

Perceptions of Parents' Ethnic Identities and the Personal Ethnic-Identity and Racial Attitudes of Biracial Adults

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The present study examined the relationship of perceived parental closeness and parental ethnic identity on personal ethnic identity and colorblindness beliefs in 275 part-White biracial Americans (M age = 23.88). Respondents completed online measures of their personal ethnic identity (minority, White, and multiracial), perceived parental ethnic identity, parental closeness, and attitudes about the state of race relations and the need for social action in the United States. Using path modeling, results show that part-White biracial individuals perceive their ethnic identity to be strongly linked to their parental racial identities, especially when they had closer parental relationships. Moreover, stronger minority identity was linked to less colorblind attitudes, and greater White identity was linked to greater colorblind attitudes suggesting that patterns of identity may influence how biracial individuals view race-relations and the need for social action. Implications for biracial well-being and their understanding of prejudice and discrimination are discussed.

Keywords: multiracial identity development, ethnic identity, parent–child relationships, racial beliefs/attitudes

The construct of ethnic identity contains multiple dimensions, including how individuals self-categorize their race/ethnicity, their degree of attachment with their ethnic background, and how integrated their ethnic identity is with their views of the self (see [Phinney & Ong, 2007](#) for review). Ethnic identity develops early in childhood with socialization processes involving parents, peers, and environment, and continues developing through adolescence and into adulthood. Ethnic identity can influence how individuals conceptualize race, the role of race in society, and racial discrimination experiences ([Sellers & Shelton, 2003](#)).

Because of their multiple ethnic backgrounds, multiracial ethnic identity development is inherently complex ([Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010](#)). Multiracial people simultaneously navigate multiple ethnic identities and their related cultures and belief systems. Part-White biracial individuals, for example, have a choice in how they self-categorize and identify; they may choose to singularly identify with their racial minority group, to identify solely as White, to identify with both racial groups (e.g., I am African American and White), to identify as biracial or multiracial, or identify as none of the above (e.g., I am human; [Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002](#); [Rockquemore, Brunsma, & Delgado, 2009](#)).

There is also considerable support for fluidity in how biracial individuals choose to self-categorize depending on context ([Campbell, 2007](#); [Harris & Sim, 2002](#); [Hitlin, Brown, & Elder, 2006](#); [Renn, 2000](#); [Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002](#); [Sanchez, Shih, & Garcia, 2009](#)). In different situations or at different phases of development, biracial individuals may change their self-categorization. Their racial development is also more complex because biracial people are often raised by parents who do not share their same racial background. Because of these complexities, one cannot assume research on monoracial populations applies to the multiracial experience ([Brittian, Umaña-Taylor, & Derlan, 2013](#); [Shih & Sanchez, 2005](#)). With interracial marriages on the rise ([Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010](#)), biracial people represent a large and exponentially growing population in the United States (see [Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011](#)) about which little is yet known ([Shih & Sanchez, 2009](#)). The purpose of the present article is to provide a preliminary look at the role of parents in the ethnic identity and racial attitudes of biracial individuals by having biracial people indicate their perceptions of their parents' ethnic identities and the closeness of their parental ties in addition to their own personal ethnic identities, and attitudes about race and discrimination in the United States.

With a few notable exceptions, little is known about parental influences on ethnic identity and racial belief construction of biracial individuals. Most of the work to date has either focused on how parents in interracial marriages racially classify their children ([Bratter & Heard, 2009](#); [Qian, 2004](#); [Roth, 2005](#)) or examined the broader question of family racial/ethnic socialization processes and their effects on biracial people ([Brittian et al., 2013](#); [Juang & Syed, 2010](#)). Neither of these bodies of work has examined how parents' ethnic identity influences the ethnic identity of their biracial children. For the purposes of this article, *ethnic identity* refers to the degree of importance, attachment, and commitment

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biracial individuals and their parents are perceived to have in their racial background using the framework that brought about the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (Phinney, 1992). Following prior work (Good, Chavez, & Sanchez, 2010; Sanchez & Garcia, 2009), we focus on three ethnic identities among part-White biracial individuals (White, minority, and multiracial) and their relationship to parents' perceived ethnic identity.

