a biracial individual can understand their identity: Traditional identity, Border identity, Protean identity, and Transcendent identity. When a biracial person espouses a Traditional identity, they identify singularly with one of their racial groups, only stating they are biracial when specifically asked. These individuals

may say they are biracial when discussing the lineage of each birth parent. Some biracial persons claim a Border identity, which stresses the "in-betweenness" of their experiences; they do not consider themselves fully one race or another. Rather, their racial identity is formulated by incorporating different elements of each of their races. In Rockquemore's study, some participants that fit within this identity expressed difficulty in discussing how they identified without also discussing the problem of racial categorization (Rockquemore, 1998).

In the Protean identity, the biracial individual can shift how they identify based on the context of a social interaction. These individuals feel they are a part of several different worlds which they can navigate and cross depending on what the situation calls for. For example, a "protean" Black/White biracial person may consider themselves Black, White, and biracial. Finally, in the Transcendent identity, the biracial person rejects the salience of race in their identity, instead responding with unrelated elements of how they identify when asked about race. Rockquemore (1998) posited that this status was reserved only for those biracial individuals with an ambiguous appearance (in her study, they were those who could pass for White).

While Root (1999) hypothesizes multiple possibilities in how a biracial person identifies as having a "healthy" biracial identity, Choi-Misailidis (2010) proposed a multiracial status (rather than stage) model which purports to account for the dynamic nature of identity formation. Choi-Misailidis makes the assumption that as an individual gets older, they become able to understand increasingly complex information about themselves. Further, the prevailing identity an individual takes is the one their environment reinforces the most; it becomes the identity they can most easily project to

the world. In the Multiracial-Heritage Awareness and Personal Affiliation Theory (M-HAPA) model, it is hypothesized that mixed race individuals will vary in the strength of their identification with each identity status depending on the context. For example, a mixed race person may identify more with one of their races when in the presence of others of the same race.

The M-HAPA model posits that an individual's identity is comprised of an internal identity and an external identification with a mixed race background (Choi-Misailidis, 2010). The internal identity entails an awareness of ancestry, including personal attitudes and beliefs about their multiracial heritage, sense of belonging to each racial group, and feelings about each racial group the individual belongs to. The external identification includes how the individual identifies on the U.S. census, their participation in cultural practices, societal roles, relationship with each side of the family, and choice of partner and friendships. The healthiest outcome, according to the author, is when there is congruence between an individual's internal and external identifications.

Choi-Misailidis (2010) purported three identity statuses as part of the M-HAPA model: Singular identity status, Marginal identity status, and Integrated identity status. When a mixed race person claims a Singular identity status, the individual identifies with one racial group and excludes others, similar to Rockquemore's (1998) Traditional identity. This identity status is aided by the tendency of others to place mixed race individuals into a single racial category based on physical features and how neatly the mixed race person fits into a racial stereotype (Root, 1990). Oftentimes this identity that others have placed on the person is internalized as their reference group. An individual claiming this status also perceives their place in society as congruent with this reference

group, and they exclusively appreciate the cultural practices of their singular group. Additionally, this person may experiment with each of their cultural backgrounds, but they will do so one at a time.

The Marginal identity status can be understood as an awareness within the mixed race individual that they are different from others. Although conceptually similar to Stonequist's (1937) understanding of marginality in that the marginal person belongs to two worlds but never completely to either, it differs in that Choi-Misailidis (2010) considers a person in the Marginal identity status to be in-process in their identity formation. This status is also similar to Rockquemore's (1998) Border identity. Further, a person identifying within this status does not necessarily have identity problems. Rather, the Marginal identity status may be a way for the mixed race person to negotiate their multiraciality without committing to any one racial group. However, this person is also disconnected from most or all elements associated with their racial heritages. For example, this person may be disinterested or avoidant of exploring their background, and may also feel disconnected from others because of their feelings of being different. In other words, these individuals do not perceive that they have a reference group that is tied to race.

While not necessarily considered an end goal or a final stage, the Integrated identity status allows for the adoption of a truly multiracial status. However, the individual does not always consider themselves equally a member of each of their racial heritages. Rather, the person may consider themselves more or less of a particular race depending on many personal, social, and environmental factors discussed above (Cross, 1987). Nevertheless, this person adopts values, customs, and an appreciation of each of

their racial heritages. Further, an "integrated" multiracial individual will also have labeled their identity status as something that claims membership into multiple racial groups.

Choi Misailidis (2010) reviewed several factors that the existing literature identified as factors that affect multiracial identity status. Some of the factors reviewed included demographic variables such as gender, age, extended family, and education level. Another factor affecting multiracial identity status is the influence of parents (discussed earlier as also an influence to body image), as well as parents' marital status. The literature is mixed with regards to parental influences, with some research suggesting that fathers are less influential in their child's identity formation (e.g., Bratter, 2007) and other research stating that the father (perhaps as the head of household) is more influential (e.g., Qian, 2004). Parental marital status is believed to influence a child's identity development in that it helps determine the availability of each parent and their ability to expose their child to cultural practices and beliefs. Further, a child may observe that there is a hierarchy within their parent's relationship which may imply that one parent holds more of a marginalized status than the other parent (for example, a Black parent in a White/Black union).

In addition to the factors highlighted by Choi-Misailidis (2010), it appears that individuals in part come to know themselves as racialized beings by seeing themselves through the lens of others (Williams, 1996). Individuals are expected to look and act a certain way based on their perceived race (among other factors); monoracial groups become a gauge by which people's appearance and behaviors are compared to and judged. When this individual does not fit neatly into any one racial category, the "What

are you?" question becomes salient. Closely connected to this question is the notion that one is not "Black enough," or "White enough" to be considered Black or White, for example. This highlights and further supports the view that race, in addition to being a "category," is also negotiated and renegotiated via social interaction (Williams, 1996).

Similarly, Rockquemore (1998) conceptualized identity as forming as the individual understands themselves in relation to others. As a biracial person interacts with their White peers, they form an ability to fit in with that racial group, particularly if they are part White. However, the author warns that it's not simply the amount of interaction a biracial individual has with others. Rather, social interactions are also mediated by how the biracial individual socially experiences race. For example, a biracial individual may experience rejection by a peer group with which s/he shares a race, meaning that their experience with race within that particular group is not validated. While there are many reasons this invalidation could occur, Rockquemore's participants discussed how they felt their ambiguous appearance played a role in how monoracial people interacted with them.

It stands to reason then that one of the most overt symbols of racial group membership is appearance (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001). It is through one's appearance that others infer race and all of the meanings assigned to that label (Williams, 1996). However, the research examining the link between appearance and identity is in its infancy, perhaps in part due to the assumption that an individual who has any non-White racial heritage was automatically a member of that racial minority (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001). Some authors have made the distinction between how the biracial individual perceives their skin color and how others' perception of skin color affects that

biracial individual's understanding of their appearance. This combination is particularly salient given that a biracial person does not create and renegotiate their identity in social isolation (Rockquemore, 1998). For example, a biracial individual may experience the world similarly to a monoracial minority if their social interactions serve to invalidate their identity as a biracial person. This is apparently a fairly common phenomenon, where 40% of participants in one study endorsed these experiences (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001). In fact, it appears that other's perceptions of a biracial person's identity matters more than how the individual feels about their own appearance. This is the case whether the biracial individual identifies with a singular identity or not. It is perhaps only when a biracial person's social network identifies "biracial" as a racial category do they have a greater likelihood of receiving this social validation (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001).

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purpose of the present study was to understand the perceptions and impact of parental messages on biracial and biethnic women's body image using qualitative research methods. Specifically, the current study answers five research questions. 1) What are the messages that biracial and biethnic women received about their body or appearance from their parents? 2) How did these messages impact their body image? 3) What influence did parents have on their daughter's racial/ethnic identity? 4) Are biracial and biethnic women reporting similar experiences with regards to body image as monoracial and monoethnic women? 5) How do biracial and biethnic women believe their racial/ethnic identity influences their body image?

The following section will highlight the rationale for using a qualitative research design, the research paradigm that informed my research methods, explain grounded theory as the research design that was used, describe my role as the researcher and my level of involvement in the participants' world, and describe the participants, selection procedures, and recruitment sources. Additionally, data collection methods, data analysis and synthesis, and issues affecting trustworthiness are discussed. The interview questions used are included in order to provide a glimpse into how I believed the research questions could be answered. Lastly, potential ethical considerations that may have affected the

research are discussed.

Rationale for Using Qualitative Methods

Given the lack of literature on parental influences on biracial and biethnic women's body image, we have little information that can help create theory or develop a framework to increase understanding of the experiences under study. Additionally, the literature suggests that women's body image development is a complex sociocultural process that includes the influences of each parent, peers, and several media sources, among others (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). Although the current study inquired about parental influences exclusively, it is understood that the previously mentioned influences differentially interact with individual differences, experiences, and culture to inform body image development. For these reasons, qualitative research methods best captures biracial and biethnic women's unique and multifaceted experiences. Specifically, qualitative research methods allow me to uncover the meanings people have assigned to their life experiences (Morrow, 2007), and recognize that an individual's experiences are embedded and interpreted from within a particular social context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), which cannot be removed from analyses. Qualitative research is best suited to answering the question of "What?," particularly with groups that have been marginalized and/or silenced (Creswell, 1998). Further, it is acknowledged that I enter the researcher-participant relationship with previous experiences and biases that undoubtedly impact the way data is analyzed and interpreted (Ponterotto, 2005). Researcher subjectivity can be accounted for by documentation of my self-reflective process (via journaling, field notes, etc.; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research methods also allow me to attempt to enter and

engage in the participants worlds in order to understand their experiences in ways that quantitative research cannot do (Ponterotto, 2005). Discovery of themes and categories can lead to the development of a framework that can guide future research and therapeutic interventions (Morrow, 2007). This was especially salient in the present study, as there is no previous research on this topic and with this population.

Research Paradigm

Research paradigms can be understood as a "set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990), and are generally used to set the context for a study (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). In order to fully understand my conceptualization of the research paradigm I have utilized, I will elaborate on the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and rhetorical structure that has informed this study. When planning this research, I identified the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm as ideal for the current study. The ontological assumption of this paradigm includes the rejection of a single, objective reality in favor of "relative, shared realities" which occur within a particular social context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In other words, each individual has their own reality that may or may not be (though usually is) shared by other individuals. The interpretivist/constructivist paradigm also rejects the goal of predicting and controlling the phenomena under study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Morrow & Smith, 2000). One foundational question underlying this paradigm is, "How has the individual constructed reality? What are their truths?" (Patton, 2002). The lived experiences and worldviews of marginalized, silenced, and oppressed groups can be heard in great depth (Morrow, 2007). Such a paradigm can help in giving voice to biracial and biethnic women, who have not been represented in the

body image literature and therefore are invisible in such a pertinent dialogue. Stated differently, examining body image from the perspective of biracial and biethnic women places these women as expert and centralizes their experiences.

The epistemology of a paradigm is concerned with "the relationship between the 'knower' and the 'would be-knower'" (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 127). In qualitative research, the meanings assigned to those realities are co-constructed between myself and the participant (referred to as *intersubjectivity;* Haverkamp & Young, 2007), and it is acknowledged that we enter this relationship with values, biases, and experiences that influence the research process (Morrow, 2007). In the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, knowledge is gained through this interaction between researcher and participant (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). Referred to as hermeneutic discovery, the participant and researcher engage in intense dialogue that culminates in deeper understanding of lived experience (Ponterotto, 2005). The results are truly unique because they stem from the distinct combination of the two individuals engaged in the relationship; a different combination would yield different results. In the present study, I noted the uniqueness of the relationship with each participant, as well as solicited the participant's thoughts on how our relationship will influence our dialogue. In particular, I also strived toward equity while simultaneously understanding that true equality between myself and participants is difficult to achieve. Further, I was constantly aware of my position as an outsider of participants' experiences, particularly as I identify as a Hispanic monoracial and monoethnic woman, and was transparent regarding these identities. This approach is also consistent with my identity as an interpersonal-feminist practitioner (Brown, 2010; Teyber, 2011).

The axiology of a paradigm refers to the role of the researcher's values in the research process (Morrow, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005). The interpretivist/constructivist approach acknowledges that my experiences and values will impact the research process and therefore they cannot be separated from the analyses. Rather than attempt to remove researcher "bias," as is common in the positivist/post-positivist approaches, the interpretivist/constructivist researcher (through use of reflexivity) acknowledges and attempts to describe components (e.g., values, biases, experiences, etc.) that are influencing the research process. Additionally, this influence is seen as a rich source of information that also affects the researcher-participant relationship (Ponterotto, 2005). Although my influence is acknowledged and utilized in dialogue with participants, bias is not necessarily allowed to dominate the research process freely. Rather, interpretivist/constructivist researchers attempt to "bracket" their biases and assumptions in order to account for its inevitable influence (Ponterotto, 2005). Bracketing is a tool associated with phenomenological inquiry in which an individual puts aside what s/he believe about what they are researching, and is one method of demonstrating the validity and rigor of data collection (Ahern, 1999; Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). There are several ways that researchers attempt to bracket researcher bias in qualitative research, such as keeping a self-reflective journal, utilizing external auditors, or seeking peer consultation, among others (Chan, et al., 2013).

In line with the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, I thought about how my assumptions, knowledge (and lack thereof), and values would influence the research process in its entirety, beginning with how I became interested in the topic of the current study, to how it influenced my literature search (Ahern, 1999; Chan et al., 2013). During

this time, it felt appropriate to keep a reflexive journal of this process, as I found myself overwhelmed, frustrated, and simultaneously excited by what I was finding (and not finding) in terms of information. Among one of the initial realizations, and one that I'm continuously learning in my training as a counseling psychologist, is that I have values and opinions that I cannot (and should not try) to remove from the research process. It was important to me in my relationship with the participants that I made my values transparent and that I honored their values. My experiences in this process were shared with members of my committee in order to ensure the validity of the data.

The rhetorical structure in research refers to the language that I used in my write-up of the study (Creswell, 1998; Ponterotto, 2005). As seen in this chapter, I employed a first-person rhetoric that allowed me to remain embedded in the data and meaning-making, rather than remove myself from my experience with participants post data collection. My experiences, values, expectations, and motives are included, and quotes from my reflexive journal are included where appropriate. This is preferred in the research design I used (Charmaz, 2006), is consistent with the research paradigm underlying the research design (Ponterotto, 2005), as well as recommended in the 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010). Use of first person also captured the nature of the subjectivity that is inherent in grounded theory from an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm (Morrow, 2007).

Research Design

The present study utilized grounded theory with the intent to develop an understanding grounded in biracial and biethnic women's experiences regarding

messages about their bodies. Grounded theory was originally posited by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) and has its roots in sociology, symbolic interactionism, and interpretivist theories (Morrow & Smith, 2000). According to Fassinger (2005), symbolic interactionism is a theory in sociology that is concerned with the meaning created in a social interaction between two people by use of shared symbols, such as dress and language. This is ideal in the current study because it accounts for and directly examines the shared social meaning between participants and myself. Further, this is an ideal approach because there is no existing theory on biracial and/or biethnic women's body image development.

Grounded theory has undergone several iterations (e.g., Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), though researchers place grounded theory within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm (Fassinger, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005). In its original form, grounded theory resembled a postpositivist paradigm, which posited that a researcher can approach their research in an unbiased, value-free way (Morrow, 2007). Many years after developing grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss diverged with regard to methodology and theoretical aspects underpinning grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Fassinger, 2005). Grounded theory shifted towards a more constructivist lens, which posited that theory is created through "local and specific constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Further, because researchers cannot approach their research with neutrality, researcher reflexivity must be a part of the research.

Grounded theory inherently emphasizes inductive strategies (Patton, 2002) that includes an iterative process, where data is collected concurrently with coding and further theorizing until no new themes emerge (referred to as *theoretical saturation;* Fassinger,

2005; Haverkamp et al., 2005). Its primary aim is to "produce innovative theory that is 'grounded' in data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context" (Creswell et al., 2007; Fassinger, 2005, p. 157). In other words, like the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, grounded theory helps researchers discover the realities and shared meanings between groups of people. Rather than testing hypotheses, grounded theory is concerned with *building theory* from data (Yeh & Inman, 2007).

Grounded theory research methods are flexible with regards to how the data are interpreted, changing as new information comes to light. This type of research method is commonly called *emergent design* in the literature (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss et al., 1998). Throughout the coding and interpretation process, the data are also compared to each other for similarities and differences, and grouped into categories. Because the data are contributing to further theorizing as it is still being collected, the researcher can add new categories and modify existing ones so that they better capture the meaning provided by the participants. Additionally, as the researcher is immersed in the data, s/he often engages in memoing which they can examine later for their meaning of the data (Yeh et al., 2007).

Researcher and theoretical sensitivity are important aspects of grounded theory and stand in stark contrast to researcher objectivity (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Researcher subjectivity is the notion that the researcher enters their research having been influenced by their training, experiences, and biases. Therefore, it is impossible for the researcher to remove themselves from the analytic process. Rather, researchers using grounded theory should become aware of their subjectivity in order to be aware of how it is influencing

the research. Researcher sensitivity requires the researcher "to put him- or herself in the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 32)" in order to understand the significance of the data s/he has collected and how concepts from different pieces of data come together. This is understood as theoretical sensitivity.

A researcher gains theoretical sensitivity as s/he becomes increasingly able to consider multiple vantage points and build on ideas in the data (Charmaz, 2006). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), sensitivity builds as the researcher remains involved in the data, making them more likely to identify theoretical concepts in the data that s/he previously was not aware of. Oftentimes, increased awareness of theoretical concepts allows the researcher to modify the research questions in order to capture deeper levels of knowledge. The researcher may feel they have "changed" since beginning the research project, and also feel they are much more sensitive to picking up on themes, similarities, and differences in the data.

In order to build theory on biracial and biethnic women's experiences, I cannot simply describe the data by identifying themes. Rather, I must go further in my analysis by relating themes to one another and develop a conceptual scheme that will further organize the findings and, I believe, communicate the experiences of the participants more thoroughly. While there are various incarnations of grounded theory, the present study used the version of grounded theory posited by Charmaz (2006). This version is best suited for the present study because of its increased focus on the theory-building component of grounded theory. Taking a reflexive stance in Charmaz's version allows the researcher to consider how their theory is evolving based on their interpretation of the data. It is acknowledged that the resulting theory could look different if the same research

questions were asked by a different researcher and with different participants.

Researcher as Instrument

Given the above-mentioned tenets of interpretivist/constructivist paradigm and grounded theory, it is imperative that the researcher constantly engages in reflexivity in order to monitor how their values, assumptions, and biases impact how the research process unfolds (Fassinger, 2005). Reflexivity can be thought of as a deconstructive exercise which involves self-questioning regarding the researcher's ongoing experience and how s/he influences the research process (Patton, 2002). This is commonly achieved through keeping reflexive journals and reviewing them as the data collected is analyzed. Journaling is one qualitative research tool that helps researchers examine the impact of their perspective and position, promote insight, and evaluate the research process (Finlay, 2002). Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I kept a reflexive journal that included my experiences, assumptions, biases, and motivations in order to increase my awareness and evaluate how my worldview is impacting how the research unfolds.

My personal background as a Hispanic, monoracial/monoethnic woman who has been exposed to similar sociocultural norms as my participants has likely influenced the co-creation of meaning that will occur. However, I'm aware that the meanings I've made of those norms may not be the same as that of my participants. Nevertheless, the notion of mutual experiences (regardless of the individual differences in meaning) fostered my interest in body image. I'm driven to study phenomena in which groups of people have been ignored or marginalized. As an undergraduate, I used grounded theory to work with Hispanic college women to examine their sexual scripting and how this influenced their

negotiation of safe sex (Stephens & Thomas, 2011). My experience with this research sparked my interest in qualitative research and minority women.

There is also no question that my literature search informed my assumptions going into data collection. For example, I had assumed and was expecting to find that biracial/biethnic women may experience conflicting messages from their parents, and subsequently feel unsure as to how to integrate these messages into their working identity. Additionally, as a woman in this society, I'm aware that I may be sensitive to looking for experiences similar to my own, and less sensitive to aspects of parental messages that I've never experienced. Therefore, I documented possible contradictory information as well as hypothesized alternative explanations in my self-reflective journal. I also shared these assumptions with my participants and solicited their reactions to my assumptions. I also at times shared with them whether other participants had endorsed similar experiences; I found that doing this allowed participants to feel validated and to continue to elaborate on their experience.

Participants

The participants for the present study included 13 adult women, ages 18 to 38, who identify as biracial and/or biethnic and endorse a childhood relationship with their biological mother and father. This age range was chosen in order to increase the likelihood that I would sample participants with similar experiences, as well as the timing of the increase in biracial individuals in the U.S. population (US Census Bureau, 2014a). Namely, we would expect to find more biracial individuals born after the end of racial segregation. In qualitative research, the amount of participants is not as important as

continued sampling based on emerging themes until theoretical saturation has been reached (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Fassinger, 2005). Also, sample sizes in qualitative research has historically been smaller than quantitative studies but the information obtained from each person has generally been of greater depth (Morrow, 2007). The sample is obtained purposefully based on the type of information sought (Patton, 2002). For the current study, data was collected until saturation was reached with regards to the interview questions and how they answer the overarching research questions. Saturation can be thought of as occurring when the data collected no longer add depth to the themes and categories (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Data were collected regarding participants' racial/ethnic identification (and that of their parents), their age, education, and where they grew up. Further, participants were asked if they could provide in-depth information about parental messages they received about their bodies and how this impacted their body image. Women who felt that they were not aware of an effect, or otherwise felt that they could not provide in depth information, were excluded from the study. The demographic information for participants can be found in Appendix D. Participants varied with regards to their racial/ethnic makeup. Twelve of the 13 participants had one White biological parent (with the exception of Rachel, who had been raised with White adoptive grandparents on her mother's side). Although all participants were biracial because each parent was of a different race, they used different language to describe their racial identity. These were preserved and placed along with other participant demographics.

Selection. The present study utilized purposeful, criterion-based sampling so that the phenomena under study could be adequately captured with the population of interest

(Patton, 2002; Sandelowski, 1995). Purposeful sampling was chosen because it involves obtaining participants that will provide rich information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Rather than sample biracial *or* biethnic women from specific racial or ethnic groups, I aimed to capture themes that may apply to several groups. This is because of the lack of research on biracial and biethnic women's body image in general, therefore, this appeared to be a good starting point. This was also done due to the difficulty in sampling biracial women in predominantly White Utah. Additionally, I sampled women within as well as outside of the local community in order to explore whether biracial/biethnic women locally differ from women outside of Utah.

Theoretical sampling was also used in this study. Theoretical sampling involves continually gathering data to refine and deepen categories that were forming (Charmaz, 2006). I chose theoretical sampling because I believed that the categories that were forming could be further elaborated on and enriched. According to Charmaz (2006), theoretical sampling "directs you where to go" (p. 100). Participants who have not been represented in the data are sought out, and this process continues until the data are not being "challenged or deepened" by sampling new participants. It was also beneficial to utilize snowball sampling in this study, as biracial and biethnic women may be a part of communities that may have similar (or different) perspectives.

Recruitment. Recruitment occurred in two phases (once in April 2015 and once in September 2015) and from several sources after attaining Institutional Review Board approval, both in and outside of Utah. This occurred by contacting the administrators of two listservs, the Association of Women in Psychology and the Academy of Eating Disorders, and receiving instructions on how I can post a copy of my flier to the listserv.

A copy of the recruitment flier can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, Donna Hawxhurst, the Training Coordinator at the Women's Resource Center (WRC) at the University of Utah was contacted, and she allowed for hardcopies of fliers to be posted at the WRC. Additionally, C. Kai Medina-Martinez, Director of the LGBT Resource Center at the University of Utah, allowed fliers to be posted at the LGBT Resource Center. Fliers were also posted at Westminster College during Phase 1 of recruitment, and fliers were posted in several buildings at the University of Utah during Phases 1 and 2. This resulted in the most inquiries regarding the study.

Interested women contacted me by email and expressed interest in the study. Potential participants were informed of the inclusion criteria and that participation would involve at least one interview, submitting certain documents, and participating in the data analysis and synthesis process (e.g., participant checks). Eligible women were sent a copy of the Informed Consent Document for review and electronic signing, and were provided a hardcopy for signing if the interview was conducted in person. A copy of the Informed Consent document can be found in Appendix B. In total, 17 women expressed interest; one woman was excluded due to not having any relationship with one biological parent, two were excluded due to falling outside of the age range, and one potential participant was excluded because she contacted this researcher after data analysis had been completed. This individual was informed that she might be needed for interviewing at a later time. The final sample consisted of 13 women who identified that they had biological parents that were of a different race and could discuss experiences with messages they received about their appearance. After being interviewed, participants were asked if they knew of anyone fitting the inclusion criteria that would be interested in

interviewing for the study. Several participants provided me with the contact information of these individuals, and I contacted them regarding the study and offered to answer any questions.

Researcher Roles and Relationships With Participants

Similarly to my clinical work, I value relationship building with the participants where they are viewed and treated as "expert" in their experiences (Brown, 2010). My intent is to foster collaboration in the data collection process, soliciting feedback on the methods of obtaining and gathering the data. For example, while I asked some pre-established interview questions, I also asked participants how they felt about the questions, if they felt that they helped capture the meaning of their experiences, and if there were other questions or things they would like to add that would deepen our level of understanding. When more than one participant expressed similar concerns or offered similar questions, these became incorporated into the interview questions. For example, several participants mentioned women in the media that espouse their ideal body or ideal features, and then expressed that this was a good way of referencing certain ideal features in a way that everyone can identify by "Googling" a photo of these people.

Additionally, I shared emerging themes with participants who had been interviewed, and solicited feedback on my wording and conceptualizations in order to ensure that participants felt the meaning of their experiences had been captured. Regarding my role, I positioned myself as a collaborative researcher who strives for egalitarian relationships with the people I interact with. As indicated above, I also positioned myself based on my identity as a minority woman in a predominantly White

society. This meant that I acknowledged and openly shared my experiences with body image within the larger sociocultural context, while simultaneously acknowledging my outsider status with regard to being of only one race and ethnicity. I found that participants related well to this disclosure and I believe it led them to elaborate on their perceptions and experiences.

Taking Leave

Given the intimate nature of the topic under study, I felt connected with participants when hearing about their experiences. Throughout the interviews, I expressed my appreciation for their level of disclosure, and provided some self-disclosure as a means of maintaining an egalitarian relationship. As the interviews concluded, I asked participants if they had any concerns, what they would like their pseudonym to be in the write-up, and if they were interested in being contacted about the results. Some participants expressed they either did not mind their real name being used, or preferred their real name was used. There were still some participants that provided a pseudonym.

Sources of Data

Triangulation of data is the process by which researchers combine multiple sources of data in order to provide a more thorough and complete picture of emerging themes and increase the credibility of the research (Patton, 2002). This analytic strategy is often employed in grounded theory research designs. Each data source provides a different source of information that may not be considered with single-method studies, contributing to the depth of knowledge that I sought. I collected data from individual

semistructured interviews (which were audio taped), analytic memos, as well as photos of women in the media followed by a quick written description by the participant as to why they chose the women they chose as espousing their body ideal. Originally, women were asked if they could provide any journal/diary writings, or any art they created related to identity or body image, though no participant recalled either documenting their experiences with these topics in this way, or stated they no longer knew where they could find this information. Therefore, the photo and "blurb" was added as another data source after it was found that all participants could identify women in the media that espouse their ideal.

Given that I obtained a sample of women from both in and outside the local area, some interviews were conducted via phone and Skype. If in Utah, every effort was made to interview in person, though Skype and phone interviewing was allowed in the case where meeting in person would cause an inconvenience to the participant, such as interviewing later in the evening or difficulty with finding reliable transportation. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) reported that telephone interviews allow researchers to access difficult to reach respondent groups and is more cost effective than face-to-face interviewing. I offered to meet local participants where they felt the most comfortable, and also offered to interview them at the university if they preferred. Participants were notified at recruitment that I would audio record our interview, and asked for consent to interview and record.

Individual Interviews

In grounded theory, data collection is done in tandem with data analysis, which allows the researcher to modify their approach in an effort to collect the data that will contribute to the greatest understanding of the phenomena. The interviews were semistructured and allowed for flexibility in topics discussed so the participants could have space to guide the interview the way they felt they needed to. Consistent with Kvale (1996), I view interviewing as a dynamic process that involves true listening and making sure that I understand the participant's perspectives. When appropriate, I shared my interpretation with participants and solicited their feedback and their own interpretation. My hope was that this could have captured the depth of their experiences and perspectives, and that I could incorporate this feedback into future interviews. In order to structure the large amounts of information, as well as to begin the data analysis process, the content of the analytic memos included not only my reactions to the data, but also working hypotheses, interpretations, and possible developing themes. These sources are discussed in detail below.

Individual interviewing began with brief informal conversation in order to build rapport with participants (Teyber, 2011), provide an opportunity to ask questions, and acclimate both myself and participants to being audio recorded. I followed interviewing protocols suggested by Kvale (1996), which include briefing participants as to the purpose of the study and obtaining written or verbal informed consent for participation. Participants were debriefed following the interview, where I shared the meaning I've made of the information they've provided, and also shared my perspective on important themes (Kvale, 1996). This gave participants an opportunity to add to my interpretation,

or disagree and refine/correct my emergent findings. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes.

According to Charmaz (2006), an interview is a "directed conversation" which allows for in-depth exploration about a specific topic. Interviewing from this framework also encourages participant interpretation of their experiences. Using interpersonal process (Teyber, 2011), I attempted to understand participants' experiences beyond the words they used, focusing also on how the participants made meaning of their experiences. By actively listening, I asked clarifying questions, responded in a validating and normalizing way, and encouraged participants to provide more depth in their responses (Teyber, 2011). Additionally, I made every effort to attend to interpersonal relationship elements by paying attention to aspects of participants' disclosures which would indicate lack of safety, discomfort, or feeling misunderstood. Some of the ways I did this included attending to body language (if on Skype or in person) and tone (if on the phone). I also noticed whether a participant became less engaged or less verbal.

I interviewed a total of 13 participants of varying mixed races. Although inclusion criteria indicated that all participants had to be part White, one participant (Rachel) reported she was not biologically part White, but had been raised with a White family because her Native American mother had been adopted by a White family at birth. It was then decided that Rachel would have a unique contribution to the findings, and after some discussion it was clear that she had been exposed to White beauty norms and White parental influences given that her mother was raised to be culturally White. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed either by myself or a professional transcriber or research assistant. Where professional transcribers or research assistants were used, I

conducted transcription checks by listening to the audio recording and following along in the transcription, correcting for any errors. The following open-ended questions were used during the interview. These questions are consistent with grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2006). They were not asked verbatim, but rather used for reference to guide the conversation. Where appropriate, I also asked clarifying questions.

1) Tell me a bit about your parents. How did each of them identify in terms of their racial/ethnic identities?

2) How would you describe your racial/ethnic identity?

How do you think your parents influenced your identity?

3) How do you feel about your body?

What things do you like or dislike about your body?

What is your ideal or most attractive body?

4) How did your mother feel about her body? About your father's body? What messages did she give you about your body or appearance?

5) How did your father feel about his body? About your mother's body? What messages did he give you about your body or appearance?

6) What do you feel were the positive and negative impact of these messages on your body images?

7) How do you feel your racial/ethnic identity influences your body image?

Because data collection and analysis occurs concurrently, information obtained from the interviews was incorporated into future interviews and data collection in order to address conceptual gaps (Charmaz, 2006). For example, an additional question was asked after a few participants described their body ideal by identifying a woman in the

media that espouses these ideals. Based on this, the following question was added: 8) Are there any women in the media that you feel espouse your ideal body, and if so, who are they? Additionally, because so few participants were able to speak to how each parent felt about the other parent's body or appearance, this line of questioning was dropped.

Analytic Memos

Analytic memos are notes made by the researcher which capture thoughts and emerging connections between themes, and help the researcher in identifying gaps in the data and in forming questions and directions to guide further research. The methods for writing memos are flexible to allow the researcher to use them in a way that advances their thinking. Analytic memos benefit the current study because they prompt researchers to engage with the data early in the research process (Charmaz, 2006). Codes and concepts more easily stand out and allow me to crystallize further questions and directions. My analytic memos include potential emerging themes, possible codes, and categories. They also include observations during the interviews and reflections during data analysis. These were checked regularly so that I made sure to incorporate its contents into subsequent data collection and writing.

Photographic Documentation of Ideal Appearance

Given that many of the participants described their concept of female ideal physical features by identifying women in the media, participants that had already been interviewed as well as participants that were later interviewed were asked if they could provide at least one photo of one of the women in the media that they felt espoused their

ideal body. This was done in order to provide information as to what beauty standards participants had been exposed to and had perhaps internalized. In addition to the photo, participants were also asked to write a very brief (2-3 sentence) "blurb" which describes what particular physical features the woman in the photo had that participants felt were ideal, or were a part of their beauty standard. In the case where more than one woman was identified, participants were asked to provide a photo of that woman as well.

Participant Checks

Participant checks are often used to ensure that researcher subjectivity is not prioritized over participant perspectives (Morrow, 2007). Throughout the study, I checked in with participants during the data analysis process when clarification or follow-up questions were needed by phone or email. Specifically, participants were contacted if there was something I noticed in their interview transcript that I wanted more clarification on, and also when I had begun forming categories from the data. Participants were asked to evaluate the emerging categories and interpretations and to review the data to make sure that the codes and themes I created best captured their experiences.

Data Analysis/Synthesis and Data Management

Data management and analysis/synthesis occurred throughout the data collection process. This was done in order to keep the data organized as well as to begin to immerse myself in the data as soon as possible. Most interviews were transcribed by undergraduate research assistants as well as TechSynergy, a professional transcription service. I transcribed 3 interviews, and performed transcription checks on all of the

interviews I did not transcribe myself. Further, I used NVivo, a qualitative analysis software program that helped me track data collection (as interviews were added), and allowed me to see codes that co-occur across documents. NVivo also organizes the data in such a way that users can see how many participants are within a category in order to make it easier to tease apart emergent themes. To prepare for data analysis, I also enrolled in the Qualitative Research Methods course in Spring 2015.

Data collection, analysis, and immersion of myself occurred concurrently. Charmaz (2006) states that researchers "learn through studying" the data, and conceptualizes data analysis as a process of using the data to increasingly focus and refine future data collection. By doing this, I can infuse the voices and experiences of participants to influence data collection efforts. Following the data analysis procedures of Charmaz (2006), I engaged in initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding while remaining immersed in the data. My hope was to obtain enough of an understanding of biracial and biethnic women's experiences to make a meaningful contribution to the literature regarding how parental messages affect this population's body image and racial identity.

Data analysis began with an initial reading of the entire data set without beginning to code or analyze, so that I could "enter vicariously" into the lives of participants and listen to what they were trying to tell me (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This was also done so that I could gain a sense of the "big ideas" in the data before breaking it down (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 139). This began as soon as I received the transcription of the first interview; during the time I had received the first transcription, I had just finished completing the second interview. While waiting for transcripts, I listened to the audio

recordings of each of the interviews and began my reflexive journal and analytic memoing.

Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach was used in this study given the paradigm with which I was approaching this study (Charmaz, 2006). After an initial immersion into the data (highlighted above), I moved to *initial coding* of the data. Coding is the process of extracting concepts from the data, and "developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.159). Initial coding involves a careful reading of the data while remaining open to any possible theoretical directions (Charmaz, 2006). Each word or segment of data is named and identified for possible meaning or contribution to an emerging theme. As this occurred, I compared pieces of the data to other pieces, ultimately allowing me to differentiate categories from each other and refine the coding process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During this level of coding, it is also anticipated that a researcher will code many more potential categories and themes than is meaningful in answering research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 141). As I moved forward with initial coding, certain potentially significant pieces of information were added to my analytic memos. For example, one memo highlighted the similarities between the experiences of two participants with regard to body awareness, and that both participants were part Native American. At times this led to changing some of the codes in order to fully capture the meaning underlying them, for example, renaming a code that I had titled "You're not Japanese enough" (quoted from a participant) to "You're not 'X' enough" in order to more broadly capture this experience that several participants were endorsing.

The second form of coding, *focused coding*, began after I had combed over and

categorized the data. This involves using the most frequent and significant initial codes to synthesize the growing amounts of data in a theoretically relevant way. As these larger, focused codes develop, I then compared them to the smaller, initial codes to make sure my analysis remained conceptually accurate. According to Charmaz (2006), focused coding is the first step in theoretically integrating your data. Focused coding also led me through a reduction process, where I had to sit with the nuances and perceived meanings of the data, and ultimately make a decision on which parts of the data were not relevant to the overall research questions. *Axial coding* occurs after initial and focused coding, which involves "relating categories to subcategories" and specifying the relationships around the "axis" of a category (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Whereas initial coding breaks the data into separate elements and codes, axial coding brings the data back together to describe participant experiences more fully. The categories must be able to be integrated together to begin to answer questions such as "…when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). In doing this, I began to identify relationships between categories as well as identify characteristics of the categories. As with immersing and initial coding, I continued to write analytic memos of the findings and my interpretations in order to deepen my understanding of the data. Axial coding led to some categories becoming subcategories in order to deepen the description of the phenomenon in question.

Finally, I utilized *theoretical coding* after initial, focused, and axial coding had occurred. Theoretical coding involves comparing higher-order categories to one another and determining how they may be related (Charmaz, 2006). Doing this helps me move my data (which now appears integrated and cohesive) in a direction where theory can be

developed. Ideally, I would then be able to tell an "analytic story" which captures the meanings and experiences of participants, and uses them to form a grounded theory of the phenomenon (p. 63). I shared these categories in follow-up contact with participants who were willing to provide feedback, asking them to "check" whether the themes accurately captured their experiences. If categories seemed "thin" or otherwise did not capture the experiences of participants, follow-up interview questions were asked in order to modify existing categories. Keeping in close contact with participants in this stage of analysis also kept me from forcing categories upon the data, or prioritizing my interpretation over that of the participants. As with other stages of analysis, I utilized analytic memos which helped flesh out possible aspects of the emerging theory as well as reflect on possible disconfirming evidence in the data. Searching for possible disconfirming evidence is an aspect of grounded theory that allowed me to further refine and improve the emerging theory.

The written product includes narratives which explain the components of the theory explicating parental influences to biracial and biethnic women's body image, and makes use of representative participant quotes in support of the theory. This lends support to the validity of the model (Ponterotto, 2005). The overarching categories and themes in the written product are based on the actual language of the participants and use this language wherever possible (referred to as an *in vivo* category/theme; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 143). For ease of understanding, a visual model that explains the theory was created. The writing phase of analysis was done after all transcribing and coding was completed, and it had been determined that theoretical saturation had been reached.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is the method by which the credibility (validity) and dependability (reliability) is established (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The trustworthiness and rigor of the data was insured in several ways, including keeping a self-reflective journal, use of multiple data sources, immersing myself in the data from the beginning, and consultation with members of my committee and participants. Trustworthiness from an interpretivist/constructivist approach is established primarily through *authenticity* (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Guba and Lincoln (1989) posited several *authenticity criteria* that included: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, and catalytic authenticity. *Fairness* can be achieved through soliciting and incorporating participant perspectives. This was done during participant checks as well as during the interview with participants (as highlighted earlier). I was also mindful of the amount of representation I gave to each participant in data analyses and the written results.

Ontological authenticity is achieved when participant constructions have been fully developed. While there is no way to fully ensure full development of participant perspectives, I believe that attending to ethical considerations (see below) helped create a safe environment that fostered increased reflection and disclosure. Additionally, I attended to relationship elements in interpersonal interactions between myself and the participants in order to increase the depth of participant perspectives that were disclosed (Teyber, 2011). Similarly to my work with clients, I attempted to decrease my power in my role as a researcher, highlighting that their experiences and perspectives made them "expert" in our dialogues (Brown, 2010). As I shared my interpretation of the findings, or

my perceptions of what they said, I invited participants to disagree, revise, or reject my analysis. For example, one participant recommended changing some of the descriptions of the central themes, and also recommended that I use the term "Eurocentric beauty standards/ideals" as opposed to "Western beauty standards/ideals," as it felt to her that "Western" would encompass racially diverse individuals.

Educative authenticity is achieved when participants (and myself included) are able to understand the experiences and perspectives of others. While individual interviews do not provide a ready forum for participants to dialogue with each other, I strived for educative authenticity in other ways. For example, I provided participants with a synopsis of other participants' (deidentified) perspectives, as well as my interpretation of how participants' experiences are similar, and different, from one another. In doing this, participants can come to understand the larger phenomena of biracial and biethnic women's experiences with parental attitudes about their bodies, perhaps to the point of developing a sense of solidarity with other women who have been influenced by their parents. My hope was also that participants would feel validated in their experiences. Participants that collaborated in the development of themes expressed excitement and joy when told that others had reported similar experiences to what they had.

Finally, *catalytic authenticity* is achieved when the researcher has stimulated some kind of action, either within themselves or others. As a counseling psychologist trainee dedicated to advocacy with racial/ethnic minorities (and other target groups), I have no doubt that I will take the findings of the present study and submit them to local and national conferences. I also will be mindful of how the findings can inform implications for psychotherapy and future research. I also plan to submit a manuscript of

the findings to scholarly journals in order to extend the reach of these women's voices.

Additionally, trustworthiness in qualitative research is dependent upon whether the researcher's perceptions of participant experiences are congruent with participant perceptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As indicated above, credibility is typically assured through clarifying researcher bias up front, triangulation, presenting discrepancies in the data, journaling, and participant checks. Further, a study can be deemed as dependable when the researcher details how the data were collected and analyzed thoroughly (typically called an audit trail; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Dependability essentially refers to whether a reader would be able to track what the researcher did to arrive at their results. In the current study, these criteria were also considered and utilized.

Ethical Considerations

The present study was conducted in accordance with the American Psychological Association's (APA) ethical codes (2010). I received approval on 3/16/2015 from the University of Utah's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and followed accepted guidelines for data collection. From the beginning, participants were made aware of my ethical obligation to protect the data and participants from harm, as well as the limits to confidentiality. In my role as a counseling psychologist in training, I attended to participants' experiences in the moment, and addressed any indication of distress using Interpersonal Process Approach (Teyber, 2011). I offered participants a short list of psychotherapy referrals (based on their geographic region if they are not local) and encouraged them to seek therapy if needed. No participant requested the list of referrals,

and did not report any adverse effects from participation. One participant (Amelia) expressed frustration with the component of the study that asked her to identify a woman in the media that espouses her ideal and to explain why. When processed, Amelia explained that she was irritated that beauty standards exist and that she has felt the detriment it has had on her as well as other women. Nevertheless, she provided an example from the media. Follow-up contact indicated she did not feel there were adverse effects from participation. Participants were debriefed and asked about their experience in participating in the study. Some participants expressed their curiosity regarding what the study findings would yield, and further expressed their support that this research was being done. Additionally, I checked in with my advisor regarding my progress and practices in data collection, analysis, and synthesis, in order to make sure there were no ethical concerns that I may have missed. Lastly, I collaborated with participants and my advisor on ensuring that the written results accurately conveyed participants' experiences while being sufficiently vague so as to not risk identification of participants.

Audio files were kept in an encrypted folder on an external hard drive in my home. This external hard drive was locked in a file cabinet that was not immediately visible. The only individuals that were allowed access to the data with my permission (including transcriptions) were myself, my advisor, members of my dissertation committee, and individuals involved in transcribing (e.g. undergraduate research assistants and TechSynergy). The personal computer that I used to view transcriptions and write the results has been encrypted in accordance with HIPAA standards, and requires one password to access the computer, and one password to access confidential documents. Communications between myself and participants by e-mail were also

encrypted using Virtru electronic encryption software. I have used this software in my clinical work in order to send confidential e-mails with success.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this research was to explore the messages biracial and biethnic women received from parents regarding their appearance and identity, and to begin to understand the effects of those messages on body image. The overarching goal of this exploratory research was to add to the scant literature on biracial and biethnic women's body image and racial identity, and begin to identify themes within these domains that could inform theory. This chapter provides an analysis of participants' interviews regarding their experiences with messages received by each parent regarding appearance and identity, its impact, as well as participants' views of their own bodies, most attractive features in women, and how they felt their identity influenced their body image. The results also identify salient themes that emerged from the data in order to highlight areas where participants had similar and/or differing experiences. Participants were also asked to provide a photo and description of at least one woman in the media that they felt espoused their ideal female body and/or appearance.

Fifteen themes emerged which all fit within one of three major areas: body image, parental messages about appearance, or identity. The themes included: (1) Body Awareness and Body Consciousness, including how participants connect this concept to

body image; (2) Feelings About Appearance, including the aspects that participants liked and did not like about how they look; (3) Comparing My Body to Other Bodies, including how participants felt about their appearance as a result of comparing; (4) Western Beauty Standards, including how participants define the dominant beauty standard; (5) Ideal Features, which includes participants' views on ideal female features; (6) Women Who Embody the Ideal, which includes the women in the media that participants believe represent the dominant standard of beauty; (7) Mother's Messages Regarding Appearance, which include direct and indirect messages, as well as their impact; (8) Father's Messages Regarding Appearance, including direct and indirect messages, as well as their impact; (9) Feeling Different, which includes participants' experiences of feeling like they do not belong because of their races and biracial identity; (10) How Do I Identify?, including participants' process in how they ultimately chose to identify; (11) You're not 'X' Enough, which includes how participants experienced having been given this message in different ways and in different contexts; (12) People Assume, where participants describe their experiences of having their race assumed for them; (13) Feeling Connected to Minority Race and Culture, which included the different ways that participants chose to connect with their minority race's culture; (14) Parental Influences to Identity Formation, which included varying experiences that shaped how participants currently identify; and (15) How Identity and Body Image Are Connected, which ties together how racial identity influences a biracial woman's body image. Brackets in quotations (i.e., [ ]) indicate changes that were made for clarification.

Body Image

Body Awareness and Body Consciousness

For some participants, part of their understanding of body image meant having a sense of awareness of their bodies, including their appearance, health, and weight. Regardless of the source of messages that informed body image, participants described a sense of constant awareness or consciousness of their appearance or being concerned about how they look from the perspective of others. As Carli (who is part White and part Latina) stated, your body and body image is very relevant because it is what is most "apparent to the world." She comments, "Body image definitely has, has uh, you know it is incorporated into all this because that's something the whole world sees. Immediately when you walk into a room, they identify you, whether you like it or not, you know?" She also felt these experiences are common among most women, where you are critical of your features and concerned about what your appearance says about you. For some participants, they received early messages from their parents (primarily their mothers), which were reinforced by other sources, such as the media or peers. This conditions women to become self-conscious of their features, as was Carli's experience:

> You know, I feel like I've just been conditioned to look at myself in the mirror and just immediately pick out the things that I hate, the things that I need to work on, the things that I need to change. Like pick out an outfit that says something about me, stuff like that, I think that's just been learned throughout all these years and I think it would, I think this is a, a common experience among women.

Melanie (who has one White and one Black parent) acknowledges the impact of sources of appearance-related information in addition to her mother, particularly magazines and the type of women represented within them. Melanie reported believing that mothers can be a source of either confirmation or contradiction of the messages girls receive from the

media. However, Melanie, like other participants, engaged in a process of comparing herself to what was in the popular media and noticing that she did not look like the models depicted in the media she consumed:

> I feel like when you are looking at magazines you are going to be aware if you are White whether it is coming from your mom or not. So I have this very heightened awareness, very self-conscious of my body and how other people viewed my body.

Rachel, who is part Native American, expressed a different understanding of body consciousness and awareness of appearance. For her, being conscious of her appearance was tied more to feeling confident and comfortable "occupying" her body and feeling confident in "taking up space without apology." She described having a "kinetic" rather than "aesthetic" knowledge and connection with her body regardless of what shape it is in. In times where Rachel has not felt comfortable taking up space, she has felt like she needs to take up less space and become smaller. Amelia, who is also part Native American, described a similar feeling she experiences when she is more strongly connected to the Earth and nature. She emphasized taking care of your body and the experience of your feet "hit[ting] the dirt" as being tied to her body image:

> But in the Native American culture it's just not your body, like how you treat your body is what you are going to get out. What you put into the world. So mainly it just emphasis on taking care of your body. Really just tying yourself to nature. Why I feel like I am very outdoorsy, and why you feel like you always have a deeper connection when your feet hit the dirt.

In addition to appearance, some participants reported that their body image involved awareness or being conscious of their health. Participants felt better about their bodies when they were more physically active and when their lifestyle choices reflected putting their physical health as a priority. In addition, when participants discussed being aware of health as tied to their body image, the conversation also turned to being

conscious of weight. As Angela stated, when she is more physically active, she feels better about herself even if her body does not meet society's standard of beauty. She commented, "When I was being physically active, and working on being healthy and eating better, like I feel better about myself even if it's not the standard."

For Amber, who is also part Native American, she connects her body image to taking preventative steps to avoid health conditions commonly found among Native Americans. This meant being conscious of what she eats and exercising to try to prevent diabetes. Additionally, Amber was conscious of how much and how often she drank alcohol because alcoholism runs in her Native American side of the family. Similarly, Rachel was cognizant of having fat around her midsection and how that put her at risk for certain health problems. Like Amber, she connected those health problems to being Native American:

> The genetic side made me fairly conscious of when I was drinking. Like when I was going out on Tuesday and drinking alcohol I was not over doing it. Because you know alcoholism runs very big in Native American side of the family and I didn't want to be one of the people that was constantly drinking and developing problems and all of that stuff. Being on a reservation I didn't want to drink too much like my great aunts and my great uncle down there. So there are certain things I was pretty familiar with.

Like with most other participants and their parents, the biggest body image issue that we kept coming back to is weight. Therefore, it's not surprising that many participants mentioned being aware of their weight as tied to their body image. While Amber likes many elements of her appearance, she is very conscious of when she is putting on weight. She acknowledged that others may not notice when she is heavier, though this does not appear to change her discontent with the extra weight. She states, "I would tend to get really sensitive when I have put on more weight in my mid-section and

I'll try to tone that down. Even though no one sees it but me, I know it's there damn it."

Similarly, Kari brought up her feelings about weight when discussing her body image. She spoke of having to always be conscious of her waist size and that as a woman, her weight sits mostly on her hips. It appears she perceived this negatively because she did not like talking about weight with others. Amelia's awareness of weight was so significant that she developed a fear of being fat. She recalled that as a young girl she did not have any insecurities related to her body, but Amelia became insecure as she hit puberty when she was in junior high school. Her insecurity was fueled by the changes she saw in her body as well as her father's comments directed towards her about weight and exercise: "I have a fear of being fat. Mainly lazy, but lazy and fat. I've always had a strong fear of it. I've always had a huge thing for fitness. Because its great for your mind body and soul."

Feelings About Appearance

All participants discussed their feelings about their appearance and mentioned features on their body they liked as well as features they did not like. In some cases, participants would both like and dislike aspects of the same body part. For example, Amber liked the color of her hair but not the texture: "I love my hair, but it is a darker color and it is always really thick. The curly part I will never like, 99.9% of the time I will never like the curly feature of my hair." In addition, participants also appeared to echo the concerns of their parents and peers and criticized features that they saw others criticize for themselves.