Many developmental theories have put forward the importance of familial relationships in identity formation (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996; Gonzales-Backen, 2013; Root, 1998). For example, Gonzales-Backen (2013) applied an ecological framework to ethnic identity development of part-White biracial adolescents that acknowledged the multiple levels that contribute to the formation of identity for this population, including familial ethnic socialization from ones parents and extended family, experiences with discrimination, physical appearances, and socialization from non-family members such as teachers, peers, and the media. This theory also suggests that the parent-child relationship might moderate the relationship between familial ethnic socialization and ethnic identity exploration, affirmation, and ultimate resolution for biracial individuals. The one study that has empirically examined the role of parental involvement in patterns of racial classification among biracial adolescents found that (along with parent gender), father's family involvement influenced the way children racially classified themselves (Bratter & Heard, 2009). These findings suggest that parents and the strength of their relationships with their children play an important role in biracial people's racial identity choices. Similarly, in a qualitative study of 10 multiracial adults, Miville and colleagues (2005) also found a theme of individuals more strongly identifying with the ethnicity of the parent they were closer to. Furthermore, research on monoracial minority adolescents finds that stronger relationships with parents foster children's attachment and commitment to ethnic identities (Kiang & Fuligni, 2009). Stronger relationships afford greater opportunities for parents to discuss race, ethnicity, and cultural values (i.e., ethnic socialization), which can promote connection to cultural values (Thompson, 1994). Thus, the present study considers, for the first time, how perceived parental closeness and perceived parental ethnic identity jointly inform the ethnic identities and racial attitudes of part-White biracial individuals. We hypothesize that perceived closeness with one's parents and parent ethnic identity will be predictive of biracial individuals' minority, White, and multiracial identity, which in turn will predict attitudes about race and discrimination.

Ethnic Identity and the Development of Racial Attitudes

Because race and ethnicity are salient factors in the lives of minorities, especially those of biracial people who are often met with race-related confusion, ethnic identity becomes the lens through which people view the role race plays in society (Rockquemore, Laszloffy, & Noveske, 2006). Because recent studies suggest colorblind attitudes serve as obstacles to the promotion of racial equality and undermine recognition of discrimination (e.g., Apfelbaum, Pauker, Ambady, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008), the present study focuses on the role of ethnic identity in the endorsement of colorblind attitudes among part-White biracial

individuals. Understanding the colorblind racial attitudes of biracial individuals has important implications for how biracial people experience their social realities and cope with race-related experiences.

Those who embrace a colorblind ideology deny racial discrimination exists, are blind to White privilege and status in society, and resist social policies that institutional discrimination (e.g., affirmative action; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). In general, Whites more often than Blacks endorse colorblindness (Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson, & Casas, 2007) and the degree of White ethnic identity is associated with diminished support of affirmative action policies, especially when Whites are asked to think about what benefits their in-group (Knowles & Peng, 2005; Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006). However, to our knowledge, no prior research has examined the factors that predict colorblind beliefs in biracial individuals. Some research suggests interracial households emphasize beliefs consistent with colorblindness, such as "We are all human" and "I'm not a color," as parental efforts to de-emphasize race (Rockquemore et al., 2006). This de-emphasis could lead children to have less biological and essentializing views about race—which may positively impact well-being and responses to identity threats (e.g., Sanchez & Garcia, 2009; Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, & Peck, 2007). At the same time, de-emphasizing race and encouraging strategies of colorblindness may have unintended negative consequences for the ability to recognize discrimination of others (Apfelbaum, Pauker, et al., 2008).

Based on prior research, White and minority ethnic identities are expected to have oppositional effects on beliefs about race, such that biracial individuals who more strongly embrace their White identity would hold beliefs consistent with majority status (e.g., status-legitimizing beliefs, beliefs in a fair and just world) and more minority-identified individuals would hold beliefs consistent with lower status groups (e.g., awareness of privilege and discrimination). Because of these expected dual pathways between White and minority identity to colorblind beliefs (and simultaneous positions of advantage and disadvantage), this study intentionally focused on minority/White biracial populations.

Present Study

Uniquely building on past models, the current study explores how perceived parental ethnic identity interacts with parental closeness to contribute to ethnic identity among biracial individuals. Improving on prior models, the current study includes multiple ethnic identity levels (multiracial, minority, and White) allowing for a plurality of ethnic identities among the biracial sample. Moreover, this is the first study to investigate how perceived parental closeness and parental ethnic identity predicts levels of minority, White, and multiracial identity for biracial individuals and in turn, colorblind beliefs about race, to extend prior research on familiar factors in biracial populations (e.g., Bratter & Heard, 2009; Gonzales-Backen, 2013). We hypothesized that those who reported a greater degree of closeness to their White parent and their minority parent would report higher levels of White self-identity and minority self-identity, respectively (see Figure 1). Moreover, perceived White identity (or minority identity) of the parent was expected to predict greater White identity (or minority identity) among the participant. These effects were expected to be stronger for those with stronger parental relation-

Three percent reported being from a lower socioeconomic class background ($n = 8$), 29.82% were working class ($n = 82$), 53.82% were middle class ($n = 148$), and 4.73% were upper class ($n = 13$; 24 participants did not report their socioeconomic status). The final sample consisted of 176 Black/White, 71 Asian/White, 26 Hispanic/White, and two Native American/White. In 60% of cases, the father was the minority parent and the mother was the White parent ($n = 166$), and 40% had a father who was White and a mother who was the minority parent ($n = 109$).

Measures and Procedure

Participants completed an online survey hosted on [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). After completing the informed consent, participants were asked about their relationship with their biological parents followed by questions about their ethnic identity and parents' ethnic identities. The survey was structured such that individuals indicated if they had a biological parent of a particular racial/ethnic group (Asian, Arab/Middle Eastern, Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, White/European American) and, if yes, were asked a series of questions about their self-identity with this racial/ethnic group and how they believed their biological parent identified with this group. For example, a participant who selected having a biological parent with an Asian background was asked questions such as, "I have a strong sense of belonging to the Asian community," with the word "Asian" being substituted with the other racial/ethnic groups. This deviation from the standard MEIM was necessary to ensure participants answered questions regarding the specific ethnicity tied to their parents. Participants were also asked about their "multiracial" identity. Participants then answered questions regarding their beliefs about racial privilege and discrimination. Participants were also asked demographic information, including age, gender, and education. The survey concluded with a one-page debrief.

Parental closeness. Participants completed 10 investigator-created items about the relationship with their biological parents (mother and father separately), such as, "I feel comfortable expressing my feelings around my mother/father." Items were on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, and 5 = *strongly agree*). Additional analyses determined whether these

items could be used to represent one scale assessing closeness to parents. Items were factor analyzed using varimax rotation, yielding one factor explaining 67% of the variance (see Table 1). Items were averaged to create a score of parental closeness for each participant's mother and father. Higher scores indicate greater closeness. These scores were converted to White parent closeness ($\alpha = .94$) and minority parent closeness ($\alpha = .94$) based on the reported race for participants' biological parents.

Ethnic identity of participant. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) is a 12-item validated measure assessing the level of identity associated with one's ethnic group(s). It consists of two types of items, those regarding the level of affirmation, belonging, and commitment to one's ethnic group(s) (e.g., "I feel a strong attachment to my own ethnic group identity") and items focused on the degree of searching for an identity in that group (e.g., "I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my ethnic group"). Items are on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, and 5 = *strongly agree*). Participants completed the MEIM separately for their minority and White identity, as well as their multiracial identity. Items were averaged to create scores for minority (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$), White ($\alpha = .88$), and multiracial self-identity ($\alpha = .87$). A higher score indicates a more salient identity with that particular ethnicity.