Features participants did not like. As a whole, participants identified many

features about their bodies that they were not happy with. Body parts included facial features, skin tone, weight, body shape, and height, among others. In some cases, participants connected the features they were critical about to their race, suggesting that the features they did not like were due to being a part of their minority race. Many of the features that participants disliked about themselves had been criticized at one point by someone else, such as a family member or friend. This is further evidence that the formation of one's body image in part is dependent on how others in the person's life appraise their features. Carli, who had been criticized by her mother and encouraged by her to change her appearance to appear more White, developed a critical voice that "picked apart" the features she associated with her Hispanic father. She commented, "When I look in the mirror, my skin, my hair, the things that I inherited from my dad are the first things I kind of pick. I'm like your skin needs to be whiter, you need to lose weight."

Natalie felt similarly regarding her nose, which she connected with her Hispanic father. Her mother had told her that she would be happy to pay for Natalie to get a nose job. As a result of receiving this message throughout her life, Natalie began to view the shape of her nose negatively: "My dad and his family, they all have strong noses, so I have a very strong nose. I haven't really ever liked that. I've had a difficult time with that. That's probably the main thing I have difficulty with." Messages from family were not the only impactful messages that informed how participants felt about their features. Some participants recall having certain (usually ethnic) features criticized by their peers, particularly at a time when peer influences were particularly salient. Emily, who is part Black, described wanting to fit in with her peers, who all had straight, soft hair, whereas

Emily's hair was "nappy." She also stated that her friends could straighten or curl their hair, though Emily could not because of the texture. This difference, in combination with other non-White features she inherited, made Emily stand out and feel like she did not fit in:

> I remember I was like way self-conscious about my hair. I've even straightened it chemically because I wanted to have straight hair. You know, it's the typical, because people are like, 'Your hair is nappy' or they would make fun of it. I did do it because I was like, 'Oh, I don't want to standout.' I wanted to have straight hair, so I could curl it and straighten it like everybody else.

Amelia, who is part Hispanic and Native American, had developed a dislike of her "Spanish" nose as well as her "crooked" teeth. She recalled her father asking her on several occasions when Amelia would get her teeth fixed, which undoubtedly contributed to Amelia disliking them. Ultimately, Amelia got braces in order to correct her smile. However, like other participants, Amelia fights against those internalized messages. She recalled, "Growing up, I would always nit pick at things. But as I get older, I am teaching myself now that it's stupid, why would you even consider that?" Several other participants reported greater acceptance and tolerance of features they did not like as they got older. In fewer cases, participants began to like the features they once disliked or were self-conscious about. For example, Melanie began loving her non-White features, even her hair, which was a feature she spent a long time and a lot of effort trying to change:

> But, at the same time, having a lot of White friends, I started to love my skin tone because they would just tell me how lucky it was that I didn't have to tan and stuff and so I just loved the kind of olive complexion that I have.

However, it's important to point out that Melanie changed her opinion of features because of how others felt about her appearance. This is further support for the trend that

how participants felt about their appearance was in large part influenced by how others felt and what they communicated to participants.

Features participants liked. As indicated above, participants also described features of their appearance that they liked. However, rather than discussing features they viewed positively, participants described features they seemed to just tolerate, suggesting that they may still have held standards of beauty which are overall critical. Additionally, there was a general trend towards trying to accept or tolerate features that were perceived as being racial or ethnic minority features. In examining participant responses, it appears that participants that discussed developing an acceptance of features associated with their minority race and ethnicity had formed a more conditional acceptance of these features compared to features associated with the participant's majority race. Lucy described liking that she was "curvy" like her mother (who is Mexican). I noticed that Lucy did not use words that are judging of her weight, such as calling herself "fat." Rather, she described herself in a more objective, accepting, and less shaming way:

> I really like that I am curvy, like I am very grateful that I have my mother's curves, like the big bust and the big bottom. And she has like a little, tiny waist, and so I have that too. So that's the things I like about myself a lot.

Lucy also expressed wanting her skin color to "match" how she identified as a Black woman. Lucy did not always like her skin color because it set her apart from her peers and made her feel different. However, since Lucy began identifying as Black, she wanted her appearance to better match her identity. She also began to love her skin color in part because it set her apart from everyone else. Other participants expressed similar sentiments regarding other features. Jackie, for example, suggested that at one point she did not like her brown eyes. This was because she had at one point bought into the

traditional Western standard of beauty and wanted to appear like a "California girl." However, she expressed having had to "learn to like them."

Some participants also expressed liking their body shape when it appeared more athletic. For these participants, they took pride in their exercise routine that allowed them to attain their physical appearance. Tina expressed feeling proud of her body and the hard work she put in. Similarly, Amelia expressed appreciation for the features affected from being involved in athletics and being a runner. However, participants who achieved their appearance by prioritizing exercise in their life may also hold themselves to Western beauty standards, which emphasizes being toned and thin. In other words, body appreciation and body confidence may not equate with accepting one's body and appearance unconditionally. Therefore, it is possible that these participants would not be happy with their body "as is," or how their body would appear if they did not work hard to tone what Tina called "trouble areas." For example, after Amelia disclosed her features that she appreciates, she then suggested that she is no longer as happy with those features as she used to be. It seems in her dialogue that Amelia is critical of herself for not exercising as much and therefore losing her ideal shape:

> I would probably just say [that I am happy with] my lower waist, like my mid-section. And then probably just my thighs. Like I have always been a runner and when I was in my teens I used to run a ton and burned a ton of calories. And you are burning calories but then when you stop running your thighs get bigger. Because you have all this muscle that is just sitting there. And then when you stop using it just. Then you are like, 'oh I've got a lot of mass on me. I need to get back to regular routine.' I've always had a great butt. I always pride myself on that. Because I have gotten lazy with sprints it's not as good as it used to be.

In sum, it can be concluded that participant's feelings about their appearance varies, though there were several physical features that were salient. Most participants discussed features associated with their minority race and ethnicity (e.g. skin color, body

shape, facial features). In some cases, participants' feelings regarding their appearance depended on how others appraised their features, indicating that body image is in part formed by how salient people in a person's life appraise those features. This also indicates that body image formation does not occur in a vacuum. While some participants did not like features they associated with their minority race (in part due to critical feedback they had received from others), other participants had come to tolerate, accept, and at times even appreciate their minority features. Further, some participants expressed liking the features they attained from having a regular exercise routine; body acceptance and appreciation seemed dependent upon whether the participant was adhering to their exercise routine and whether their features remained toned. In these cases, it seemed that participants had conditional acceptance of their bodies rather than accepting or appreciating their features "as is."

Comparing My Body to Other Bodies

Participants also described that their body image was informed by comparing themselves to other women, including friends, women in the media, and female family members. Some participants mentioned how their appearance was alike or different from White and non-White individuals, though it appeared that most participants compared themselves to White girls and women, or Eurocentric standards of beauty. In most cases, participants also felt disappointed when they compared themselves to others, indicating that they did so with a critical lens. At times, this affected the clothing participants chose to wear or the choice of how to alter their appearance to better match the predominant beauty standard. Further, participants had noticed that girls and women with their

appearance were not represented in the media they were exposed to. Rather, the media tended to show monoracial, mostly White women.

As indicated above, most participants who in part formed their body image by comparing themselves to others had compared themselves to White girls and women. Most commonly, the people participants compared their features to were individuals that the participants personally knew, though some were also influenced by the media. Among the women participants knew, female friends and mothers were mentioned most frequently. Melanie recalled from an early age that she compared herself to her White friends and noticed she did not look like them:

> My, all my friends were blond haired people so it really like, I stood out when I was sitting down with my friends. It was more of like an external thing. I noticed and even like…my friends with, my white friends with dark hair weren't as coarse as mine. It wasn't even as coarse.

Carli reported a very similar experience, where she compared herself to her White friends. However, she recalled that her mother also encouraged her to spend time with White friends but not people of color. Carli received the damaging message that she should attempt to appear more White from her mother, which was reinforced by seeing that her friends were considered beautiful and were more welcomed by her mother as one of Carli's friends. As a result, Carli felt different from her peers and began to dislike her "ethnic" features. Further affecting how Carli experienced her body, she remembered watching her mother compare herself to her friends growing up, and feeling like she was not as beautiful or thin as her friends. Carli experienced this as her mother feeling like she would not be loved or accepted if she did not look like her friends, which Carli internalized and ultimately applied to herself.

Angela also compared herself to her White friends, though in a different way than

other participants. Because Angela never saw women in the media or among her friend group that looked like her, she never identified with White standards of beauty, despite being half White:

> I would say that there was never any representation for somebody that looks like me, so even when the standard of beauty was very clear in my community, it was very, very White. I almost feel like those standards never match, like I never start looking at magazines and think like, "Oh, I'm supposed to look like that White woman.

For Angela, a prominent moment in her life where she noticed just how different she was from her White peers was when she went to college and lived among White women. Angela noticed that her White college friends and roommates ate similar foods and exercised like she did, though she perceived their relationship with exercise and eating was "unhealthy" because they dieted and exercised to maintain a certain appearance.

In addition to comparing herself to her White friends, Tina compared herself to her White mother. Tina acknowledges that her mother "was different" with regards to appearance by saying she knows she's comparing two "different" people to each other. Nevertheless, she still found herself comparing with a critical lens: "I looked at the pictures of mom when she was younger and obviously, she was different but she had smaller waist, smaller things, smaller you know." In comparing herself to her mother, Tina noticed that she was bigger. She also saw this in her White friends when Tina was in junior high school, where she saw that her friends had smaller thighs. Tina became insecure of the size of her thighs, perhaps after seeing that her mother and friends were all smaller than she was. Because of her insecurity, Tina wore "disgusting Bermuda shorts" to hide that her thighs were larger. Tina acknowledges that her standard of beauty was more informed by White beauty standards despite being biracial and looking

different than her White peers.

Other participants recalled comparing themselves to non-White girls and women, again with a generally critical lens. In these cases, participants mentioned how women in their minority racial or ethnic group should look by stating that one of their features is like or unlike the features of women in that racial/ethnic group. Kari, for example, described her body type as "athletic," then contrasted her body shape with that of typical Indian women, stating that if an Indian woman is athletic, it's "very noticeable." Rachel discussed comparing herself to what other Asian women look like, which suggests she has an awareness of an Asian standard of beauty. When comparing herself, she noticed that she doesn't fall neatly within those standards, in that she is taller and larger: "And it's weird. For Asians, I'm kinda tall. I get told that a lot. 5'6, and in the Asian world it seems like I'm tall. It's so focused on being petite. My sister is a size zero she is just teeny tiny." She also has curly hair, which is not a feature that is common among Asian women. Rachel recalled that when she was younger she had "typical looking Asian hair" which was "dark" and "straight."

Similarly to Rachel, Melanie expressed feeling like she does not fit into any standard of beauty based on her races, particularly as she noticed she has both White and non-White features. Several participants stated that they have to navigate this "middle ground" with respect to their ambiguous appearance, where they did not look like White women but also did not look like women from their other racial group. Therefore, Melanie compared herself both to her White peers as well as to her sister, whose appearance is less ambiguous and "more Black" than Melanie:

> And growing up most of my friends were White and my body was just a little different. I remember like, one of the earliest things I remember feeling self-

> conscious about were my thighs. I just remember having larger thighs than most of my friends did and it just, and also I had these mixed incidents where I wanted to look like my friends but also my sister. There were all these ideals I had, like, she was my older sister. She was beautiful and my ass is super flat. And that is something to this day, that I just have a flat ass."

Western Beauty Standards

Rather than presume what Eurocentric beauty standards participants were exposed to (and perhaps held to by themselves and/or others), participants were encouraged to explore what they perceived they were. By exploring their perception of the dominant standard, we can capture the standard that they were exposed to throughout their life from their lens. These are likely the standard(s) that participants had to navigate for themselves and consciously accept or reject. Additionally, the messages participants received by their parents regarding appearance and body image may have in part been informed by the same or similar messages.

Participants named only tangible qualities to describe the dominant beauty standard, which contrasts their own personal standards of beauty that included both physical and nonphysical qualities. Additionally, several participants felt that, within the dominant standard, "dark skin is ugly" and that "European standards of beauty are more beautiful," as Lucy expressed. In addition to listing physical qualities exclusively, most participants listed very similar qualities, suggesting that their perceptions of the dominant beauty standards are similar. Overall, it appears that light skin, light eyes, light hair, and a thin body type with fewer curves is the Eurocentric beauty standard as reported by participants.

Rachel captures the essence of the dominant beauty standard in describing how a

woman should appear “acceptable,” an appearance she felt pressured to adopt because of her White grandmother but one in which Rachel chose to reject. As a young girl and adolescent, Rachel wanted her appearance to match the dominant beauty standard, which included “the whole green eyes and straighter hair thing.” She stated, “Everything was supposed to be so processed or prim and things like that and I hate it. I did. I rejected it. I um, so yeah, I feel like it's just more natural. Low maintenance. “ Jackie described features of the dominant standard as a woman who has "the features of a ‘surfer chick.’" Given that Jackie spent part of her life living in California, it is very likely she was influenced by her geographical location, particularly because she expressed having wanted her appearance to match the dominant standard around her. She recalled, “I wanted to have blonde hair and blue eyes, I wanted to have the peaches and cream skin, I wanted to be the surfer chick—and I’m like okay really? I’m…it’s never going to happen.” Jackie’s dialogue touches on a concept unique to the relationship between minority women and the Eurocentric beauty standard. Specifically, minority women may desire to alter features that are unchangeable, such as skin tone and eye color, in order to better match the Eurocentric standard.

However, some participants’ perceptions of the dominant beauty standard differed slightly from what is currently in the literature, which states that lighter, straight hair is ideal. Both Tina and Lucy identified that, in the dominant beauty standard, women can have curly hair, though commented that the texture of the hair makes the difference. For example, a woman can have naturally curly hair though her hair can’t be coarse or kinky. Lucy felt, “You can have curly hair and that’s great, that’s beautiful, but it just can’t be coarse.” Although these participants purported that there is greater variability in hair

texture within the dominant beauty standard, they limited the texture to straight or curly, and excluded coarse and kinky hair. If this is the case, then the dominant standard still excludes the majority of minority women, particularly women of African descent.

Participants also differed in how they communicated their understanding of the dominant beauty standard. In some cases, participants discussed their view of the standard by identifying what they consciously rejected, as is the case with Rachel. Carli reported her perspective on the dominant standard by sharing her self-criticisms on the Hispanic features she inherited from her father. She also identified that there is one type of body in this society that all women are at least aware of, but more commonly are pressured to internalize, removing the woman's freedom of expression to "break the rules" of White beauty standards. Similarly, Amelia communicated her view of the dominant beauty standard by describing the features she does not like in her appearance because they do not match the standard, such as her "brittle nails."

Resistance/rejection of the dominant beauty standard. After understanding how participants perceived the dominant beauty standard, we can now explore the extent participants felt they internalized or rejected these standards. It appears that participants as a whole reported rejecting the dominant standard that they described in favor of accepting a more diverse standard of beauty. For Emily, this meant that she never wanted to look like "a little skinny blonde girl," though she recalled wanting to have less coarse hair that she could "curl it and straighten it like everybody else." However, Emily related this to wanting to fit in with her White peers rather than wanting to "be" White. In some cases, participants connected rejecting the dominant beauty standard with their identity, indicating that there was a desire to have their appearance match more with their racial

identity. This was particularly relevant for women who identified as either biracial or more with their minority race, as Lucy, Carli, Kari, and Jackie did.

Lucy, who identified as predominantly Nigerian, expressed wanting to be darker in order for her appearance to be more congruent with her identity. Additionally, she also desired a more traditionally Black appearance so that she could more easily "fit" into a monoracial mold. Lucy commented, "A lot of people always say, 'oh, I wish I was lighter,' like the ones who are dark, but I wish I was darker because at least I would be able to fit into one common mold." Melanie, who is also half Black, recalled wishing that her skin were darker, particularly after receiving compliments from her White friends about not having to tan. From the perspective of the interviewer, it appeared that Jackie felt very similarly to Lucy. Jackie wanted to "embrace" her ethnic background more, though this entailed altering her ambiguous appearance. She mentioned wanting to dye her hair darker and a desire to be "slimmer" so that she could appear more traditionally Japanese. For Carli, identifying as predominantly Chicana was more reflective of a desire for self-acceptance rather than wanting to change her appearance in order to look non-White. Because Carli had only recently begun identifying as a woman of color, she expressed having a goal that entailed self-acceptance for her identity and her appearance. Carli stated, "I think my goal is accepting my body and my skin for exactly how it is today. Um, and loving myself for exactly who I am."

For several participants, it was exhausting to continue desiring a more Eurocentric appearance, which was the primary contributing factor to their choice to reject the dominant beauty standard. Rachel was heavily pressured to adopt a feminine, Eurocentric appearance by her grandmother. Because of this, Rachel spent many years struggling

with applying make-up that would run down her eyes and wearing heels that hurt her feet. However, Rachel described in her interview how she found the strength over time to reject those standards and begin to develop a "sense of esteem" with herself:

> I did wear these things but to me they are just impractical. I do I feel like I reject that ultra feminine stuff…I found the strength over time [to reject Eurocentric beauty standards]. I think it's taken a lot longer to trust it, to develop a sense of esteem with myself.

Some participants seemed to reference what can be thought of as evolving cultural standards of beauty, which embrace more variety in what is considered beautiful; their minority groups have made their appearance feel more accepted and attractive. And yet for other participants, like Tina, there have not been standards of beauty created for "mixed" women, though she also feels that the standard would allow for more variety in beauty as opposed to the restrictive monoracial and Eurocentric beauty standards:

> So there isn't standard of how we're supposed to look, whereas if you were just purely White there is standard of how those girls are supposed to look, and if you're Black there's standard of how those girls are supposed to look like. Because mixed isn't hugely out there just quite yet, there is not a huge stigma on how mixed girls are supposed to look. When you find one ["mixed" girl], you'll go, "Cool!" There's not an outline of how we're supposed to look just yet.

Carli echoed the feelings of other participants when she stated that, in the Chicana community, she has found more acceptance and feels more beautiful. Carli has noticed that women that look like her are "looked at as more beautiful." Natalie, who is also part Hispanic, mentioned that the way beauty is interpreted in Hispanic culture is very different in her experience from mainstream White culture. Natalie mentioned body size as being one component that is viewed differently, and stated that there is "a lot more variety and a lot more diversity in what is beautiful."

Ideal Features

All participants had opinions regarding what they consider to be ideal features- what they find to be most attractive on a woman and also on themselves. Participant responses centered around several areas of the body, including body shape, facial features, hair, and skin. Additionally, participants discussed the notion that the most ideal physical features sometimes depend on the person, suggesting that there is no one standard or ideal looking woman. It also appears that it would be erroneous to simply add all features discussed by participants together to get a comprehensive picture of the ideal woman; rather, the features mentioned should be examined from the lens of each individual. Nevertheless, the points of convergence suggest a possible ideal shared by biracial women. Interestingly, the points of convergence were usually shared by participants who also shared a minority race.

Body type/shape. The participants who mentioned body type or shape appeared to agree regarding what they considered to be ideal. Body type and shape includes a description of preferred height and distribution of fat and/or muscle. Participants indicated that an athletic, toned figure was attractive, yet they also stated that their ideal body shape is one that also has curves. All participants who discussed body shape as part of an ideal also expressed that being taller ("but not too tall either," according to Natalie) was considered attractive. Amber summarized the opinions of participants when she described the ideal body shape as an "hourglass, something that accentuates femininity." For some participants, these are ideal features they wished they had had at some point, whether historically or currently. Jackie, who is part Japanese and part White, is one such example. She disclosed that, in the past, she would have liked to look different than how

she looked in order to match the perceived dominant beauty standards. This was Jackie's way of communicating her view of body type and shape ideals. In addition to describing her ideal body shape, Jackie also painted a picture of the ideal woman by describing other ideal features.

> I wanted to be curvy. I wanted to have bigger boobs. I wanted, uh, to be taller. I wanted to have smaller feet back then too because, look, when you're short and you have big feet it looks crazy. Um, I wanted to have blue eyes back then.

Lucy, who also stated that the hourglass figure is ideal, described this body type as, "…someone who is thinner, not big thighs, but like really small middle, and she has a very big bottom and top." Similarly, Emily related she once had a desire to have a "voluptuous" figure, and indicated that she associates being voluptuous with the ideal African American woman's body shape. Angela, who is also part African American, used the word "voluptuous" to describe the ideal body shape for African American women. This lends support for the notion that biracial women may not only consider the White Western beauty standard when conceptualizing an ideal body type and shape; they may also hold body shape and type ideals for their second or other race as well. For Emily, this meant having "the biggest boobs and the biggest butt," along with "this tiny waist," similar to Kim Kardashian. More recently, Emily's conceptualization of an ideal body shape and type had shifted towards a more athletic look, which had motivated her to exercise.

In addition to an "hourglass" or "voluptuous" shape, several participants also mentioned an "athletic" figure as being a desired body type and shape. Tina's definition of an ideal body type was toned and athletic, though she made sure to mention that this body shape is different from being "skinny." In her dialogue, Tina alluded to being

athletic as healthy: “Personally, I think the ideal body is that athletic look that’s not, it’s not skinny but it’s toned. You can gain weight but try to tone all muscle. Just be healthy.” Natalie also expressed that the ideal body shape is “not thin but physically toned,” and that it needs to be clear by their physique that a woman “goes to the gym and eats healthy.” Amelia felt similarly, relating that a woman’s frame should have “some sort of tone” and that she should be “fit.”

Facial features. Approximately half of the participants articulated what they considered to be ideal facial features. Unlike the discussion of body shape and type, participants who mentioned ideal facial features were more diverse in the features they chose to talk about. Some of the features described included a woman’s smile, the shape and color of eyes, facial bone structure, noses, and even how much make up a woman wears. For both Emily and Amber, make up should be minimal and not detract from a woman’s natural facial features. Emily, who is half White and half Black, stated that the ideal woman’s face should not need make-up because the woman would naturally have “light eyes and super dark eyelashes” and therefore not require make up to highlight these features. Specifically, she related wishing she had had blue eyes, and hoped that her child has blue eyes.

Amelia also related that she finds long, natural eyelashes to be beautiful. In addition to eyelashes, Amelia as well as Kari referred to eyebrows as relevant features that play into a woman’s beauty. Kari referenced Bollywood actresses and their “amazing eyebrows” that are thicker and more pronounced. Amelia mentions a woman’s eyes (and associated features) as being most relevant in how she conceptualizes a woman’s beauty, stating, “Probably I’d say the most important thing is probably eyes. Like really big

almond shaped eyes." Amber, who is also Native American and White (like Amelia), related liking the "thicker, rounder eye shape" on a woman's face. However, Amelia qualified her description of ideal facial features by stating that she finds something beautiful in all women, particularly when they smile, regardless of their appearance.

Lucy cites women who have "smaller faces" and "higher cheekbones" as being an ideal facial structure, whereas Kari mentions "strong faces with strong features" but a "small nose" as her ideal. Carli, who acknowledges that her perspective of what is ideal is heavily influenced by her White mother and dominant societal beauty standards, prefers "straight teeth" as well as "clear skin," discussed separately below. In examining participant responses with regard to facial features, it is possible that there is more heterogeneity in what participants discussed as being ideal facial features because phenotype varies significantly between races. However, there appears to be much more convergence when participants consider ideal skin color.

Skin. Similar to the discussion of ideal body type, participants seemed to agree on what they considered their beauty ideal when skin was brought up. Participants' responses predominantly included dialogue on skin color, with a few participants describing "healthy" skin as being "clear" (e.g. without significant blemishes, wrinkles, or discoloration). All participants who brought up skin color as a relevant ideal feature indicated that having tanned or darker skin was considered beautiful. In some cases, these participants expressed a desire for their skin color to match their minority race. Both Kari and Amelia felt this way. For Kari, this became significant when she began identifying more as an Indian woman. At that time, she found herself wanting to appear "more Indian" and had begun to idealize traditionally Indian features, which included darker

skin.

Natalie, who also noted that it is "pretty much cool to have dark skin in a tan kind of way" states that she feels this was not always the case; in other words, Natalie suggested that the dominant beauty standard has shifted from having lighter and more pale skin to emphasizing being tanned. As Tina put it, "skin tone would look like you've been in California all year." Amber described this skin tone by labeling it "olive, slightly tanned skin." Overall, it is possible that what drives participants to find beauty in darker or tanned skin is due to both a perceived shift in dominant beauty standards as well as participants identifying with or embracing their minority race as they have gotten older.

Hair. Participant dialogue regarding ideal hair included discussions of hair color, texture, and length. As with other previously described features, participants consistently described similar preferences and ideals. Most participants indicated that longer, darker hair was their ideal, as was thicker and/or curly hair, and expressed feeling that this is how many minority women appear naturally. Lucy expressed the importance of hair in "making or breaking" how a woman looks, that it "ties" a woman's appearance together. Rather than discussing specific preferences or perception of an ideal, Lucy's responses suggested that there may be many ideals, and that it is more how a woman's features come together that determine the quality of her appearance. Emily communicated a preference and acceptance of women in their natural form. It seems in particular that she found an ideal with women who do not appear to fit the dominant Western beauty standard. Emily stated, "I love that they don't feel like they have to do anything or try hard to change. It's okay if you're a little bit brown, if you have curly hair and you don't want to change it."

Tina, who identified as "more White than Black" provided the only exception to the majority opinion, qualifying her point of view by indicating that "it [ideal hair] all depends on the person." However, she also stated that she personally prefers lighter hair, particularly when it has been naturally lightened. Tina, as well as the rest of participants, highlighted one possible link between racial identity and which features participants feel are ideal. It is notable that Tina, who identified as predominantly White, preferred lighter hair, whereas the rest of participants, who identified either as biracial or predominantly with their minority race, preferred features commonly found in minority women. These features included darker, curly, and thicker hair. Natalie, another participant who "considers [herself] primarily White" also expressed a preference for features more commonly found in White women. However, she also valued lighter skin that can tan as well as "luscious hair." Nevertheless, many of the participants stated that what is ideal is also dependent on the woman with those features, and often discussed ideal features in reference to their own races and/or ethnicity.

Ideal features depend on the person. As women discussed ideal features, it became clear that there are many things that can constitute an ideal, though what can be considered an ideal feature depends on the person with the feature. Given that there is so much variability in appearances, particularly for biracial women, it makes sense that many participants felt that what are ideal features depend on the woman. Rather than list ideal physical features in her own body or in other women, Rachel strongly felt that ideal beauty was related to feeling connected to your body and what a body is capable of; what a body is able to do is unique to each person and also changes with time. For Rachel, beauty was also tied to feeling like she does not have to hide her body or become

"smaller" in a predominantly White society. Angela felt that women encompass their version of ideal beauty with "what they stand for" and that women's features can be attractive for different reasons. From Angela's perspective, there are many variations of attractive women, and the full range of body proportions are all attractive. Amelia felt similarly, stating that she finds beauty in all women, and what she finds beautiful is not limited to the features society focuses on. She also spoke regarding how a woman's flaws, and the image she is trying to portray, can make her more beautiful.

> Like, just like I'll see all the flaws in women that are like perfect. And then what I find uniquely pretty about them, I think its what they are trying to portray in their image. I don't think there is just one body type or exact thing. I think some overweight women are really beautiful. And I don't think weight or hair or whatever determines how pretty you are.

The above findings lend support for a connection between racial identity and what a biracial woman's standard of beauty encompasses. While there were a variety of features described by participants, there was consensus with regards to hair, skin, and body shape/type. This suggests the potential for a "dominant" standard of beauty among biracial women who are part White and part a minority race or ethnicity, a standard that differs from the purely Eurocentric ideal discussed by participants. Given that there is so much variability in terms of appearance among biracial women, it is not surprising that several participants felt that ideal features depended upon the person who had them. Nevertheless, participants who identified as predominantly biracial or with their minority race/ethnicity felt that features commonly seen in minority women were ideal. However, participants who identified as predominantly White endorsed a preference for Eurocentric features. Angela captured her feelings regarding her experiences with the dominant beauty standards, stating that she felt like she was outside of the pressure of those

standards and that she had "nothing to contribute" to her White friends with regards to appearance. And yet for some participants, there were other, nontangible features that factored into a woman's beauty, including strength, confidence, and physical capabilities. This is in contrast to what participants considered were the dominant Eurocentric beauty standards, which from their perspective included only physical features (e.g. what can be seen on the outside).

Women Who Embody the Ideal

During the interview process, it became clear that most participants were communicating their views of their ideal female body by naming women in the media. Providing this is a means of facilitating understanding between participants and myself, because these women can easily be recognized; for example, most women have heard of Kim Kardashian, and either know what she looks like, or can look up photos of her on the internet. Therefore, I began asking participants explicitly who in the media they felt espoused their ideal. Participants either identified and described at least one woman, or emailed a photo and description of their ideal woman. All but one participant identified at least one woman in the media or public eye. Amelia was the only participant who expressed discomfort at participating in this aspect of the research, because of her own body image journey. This led to a rich dialogue where Amelia and I processed her experiences with media messages and how she slowly internalized these messages. Ultimately, they were another contributor to Amelia's fear of becoming fat. She stated "It just makes me so frustrated. So mad…so I feel if I identify a woman in the public eye I would in a way be saying that that influence is okay." Therefore, we collaboratively

decided that Amelia would not contribute to this aspect of the study.

There was some consensus between participants regarding the women identified, however, there was also a large amount of diversity. Sometimes, the diversity in preferences for appearance came from the same participant. The women identified ranged in races, body size, hair color, and skin tone. Three participants identified one of their ideals as Beyoncé. For Angela, Emily, and Natalie, Beyoncé was one of their ideals because she has curves. Angela specified that Beyoncé is "voluptuous" which is a word she commonly associated with Black women, stating, "Women who, like, are physically strong-looking but also curvaceous and you know for black women the word voluptuous is ideal." Similarly, Angela reported that Kim Kardashian's curves and smaller waist are also ideal.

Although Natalie identified Beyoncé as one of her ideals (despite Natalie identifying as predominantly White), she also stated that she felt Kiera Knightley is "very petite" and "feminine" with "long beautiful hair," all ideals for Natalie. This further lends support for the notion that biracial participants may not find ideals in only one race, and not only within one of their races. This was also the case for Melanie, who identified both Gabriel Union and Tina Fey as espousing her personal ideal of beauty. Interestingly, Melanie seemed a little self-critical when discussing what she felt was attractive in Tina Fey, though she did not do this when describing the ideals of Gabriel Union. This indicated the possibility that Melanie was aware that she was choosing someone that society may deem as unconventionally beautiful, particularly when compared to the more "feminine" or "glamorous" women that you can find in the media:

> Tina Fey. She is like, really beautiful. I really value… I'm a weirdo, but I think she is beautiful. She wears those glasses and you think like, they make her more

> attractive than her other qualities. And you think she is the most beautiful person ever.

Tina was the only participant who identified a biracial woman in the public eye as being one of her ideals. She stated, "I don't know, she [Gugu Mbatha-Raw] is mixed and she's very pretty." It is possible that this is related to what Tina had alluded to in her dialogue on Western standards of beauty; because there are not very many "mixed" women, and there is a large amount of diversity within biracial women, there has not been an ideal or standard of beauty set for this group of women. Further, most American women (including the participants) were raised with exposure to the same actresses, therefore it is not surprising that they came to idealize the same public figures.

Parental Messages Regarding Appearance

Mother's Messages Regarding Appearance

Mothers communicated messages to their daughters through behaviors and comments regarding her own appearance in addition to overt, verbal messages directed to their daughters regarding their appearance. The overwhelming message regarding appearance-related to body dissatisfaction and weight, though there were other physical features that were criticized. All participants reported that their mothers were dissatisfied with their own appearance regardless of race (e.g., both White and racial/ethnic minority mothers were unhappy with how they looked). This dissatisfaction was communicated to all participants in both direct (e.g., verbal comments about being dissatisfied or criticisms about appearance) and indirect (e.g., dieting, cosmetic alterations) means. All participants were aware of how their mothers felt about their own bodies either from what they said or their behaviors. For example, Kari's mother communicated her dissatisfaction with her

own appearance verbally as well as by her behaviors. Kari perceived her mother as being very image conscious, stating, “My mom was definitely not comfortable with her body and, I think last year or so, she went on this really huge health kick that actually, when she sort of tried to lose weight she couldn't commit to it.”

Kari also disclosed that there were “good and bad” foods in the home growing up, and that dieting was something that her mother expressed excitement about. This led Kari to question her own dieting behaviors. She stated, “She called and would be like, ‘Oh, I started this new diet and I've lost 10 pounds and I'm really excited!' And she would be really excited. And then I'm wondering, is this something I should be excited about?” Similarly, Melanie recalled being “forced” to diet with her mother so that Melanie “would not be that [overweight] kid.” Her mother hid food in the home in order to keep her and her daughters from indulging. In addition, mothers engaged in other behaviors, including spending long periods of time enhancing their appearance before leaving the house. Carli recalled her mother spending hours in front of her mirror “primping” before leaving the home, leaving Carli with the impression that women need to alter their appearance to make themselves look better.

Participants had different experiences with regard to the messages they received from their mother. In some instances, a mother would verbally communicate acceptance of her daughter’s appearance, but nonverbally communicate a conflicting message. For example, Tina stated, “She sent me very strong message to just be very self-confident and don’t worry about what other people think and never a let guy influence how I should dress or act.” However, Tina’s mother also sent a message of dissatisfaction with her own body when she gained weight, sending Tina a message that included conditional

acceptance of appearance. Tina reported, "Body image wise, my mom taught me to be happy with it and to not stress too much about it unless I start to gain a lot of weight." Similarly, Kylie described feeling that her mother was well-intentioned in her comments about appearance, though felt the way she communicated what she felt was best for her led Kylie to feeling like there was something wrong with her body. For example, Kylie's mother offered to pay for Kylie to get a breast augmentation, which for Kylie was reflective of an overarching message her mother sent about her and the role of a woman's appearance. Kylie summarized the message she received, stating, "You have to look presentable so men in your family are proud to be seen with you."

Some participants don't recall receiving any overt, verbal messages regarding their appearance from their mother, though their mother's negative comments regarding their own bodies served as strong messages that led participants to reflect and compare their bodies to their mother's. It was their mothers' negative comments about their own appearance that led their daughters to evaluate their own appearance negatively. Tina expressed:

> She would never say anything derogatory towards me, but I guess it's just like things she said about herself that made me like it would project on to me because I am bigger than her and I am her daughter, like I am a part of her.

It appears that, in such a case, it is up to the participant whether they perceived this as a positive or negative. Emily's mother, a single parent, did not provide much guidance or influence. Emily perceived this was because she did not have time to worry about the "little things." Emily recalled feeling accepted, though left wanting for more guidance. Jackie, whose mother was also a single parent, also did not receive any messages regarding her appearance one way or the other. Jackie perceived this overall positively;

however Jackie, like other participants, picked up on indirect messages via her mother's dieting and exercise behaviors. This affected Jackie negatively from a young age. She indicated, "I remember being like, young, and trying to do like sit ups and being like conscious about like, 'What eight year old needs to do a sit up? I don't need to do a sit up.'"

Because some participants' mothers did not communicate any overt positive or negative messages, other outlets, like the media, became more salient as influences. This was the case for Angela, who recalled always knowing that she did not fit the White American standard of beauty that she saw in the media, yet finding that this was her main outlet for messages regarding appearance:

> I feel like the popular culture on TV and how are those things…I think the one thing that wasn't happening is there wasn't a conversation about those things. And so, the conversation got shaped by the media. Especially, coming out of Montana, where there's not a lot of representation in general. So I think that their popular culture probably had larger influence than my family culture.

Additionally, some participants reported damaging messages related to their non-White racial/ethnic features such as hair texture, skin color, shape of nose, and body build. For example, Carli's mother made great efforts attempting to "White wash" Carli in order to get her to pass as White, by chemically straightening her hair and encouraging her to wear make-up to make her face appear lighter. Because of these efforts to White wash Carli, she felt she received the following "take home" message from her mother:

> You're not, you're not doing good enough. You're…you're doing something wrong. You've got to try harder. You've got to be whiter. You've got to work at this, you know. You've got to work to conform to what society believes is beautiful and what I think is beautiful.

Similarly, Natalie's mother, who had undergone cosmetic surgery herself, had told Natalie that she "would love" to pay for a nose job, which made Natalie aware of her

"prominent [ethnic] nose" and to evaluate this as a negative physical feature. Natalie believed her mother was not aware of the message she was sending and its consequences on Natalie's self-esteem.

Impact of Mothers' Messages

Mothers' messages had both a positive and negative impact on their daughters' body image, feelings about their appearance, and behaviors. Most participants reported becoming self-conscious about their appearance and adopting attitudes and behaviors similar to their mother's. This is arguably the most prominent impact of their mother's messages and behaviors. Participants adopted the pattern of constantly questioning their appearance, and being very conscious of the foods they ate to the point of restricting and dieting, and disliking certain features that they saw their mother's dislike in themselves. Because of her mother's frequent comments about weight, Lucy reported worrying about her appearance most of the time, though noticed that this worry is more significant when she is with her mother, stating, "Like sometimes when I am around her, I felt like she is judging me. Like, I wonder like if she thinks I look way too big or if she thinks I am pretty or pretty enough." Similarly, Kari and Amelia became self-conscious about how they looked and whether they were gaining weight. Amelia expressed feeling like these concerns would be long-term, indicating, "Growing up I just had that thing in the back of my head, I'm a little overweight. I am gaining weight. I think it will always be there I think, until I am old and don't give a damn." Similarly, Kylie adopted the belief that you should look presentable and be someone that others want to be around. Her mother instilled the notion that people will judge you by your appearance; therefore, it's

important to look your best.

A few participants felt they were able to "pick and choose" what messages and behaviors they adopted, so that they were able to let go of what they perceived as harmful and adopt the healthier parts of their mother's beliefs and behaviors. Tina, for example, adopted her mother's behaviors regarding grooming and beauty. She recalled her mother being a "huge fitness nut" who was visibly unhappy when she would gain weight, though she felt she adopted a positive version of those behaviors. Tina recalled internalizing the message, "Be happy with yourself. You're beautiful the way you are. It had a huge impact on me because I hate wearing makeup now and I'll not always shave my legs and stuff." Rachel was also able to overcome the negative impact of her mother's messages about herself and about Rachel's appearance, though this process involved feeling confused and feeling a sense of mistrust regarding the purpose of these messages. Over time, she was able to decide what appearance-related values to keep and which to reject.

Although most participants spoke regarding the negative impact of their mother's messages and behaviors, it appears the overall impact isn't purely damaging. Some participants who described negative impacts also described positive influences to their body image and their behaviors. For example, one participant reflected that although the messages she received regarding food and weight were damaging, her mother's messages regarding dress and being concerned about what you portray to the world were positive. Melanie never felt she had to worry about how she presented to others. She indicated that her mother's messages, which emphasized thinking about how she is dressed and what you look like, led her to never have to worry about how she looked. Angela, whose mother did not provide any concrete messages regarding appearance or standards of

beauty, felt she had to construct her own standard of beauty outside of her mother's influence. Angela also felt she was protected from many of the harmful messages regarding standards of beauty by not knowing about them:

> I have always been more concerned with people's characteristics than their appearance, because you can be the prettiest person on the planet and you're actually an asshole. And I also know that really pretty girls are really, deeply, severely insecure. So I feel like I have avoided a lot of that struggle because it just wasn't…I had priorities.

In sum, whether mothers communicate a positive or negative message directly and verbally about their daughter's appearance, their behaviors and feelings about their own appearance had as much of an impact on how participants felt about their own bodies and on their own appearance-related behaviors. In addition, all participants' mothers were unhappy with their appearance and went to various lengths to alter their appearance, including dieting, use of cosmetics, or cosmetic surgery. Participants were then left to "pick and choose," as well as reframe, the messages their mothers communicated in order to overcome the negative impact of these messages and internalize a positive body image and positive feelings towards racial identity. In terms of positive influences and impact, some participants were able to see the good intent behind their mother's messages that served to offset the damage those messages could have caused. Similarly, some participants felt some of the messages had a positive influence, such as instilling a sense of pride in the appearance one puts out into the world. It appears the messages and overall impact are complex but suggest that mother's play a central role in the body image and racial identity development of their daughters.

Father's Messages Regarding Appearance

Participants described appearance-related messages they received from their fathers. Similar to messages received from their mothers, participants made observations of their father's behaviors and comments regarding his own appearance in addition to overt, verbal messages directed at their daughter's own appearance. Fathers seemed to be more direct in terms of what they communicated than mothers, yet participants were also influenced by their father's behaviors. Some of the messages were critical and perceived negatively, whereas others were affirming, accepting, and complimenting. For example, Lucy recalled her father's very overt and direct criticism regarding her weight and her choice in clothing, make-up, and food. Lucy's father would ask Lucy why she would choose to drink soda when she could choose to drink water, and was overall critical of her choices. Lucy recalled, "We had an incident at the grocery store where he was like, he will just tell me what he thinks about how I carry myself, or like my body, or what I should and shouldn't eat or what I need to do." She expressed that her father's messages affected her more because he was more direct in his comments compared to her mother. Lucy related that she continues to receive criticism from her father as an adult.

Whereas participants recalled their mother's dieting behaviors and cosmetic alternations, they noticed their father's exercise and eating behaviors. Most fathers either had or still have an exercise regimen, which allowed them to eat what they wanted without restriction. Melanie recalled her father using exercise in order to mitigate having eaten candy:

> I have watched him eat a family pack of M&M's and say, 'Oh well, I guess I'm running 7 miles tomorrow.' And was able to kind of like not feel so guilty about it because he is very athletic and works out every day. So it's not that big of a deal to him.

However, participants reported their fathers would become dissatisfied with their appearance when their weight fluctuated or when they did not have the body shape they hoped for. Fathers generally desired an athletic build, or to become more muscular. This was perceived by participants as a way to maintain an outward masculine appearance and also communicated that appearance was important, as was how others perceived you physically. Rachel recalled seeing these behaviors in her father and interpreting them in this way:

> Ya I know he wanted to be bigger, so strength was really important to him too. I remember him showing me how many push-ups he could do or, he wanted be strong and like, girth, have a bigger presence. And definitely wanted to dress sharply. He was all about his image.

Also similar to their mother's messages, some participants noticed that their fathers would communicate conflicting messages, though participants for the most part internalized the negative aspects of these messages over the positive. For example, Amelia's father would embrace Amelia's physical abilities in running and exercise, which instilled in Amelia a sense of pride in her abilities, yet her father was always critical of Amelia's weight and her teeth. He would ask Amelia when she would "get [her] teeth fixed." These messages were perceived as so damaging by Amelia's brother that he openly challenged their father despite their father being the head of household. Amelia's father's comments stopped after this occurred. For Lucy, the conflicting messages included telling Lucy that she was "beautiful the way she was," yet this was stated in the context of criticizing her choices in clothing and makeup. Lucy's father perceived that Lucy was trying to appear White by relaxing her hair and also perceived she was changing her appearance "for the boys." However, he chose to communicate this in a criticizing way. Lucy stated, "So what he'd do, he'd see there was like different kinds

of lipsticks or blush on, he was like, ‘Why do you look like that? You are beautiful the way you are. Why you trying to impress boys?’ and I'm like, ‘It's not for the boys.’”

Jackie reported a similar experience of receiving conflicting messages with regard to appearance from her father, a White man who was in the military for part of Jackie’s life. Jackie described a pivotal experience where she got ready for a church dance and had chosen a bright red lipstick that she really liked to wear. Jackie’s father commented on Jackie’s red lipstick in a “very passive aggressive way” by telling Jackie she “looked like a harlot with that lipstick on.” Jackie stopped wearing colored lipstick after her father’s comment, and continues to not wear colored lipstick to this day. Jackie also recalled getting the message from her father that she should never let a man tell her what to do, what to wear, or how to look, despite her father criticizing her appearance, which Jackie perceived as a conflicting message.

Some fathers also communicated a message that women are to be looked at, or valued for their physical features. In Rachel’s case, her father taught her how to wear make-up in a way that he felt men would find pleasing. Rachel’s father tried socializing Rachel into being a woman that can attract a man based on his standards of what women should look like. Rachel’s father also referenced Vietnamese cultural practices and traditions regarding women’s dress as it relates to attracting a male suitor. Rachel felt her father was teaching her at a young age that finding a man is valued and that a woman's role is to "capture a male suitor.”

> He was more interested in keeping some of the cultural pieces alive, so he would tell me cultural traditions around, I want to say *odiga* but it’s not pronounced that way. The Vietnamese long dresses. And so he would tell me the cultural pieces; so if you’re not married you would wear light color ones. If you’re married you were dark colored ones, and he wanted me to learn some of the cultural dances and stuff. He would say, ‘That’s why the women do that.’ It’s so, that little 'come

> hither,' that whole idea of capturing a male suitor. And this was again pretty young. I was learning what was attractive to men and why. And sending out that message that, 'You know I'm young and I'm available' versus, 'I'm taken and I'm not [available].'

For Tina, these objectifying messages were couched in compliments about her appearance, which Tina internalized positively. Her father also commented on the physical features of women that were in the media, which perhaps may have affected Tina since she was exposed to that. According to Tina, her father appeared to have a belief that women are there to be looked at and "just be pretty" as well as to "just do what they're told."

However, not all messages were critical or negative; some participants had the experience of receiving affirming and accepting messages from their fathers regarding their appearance. At times, these messages balanced out the negative messages participants received from their mothers. For example, Kari recalled her father (who is White) only ever commenting on her appearance positively. Kari stated, "He's only ever commented on stuff in a positive way. He never really saw body image as being that important and I always think he was just kind of like, 'You're healthy. You're fine.'" This message was in contrast to the messages Kari got from her mother, who encouraged Kari to watch what she ate and to diet. Similarly, Carli recalled her father, who was the minority parent, as a source of support and balance against her mother's very damaging messages about Carli's ethnic features. Carli felt her father encouraged her to have a healthy lifestyle by being active but to also eat as much as she wants.

Some participants did not receive overt appearance-related messages from their father. In such a case, it appears that these participants picked up messages from their father's behaviors, or relied on other sources for appearance-related information. Kylie

reported not receiving any verbal messages, positive or negative, regarding her appearance. There were no expectations regarding eating, exercise, or how Kylie should look. Kylie interpreted this positively, stating that her father was never "negative about [her] appearance at all." However, she recalled that her father would always try to eat healthy, occasionally dieting when he noticed he was getting heavier, though he did not seem to put forth significant effort. Overall, Kylie interpreted this as her father not caring much about his appearance. Similarly, Natalie's father did not communicate appearance-related messages verbally, though Natalie perceived that her father indirectly sent messages encouraging healthy eating and physical fitness by encouraging her to eat more vegetables and to have a balanced diet. Natalie also indicated her father exercised daily, which reinforced the indirect message that Natalie should strive to be physically healthy (rather than thin). Whereas Natalie's mother communicated the message that being thin is beautiful, her father communicated that being physically healthy is ideal. Just like Kylie, Natalie interpreted her father's indirect messages positively and felt that her father had good intentions.

Impact of Fathers' Messages

Whereas most participants reported an overall negative or damaging impact from the messages they received from their mothers, it appears the impact of their father's messages are more mixed, with some participants reporting both positive and negative aspects to how their father's messages influenced them. In some cases, participants reported that their father's messages also balanced out their mother's critical appearance and food related messages. This was the case for Carli in particular, as well as other

participants. As discussed above, Melanie, who received verbal messages from her father that she was beautiful, also recalled her father's unhappiness with his own weight as he got older. Melanie's father gained weight because of his habit of overeating, which led Melanie to view food as something to consume based on taste rather than as fuel for the body. She related, "A negative aspect of my dad was his attitude gave me an opposite view of the spectrum. I didn't think about food as how I was eating and fueling my body. I ate food as something to be consumed." However, Melanie also noted that despite her father's unhappiness with his appearance, her father's messages regarding Melanie's appearance also served to "tone down" her mother's messages regarding eating and appearance. This was perhaps especially important given that Melanie was affected by both parents' unhappiness with their bodies. She reported, "He balanced my mom out really well and helped me find moderation. And allowed me to give myself…to allow myself to feel good about how I look."

Kari also discussed the impact of her father's messages as they related to food. Like Melanie, she recalled her father's messages regarding her appearance as overall positive, though he would also playfully tease Kari about her choice to be a vegetarian. Kari's father valued meat eating and approached his teasing from that lens. Further, her father prided himself in eating large quantities of food and expressed a sense of pride in Kari when she did the same. Kari knew that if she told her father when she would eat a larger quantity of food, that she would not be judged. Ultimately, this led Kari to feel like she had to live up to her father's ideals with regards to eating habits, and that she was disappointing her father if she could not overeat like he did. Also like Melanie, Kari's father's messages, which encouraged Kari to overeat, balanced her mother's messages

that encouraged restriction and dieting.

Perhaps because their father's messages were at times conflicting, participants felt they had to attempt to overcome the damaging effects of their father's messages and focus on the more positive aspects of the messages they received. This is also similar to what some participants did with the messages they received from their mothers. At times, this meant focusing on the positive messages and discarding the damaging ones, whereas at other times this meant reframing the damaging messages more positively based on what participant's felt were good intentions in what their father's said. The participants who reported making an effort to reframe their father's messages also indicated that reframing and focusing on the positive were an ongoing process. Amelia, who had received overt messages regarding her weight and her teeth from her father, perceived that her father had good intentions and therefore she had to interpret his messages in a more accepting and affirming way. In other words, Amelia decided to stick with the positive in her father's mixed messages. Nevertheless, Amelia acknowledged that she did "constantly look at mirrors" and judge her body:

> And so, yeah it's prideful in what my body can do. So it was very mixed messages; you're fat, but you can do great things. They kind of get mixed but I'm sticking with the positive. But I am constantly judging my body. And I think that I do see an image of me that is not really there. And its frustrating because I know it is not there, But, yeah it has developed that kind of image.

Similarly, Jackie credited her father for her strong personality and resilience, as well as her "tough and assertive" attitude, despite having received shaming messages that she was a "harlot." Jackie reflected on the similarities and differences between the messages she received from her father and that from her mother. Whereas both parents had something to say about how women should look and act, Jackie's father had pushed

the notion that she should not let men tell her how she should look. Jackie had noticed the irony in hearing such mixed messages from her father. Nevertheless, she focused on internalizing the aspects of her father's messages that would contribute to creating a strong personality. For Jackie, this meant adopting the stance of trying to do things on her own and not letting anyone tell her what to do:

> There was some things that, you know, became, um, deeply rooted in me. Like, its just like no I'm not…gonna…you can't tell me I can't do something--- if I physically can't do it then I'm just going to let you do it, but I'm still going to try.