Perceived ethnic identity of biological parents. Participants completed the MEIM for the perceived ethnic identity of their biological mother and father. To our knowledge, no prior research has used the method of asking individuals to assess the ethnic identity of their parents, however, prior studies have instructed participants to fill out measures the way they think others would in order to assess perceptions of other individuals' ethnic identity and racial attitudes (e.g., Johnson & Kaiser, 2013; Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009; Wilkins, Kaiser, & Rieck, 2010). For example, in Wilkins, Kaiser, and Rieck (2010; Study 3), participants were asked to complete a measure of ethnic identity the way they thought a person shown only in a photograph would, and they examined how those inferences of racial identification corresponded with the actual racial identification of those individuals in the photograph. They found that inferred identification and the

Table 1
Perceived Parental Closeness Items and Factor Loadings

Item	Minority parent factor loading	White parent factor loading
1. I am satisfied with my relationship with my mother/father.	.84	.87
2. I feel comfortable expressing my feelings around my mother/father.	.90	.89
3. I feel understood by my mother/father.	.88	.90
4. I use everyday language/vocabulary when talking to my mother/father.	.62	.63
5. I can go to my mother/father for guidance.	.87	.89
6. My mother/father took an active role in teaching me new things.	.80	.76
7. I do my best to spend time with my mother/father.	.84	.86
8. I know a great deal about my mother/father.	.77	.72
9. I feel that I can talk with my mother/father about almost anything.	.89	.89
10. I believe my mother/father is proud of me.	.72	.72

actual identification of the targets were highly overlapping suggesting that inferred identification is predictive of actual identification even among unacquainted individuals. In the current study, participants were asked to do the same, that is, fill out the MEIM for their parents as a measure of their perceptions of their parents. Based on prior research, this method should approximate parents' identity to some degree, but more importantly, this method would assess the seemingly most influential aspect of parental identity (children's impressions of their parent's identity). An example item from the perceived MEIM of parents is, "My mother has a strong sense of belonging to the *Asian* community." Items were on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, and 5 = *strongly agree*) and were averaged to create a score for mother ethnic identity and father ethnic identity. Based on the reported racial group of participants' parents, these scores were converted into White parent identity ($\alpha = .87$) and minority parent identity ($\alpha = .92$).

Racial attitudes and beliefs. The Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000) is a 20-item validated measure used to assess racial attitudes and beliefs about prejudice and race. It is comprised of three validated subscales that served as indicators of the latent factor for colorblind beliefs: (a) racial privilege (e.g., "Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not"); (b) institutional discrimination (e.g., "Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people"); and (c) blatant racial issues (e.g., "Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations"). Participants rated their level of agreement on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). Items were coded to reflect lack of awareness regarding racial privilege ($\alpha = .78$), institutional discrimination ($\alpha = .69$), and blatant racial issues ($\alpha = .68$), so that higher scores indicate greater colorblind attitudes.

Results

We first ran a series of ANOVAs to test for biracial ethnic group differences on all study variables; no significant differences were found. Correlations for all variables are shown in Table 2. Initial regression analyses suggested that gender of parent did not moderate relationships examined here but we did not have a large enough sample size to fully address gender of parent (see Bratter & Heard, 2009). Data were analyzed using a

mixed model with both latent and observed variables (see Figure 1). All of the variables were observed with the exception of the colorblindness scale, which had three separate indicators based on the validated subscales (Neville et al., 2000). The modeling analysis was conducted with EQS software (Bentler, 1995; Bentler & Wu, 1995), using the conservative method of listwise case deletion such that any missing data led to removal from analysis. This method of dealing with missing data led to removing 40 cases (14.5% of the data). The following fit indices were examined to determine the goodness of fit of models: chi-square, NFI, NNFI, and CFI and RMSEA following recommended standards (Kline, 2005). Good fitting models generally have NFI, NNFI, and CFI at or above .95, RMSEA at or below .06, and nonsignificant chi-square values.