Similarly to what was discovered in mothers' messages, participants were as much affected by verbal messages about appearance as well as their father's behaviors. However, fathers tended to be more direct than mothers in how they communicated. For example, fathers tended to be openly critical or openly affirming of their daughter's eating and exercise, and the choices they made with how they looked, though their father's eating and exercise behaviors were also influential. Also similar to their mothers' messages, participants also noticed their fathers communicated conflicting messages, which meant participants would receive both positive and negative or damaging messages from their father. In such cases, most participants chose to reframe or discard the damaging messages in favor of the positive, at times focusing on the "good" intentions their father had when they said something negative. Nevertheless, reframing and/or discarding the negative was an ongoing lifelong process, and these participants also came to develop a self-critical voice with regards to their feelings about their body. Still other participants did not recall receiving overt appearance-related messages, which led them to either turn to other sources for information on appearance, or to focus more on their father's behaviors for information on appearance and lifestyle choices. Overall, it

appears that fathers' messages tended to be more positive and affirming, even "balancing out" mothers' damaging and critical messages, though fathers were also at times guilty of negatively influencing their daughter's body image.

Identity

Feeling Different

Most participants endorsed having felt different, as if they were a part of a "middle ground" between being White and fitting into the dominant culture, and being a member of their minority race. Participants felt insecure, like they did not belong, and isolated. Additionally, several indicated that they recalled feeling they were different from an early age. Angela's experience of feeling different went so far back that she did not recall not feeling that way:

> I don't have any memory of not feeling that way. I don't ever recall a time that there was a point where I felt like I belong in terms of race or body image. For a long time I thought, you know, before 3rd grade, 'Why am I different? Why do they all say these things?'

Jackie also reported that she knew she was different from a very young age, not just in appearance, but also in cultural practices and socioeconomic status. When she was living with her Japanese mother, she recognized a difference between herself and her peers, and feeling like she could not reconcile her identity in these two spaces (e.g. home and at school). Because of this, Jackie internalized this feeling of being not good enough, and consequently struggled with low self-esteem for many years. Amber first noticed a difference in her skin color, especially because she went to school in Casper, Wyoming, where her community was predominantly White. She recalled, "I definitely noticed it when I was younger and I was living in Casper in my formative development. I was

totally aware of it. I went to a school that was predominantly White."

Carli and other participants articulated feeling an "uneasy sense of 'inbetweenness,'" where they did not fit in with their peers. This led these participants to silently question where they could possibly find their community and where did they truly belong. For Amelia, this constant process of having to navigate between two different worlds was exhausting. Ultimately, it can perhaps be assumed that participants formed their identity within a context that included navigating between two groups, where they did not feel they fully belonged to either. This is a truly unique experience to biracial individuals, particularly those who have a White parent and a racial minority parent.

How Do I Identify?

Participants had a variety of different ways of describing their identity, highlighting the complexity of being part of more than one racial group. For some, the struggle came with feeling like they had to "check boxes" and noticing that their identities were not captured by standard paperwork. For other participants, their identity was influenced by who they surrounded themselves with. For Emily, racial labels such as "Black" and "White" were bothersome because she felt the labeling was being done to make someone else's life easier. Therefore, she chose to identify as "American." Faced with a similar situation, Amber chose to decline to identify because she did not feel the racial categories she could choose from captured how she identified.

Several participants discussed their identity formation and how they identify in relation to how others identify them. Participants reported that their identity shifted from

feeling like they were more a part of the minority group when around White peers, to feeling like they were more part of the majority (White) group when around minority peers; As Kari stated, how she identified depended on the races of who she was around: "If I'm around mostly White people, I'll definitely identify more strongly as Indian, but if I'm around like the Indian side of my family, I definitely feel more like I'm White." For Lucy, this led to questioning her own race and altering her behaviors, particularly when surrounded by her Black peers, who made her feel like she was not "Black enough." Similarly, Tina described how she was identified as "White" by her Black peers, but is considered "the Blackest person" when around her White peers. Sadly, this causes Tina to feel like she does not have a consistent or "true" identity with "whoever" and "wherever" she is.

You're Not "X" Enough

A related finding suggests that, perhaps because of their ambiguous appearance, participants were made to feel like they were not [insert race] enough by others. This message came from not only their peers, but by family for certain participants. This was the case with Melanie, who was told by her sister that she could never be a member of their mother's Black sorority. Melanie recalled, "I remember this one time my sister took it [our mother's Delta Sigma Theta jacket] off me and she was like, 'You will never be a Delta. You are too White. They will never take you.'" Additionally, these messages sometimes included labels that were perceived by participants as an effort to categorize them based on their ambiguous appearance. For example, Lucy recalled being labeled an "Oreo" because she did not act like others would expect her to given that she appeared

more Black than White. According to Jackie, the Japanese have a label to describe a person in this "middle ground," and therefore are not "good enough" or "pure," stating, "*Itsoshi*. Japanese people have a word for somebody who's Japanese but not Japanese. And so I was never Asian enough for the Asian kids, and clearly I didn't look white." For some participants, feeling like they were not enough also had to do with whether they espoused the culture and language of the group, leading to a feeling of rejection by that group. Amelia recalled feeling like she had to be heavily involved in the Hispanic community and know the language in order to feel acceptance from that group. She stated, "I was always feeling left out because I couldn't speak Spanish or anything like that. So it's like, you're constantly having to be involved in the community to show that you are Hispanic enough."

People Assume

There appeared to be a common experience among participants where others labeled them based on their appearance, which was often ambiguous. The assumed race also seemed to depend on geographical location, perhaps indicating that location is also used as contextual information by others in determining a biracial individual's perceived race. Emily discussed her experiences of travelling with her family to Mexico, where it was often assumed that she was Mexican. Similarly Tina, who grew up in San Antonio, Texas, was also often mistaken for being from Mexico, particularly because "half of the population of San Antonio is from Mexico." These experiences of being labeled based on appearance can become one of the most prominent sources of information influencing identity formation in biracial individuals, as was the case for Lucy. Because of these

messages about her appearance and identity, Lucy felt she had to "act more Black" in order to "make up" for the fact that she did not look Black enough.

> That [people assuming my race] has to be one of the top things that shaped me to be who I am today. Because growing up in Utah, it's all White people here basically. It's a lot of White people, and I guess I had a lot of people who, growing up, even when I was a kid, they would always just…like if I said I was Black, like they know I am not White, but they don't think I am Black either…. If I can't look Black enough, then I need to act Black to make up for it. And so I guess I found my behavior changing a lot.

Sometimes, these messages were received at a very young age from adults in more covert ways. As a child, Rachel was asked by one of her teachers to draw a picture of her family. Unbeknownst to the teacher, Rachel's family members (with the exception of her biological mother and father) were all White, though the teacher assumed Rachel would not need the peach crayon to color in her family's skin. Rachel indicated, "I remember that [the peach crayon] being taken away and not having the choice for the other crayon. I remember learning how to shade. I'd make my own colors, but like shade different color in crayons."

Feeling Connected to Minority Race and Culture

Ultimately, all participants felt in some way connected to their minority culture, regardless of how they predominantly identified. It seems overall that this was a positive and grounding decision for participants, who struggled throughout their life with being labeled by others and trying to fit themselves into neat racial categories. Additionally, participants all had unique ways of connecting themselves to their minority culture, including learning a new language, wearing some elements of the traditional clothing, and finding ways to for their appearance and identity to match. For Kari, this connection

was a “form of self-separation” in that she wanted everyone to know that she was not purely White when she moved to Utah, away from her Indian family and their traditions. She perceived that her Indian culture would be “cut out” if others were left to assume her race(s). She expressed, “This isn't as cold as it's going to sound, but I wish people would know, moving up to Utah, 'Listen I'm not one of you. I'm Indian. I'm not White. Don't try to classify me as something I'm not.’” Because of this, Kari chose to wear scarves she purchased on her trip to India so that she could stand out as being Indian without “going full out *sari*.” Natalie chose to connect with her culture by learning Spanish in high school, primarily so that she could communicate with her grandmother. She recalled feeling this helped with feeling more “intimately connected” with her culture. In learning Spanish, Natalie was able to more easily communicate with her grandmother, who then passed on key knowledge of foods and family history.

Parental Influences to Identity Formation

In addition to parents influencing body image, parents also played a pivotal role in their daughters’ identity formation. As was the case with body image, participants reported that their parents influenced their identity formation in both direct and indirect ways. These included parents supporting exploration of both identities, the parent of the majority culture embracing aspects of the minority culture and vice versa, and parents rejecting one of their daughter’s identities, among others.

Supporting identity exploration. Some parents encouraged their daughters to explore their identity and choose how they wanted to identify. For participants where this was the case, parents primarily encouraged exploration of their minority identity, though

both races were understood to be open to exploration. This could have perhaps occurred because of the marginalization of minority races, and also partly because of the invisibility of being White. These participants expressed feeling supported by their parents, which in turn instilled a sense of comfort and "pride" in their identity. Melanie, for example, described this support from her Black mother as leading her to feel like "a strong Black woman" because she felt she was allowed to explore her culture. Melanie also felt this support from her father, though indirectly, through "his love" of Melanie's mother. Similarly, Angela's mother tried very hard to communicate to Angela and her sister that they have "the best of both worlds." Angela recalled "that making sense" and consequently feeling "a self-esteem boost" because race was a staple conversation in the household. It is possible that Angela experienced this positively in part because her identity as being a part of both races was not hidden or marginalized; rather, it was openly talked about and supported. It seems that when participants felt their identities were not supported, it instilled a sense of shame and feeling as if part of their identity was being "erased."

Parents embrace each other's cultures. Fortunately, several participants recalled memories of their White parents openly accepting and embracing the culture of the minority parent. This turned out to be one indirect way that parents communicated acceptance of their daughter's minority race. Additionally, several participants expressed that their White parent embraced the culture without attempting to "own it" or make it their own. Kari is one such example, where her White father "immersed himself in the culture but did not claim it as his own." Kari also noticed that her father did not attempt to Westernize her mother's side of the family, and that he learned to cook Indian foods

with Kari's *nonny.* Kari explained*,* "My dad, actually, he's great. He always came to *nonny's* with us. He always tries really hard. He's a great cook. My grandma, my *nonny*, she taught him how to cook Indian food and they usually cook together." Similarly, Amelia's White mother showed her acceptance of her father's Hispanic culture by learning how to cook some common dishes for the family. Additionally, she had openly communicated to Amelia "that [Hispanic people] is your people." As a result, Amelia felt a sense of congruence within her family, especially given that both of her parents communicated similar messages regarding racial identity.

Participants also told stories of many instances when their minority parent adopted the culture, and sometimes identity, of the White parent. Whereas the opposite situation was perceived as an affirming and positive experience, participants who reported that their minority parent embraced the White parent's culture perceived this occurring negatively, almost as a form of colonization. Unfortunately, more participants endorsed this as being their experience. Perhaps the strongest example of this experience was found in Carli, whose mother attempted to "White wash" Carli, her brother, and her father. Ultimately, Carli's father chose to identify as White, to the point of becoming upset if someone referred to him by "Carlos" (his birth name) instead of "Carl." Carli related feeling this was very difficult to witness, particularly because Carli perceived her mother as having pressured her father to "erase" his Hispanic culture and assimilate into a White identity, and stated, "I think my mom has kind of successfully manipulated my dad into just saying he was like…it started off as just saying, "pretty much White" and then the culture has kind of been lost." At times, the adoption of a White or Westernized identity seemed to be independently chosen by the minority parent, as was the case for

Jackie and Rachel. They describe how their minority parent, both of Asian descent, came to the United States and wanted to be identified as an American. Rachel indicated, "My father is Vietnamese. He wants to be identified as culturally American because he came here as an adult, and so he wanted to reject that and be seen as American."

Rejecting daughter's identity. In addition to some White parents rejecting the identity and culture of the minority parent, some participants felt that parts of their identity were also rejected. In Carli's case, her mother also did not accept that Carli was part Hispanic and attempted to raise her as White. Further, Carli perceived that these efforts were all done "behind closed doors," and therefore the world did not see what Carli and her family had to endure. Her mother's rejection was both towards her ethnic appearance as well as her culture, and took the form of discouraging Carli from tanning as well as learning Spanish. Carli reported, "She basically tried to raise me as White. Um, she like would tell me, 'don't go out in the sun. Put on make-up to make your face look whiter.'" Rachel heard similar messages from her White family, who adopted Rachel's mother.

Whereas Carli and Rachel each experienced her mother's rejection of her identity as likely being due to White ethnocentric biases, Amber perceived her father's discouragement of embracing Native American culture as serving a protective role for her. Amber recalls her Native American father telling her that being Native American was not "something to be super embarrassed about" and that she could "fit in no matter what." It appears that her father tried finding a middle ground between not instilling shame in Amber, while also not encouraging Amber to identify as Native American. Amber recalled, "He didn't want me over describing myself as Native American. But he

also didn't want to reinforce it and say it was a bad thing. I remember him saying that you fit into both worlds." For Tina, her White mother encouraged her to "talk proper" so that she would not "sound like an immigrant" and therefore be treated differently on the basis of race. This pattern seemed consistent with participants who described feeling their minority identity was rejected. It is notable that, for participants who felt their White parent rejected their identity, they perceived this as being due to White ethnocentric biases, whereas participants who felt discouraged to embrace their minority identity by their minority parent felt this was done in order to protect them. Additionally, they also perceived the message as less damaging and rejecting, and appeared to understand why their parent would try to protect them by these means.

Influence on Identity

Regardless of the type of message participants received about identity, their influence on participants' identities were varied. Some participants felt a sense of pride being identified as a Woman of Color, whereas other participants ultimately chose to identify less with their minority race. In Tina's case, she chose to identify as biracial, though "more White than Black." This was partly due to Tina having spent more time with her White mother; however, Tina was also influenced by her Black father, who was very proud of his identity. Because Tina saw how proud her father was of his identity (despite being a Black person in a White society), she began to internalize those feelings. She stated, "I get that whole 'proud to be a black person' mind from him." It is possible that Tina may have chosen to not identify as biracial if she had not seen how proud her father was of his race. Melanie's story in this regard is similar; she recounted how her

mother (who identified as Black) influenced her identity by helping to "encourage that pride" that Melanie eventually developed of being part Black. This was coupled with support from Melanie's father, who encouraged her to learn about her minority culture. As a result of this support, Melanie felt "like a strong Black woman" who had an understanding of her family's history.

How participants identify was also influenced by which parent they spent the most time with (regardless of their race), particularly in cases where the parents had divorced or were no longer together. Lucy's identity was heavily influenced by having been raised by her Nigerian father. She stated that she does not tell people she is biracial because her father had raised her and therefore she is culturally Nigerian. Similarly, Natalie identified as predominantly White because of her more Eurocentric appearance, but also because she was raised by her White mother and did not "grow up in that [Guatemalan] culture." Further, it appears that this pattern of influence is the case regardless of the parent's race. For example, Kari's mother is Indian by race, but grew up in Canada. Kari described her mother as very "Westernized" and, in combination with Kari's White father, Kari also indicated that she is very Westernized. Because Kari was essentially raised by two culturally White parents, she had not realized that her and her mother's experience with race were different than her father's. This realization led to Kari identifying as biracial. She indicated, "I realized definitely that my mom's and my experiences were different from [my father]. It was like watching a light bulb go off, and I was like, 'yeah, I'm a biracial woman.'"

How Identity and Body Image Are Connected

The final theme connects participants' understanding of their racial identity with their body image. All participants discussed their thoughts on how their racial identity and feelings about their appearance are related in some way. The relationship between racial identity and appearance was mixed; for some participants, their identity was a source of information that influenced them positively, and for others, having to navigate two races (with two differing sets of beauty standards) was difficult and confusing. Some participants had desired to have their appearance "match" with their racial identity. This was certainly the case with Amelia, who expressed that she wished her skin were darker to better match her Native American culture. It appears that participants who felt their appearance matched their racial identity felt more connected with their racial identity. They also felt less affected by Eurocentric standards of beauty. Carli expressed that identifying as Chicana allowed her to espouse body image ideals that are more congruent with her appearance, which made her feel beautiful. She stated, "To be honest it [identifying as Chicana] helps me a little bit. It makes me feel a little bit more like, um, a little bit more beautiful."

Similarly to Amelia, Lucy had expressed a desire for darker skin, though for her this was due to Lucy not wanting anyone to question her racial identity. Because she never felt fully accepted by either racial group, it is understandable that Lucy would desire a more monoracial appearance so that she would not have to explain herself to others. Lucy also desired a sense of belonging and acceptance that was not found in either racial group.

> Like I still sometimes wish I was darker. Like I get really excited when I tan, because I feel like -- it's like the insecurity, that I wish for validation, can you

> accept me as Black, because I am darker, or would you believe me more? I wish I was darker because at least I would be able to fit into one commodity.

At times, racial identity directly affected the choices participants made with regard to their appearance. Amber stated that she chose to keep her hair long and straight (despite her hair being naturally curly) in order to "hold on to" and feel connected with her Native American side. For Kari, her sense of style and the clothing she wore reflected her Westernized upbringing, though she allowed for some pieces of clothing (e.g. a scarf) that reflected her connection to Indian culture. Regarding this, she stated, "What I express with my personal style, my personal sense of what I wear and how I collect things, I definitely… it's more Western type of beauty. At the same time, some of what I wear is definitely Indian."

Many participants reported feeling more body confidence and more body acceptance because of their racial identity. Additionally, espousing a biracial identity meant that there was greater variety in what is considered beautiful with regard to appearance. Although Natalie identified more as culturally White because she was raised by her White mother, she reported her racial identity affecting what she views as beautiful.

> I feel like I'm able to see people of different body sizes and different appearances that aren't usually seen as beautiful in the culture where I live in as being beautiful in different ways. To be different sizes as beautiful whereas here [in Utah] it wouldn't be as such.

Emily also found body acceptance because of her biracial identity, despite her body not matching Eurocentric standards of beauty. Part of Emily's racial identity development included accepting her unique appearance rather than attempt to match her appearance with the dominant beauty standard. She stated, "It's not like I'm a Victoria Secret model

or anything, but I like me. I don't know. So I don't feel like I have to look like anybody because I feel like I just look different than everybody, so nobody would look like me."

As mentioned earlier, Carli's appraisal of her appearance changed drastically as a result of her choosing to identify with her Chicana roots. Prior to this, Carli had been raised as White, and she was encouraged to appear as White as possible by her mother, and to equate a Eurocentric appearance with beauty. However, Carli's recent change in identity led to feeling like there wasn't anything wrong with her because her appearance did not fit a White mold. She stated, "I think looking at myself as a person of color has changed my body image and my self-confidence as a whole because I can see myself more for who I am instead of putting on this false White identity that doesn't really fit." Similarly, Angela was aware of Eurocentric standards of beauty and never felt she fit into them. She had described that growing up with mostly White friends was at times confusing because she felt she had "nothing to contribute" to their conversations about appearance. Therefore, she developed body confidence by connecting more with her African American side, though she still identified as biracial. For her, feeling like she did not fully belong to either group was perhaps the most influential element to her body image. She stated, "It [feeling like I don't belong to any one racial group] had a huge influence in terms of just having to form body confidence and just kind of personal confidence."

Body image was also influenced by the experience of having to navigate two racial groups with two different (and sometimes contradictory) appearance standards. For several participants, the experience of navigating a biracial identity meant also navigating feelings regarding an ambiguous appearance. It seemed that navigating appearance and

identity in tandem meant incorporating both racial groups into one's appearance. For participants who at one point espoused Eurocentric standards of beauty, incorporating their minority racial group into how they conceptualized their appearance was perceived as a healthy shift. Tina had at one point desired to appear White, though in the process of developing a biracial identity, this changed

> But now [since identifying as biracial], I'm pretty confident in myself. I'm content. I don't want to change anything because I'm happy with myself as I am. But I think that does have to do with the fact that I'm not all the way Black. I'm not all the way White, so I don't look like either one of them. So I'm considered exotic. The way I look is considered pretty on both ends.

Amber also discussed the connection between her biracial identity and her appearance by describing how she attempted to incorporate physical features of both racial backgrounds. Amber called this a "50/50 split" and indicated that she aspired to have her appearance be a mix of both White Italian and Native American features. This involved Amber straightening her hair to acknowledge her Native American roots while also wearing makeup that "highlights a more European look."

Melanie described what I perceived as a confusing experience that is unique to biracial women with an ambiguous appearance. Namely, she felt her biracial identity made it more complicated to navigate how she should feel about her appearance because she did not easily fit into any appearance–related mold. Although she reported feeling satisfied with her appearance at the time of our interview, she did not always feel secure when it came to how she felt about her body.

> It's definitely really shaped it. I feel like people who identify as one race don't really get the being told what to do in two directions. So I feel like it has caused a lot of conflict and it made it a little more challenging to figure out how I felt about my body. That was interesting growing up. My skin growing up was too White or too dark.

Lucy's experience with navigating and developing her identity also led her to feel that some of her features were acceptable and some weren't. What was considered acceptable was usually determined by who she was around, and was often communicated in brief comments by others. For example, Lucy had experiences where she would get asked on dates solely based on the person finding a particular physical feature on Lucy pleasing. This made Lucy wonder whether her other features were therefore not considered beautiful.

Conceptual Model

The model that is proposed here (Figure 1) is reflective of my effort to visually display the connections among the main concepts highlighted by participants. The model should be viewed as a first attempt to document these interconnections and is therefore open to alterations as research in this area grows, particularly given that this model is a culmination of diverse experiences but is not the only experience that biracial women can have. Nevertheless, several participants provided feedback on the results that in turn informed this model. It is important to note that the 3 smaller circles combine in a Venn diagram format to represent how they all influence participants' body image. This is not to suggest that media and peers do not play a significant role in body image development for biracial women. Rather, this figure only highlights the components in the current study. The components of the model will now be discussed in reference to the results.

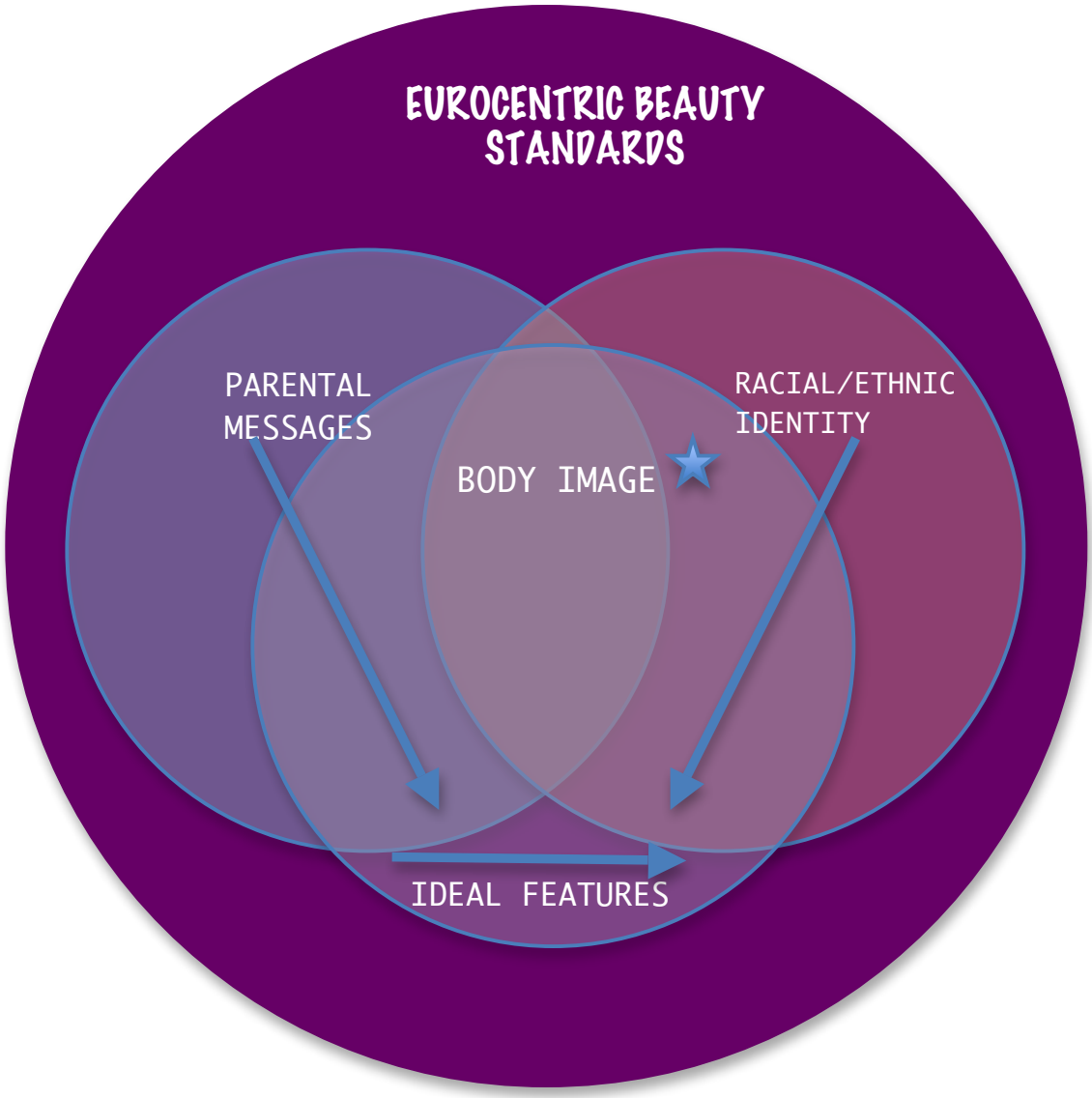


Figure 1. Conceptual model of major themes.

Eurocentric Beauty Standards

Although this was not initially a major source of information under exploration in the current study, it became clear that Eurocentric beauty standards were a clear overarching influence that served as a sort of backdrop to the other major themes. In other words, rather than participants necessarily comparing themselves to White women, participants were informed by Eurocentric beauty ideals, which preferences lightness overall and a thinner, toned body shape. Regardless of whether or not participants accepted or rejected these ideals, their effect was nevertheless there. Further, these ideals appeared to influence the ideal features participants espoused, how parental messages were perceived, and participants' identity exploration.

Many participants described their process of becoming aware of Eurocentric beauty standards (either by parental messages, media, or peers), then engaging in the process of navigating these ideals and what it meant for them. For some, this meant comparing their appearance to the dominant standard. Ultimately, participants had to actively choose to accept or reject these standards. Most participants chose to reject these standards in favor of more body accepting and diverse beauty standards. These were beauty standards that included some of their non-White or ambiguous features, which in turn positively influenced their body image. With regards to parental messages, participants often discussed the messages themselves as well as their effect from the context of whether or not they were congruent with Eurocentric beauty ideals. Carli's mother, for example, had attempted to "White wash" Carli by (strongly) encouraging her to change her appearance in order to match the dominant beauty ideals. Although participants were not directly asked, it seemed that the messages they received from their

parents were also heavily influenced by the Eurocentric beauty standards of society. Therefore, the smaller circle that is labeled "Parental Messages" is also situated inside the larger circle that represents Eurocentric beauty standards. Further, participants' comparison of their appearance with the dominant standard appeared to be part of their identity exploration. This is not surprising given the research on biracial identity formation which suggests that appearance is salient in how biracial individuals identify. Therefore, this smaller circle is also placed within the larger circle to represent this relationship.

Parental Messages

The circle which represents parental messages overlaps with both the racial identity and ideal features circles. This is done in order to highlight how parents influenced both their daughter's racial identity as well as the ideal features they espoused. Participants discussed how their parents' appearance–related messages led them to internalize a critical voice about their appearance. Participants also internalized a preference for similar features that their parents preferred, though some participants later renounced these for more diverse, non-Eurocentric ideal features. By and large, it appears that the ideal features participants discussed were a hybrid of Eurocentric features along with features that were common in participants' minority race (e.g. dark hair, tanned skin). Parents also supported or rejected their daughter's identities in various ways, including by encouraging identity exploration or by rejecting the race of the minority parent.

Ideal Features

The ideal features circle was placed at the bottom of the larger circle because of its impact on body image in the absence of an effect on the other major components of the model. Rather, the other components (e.g. racial identity, parental messages) influence the ideal features participants internalized in different ways. Nevertheless, the effect of participants' ideal features on their body image was highlighted by participants. Namely, participants who espoused ideal features that were congruent with Eurocentric beauty standards seemed to be more critical of their non-White or ambiguous features. This was understood to mean that participants were more dissatisfied with their appearance when this was the case.

Racial/Ethnic Identity

The final smaller circle represents the interconnection between racial/ethnic identity and the other main themes highlighted by participants. While participants' racial/ethnic identity was informed by parental messages, their racial/ethnic identity in turn informed what participants felt were the ideal female physical features. For example, participants who identified more strongly with either a biracial or predominantly minority identity tended to describe ideal features that were commonly found in minority women. Additionally, racial/ethnic identity uniquely influences participants' body image, as highlighted in the model by the star where the body image and racial/ethnic identity circles overlap. This symbol is representative of the bidirectional relationship between these two concepts in how they influence each other. Namely, participants indicated that their racial/ethnic identity partly influenced their body image, and their appearance and

body image influenced how they racially identified. Some participants had reported a desire to have their appearance "match" their racial/ethnic identity, and were more dissatisfied with their appearance when this was not the case. As researchers further understand the influences of these areas on body image in biracial women, it is anticipated that this model will adapt as new information surfaces. Largely for this reason, the model was created to be as simple and uncluttered as possible.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of the messages that biracial women received from their parents on their body image and racial identity. A grounded theory design and a social constructivist paradigm were utilized to answer the research questions. Participants discussed their feelings about their bodies, what they considered to be ideal features on a woman, their racial identity, the messages they received from each parent regarding appearance and identity, and the impact of these messages. In this chapter, I discuss the findings specific to each research question, integrate the literature that is relevant to those findings, and explore the implications of the findings with regard to future research and interventions with biracial girls and young women. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the study.

Messages Received From Parents

First, I explored the appearance–related messages that biracial women in this study received from their mother and father. The results demonstrated that both parents play a central role in the body image development of their daughters. Biracial women received messages in both direct and indirect ways, as well as from each parent. Existing literature on body image development supports my participants' accounts of messages

received from their parents (Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003). Namely, my participants recalled comments directed at their appearance from their parents, as well as parents' dieting behaviors, and parents' comments regarding their own appearance. However, there were differences in what and how each parent communicated. Mothers primarily communicated dissatisfaction with their weight by dieting and making comments about their weight. Fathers were more direct in their messages, for example, by directly commenting on their daughter's appearance and criticizing their food and clothing choices. However, participants were also influenced by their father's behaviors, which included exercising in order to eat without restricting themselves.

These findings highlight the importance of both direct and indirect appearance–related messages on biracial women's body image. Whereas the existing literature (albeit on White samples) focuses on verbal and nonverbal (e.g., dieting behaviors) messages separately (e.g., Schwartz, Phares, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 1999; Frances & Birch, 2005), this study suggests that perhaps examining appearance–related messages in tandem for biracial women is warranted. Other researchers have explored the effects of these messages together (e.g., Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003), though no existing study has explored the effects of direct and indirect appearance–related parental messages on biracial women. The current study suggests that perhaps biracial women receive similar forms of messages from their parents.

Impact of Messages on Body Image

The second research question naturally follows the first, inquiring as to what is the impact of these parental appearance-related messages. Regardless of the mode of

communication, parents' messages and behaviors had a significant impact on how participants felt about their bodies, which in turn also affected their own appearance-related behaviors. Both direct and indirect messages seemed equally impactful. As a result of these messages, participants became critical of their own appearance in similar ways to their parents. This was seen in participants questioning their appearance, dieting, and disliking similar features that their parents had criticized. For the most part, participants perceived more negative messages coming from their mother rather than their father. Further, parents communicated both positive and damaging messages, which participants had to "pick and choose," or reframe, how they internalized them. Overall, it appeared that fathers' messages tended to be more positive, at times serving to "balance out" mothers' predominantly damaging messages. Although it could be argued that parents have good intentions in communicating these messages, research suggests that mothers are aware of teasing as a negative influence to their daughter's body image, but may be unaware of the impact of other forms of messages (McLaughlin, Belon, Smith, & Erickson, 2015).

Arguably the most prominent impact was on participants' feelings about their own appearance; most reported feeling self-conscious about their appearance and becoming concerned with gaining weight. The existing literature on maternal influences on daughters' eating behaviors is consistent with this finding (Francis & Birch, 2005). Although most of the research examined White mother-daughter dyads, the current study suggests that biracial women are also affected by these messages in similar ways, regardless of the mother's race. It would be important to note that some participants reported a positive impact from their parents' appearance-related messages; for example,

participants had learned ways to portray themselves to the world in ways they wanted to be perceived. Some participants valued that a parent taught them to dress and appear in a way that would garner them respect from society. This usually involved a "polished" choice of clothing as well as hair and makeup. Regardless of whether the impact was perceived positively or negatively, research suggests a significant correlation between parental feedback about appearance and daughter's psychological functioning (Schwartz, et al., 1999). Although Ivezaj and colleagues (2010) drew similar conclusions, the current study expands on this finding using a fully biracial sample. As posited in the review of the literature, body image concerns and dissatisfaction do not appear to be limited to White women, what Grabe and Hyde (2006) coined the *Golden Girl Problem.*

Influence on Race/Ethnic Identity

The third research question shifts to examining parental messages pertaining to racial identity. Researchers have begun to document the influence of parents on their biracial children's racial identity (e.g., Miville et. al., 2005; Qian, 2004). Some of the messages participants reported were "couched" within appearance-related messages, for example, a parent may communicate assumptions of how one should look based on their race. Participants also reported direct and indirect messages that played a pivotal role in their identity formation. Similar to appearance-related messages, both parents influenced their daughter's identity formation by either supporting or rejecting identity exploration, or embracing the identity and culture of the other parent. One way in which parents supported identity exploration was through a sharing of culture and open dialogue about race that encouraged racial pride. However, participants perceived the minority parent

embracing and adopting the culture of the White parent negatively, almost as a form of colonization. In some cases, this colonization spread to their daughters, which created a feeling of shame in identifying with their minority race.

The current study extends the literature on parental influences to biracial individuals' identity formation. Rockquemore, Laszloffy, and Noveske (2006) posited that mothers are the primary influence to identity because they serve as the earliest source of socialization, whereas Qian (2004) found that fathers may be more influential given that they are traditionally the head of household. This study suggests that both parents are influential in their daughter's identity formation, and that there may be more variables to consider than the parents' role or gender. Specifically, participants in the current study were also influenced by the parent they spent more time with as well as which culture is more predominant in the home. This supports the findings of Miville and colleagues (2005) that suggest that biracial and multiracial individuals will tend to adopt the racial-ethnic identity of the "dominant" parent. This underscores the importance of intervention with both parents so that they can support their biracial daughter's identity exploration.

In addition, participants also described their general experiences with navigating identity. This dialogue stemmed from asking participants how they identified, given that there is greater variety in how biracial individuals can identify when compared to monoracial individuals (Rockquemore, 1998) Participants reported experiences captured by recent literature (e.g., Miville et al., 2005). For example, participants' identities were influenced by how others identified them, which tended to be based on phenotypic appearance. Additionally, participants reported feeling influenced by the experience of being a part of both racial groups but never feeling like they are fully part of either, what

Miville and colleagues (2005) referred to as the "chameleon experience." In the current study, participants recalled getting the message that they are not sufficiently a part of either of their racial groups. Oftentimes, this message was received by members of each of their racial groups. These experiences seem unique to biracial and multiracial individuals, who frequently have a more ambiguous appearance and more often have to navigate more than one racial group membership. Therefore, it would be wise to consider these findings in the development of new and existing biracial identity development models.

Biracial/Biethnic versus Monoracial/Monoethnic Women's Body Image

As suggested above, it appears that biracial women appear to be reporting similar experiences with regard to body image as White and monoracial women. Messages pertaining to appearance come from similar sources. Namely, family (Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003; Michael et al., 2014; Ricciardelli et al., 2001; Schur et al., 2000), as well as media (Ata et al., 2007), and peers (Jones et al., 2004; Smolak, 2004) have been implicated. While previous research has suggested that White women and monoracial Women of Color internalize Western standards of beauty in similar ways (Gordon et al., 2010; Grabe & Hyde, 2006), the current study suggests that biracial women are also internalizing these standards to varying degrees. It is possible that this finding is in part due to the participants in the current study being half White; therefore, they are able to identify with some of the appearance messages for White women. Nevertheless, it appears that the way beauty is constructed among biracial women is more diverse than what we think of in Western standards of beauty. Although participants had internalized

Western standards of beauty to varying degrees, they still described their beauty ideal as including a curvier, voluptuous body shape as well as tanned skin. Additionally, participants reported working to consciously reject dominant Western beauty standards in favor of a more diverse and inclusive standard that better matched their racial identity.

Racial/Ethnic Identity Related to Body Image

Participants discussed how they perceived their racial/ethnic identity influenced the development of their body image. For all participants, there was undoubtedly a connection between navigating a biracial identity and how they felt about their appearance. For some participants, their biracial identity served as a sort of guidepost that allowed them to feel confident and proud of their ambiguous features. For others, navigating an ambiguous appearance felt like being pulled in different directions. Participants desired to have their appearance and identity "match," and also reported more body confidence and acceptance when they adopted a biracial identity. This supports the findings of Watson and colleagues (2013), though extends the findings to biracial women. Namely, these authors had found that racial identity, rather than race itself, serves as a buffer for developing body image problems and disordered eating, at least in African American women. Perhaps this buffer also extends to biracial women, leading them to attain some level of body confidence and acceptance. There is no doubt that Eurocentric standards of beauty differentially impact minority women negatively by leading to negative appearance evaluations (Rogers, Wood, & Petrie, 2010). However, the current study suggests that further research examining the link between racial identity and body image specifically with biracial women is warranted. Overall, participants

reported rejecting the dominant, Eurocentric beauty standard they were exposed to. Some rejected this standard in favor of an appearance which better matched their identity as a biracial or predominantly minority woman. Others rejected Eurocentric beauty standards as an end to feeling a chronic sense of disappointment with their bodies, which they described as an "exhausting" experience and something they weren't going to do to themselves anymore.

Ideal Women in the Media

In addition to the original interview questions, I asked participants to identify at least one woman who is in the public eye and has features they consider to be ideal. This component was added after several participants identified women in the media when discussing their perceptions of ideal physical features. I realized that an easy way for women to discuss ideal physical features was to reference women in the media that most people have either heard of or can look up on the internet. All but one participant participated in this aspect of the research. The findings of this aspect of the study suggest that biracial women find ideal features in more than one race. For example, one participant valued a petite feminine appearance (such as Kiera Knightley), though she identified Beyoncé as a woman that also espouses her ideal features. Additionally, only one participant identified a biracial woman in the public eye that espoused her ideals, perhaps in part due to the scarcity of biracial women in the media. It may be that, similarly to monoracial women, biracial women are comparing their appearance to these ideal women, and using these ideals as reference points for how they should look.

Overall, the current study had several "take home" messages, which may be used

as a starting point for future research. With regards to appearance-related messages from parents, it appears that communicating positive messages to daughters (e.g. that they are beautiful) does not provide enough of a buffer to shield them from developing negative appearance evaluations. To use the old adage, "Actions speak louder than words." In other words, parents' behaviors communicate just as much (if not more) than what they verbalize to their daughters. How a parent appraises, comments, and treats their own body will influence how participants then view their own appearance. Additionally, this effect appears to be even stronger when coming from the parent that the daughter is closest to (as concluded in Miville et al., 2005). This can sometimes be the parent that they spent the most time with, or the parent that is viewed as dominant, or the parent that they racially identify with more. Therefore, there is undoubtedly a link between body image, parental influences, and racial identity. Further, it was noted that many of the features that participants disliked about themselves had been criticized at one point by someone else, such as a family member or friend. This is further evidence that the formation of one's body image in part is dependent on how others in the person's life appraise their features. Regardless of how these negative appearance evaluations developed, the current study provides some evidence that espousing an inclusive biracial identity can serve a protective function.

Limitations and Future Directions

No study is without its limitations. Perhaps the biggest limitation includes the lack of demographic diversity, particularly as it pertains to education and geographical location. All participants in the study were either enrolled in an undergraduate degree

program, had received an undergraduate degree, or had pursued or completed a graduate degree. Three of the 13 participants had completed some college, two had completed an Associate's degree, four had completed Bachelor's degrees, and the remaining four had completed graduate degrees. Additionally, all but three of the participants live in Utah. Although efforts were made to network and sample outside of Utah (including networking with faculty in academic departments outside the state), very few individuals came forward to express interest in participating. A related limitation includes the amount of racial diversity in the sample. I chose to sample individuals who were part White and did not attempt homogeneity with regard to the other race. In other words, the other race of participants in the current study varied; some were part Black or African American, some were part Asian, and some were part Native American, among others. All but one of the participants was part White (with the exception of Rachel, whose mother was Native American but adopted as an infant and raised with a White family). It is possible that these demographic limitations, combined with the heterogeneity of the races of participants, affect the conclusions and implications derived from the data. Nevertheless, it appears that participants described very similar experiences and themes regardless of the variety in races.

A second limitation of the current study pertains to the recruitment methods used. As described in my methods section, I utilized purposeful, criterion-based sampling as well as theoretical sampling in order to allow me to refine and deepen the categories and themes that were forming. I had anticipated that sampling biracial women would be incredibly difficult; therefore, I also asked recruited participants if they knew anyone that met the inclusion criteria that would be interested in participating. I also allowed for a

wider age range (e.g., 18 to 40 years old) so as not to exclude biracial women that could potentially describe similar experiences. Additionally, sampling in colleges and universities undoubtedly contributed to the lack of educational diversity. It may have also skewed the findings towards describing the experiences of biracial women who either grew up with or have socioeconomic privilege. This study missed the experiences of uneducated and lower socioeconomic status biracial women, and it is recommended that future research on this topic attempt to include these women in their sample.

A third limitation includes the absence of focus groups throughout the data analysis process. Although I obtained feedback on the results and collaborated with some of the participants in renaming and refining the categories, the participants may have missed the opportunity to hear from each other, connect, and share perspectives and experiences. Focus groups were not utilized due to time and scheduling restraints, not just with myself, but also with the participants themselves. It seemed that the participants that were contacted were very willing to help individually, though seemed somewhat burdened by the idea of attending a focus group at a potentially inconvenient day and time. Further, the focus group would have missed the in-person presence of the three participants that did not live in Utah. Nevertheless, it is possible that a focus group would have enriched participant experiences by allowing them to see the commonalities in their experiences, as well as added to the meaning made of the data.

This study adds significantly to the scant body of literature on biracial women's body image. As previously discussed, body image studies have focused on either White women, monoracial Women of Color, or included a small amount of bi or multiracial individuals (e.g., Ivezaj et al., 2010). This study focused exclusively on biracial women

in order to begin to understand their experiences with parental messages, a key influence to body image and racial identity. From these exploratory findings, a conceptual model was created (see Figure 1) to visually display the interconnections among racial identity, body image, and how parental messages influence these in turn. It is expected that this conceptual model will be challenged, tested, and revised as new research further elucidates the relationships among these variables. Given the rapid increase in biracial individuals among the U.S. population (US Census Bureau, 2014a, 2014b), a focus on biracial individuals in research is overdue.

It is recommended that future researchers build on the findings of this study and attempt to address some of its limitations. For example, researchers with access to more diverse areas (e.g. larger cities) can likely find it easier to obtain a larger biracial sample. Researchers, particularly from a university setting, may have more community networks and connections that they can utilize in order to sample biracial women who are not college educated and/or are from lower socioeconomic status areas. Also recommended is that researchers utilize diverse recruitment strategies in different areas (such as other states) to reach participants. Additionally, future studies may build upon the conceptual model developed in the current study by utilizing a participatory action research (PAR) methodology (Torre & Ayala, 2009). PAR elevates participant statuses to coresearchers, which allows them to develop research questions based on what they feel is relevant to their communities and to their lives. Their status as a member of the community they are themselves researching allows them an intimate connection to the phenomenon under study that would otherwise not be possible (Torre & Ayala, 2009). This approach would also be a natural extension of the social constructivist paradigm used in the current study,

and would empower participants by giving them the control and influence to guide the research where they feel it should go.

Implications

The results of this study provide some implications for work with biracial/biethnic women. It appears most beneficial to provide interventions during childhood and adolescence, when body image is initially forming (Schur et al., 2000). Teachers, school counselors, and clinicians are positioned in such a way as to have the power to promote psychological health and well-being with biracial girls. The findings of the current study point to interventions not just with biracial girls, but also with their parents. Halliwell (2015) argues that a healthy body image in children would focus on competence (e.g., what the body can do, the growing individual's ability to provide for their bodily needs), which may then provide a buffer for biracial children as they become increasingly aware of societal standards of beauty. While a number of programs exist to address body dissatisfaction in children and adolescents (e.g., Yager, Diedrichs, Ricciardelli, & Halliwell, 2013), none have specifically addressed the unique experiences of biracial girls and adolescents. An ideal program would consider this as well as how parents can be a positive influence on their daughters. The results of the current study suggest that addressing parents' behaviors as well as their verbal messages, and working to make verbal messages and behaviors more congruent, would be beneficial.

Counselors who work with biracial individuals, whether children, adolescents, or adults, should consider the role of racial identity in the formation of their client's body image. The overarching themes discussed in the current study (e.g., You're not 'X'

enough, People Assume, etc.) can be used as a warning sign that the practitioner may need to explore racial identity and feelings about appearance with their client. Additionally, exploring the role that parents played in the formation of a client's body image and racial identity would help the practitioner (and client) to understand the unique experiences that their biracial client is reporting. Although parental influences to body image and racial identity are not a new discovery (Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003; Peterson et al., 2007; Guan et al., 2012), the current study is the first to examine these components in tandem from the perspective of the biracial individual. Biracial individuals have different meanings attached to their identity when compared to monoracial individuals (Rockquemore, 1998). Approaching treatment with this population using traditional racial categorizations leaves many of these individuals feeling that their identity is not adequately captured.

Conclusion

This study provides some initial insight that will help researchers begin to understand the relationships between parental influences, body image, and racial identity in biracial women. By speaking directly with biracial women (rather than their parents) and asking them about the details of their experiences, we can gather rich information that other research methods would not get. Because the research is in its infancy, there is no existing theory to test quantitatively. The results of this study go further than to simply say that parents play a role in the development of their child's body image (which is already known); rather, it describes the phenomenon and impact from the perspective of the individuals who experienced it. From that, we were able to come to some overarching

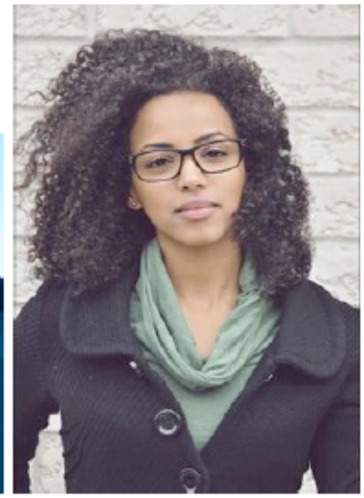
take home messages that participants agreed were what they wanted the research world to know. Undoubtedly, counselors working with youth and adult biracial women can learn from these findings and in turn provide more culturally competent care to this population.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT FLIER

Calling Biracial Women!

Take Part in Body Image Research



You may be eligible if you:

- ✓ Are a woman
- ✓ Are between 18 and 40 years old
- ✓ Identify as biracial (each parent is of a different race)
- ✓ Had a relationship with both biological parents growing up

Please contact

ingrid.boveda@hsc.utah.edu for information or to take part in the study

Research Approval: University of Utah Institutional Review Board

Principal Investigator: Ingrid Boveda, M.Ed., Department of Educational Psychology, University of Utah

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APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Informed Consent

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of biracial and biethnic women's perceptions of the parental messages they received regarding their bodies, and to understand how these experiences and messages influenced their body image and racial/ethnic identity. Your participation in this study can help us in understanding these experiences, which can help in creating potential prevention and intervention strategies.

As part of this study you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview with the principle investigator. It is anticipated that the interview will take between 1.5 to 2 hours. Questions will be asked about messages you received from parents about your body growing up and your identity development. Your responses will be audio recorded and transcribed. Additionally, the principle investigator will ask you if you would be willing to share any personal documents (e.g. journal entries, poems, drawings, etc.) in order to enrich our understanding of the topic under study. The risks of this study are minimal. You may feel upset thinking about or talking about personal experiences related to your body image. These risks are similar to those you experience when discussing personal information with others. Participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take part without any penalty or loss of benefits. If you feel upset from this experience, you may end participation at any time without penalty. A list of referrals for counseling will be provided to all participants.

To protect your confidentiality, we will ask that you give yourself a pseudoname. Although the conversation will be audio recorded, anything you say will be attributed to your pseudoname, not your real name. Further, the audiotape will be destroyed once it is transcribed. To ensure your ideas have been conveyed appropriately and to address any follow-up questions, we would like to retain your e-mail address. Once we have completed the study, we will destroy this information. Your responses and your e-mail will be kept confidential and stored on an encrypted password-protected computer. The data will be accessible only to the researchers working on this project. Anonymity is guaranteed in the reporting of the data. All research findings will be reported in aggregate or summary form. Study results may be disseminated through national media and publications, but only group data will be presented or published.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you feel you have been harmed by this research, please contact Ingrid Boveda, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Utah, at 801-581-7148 or Ingrid.boveda@hsc.utah.edu.

Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. Also, contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you do not feel you can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu. You may also contact the Research Participant Advocate (RPA) by phone at (801) 581-3803 or by email at participant.advocate@hsc.utah.edu.

By signing this consent form, I confirm I have read the information in this consent form

and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I will be given a signed copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

_____ _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1) Tell me a bit about your parents. How did each of them identify in terms of their racial/ethnic identities.

2) How would you describe your racial/ethnic identity?

How do you think your parents influenced your identity?

3) How do you feel about your body?

What things do you like or dislike about your body?

What is your ideal or most attractive body?

4) How did your mother feel about her body? About your father's body? What messages did she give you about your body or appearance?

5) How did your father feel about his body? About your mother's body? What messages did he give you about your body or appearance?

6) What do you feel were the positive and negative impact of these messages on your body images?

7) How do you feel your racial/ethnic identity influences your body image?