Hypothesized Model

The hypothesized model shown in Figure 1 showed a good fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 16.43$, $df = 18$, $p = .56$, *ns*, $CFI = 1.00$, $NFI = .91$, $NNFI = 1.00$, $RMSEA = .01$, 90% CI [.00, .05], $AIC = -39.76$ (see Figure 2). As predicted, perceived White identity of the parent and closeness to the White parent was associated with greater White self-identity for biracial adults, but unexpectedly, closeness to White parent did not moderate the relationship between perception of parent's White identity and self-identity. As predicted, perceived minority parent identity and closeness to the minority parent positively predicted minority self-identity such that greater perceived minority parent identity and greater closeness to the minority parent were both independently associated with greater minority self-identity. As expected, closeness to minority parent significantly interacted with perceived minority parent identity to predict minority self-identity (see Figure 3). Following Aiken and West's (1991) procedure for simple slopes testing, we examined the differences between slopes for participants who were one standard deviation below and above the mean. For those respondents who indicated a closer relationship to their minority parent (one standard deviation above the mean), perceived minority parent ethnic identity was associated with greater minority self-identity ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$). For those with a more distant relationship to their minority parent (one standard deviation below the mean), the association between perceived minority parent identity and minority self-identity was much

Table 2
Correlations Matrix of All Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Minority self-identity	—								
2. White self-identity	-.08	—							
3. Multiracial self-identity	.40***	.33***	—						
4. Parent minority identity	.26***	.02	.18**	—					
5. Parent White identity	.04	.51***	.28***	-.03	—				
6. Closeness to minority parent	.22**	-.03	.10	.08	-.02	—			
7. Closeness to White parent	.09	.19**	.09	.04	.04	.10	—		
8. Belief in racial privilege	-.20**	.16*	-.03	-.06	.05	.02	.06	—	
9. Belief in institutional discrimination	-.26***	.31***	.03	-.08	.12 [†]	-.15*	-.02	.57***	—
10. Belief in blatant racial issues	-.25***	.09	-.07	-.11 [†]	-.02	-.05	.03	.55***	.53***