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant *(by pseudonym)*	Age	Mother's Race/Ethnicity	Father's Race/Ethnicity	Racial Identity	Highest Level of Education
Amelia	25	White	Latino (Mexican)/Native American	"Some sort of Hispanic Mix"	Bachelor's Degree
Amber	34	White	Native American	Biracial	Graduate Degree
Angela	35	White	Black	Biracial	Graduate Degree
Carli	21	White	Latina (Mexican)	Chicana	Bachelor's Degree
Emily	26	White	Black	American	Bachelor's Degree
Jackie	38	Asian (Japanese)	White	Biracial	Graduate Degree
Kari	21	Asian (Indian)	White	"Depends on who I'm around"	Some College
Kylie	22	Asian (Taiwanese)	White	Biracial	Associate's Degree
Lucy	19	White (Mexican)	Black (Nigerian)	Nigerian	Some College
Melanie	24	Black	White	Biracial	Bachelor's Degree
Natalie	18	White	Latino (Guatemalan)	"I consider myself White"	Some College
Rachel	36	Native American *Raised White	Asian (Vietnamese)	Biracial	Graduate Degree
Tina	21	White	Black	Biracial, "but more White than Black"	Associate's Degree

APPENDIX E

ANALYTIC MEMOS

* All names are the pseudonyms provided by participants

5/10/2015
After having done my literature review on biracial women, racial identity development, body image, and parental messages, I have to say that I still don't know what to expect from the interviews. I have my first one, with Rachel, in a couple of days. She does not identify as part White (one of the requirements of my study), but she was raised with White grandparents, and her mother (who is Native American) was raised by these White grandparents and adopted at birth. I'm not sure what to expect given that already I'm not interviewing someone that is part White. But I wanted to start from an open place and see where the data take me. She may have similar experiences to my other participants if she was raised primarily by White grandparents. I worry that it will be hard to tease apart parental messages from family messages, and further worry that family messages will be more influential than parental messages in my participants. I realize that I have certain expectations over what I will find and what my participants will say. For example, I expect that parents will convey conflicting messages that influence my participants' body image, and that participants will differ in their degree of identification with one of their races over another. According to the literature that I've read on racial identity development, biracial individuals' racial identity may in part depend on phenotype; that is, a biracial person may identify based on how they appear (so if they appear more White, they may identify as more White, perhaps because this is what others have commented to them).

5/15/2015
Notes from my interview with Rachel:

- She's in the mental health field and has a deep understanding about identity and racism. It seems she was influenced greatly by her White grandparents as well as her experiences with racism.
- Appearance: She has an ambiguous appearance, but does not "look White" to me. She has big curly hair, has big breasts and an hourglass figure. Tanned skin, and a really pretty smile.
- She adds a lot of depth to her description of her experiences
- Rachel didn't connect with her culture and develop a sense of community growing up until she was older because she didn't know it existed, and because her White family tried to white wash Rachel and her lineage
- It was like her races were invisible, and she was assigned different races depending on what other's felt she looked like. She was the child that looked clearly different but had no concept of her racial identity.
- Rachel got the **"what are you"** comment. I did see this in my literature search as being something biracial people experience.
- Rachel felt a sense of safety and community (or not aloneness) by recognizing and being recognized by someone who looks like her. There were no questions about what she is, like she had experiecned her whole life, rather, there was another individual who related to her experiences and didn't ask any questions.
- Rachel will mark bi or multiracial when offered but otherwise defaults to Asian. She also stated that the way she identifies on forms depends on what the reporting

is for or what service it is for. She seems to have a general mistrust of when she is asked to identify herself, understandable given her experiences with racial identity growing up.
- Rachel felt like other people had taken over the right to comment on her body. Rachel felt like it didn't allow her to have a sense of self-respect.
- "My attitude towards my body changed over time to where I became much more accepting. I kind of like it, um, but I find that I do feel that I'm in the middle. There's safety **in the middle**, um, I think. (potential theme…middle ground)
- Rachel seems to have become stronger because of these messages and in spite of them. So it feels like a different kind of overcoming.
- Comparing herself to what Asian women typically look like, but not what Native American women look like??
- Many experiences of overt and covert racism
- Doesn't mind using her real name in the study

5/30/2015
Notes from interviewing Carli:
- Appearance: Looks Latina. In exercise clothing at Westminster. I met her in one of the rooms in the library. She identifies as a feminist and as Chicana.
- Lived in SLC her whole life
- Carli has anger towards her mother for white washing her father and not accepting his culture into their home. Carli also feels her mother would judge her negatively if she knew that Carli does not identify as White…(**compare to Rachel and her mother, who was also white washed...that may be a theme**)
- Mom taught her how she should change her appearance to appear more White. She mentioned her skin color, hair texture, body hair, as well as her last name
- Wow. Carli identified as White up until she moved out and began connecting with others who had the experience of being pushed into a white box.
- her appearance of being non White, and biracial is apparent.
- Carli's mother tried to change Carli's appearance in order to appear more White. It sends the message that she needs to erase or minimize that part of her that isn't White
- So dad's appearance is somewhat ambiguous, especially bc he tries to change his behavior to come off as White more. She also internalized that the racial majority parent is the one who is in power.
- Carli knowing that her father would be supportive of her identifying as a woman of color gives Carli strength to be able to identify that way, even though he doesn't know that he impacts her in this way.
- I can see Carli feels a sense of solidarity and support towards her father that in part was created bc of their racial/ethnic identity. In Carli's story I hear distance and resentment towards her mother (yet he still loves her).
- Carli is taking back that power to decide how she identifies. Her father's support made Carli feel more comfortable choosing to identify as a person of color. (**minority parent allowing participant to feel more comfortable identifying as biracial/WOC??)**
- Carli is rejecting her mother's adoption of Western beauty standard. This is one of

the way that Carli is empowering herself to choose how she will identify
- Another participant who is comparing themselves (**Rachel also compares herself, to other Asian women, whereas Carli compares herself to her White friends…comparing a potential theme**)
- "Putting on a façade of being white"
- The first thing that Carli picks apart are the features she associates with her hispanic father, her non White ethnic features. Although she in a lot of ways rejects these standards and identifies as a woman of color, she has nevertheless internalized many of the Western beauty standards, and the things she picks on are also things her White mother tried to change about her.
- Carli is identifying that there is one type of body image in this society that all women are at least aware of bt more commonly fall victim to
- Father is affirming and supportive of healthy body image, mom is not
- Carli recognizes that a lot of the messages that her mother passed down were a reflection of her own unhappiness with her body. That perhaps her mother's comments were intended on saving Carli from those feelings about her own body, but instead it had the opposite effect and it sounds like put a strain on their relationship.
- Feels that mom felt powerless to challenge American beauty standards
- Carli seems to feel some shame in her belief of what are the most ideal features in a woman because they coincide with what society teaches is attractive. These beliefs that Carli has are informed by society, and her mother's messages, though she seems to want to reject those.
- "uneasy inbetweeness"

6/5/2015
Got the first two interviews transcribed. Running transcription checks by listening to the audio while reading the transcript. I shared my identity with both Rachel and Carli. I think it made Carli feel that I understand her father's cultural norms and values more, though I also pass as White, which I worried would be triggering for her (it didn't seem to be). Both interviews gave me the idea to go back and ask (and ask future participants) if there is someone in the media that espouses their ideal body or appearance.

There are a couple of things that stand out from the two interviews: being White washed, mother or family being unhappy with their appearance and negatively influencing the body image of participant, a middle ground ("inbetweeness"), comparing self to others, "what are you?" These are potential themes…
- Carli said that viewing herself as a POC changed her body image because she can see herself for who she is rather than trying to appear White.

6/15/2015
Notes from interview with Amelia:
- Appearance: thin, light skin and long dark hair. I notice her shape is what I consider ideal as well. She looks like she works out. In terms of facial features, she appears ambiguous. She doesn't appear Caucasian but also doesn't appear Native American or Mexican…

- I wonder how much of Amelia's pride in her culture relates to her father's social justice work?
- Amelia's mother embraced the minority culture in the partnership, which is something I did not expect given my biases as well as what other participants have said. Her mother embraces the culture by supporting Amelia's father and learning to cook some dishes. (**Disconfirming from what other participants have experienced)**
- Amelia feels language is important in being Hispanic, and that because she does not speak the language, it adds to the feeling of not being Hispanic enough. (**You're not X enough…another potential theme…may relate to "middle ground" that others are reporting??)**
- Amelia feels judged by Hispanics as well as Whites. Because she is not culturally Hispanic (doesn't speak Spanish, etc.) but **also not white enough** according to her white friends.
    - Her peers at soccer, presumably also hispanic, had put her in this category where she is not hispanic enough to be listening to Selena and to be incorporated into the culture. It serves to exclude Amelia from part of who she is. I've heard this a lot from other participants, where they say that others, usually in the minority culture they're a part of, seem to communicate that they are not pure enough, or X enough, to partcipate in the culture.
- As she got older, she wondered why she bothered to try to be accepted by whites by making and laughing at Hispanic jokes
- Experiences with **discrimination** (**just like Rachel and Carli)** by being accused of shoplifting.
- Father and mother were open about Amelia's marginalized/minority cultures…Amelia developed a sense of pride
- Given that I'm also Hispanic, I understand the nuances of Amelia's brother challenging the man of the house by telling him not to make comments to Amelia about her **weight** or appearance
- **Are the concerns that others have about weight? Are damaging parental messages related to weight as well??**
- Some unhappiness with weight…potential consequence of messages
- Amelia's father was very critical about appearance, commenting on her weight and her teeth, and who knows what else. However, she previously stated that she understands that he had good intentions, yet I still feel she's angry/resentful that there is a standard that she's held to.
    - So he told her to be proud of racial identity but was critical about appearance
- Like Rachel, she mentions a sense of grounding, or a connection to the earth which is tied to her Native American background
- Mom defended Amelia from her father's comments about being fat, she also engaged in constant comparison of Amelia and her sister's body. Amelia has a more athletic build whereas her sister seems to have a more hourglass shape, which their mother perceived as thinner.
- It sounds like from what I am hearing that to some degree, mom and dad they had

their insecurities about their bodies and like you were saying it has a way of trickling down to making comments about the kids weight if that's what your concerned about in yourself
- **Potential theme around overcoming body/race messages??**
- She has to be aware of what clothes she wears so that she doesn't appear too Mexican or too Native American

6/17/2015
Already I'm finding commonalities that I'm sure as I dig deeper into the data I will find more, or find hints of disconfirming evidence. Amelia is the first participant who had a parent who was supportive of the minority parent. Interesting thing that **I'm finding is that participants report having body acceptance but still expressing criticism over certain features, or fears about gaining weight, etc. Also, Amelia provided the name of another potential participant, "Emily"…**

6/19/2015
Notes from interview with Jackie:
- Appearance: Appears "mostly" Asian to me, average build, shorter
- Jackie identifies as biracial though when forced to pick a category she chooses Asian because she "clearly doesnt look White."
- "Racial ambiguousness": Something that is mentioned by other participants though not in the same words. Where they are confused by others as being a different race/ethnicity than they actually are.
- There is a word for being Japanese but not Japanese enough (**more evidence for "you're not x enough")**
- **People assume** that Jackie should speak Japanese or Chinese because she appears to be Asian.
- She identifies with these YouTube videos regarding things biracial people hear…look this up
- Could be a theme...a way that a biracial daughter has to navigate her identity, or maybe viewing her minority parent as struggling despite being educated.
- **Another participant who expresses having overcome the harmful messages about appearance or identity**!
- Wanted to look like a "California surfer chick"
- "I don't really remember her making comments about the way I looked or the way my sister looked, um it was definitely more about the behavior"
- Clearly Jackie's behaviors regarding being thin were directly related to seeing mom diet, and seeing mom try to handle gaining weight.
- Jackie has been able to distinguish between her idea for herself, and her ideal looking woman in general (which seems to fit Western standartds of beauty), but doesn't hold herself to that standard...I wonder how she got herself to be able to in a way reject Western standards of beauty...maybe a new category??
- **Just like Rachel, ideal body is tied to strength**
- Jackie feels the need to prove herself beyond her appearance. Does not want to be objectified like her mother was
- Jackie received mixed messages from her father. The message wasn't necessarily

contradicting, but the messages and their impact were both positive and negative.
- Feeling not good enough
- Already had low self esteem so dads comment was another drop in the bucket
- In part because of her father's messages about appearance, Jackie formed this voice inside herself that is negative and critical. She likely formed this even earlier on with living with her mother and comparing herself to her peers, but this experience was memorable enough that she remembers it, and it's impact, 20 years later.
- Because Asian's in society are expected to be thin, Jackie compares herself to this standard as a biracial Asian woman and feels she wants to be thinner.
- Also, some participants know how parents felt about the other parents appearance, though this doesn't seem to be producing the information I was hoping for. In fact, about half of participants said they didn't know, or speculated that they must have had some attraction to each other.

6/20/2015
One issue that I'm running into is how people are defining parents. I'm talking with Amelia's source, who said that she knows her father's side of the family well, but didn't have a significant relationship with her father growing up. She also considers her grandfather a male figure, and was raised by her stepfather, who is Tongan, whereas "Emily" is part black and part white. I'm interested in seeing what she can contribute to the data, and she is biracial, though I worry that it is a bad decision to include her because she wasn't raised closely with her father. I'm noticing that all of my participants so far have talked about overcoming harmful messages, either regarding racial identity or body image. What's interesting is that they verbalize having overcome some of these messages though they also verbalized ongoing criticism over their appearance, or in Amelia's case, worry about gaining weight. I perceive that as being clearly related to the messages her father gave her regarding weight and being athletic. I also notice that I have some experiences of participants being White washed, and some examples of participants who had their white parent embrace their races. I think I had expected to find more examples where participants were not white washed, that the white parent would embrace the minority culture (though perhaps have biases of their own). I figured that since the white parent partnered with the minority parent, that there wouldn't be attempts to raise their children to be white.

6/27/2015
Notes from interview with "Emily":
-Appearance: this is a Facetime interview. "Emily" does have am ambiguous appearance (from my perspective, others may view her as more black…(Color Complex article). She has curly "big" hair, and her phenotype suggests she is part Black/African American (larger lips, rounded nose), but her skin is very light. Brown eyes…"Emily" also has some freckles on her face, so her skin looks sunkissed. From my perspective, I find "Emily" to have beautiful features, which speaks to my own ideal features in a woman, though I have several…either way, "Emily" is beautiful!

6/30/2015

Notes from Interview with “Angela”
- Interviewed via Skype because she lives out of state. A friend of Jackie’s. Part black and part White
- Angela feels that her father is "as African American as they come" and I'm curious what that means
- Mom did not attempt to White wash, very much a blended family and Angela identifies as biracial
- Grew up with a lot of brothers
- **She feels like she doesn’t belong because she compared herself to others, and felt like her parents could not understand this experience because they weren’t mixed.** Feels less out of place in a more diverse city
- Angela valued being physically fit and strong, and contrasts this with the standard of beauty she saw around her. So she felt okay being different with regards to body image, but not with her racial identity??

7/25/2015
Interview with “Amber”
- lots of resentment towards mom for trying to make her into someone she wasn’t
- 3rd participant to identify as part Native American.
- Appearance is ambiguous, and I’m realizing my interpretation of someone’s appearance is vey much subjective, but Amber has dark hair and medium skin. Long hair. Shorter. From my perspective, I can see both the Italian and the Native American.
- Amber seems to look positively on getting in touch with nature, whereas the "catholic" side was more stressful
- Amber’s parents tried to White wash her as a means of protection
- It seems she also felt different, something other participants are reporting as well. A potential category??
- Amber began to look more European when she hit puberty, but not quite completely White. She describes her features as an "odd combination" where she looks ambiguous
- Messages were mixed

8/29/2015
Interview with “Natalie”
- Daughter of a coworker. Interviewed over the phone
- Natalie had questions about whether I would be talking with her mother at work about what she says. It seems like whatever she is going to say may not be positive with regards to her mother.
- Father is Guatemalan but moved to the US as a child. This could affect his influence.
- Considers herself White: This is what the literature is saying about influences to how biracial individuals identify. Part of it is based on appearance, part is (according to my findings) dependent on who they surround themselves with, and another part is what cultural values/side of the family they grew up with.
- Familial influences

- Natalie was encouraged to "fit in" and be Americanized by her White mother
- Eating healthy, avoiding weight gain...

9/1/2015:
I'm receiving more transcripts, and I've had to correct a couple because they were translated incorrectly. I'm noticing some participants are disclosing information regarding how parents influenced racial identity as well as body image. I may start asking about this.

9/12/2015
Interview with "Melanie"

- Identifies as biracial, 24 years old
- Wants to share with others that she is part black, because that is "a big part" of who she is.
- It instilled in Melanie a sense of pride in her she was, perhaps knowing your heritage instills pride in people of marginalized/minority races
- Dad instilled pride and acceptance when the world didn't do that for Melanie
- Family had nothing to do with dad because he married a Black woman
- Wanted to look like friends but also her sister
- You're not 'x' enough theme coming up again
- She eventually started loving her features
- Mom encouraged acceptance of identity but would have Melanie diet with her, so not accepting of weight???
- Knows mom was well intentioned in being image conscious
- Melanie received **conflicting messages** in the home regarding eating habits and weight. Dad balanced mom's messages out

9/19/2015
Interview with "Kylie"

- Part Asian and part White. She's 22. We interviewed over Facetime. Kylie appears mixed to me.
- almost forced to pick one of her races, asked to pick Asian because she looks ambiguous
- Considers herself "more Asian influenced"
- Kylie felt different growing up because the expectations and restrictions from her "Tiger mom" was different than that of her other friends
- Dad (who is White) went along with mom's minority culture
- Kylie appreaciates the way her mother brought her up though feels it could have been more "loving."
- Mom would put effort into ther appearance when going out. This resembles what other participants have said about their parents, that they communicated through their behaviors that your appearance is what you put out into the world about yourself…Kylie seems to have adopted this.
- Kylie learned by watching her parents (mostly mom) not to have an emotional relationship with food
- Parents offered to pay for a breast augmentation??!! Wow. I can't even imagine

the message this sends
- No messages from dad regarding appearance at all, but Kylie does not see it as a bad thing. Maybe this is why she identifies more with Asian standards of beauty/culture??
- Effect of having more exposure to racial diversity

9/27/2015
Interview with "Tina"
- Considers herself more white than black, but does say she's mixed
- People tell her she looks Latina
- Got the "proud to be a black person" mind from father
- Mom encouraged her to learn about her cultures.
- Kari and other participants have said this, that their appearance and what people think she is racially depends on the environment, geographical as well as the people in the environment, where she and other participants would be perceived as looking not like them. For example, if around white folks, they may emphasize how ethnic she looks, however, if around black individuals, she may receive comments about looking more white
- Doesn't feel she has a "true identity" because her perceived identity depends on who she is around
- **Comparing** herself to her White friends
- Proud of her body, she exercises
- Tina was never allowed by her dad to complain about her body and therefore body image concerns just kind of went away.
- Her father was very much wanting to keep up appearances
- **Clear influences to racial identity by parents**

9/28/2015
Interview with "Kari"
- Dad is White, mom is from India
- How she identifies depends on who she is around. Tina also said this. Participants have talked about feeling more like a minority around Whites and more White around minorities
- Kari didn't feel she had to advocate for her racial identity until she moved and noticed that the things that made her "Indian" like going to nonny's and seeing Indian family and being told what to wear wasn't in her life. Had to assert identity.
- Mom is very westernized though racially she is Indian. Kari also grew up westernized
- Realized her experience and her mother's experiences with appearance and racial identity were different
- Father doesn't try to infuse White culture though the family is generally westernized
- Family influences
- Considers herself lucky to have an athletic body, meaning this is what she considers ideal…
- Because Kari began identifying more as an Indian woman, she found herself

wanting to appear more Indian and idealize those features rather than Western features.
- Kari adamantly did not want White people to classify her as one of them.
- The overarching theme of the parental messages that Kari received was "really conflicted"
- Doesn't espouse either standard of beauty because she's biracial

10/11/2015
- Got back 5 transcripts from the professional company and will spend the next few days checking for accuracy.

10/13/2015
- So far the transcripts are fairly accurate, though the transcribers at times could not make out a word, which means I have to go back to that part of the audio to see if I can make it out. I'm starting to do an initial coding of additional transcripts. I think I want to do that to get a better idea of what the central themes are before moving into focused coding. Everything seems like it could be potentially significant, so I'm literally coding just about everything.
- "You're not Japanese enough" is something that "Jackie" reports, as well as other participants in different words. Maybe this could be a central category…like "You're not pure enough" or "You're not 'x' enough"…that last part was Jackie's wording.
- I'm also getting this concept of a middle ground, like the person is not Black enough but also not White enough for example.

10/15/2015
Notes from interview with "Lucy"
- Dad is Nigerian and mom is Mexican but raised with White parents, no cultural ties with Mexican culture. Describes mom as "very very white" though she is also curvy
- Identifies as Black, not close with mom
- Lucy is getting at a main theme…people have this stereotype of what a black person, or white person, etc., should look like, and I wonder if this is the source of assumptions, and the source of "you're not x enough"
- Growing up in Utah has been influential in her racial identity
- Doesn't use words to judge her weight, calls herself heavier rather than fat.
- -Lucy wants her skin color to match her identity more and so that people wont question her identity
- Notices that her features don't meet western beauty standards
- Prefers curvy bodies, so does mom but mom misses her "Vegas body"
- Mom wouldn't change in front of dad

10/17/2015
- Biracial people feeling they have to explain their racial identity to others. This could be related to the "What are you" theme that also keeps cropping up.
- It's interesting that participants are still comparing themselves to people they see

in the media, even though a lot of these people look nothing like them
- Weight seems to be cropping up as the central body image concern. This is surprising. I was expecting skin color or phenotype to be more commonly mentioned than weight. Perhaps this relates to thinner western beauty standard. I'm also seeing a difference between direct and indirect messages. So far, if a parent has not sent a direct (verbal) message, they are sending indirect messages, via their own dieting habits, comments about their own appearance in front of the kids, or commenting on others.

10/19/2015
- This is getting at something I've seen with other participants, that they communicated verbally that their daughters are "beautiful the way they are" but the message they sent was one of being critical about their choices of clothing/make up, etc., or being critical of their eating/weight. It sounds very conflicting.

10/22/2015
- Got a couple more transcripts in. This is an overwhelming amount of information. I'm now combing through the earlier transcripts and beginning focused coding. I'm moving some nodes that have not gained support in another area in NVivo, so that I don't prematurely delete them, but I also move them to make the data more manageable.
- Now that I am going back through with a "fine tooth comb" I also noticed that some participants reported feeling more beautiful when they moved/visited areas with more racial diversity. In the case of participants who have been in areas with more diversity and are now in Utah, they indicated that they're non-White features don't feel as beautiful. This is the case with Kylie,

10/30/2015
- Health as another main theme?? People heard messages that were either under the intent of being healthy, or participants have molded these messages so that they engage in behaviors to try to be healthy
- I'm also recoding nodes into new areas as I go through additional transcripts and find what is important.

11/24/2015
- Coding continues. There is so much data, but I'm noticing where participants are having similar experiences and times where there are contradicting experiences. Also, I'm thinking of separating out parental behaviors from parental messages. Although both are messages, it may help me distinguish between indirect and direct messages later on.
- I also decided to add family influences as a category. I may or may not include it in the write-up, given that my study is looking at parental messages, but several participants are describing the cultural influences of family members.

11/30/2015

- This is what the literature is saying about influences to how biracial individuals identify. Part of it is based on appearance, part is (according to my findings) dependent on whom they surround themselves with, and another part is what cultural values/side of the family they grew up with. Again, exposure or lack thereof is what influences in part how they identify. (Natalie's transcript pertinent to this)

12/5/2015

- It's becoming increasingly hard to work on data analysis when I'm on internship. I usually get in 7 to 8 clinical hours in a day, then drive home and try to work on coding. I feel the project is slowing down and that makes me anxious. I think I'm also anxious about the subjectivity of how to analyze. I know that Charmaz mentions that qualitative data is very subjective, and that if someone else had interviewed and analyzed, the findings would have likely been different. This is just something that I have to get used to. I have to deal with the nuances of where to put participant quotes in what node or category. I also have to work with how the categories can combine and change in order to better capture participant experiences. Wherever possible, the change is still in the language the participants used, perhaps a part of a quote that is more general to the experiences that are coming up. Sometimes it seems that the same data belongs in two categories, but I'm trying my best to think through that data when it comes up to see where it would fit best.

12/15/2015

- Just a reminder to add information regarding reference group orientation to my literature review. I'm currently working on adding a biracial identity section to my literature review given that it is something that I am asking about and something that seems as central as the discussion of body image.

12/23/2015

- I've temporarily slowed down on the coding process in order to comb through the biracial identity development literature. There are several models that have been developed for biracial/multiracial identity development, but nothing that has gained ground. There is also research which looks at influences to biracial identity development. I'm really excited that some of the influences mentioned are influences that participants have talked about (parents, race of the people they surround themselves with).

1/10/2016

Some notes on the Rockquemore (1999) article:

- The formation of identity is dynamic and not created in isolation. Often it is the interplay of physical appearance, social interactions/validation…and one other thing…
- Assumption that biracial people have a singular understanding of their identity
- Identity was conceptualized using the One Drop Rule, where if an individual had had one black and one white parent, they were categorized as black.
- Symbolic interactionism

- 4 types of biracial identity (Rockquemore, 1999)
- Dad's influence is described as much more positive because it relates to being active and healthy, which is something other participants have reported.
- Natalie overall got the message from both parents to be thin.
- Finds ideal features from a variety of races attractive

1/25/2016

- I created a coding legend and new codes to reflect each overarching area in the research in order to make writing the results and further analysis easier. There will be the 4 overarching domains: parental messages, body image, identity, and how identity influences body image. These each have their sub categories.

1/29/2016

- Conceptualizing perceptions of future as being about both appearance and expectations related to identity or perceived identity
- how parents influenced identity and body image as separate categories but not mutually exclusive
- hunch: family messages served to qualify/support/refute
- Kylie, Angela, Lucy felt more secure and received more compliments about their appearance when they were in culturally more diverse areas.

Finding: when parents had no messages, participants relied more on messages from siblings, community, friends, etc.

- "I feel like my mom's lack of commentary one of the area went to other people stronger influences (Angela):
- I feel like the popular culture on TV and how are those things to -- I think the one thing that wasn't happening is there wasn't a conversation about those things. And so, the conversation got shaped by the media. Especially, coming out of Montana where there's not a lot of representation in general. (Angela)

2/1/2016

- Maybe middle ground relates to having or not having a sense of community, experiences with white culture??

2/3/2016

- I'm continuing to put together themes/categories based on the data, and tying it back to the research/interview questions specifically. This also involved moving quotes into new categories at times. It still feels like an overwhelming amount of data. I worry that the committee will think that 13 participants are not enough, yet when I see the data and how overwhelming it can be it makes me feel more confident that I have reached saturation with the data. It seems it's been a little while since I get anything that requires creating whole new categories or represent a whole new theme.

2/6/2016

- One thing is the message mom sent and another is what the participant made of it or how she interpreted it. For example, some participants have stated that they

understand the good intentions behind damaging messages, and have reframed it as influences to healthier habits. Amelia is one example of this.

- What mom says and what mom does can sometimes be different. Conflicting messages in that what she says and does is different. I feel I noted this before, but it's coming up as something that could be worth mentioning in the results.
- I'm also starting to organize the results, though I think I'm still a ways from formally writing them. I'm thinking of organizing them into "messages" and "impact," kind of like this:
    - Parental messages about daughter's appearance
        - Mom's messages
            - Direct messages??
            - Indirect messages??
            - Impact
        - Dad's messages
            - Direct messages??
            - Indirect messages??
            - Impact
- I think there may be more sub-nodes within those, but for now that's what I have for parental messages
- Indirect messages will most likely be behaviors, nonverbals…things not directly addressed to the participant.

2/15/2016

- This reminded me of what my participants (including non African American biracial women) are reporting: "it becomes apparent that most researchers assume race is the protective factor that "buffers" some African American women, though this does not explain why some African American women still hold themselves to Western beauty standards. One possible alternative is examining racial identity, rather than race, as a potential protective factor in the development of body image for African American women (Capodilupo & Kim, 2014)."

2/21/2016

I think I've decided to postpone my defense until the fall. I really don't want to rush this process and I worry that I won't pass if I rush. I feel like I can breathe and really put time into this project now.

- Finding: It seems the types of things parents are unhappy about are mostly related to weight, but there are a variety of other concerns, like Melanie's father was self conscious about a large scar on his arm.

3/4/2016

Just some ideas from my meeting with AJ:

> Grounded Theory: What did they do with the messages from parents and are they consistent with an identity development model?

- Discussion: Messages are complicated, there isn't just one message that biracial women are getting

- Geographical location and identity/acceptance

3/7/2016
I'm taking a little break from parental messages to body image and looking at what the data is saying with regards to how parents influenced identity development. I may have to go back and look at the transcripts because this topic was something I had started to put a little more emphasis on later on, so the first few interviews made mention of this topic but I wasn't looking for it when I started coding. I only noticed it when participants really had a lot to say about it (like Carli). There are potential subcategories that are emerging in addition to the messages (which include verbal and behavior), such as cases where the minority parent adopted white culture or was westernized, and cases where the white parent embraced the culture of the minority parent.

3/9/2016
Here are some preliminary hypotheses/findings based on looking at the identity data:
- Potential Categories: messages, white parent embracing minority parent culture, vice versa…

- Finding: White parent didn't pass down their culture but either supported or didn't support minority culture

- When parent passes down key elements of their culture, the daughter tends to connect with the culture more and adopt it. When they don't, the daughter either adopts identity of other parent primarily, or western culture?? (I also saw this with Angela?)
- Jackie confirms this: "that's what it sounds like, your kind of gravitating more towards like racial ethnic heritage (Jackie: yeah). Like, and I wonder how much of that is influenced by the fact that you grew up with mom for most of your childhood (Jackie: yeah) and that was like the setting point, cause you said by the time you were fifteen already…"
- Participants felt more of a need to defend/assert their identity, or identity became more salient when they were away from family and/or parents
- I definitely need to add a node that gets at how racial identity changes depending on who the person is around…

3/10/2016
I'm looking at the category "You're not X enough," and I'm looking at "Middle Ground" and I feel the two are related, but I'm not sure if I should subsume one under another, like add "You're not X enough" to "Middle Ground" or what. In some instances they're not one and the same, and other times they really are. Maybe part of the experience of navigating that middle ground is also feeling like you're not "x" enough. And maybe another part includes the "What are you?" experience.

- Maybe "mixed messages" is not another official category but is part of other categories.

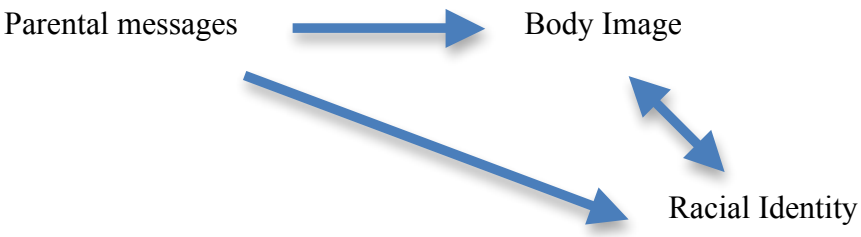
For example, participants may receive mixed messages regarding body image and/or regarding identity, but they should be included under body image and identity, respectively. But what about if it comes from parents? Does it then go under parental messages/impact??

3/11/2016
Potential organization for Identity:

Identity

1- Middle Ground
    a. You're not 'x' enough (maybe this will go here)
2- People Assume
3- What are you?
4- Mixed messages regarding identity
5- How parents influenced identity
6- How identity influences body image

3/14/2016
Potential model?? (There will obviously be more to this, but I want to get this down before I forget)



Amber: She is also connecting her racial identity (features that are part of her cultures) to her appearance. The way it affects it is it has Amber preferring more ethnic features as her ideal...maybe this is found in others?

3/15/2016
This is an excerpt from my interview with Tina, and it's something she agreed with, so it may end up in my results section:

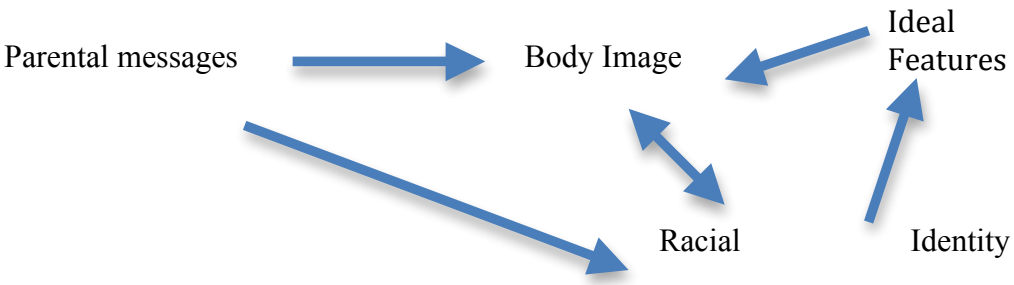
"So that's actually something I've heard too that for a lot of biracial women or at least a lot of the ones that I've talked to, it's almost kind of relieving. They like looking exotic and they've actually used that word or ambiguous is another word they've used. It's almost like they described it as a good thing because they're like, 'It's a relief. I don't have to purely follow White standard of beauty or whatever standard is their race. I could just kind of carve my own path.' That is what the focus on the parts that they like. Because it seems like what we do with standards of beauty is we compare ourselves to it

and find all the negative. But by just kind of having that middle ground kind of carving your own standard of beauty the focus tends to be more and like, 'Oh, look how cool and exotic these features are.'"

She feels that there is currently no established standard of beauty for biracial women, and therefore it is easier to accept how you look, but that it will be "tricky" when a standard is developed. Emily also mentioned this, and Angela reports feeling like she looks different from her peers

- Also I'm looking through Angela's interview (for more regarding how racial identity influences body image), and she mentioned that her body did not look like her peers growing up.

- Another thought: I had participants describe their ideal physical features, and I wonder if that at all is impacted by their racial identity, and if in turn that affects their body image, so…



3/17/2015
Here is the organization so far:
1- Body Image

- Ideal features
- Features participants liked/didn't like about themselves (Can rename to "Feelings About Appearance")
- Comparing
- Western Beauty Standards
    - Acceptance/Rejection of
- Body Awareness/Consciousness

2- Parental messages about daughter's appearance

- Mom's messages
    - Direct messages??
      = Just "Mother's Messages"
    - Indirect messages??
    - Impact
- Dad's messages
    - Direct messages??
      = Just "Father's Messages"
    - Indirect messages??

- Impact

3- Identity
- Middle Ground
    a. You're not 'x' enough (maybe this will go here)
- People Assume
- What are you?
- Mixed messages regarding identity
- How parents influenced identity
- How identity influences body image
- Discriminated Against (or just Discrimination)

3/20/2016
- I'm looking more into the Body Image category because there are some quotes that need to be put into subcategories or into new subcategories.
- I may want to combine "rejection of western beauty standards" under "acceptance/appreciation of body"…or at least I need to check if any subcategories go in the other node.

3/24/2016
Another thing I need to do is to create subnodes within the "Western Standards of Beauty" category. Still recoding things….lots of recoding.

- I also need to create a codebook for the codes that I've developed…
- I created a new sub node within Body Image called Feelings About Appearance. Within that there will be both positive and negative feelings about participant appearance from the participants themselves.
- I also need to describe/define the categories in detail, what they capture
- I don't think I should delete the family influences/messages subnode, just because it seems so significant, though I don't know exactly where it fits yet. I wasn't even looking for this, but many participants mentioned family messages about appearance.

3/28/2016
- I think I will add a node which is regarding mixed messages…this could be mixed messages about appearance or identity, and by the parents, family, as well as peers/society. The idea is to capture conflicting messages which the participants received
- There is a sub node, which mostly consists of Rachel's experiences, called "strength" which I may put under body awareness/consciousness, as it relates to an awareness of the body's capabilities.
- Overcoming/Moving past harmful/negative messages will go under Rejecting Western Beauty Standards because it seems like all of these messages relate to participants rejecting the standards that society has set on them, or that parents set on them that are influenced by WBS's…
- "See other women with my body type" will go under "Comparing"

- Noticing that a lot of participants "just want to be healthy"

3/29/2016

- Based on some recoding and immersion in the data, my current coding scheme goes like this:

1- Body Image
- Ideal features
- Feelings About Appearance
  - Features Participants Like
  - Body Acceptance/Appreciation
  - Features Participants Did Not Like
- Comparing
- Western Beauty Standards
  - Acceptance/Rejection of WBS
  - What Constitutes the Standard according to participants
  - "Ambiguous Appearance"
- Body Awareness/Consciousness
  (mention the concept of strength in write-up)

2- Parental messages about daughter's appearance
- Mom's messages
  - Direct messages??
    = Just "Mother's Messages"
  - Indirect messages??
  - Impact on Body Image
- Dad's messages
  - Direct messages??
    = Just "Father's Messages"
  - Indirect messages??
  - Impact on Body Image

3- Identity
- Middle Ground
  - Feeling different
- You're not 'x' enough
- People Assume
  - Cultural messages/ Perceptions of culture
- What are you? (mention being exoticized here)
- Mixed messages regarding identity
- How parents influenced identity
  - POC adopting/accepting majority culture
  - Majority culture parent accepting minority culture
- How identity influences body image
- Discrimination

4- 5- Family messages/influences about appearance and identity (this one will be

mentioned last in results, or in the discussion, because it doesn't directly relate to one of my research questions but many participants talked about it anyways.

Each of these will have a separate document where I color code the quotes, and begin to write up findings with the quotes to support them. I'm hoping to check in with the QRG to make sure this is okay.

I'm noticing that participant quotes which talk about acceptance and rejection of WBS also point to what they feel the standard is, even though that has it's own node. So I may have to figure out a way of linking these…one of Rachel's quotes is a perfect example of this: "Everything was supposed to be so processed or prim and things like that and I hate it. I did. I reject it. I um, so yeah, I feel like it's just more natural. Low maintenance."

I also have to start thinking of explanations for why I'm finding what I am…so if participants are rejecting WBS's, then why might that be?? Is it because they are embracing a non-White/biracial identity more??

4/1/2016
- Body acceptance/appreciation may be similar to the "acceptance/rejection of WBS node. So I may have to combine those.
    - Just looked through Body Acceptance and Appreciation, and while some of the quotes provide some glimpse into what participants feel the WBS is, it does seem separate from acceptance/rejection of Western Beauty Standard, where women do seem to be comparing their appearance to some expectation. The other node has women talking about appreciating their bodies, strength, and acceptance in general as separate from the WBS.

- Acceptance/rejection of WBS tied to identity (I think I mentioned that before), but could be part of the model.
- May add a "Embracing Minority Identity/Culture in the identity node depending on what I find. I'm finding some comments that get at participants embracing their non-White identity more.
- The What are you? And People assume nodes may be one and the same. I have to take a look

4/5/2016
- I defined what the What Are You? subnode means according to Williams (1996, pp. 203) "Race As Process" chapter. Based on this definition, there are quite a few quotes that will need to get moved around, and I need to check the "People assume" node, because I was putting many of those in there…

- People assume the participants race/ethnic make up based on appearance, not so much how they act, as in the what are you node...or maybe people assuming race rather than just being curious about it, as in the what are you node

What are you is the expectation of looking and acting a certain way, rather than just

assuming...

4/6/2016
I met with the QRG group tonight and got some validation and great ideas for how to keep moving forward. It sounded like the categories are good, and now it's just about figuring out the formal organization. Here are some notes that I took during the meeting:

Sections: Body Image and Identity
- parental messages and influences within that, as well as other things
- 4 decent quotes per section/node, if quote has something to add to that section that you can't say better
- summarize chapter 3 at the end of chapter 3
- high points of results: challenge existing literature or expands literature in discussion, rather than just restate what you found…a new finding was xyz….
- end discussion: here's what I found and why its important in grand scheme of things
- Family messages within parental messages: not something I thought of but it came up as central

- Don't put me in a box (Amelia's reaction)

- Based on the feedback, I may move "What are you" under "People Assume" as a subtheme. So the people assume so far will mention being exoticized as well as "what are you"

- Found another quote from a participant talking about how they felt more beautiful when they lived/visited a more racially diverse area.

4/10/2016
- More recoding, and I am marking the categories and subcategories that are completed as such. The goal is to not have any quotes that are not categorized, and to have all quotes within categories and subcategories fit nicely into that category.

- I'm looking into how parents influence racial identity, and it seems that, like body image, the passing down of culture and identity can be both direct and indirect. For example, indirect could be by having the child participate in family customs, or dictating when traditional cultural clothing was worn, or how often traditional cultural dishes were eaten in the home.

4/12/2016
- Here are some notes from the Identity and Body Image node. I think for this one it may be important to directly connect what the participant is saying to their actual races.
    - Wanting to incorporate ideal features of both identities (Amber)

- Wishing skin was darker to "match" more with the culture…so no one would question her and so she can be accepted as black (Lucy)
- Native American: connection with the body and the earth (Amelia, Amber). Giving back to earth and body
- Body confidence comes from not fitting neatly into a mold of appearance (Tina)
- More variety in what is considered beautiful in Hispanic/Latino culture… (Natalie)
- Being happy/content/appreciating more ethnic features (so the non white features??): Amber, Amelia, Tina, Natalie (who still identifies as White), Kylie (isn't appreciating her features per se, but is saying she wants the "Asian body), Carli
- I like looking different (Tina)
- **Feeling more attractive in areas with more racial diversity (Lucy)
    - So features that were not seen as attractive before are attractive now…so body image is also influenced by how others react to ambiguous appearance and their identity
- Identifying as person of color matching with appearance and feeling more beautiful. Talks about skin color being naturally darker and not the result of going out in the sun "I can see myself for who I am" (Carli)…this is how I'm supposed to look
- Discrepant??: Kari is westernized and she describes that as her personal style
- Racial identity as a source of standard: "You're Asian, you're supposed to be thinner" (Jackie)
- Going from wanting to fit the White/Western standard to embracing features and identity (Tina)
- Great quote: It's definitely really shaped it. I feel like people who identify as one race don't really get the being told what to do in two directions. So I feel like it has caused a lot of conflict and it made it a little more challenging to figure out how I felt about my body…so monoracial people don't have to experience the conflicting messages
- Happy with self because she doesn't look like anyone else (Emily)
- Reevaluation of what is thought of as beautiful
- Carli identifying as Chicana allows her to espouse body image ideals that are more congruent with her appearance, making her feel a bit more beautiful.
- Because Asian's in society are expected to be thin, Jackie compares herself to this standard as a biracial asian woman and feels she wants to be thinner.
    - This gets at this overall idea of wanting appearance to match identity, and/or embracing ethnic features
- Body confidence in African American culture, so because Angela identifies as part AA, she is describing how AA culture influences her body image. It makes her more accepting/confident of her nonwhite features, more accepting of her weight. In the past, Angela also sexualized

herself by wearing clothing that accentuated her breasts because in hiphop culture women are sexualized

4/17/2016

- May create a body confidence/acceptance BECAUSE of racial identity within the Identity category, but then I'll have to look back at body confidence/acceptance in the body image category to see if any fit into that

- Working on the Mixed Messages node. Making notes based on the quotes I put in that category helps to bring out the main themes within that subcategory.
    - Mixed messages appear to be from parents by and large, and participants did not feel that was a positive thing. It was "polarizing" and "confusing"
- Body awareness within the body image node: Lots of stuff here, some of conscious and aware of weight and excess fat

4/19/2016

- Most women are comparing themselves to White peers, could be because that's the majority of people that are around them?? Some of the women who fall in this category compare in order to say that they can't relate to it, rather than hold themselves to a standard.
- Some people are comparing themselves to other family members, like their mother or their sister.
- Jackie is comparing herself to what an Asian woman should look like. So for some it's to see how they match up to a particularly standard, for others it's to refute it/reject the standard.

4/21/2015

- Looking more at the family influences/messages node. Here are some notes:
    - It seems like whatever the messages are, they involve a passing down of their views, so if they were disapproving of non-White folks, that's what was communicated. Often what was communicated were cultural practices.

4/30/2016

- A potential finding: The ideal features that participants like may be a mix of both white and non-white features, often within the same person. I wonder if I can discern a potential reason why…maybe the more westernized girls also idealize white features??
- Some notes from digging into the ideal features subnode:
    - Athletic bodies
    - Ideal features depend on the person
    - Big breasted and bog butts, but toned abs
- Completed recoding! Now I'm ready to start writing!

5/1/2016

Here are my current categories and subcategories based on the finished coding and recoding:

1- Body Image

- Ideal features
    - Body Type/Shape
    - Facial Features
    - Hair
    - Ideal Features Depend on the Person
    - Skin
- Feelings About Appearance
    - Features Participants Like About Themselves
    - Body Acceptance/Appreciation
    - Features Participants Did Not Like About Themselves
- Comparing
    - Comparing Self With Non-White Individuals
    - Comparing Self With White Individuals
- Western Beauty Standards
    - Acceptance/Rejection of WBS
    - Western Beauty Standard According to Participants
    - Biracial Standard of Beauty
    - Cultural Standards of Beauty
    - "Ambiguous Appearance"
- Body Awareness/Consciousness
    - Aware/Conscious of Appearance
    - Aware/Conscious of Health
    - Aware/Conscious of Weight/Fat

2- Parental messages about daughter's appearance

- Mom's messages
    - Direct messages??
      = Just "Mother's Messages"
    - Indirect messages??
    - Impact on Body Image
- Dad's messages
    - Direct messages??
      = Just "Father's Messages"
    - Indirect messages??
    - Impact on Body Image

3- Identity

- Middle Ground
    - Feeling Different
    - Feelings Towards Being in the Middle Ground
    - Middle Ground-Appearance
    - Middle ground-Identity
- Embracing Minority Identity/Culture/Feeling Connected
- How Parents Influenced Idenitity
    - Adoption of Western Culture by Minority Parent
    - Impact

    - Influence on How Participant Identifies
    - Openness To Other Cultures
    - Passing Down Culture
    - Rejection of one Identity
    - Supporting Knowledge of Both Races/Supporting Identity
    - White Parent Embraces Minority Culture
- How Racial Identity Influences Body Image
    - Appearance and Identity Match
    - Feeling More Attractive/Accepted in More Racially Diverse Areas
    - More Body Confidence/Acceptance of Racial Identity
    - Preferring Non-White Features
    - Two Races/Two Standards
- Navigating Identity
    - How Do I Identify?
    - Navigating Identity in Relation to Other People
    - Resistance to Identifying How I Want To
- People Assume
    - Cultural Messages or Perceptions of Culture
    - I Forgot You're Not White
    - People Assigning Race
    - What Are You?
- You're Not "X" Enough
    - Feeling Like An Imposter
- Discrimination

4- Family Influences/Messages
- Accepting/Rejecting Because of Race
- Messages/Influences on Appearance
- Passing Down Cultural Values and Practices

This is going to have to be narrowed further I feel…

5/30/2016
I've spent the last month beginning to outline and write-up my results. In some cases, I wonder what is worth mentioning, or what style I should use to write. I find myself focused on trying to make the results sound generalizable despite knowing that that is not my priority. Rather, I'm just trying to describe the experiences of these women as a starting point to this area of research. There are so many things to cover and to write about that the project seems daunting, and like it will never get done. However, once I start to write it seems like the themes stand out even more, especially as I'm having to figure out how all of these women's narratives are alike and not alike each others.

7/3/2016
I've spent the last month or two writing the results in a half outline, half rough draft form, going by the major themes in the data. It's intimidating because I don't know if I'm doing it right. In some cases, I feel that I'm writing something that does the data justice,

whereas at other times I wonder if I'm pulling everything I can from it (without going overboard and making conjectures that actually don't have enough support).

I've also reached out to participants to let them know that I am in the results phase and would appreciate their input on the themes, what I'm concluding from them, and whether they think the coding is correct. So far, two participants have stated that they would be more than willing to offer feedback. I think I will send all the interested participants parts of the results as well as what I've done with the coding in order to cover more ground.

7/11/2016
I had sent two of the participants' pieces of the results, not just parts of the write-up where they were mentioned, but also overall themes that they discussed in their interviews, as well as other participants' responses to the same or similar themes. I also had two more participants that responded indicating that they would be interesting in helping. One participant stated that they will be doing a lot of traveling over the summer and may not be as available to provide any feedback until the end of summer. One participants stated that she really liked the list of themes, and was surprised at how my interpretation of the data seemed to take what they said "one step further," not by changing or altering the meaning, but by adding strength to the dialogues by finding points of convergence and divergence. The other participant reflected that it felt validating to see how other women discussed similar experiences and similar opinions. For example, she referenced how most participants discussed a beauty ideal that was in contrast to the dominant Eurocentric beauty standard. This participant, who is part Black, had mentioned in her interview that she had "nothing to contribute" with regards to her White friends talking about dieting and exercising to be thin. She indicated in her feedback that, rather than call the dominant beauty standards "Western Beauty Standards," she felt that using "Eurocentric Beauty Standard" better captured what I was going for. She made a good point which led me to change where I included "Western Beauty Standards" in saying that Black, Asian, and other women can consider themselves "western" especially if they were born in this country.

7/13/2016
I started looking more into Eurocentric beauty standards in the literature, and I've already noticed that researchers call it by different names. Some of the terms I've seen are "U.S. beauty standard," "White beauty standard," "Eurocentric beauty standard, " and "dominant beauty standard." What's interesting though is that in some studies, the authors base their entire research on this, yet a few of them assumed readers knew what they were talking about by not providing examples of what the beauty standards are. It reiterates that I will need to add a small section in my literature review which outlines what the dominant/Eurocentric/White/U.S. beauty standards are exactly.

7/26/2016
One major gist of my dissertation: When it comes to parents, telling your kids they're beautiful isn't enough. Actions speak louder than words, so you communicate more in how you view and treat your own body than in exactly what you tell your daughter.

Emily and I came up with this in a brief phone conversation. Definitely a big take home message. Maybe I should work to have a take hope with regards to Body Image, Messages, and Identity…

8/9/2016
I received feedback from Sue (on my committee). I'm happy with the feedback that I'm on the right track. I'll have to have someone edit my work for APA style, but I figured that would be the case. I was just focusing on writing and not at all worried about proofreading or APA style. She also mentioned that my writing is too long, which is actually good, because shorter sections equal less time writing. I think I'll generally keep what I have written the same, except take out any citations and add those to the discussion chapter, then make the remaining sections a bit shorter. I do have this tendency to write a lot, and I had wanted to make sure that the themes were coming across and that readers can see them clearly.

I'm starting to work on the identity node, and then I'll see where I am in my results. But so far the parental messages and body image nodes are complete! I wonder if the identity node can be seen as a consequence of some kind…like the effects of parental messages on body image affect identity, where participants don't feel like they're "x" enough, among other things.

9/1/2016
Another big potential take home of the study is that participants will internalize messages from the parent they are closest to. Either the one they were raised with, or the one whom they share an identity with. I know I can state that better, but essentially that is the gist.

I'm also having to make many decisions on what to cut out of the results. For example, some participants talked about familial influences to identity and body image. Although this came up with more than one participant, I have to keep my results within the actual dissertation topic. If I allowed myself to write up everything that I found, I would never finish.

9/3/2016
Now that I'm putting together my results and formatting it, I'm getting to look back and see what could be some possible main take-homes that I can include in the discussion chapter. This may be another one:

"Many of the features that participants disliked about themselves had been criticized at one point by someone else, such as a family member or friend. This is further evidence that the formation of one's body image in part is dependent on how others in the person's life appraise their features."

"Participants seemed to agree on what they considered their beauty ideal

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