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

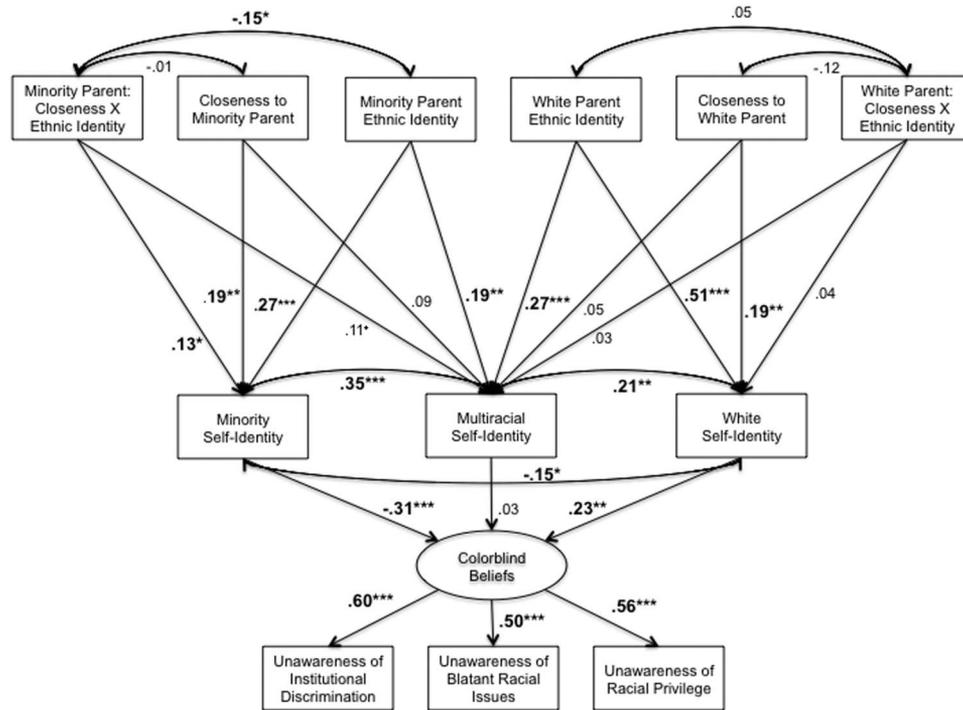


Figure 2. Results of path analyses testing hypothesized model. All exogenous predictors (e.g., parent closeness, parent racial identities, and their interactions) were correlated with each other in the model. Only significant correlations are shown. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

weaker and did not reach conventional standards of significance ($\beta = .14, p = .08$).

Multiracial identity was associated with greater minority self-identity and greater White self-identity suggesting that a stronger multiracial identity is a product of successfully maintaining simultaneous strong identities in both one's minority and White backgrounds. In addition, perceptions of parent's identity corresponded linearly with multiracial identity such that having minority parents and White parents who were perceived to hold strong racial identities was associated with

stronger multiracial self-identities. Although it did not reach conventional standards of significance, there was a marginal interaction between perceived minority parent identity and closeness to one's minority parent on multiracial identity ($p = .064$). For those respondents who indicated a closer relationship to their minority parent (one standard deviation above the mean), perceived minority parent ethnic identity was associated with greater multiracial self-identity ($\beta = .30, p = .002$), and for those with a more distant relationship (one standard deviation below the mean), the link between perceived minority parent identity and multiracial self-identity was nonsignificant ($\beta = .08, p = .28$); however, the interaction should be interpreted with caution because the effects were marginal.

Also, consistent with our hypotheses, minority self-identity negatively predicted colorblind beliefs while White self-identity positively predicted colorblind beliefs. In other words, greater White identity was associated with holding attitudes that reflect majority status and minority identity was associated with holding attitudes that reflect lower status in society. Interestingly, multiracial identity alone was not predictive of colorblind beliefs suggesting that stronger or weaker multiracial identities did not alone correspond with colorblindness.

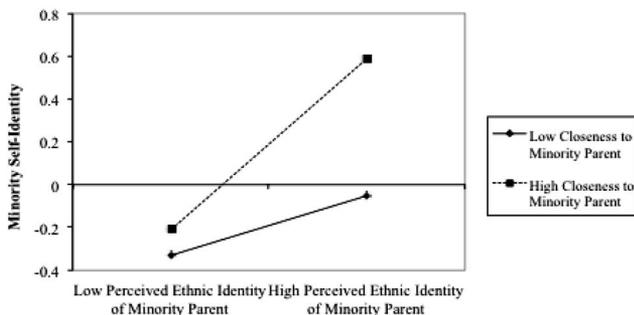


Figure 3. Perceived minority identity of parent and closeness to minority parent as predictors of minority self-identity. All variables were standardized. For those with higher levels of closeness to minority parent, perceived minority parent ethnic identity was more strongly linked to minority self-identity ($\beta = .40, p < .001$), than it was for those lower in closeness to minority parent ($\beta = .14, p = .08$).

Testing Alternative Models

Given the correlational nature of the data, we tested two alternative models to further support our hypothesized model. To test between non-nested models, fit indices are compared, with a particular emphasis on the Akaike (AIC) criterion. Be-

cause these models are not nested, one cannot conduct a chi-square different test; thus, there is no test that determines the significance of the differences between non-nested models. Conventional standards suggest that the model with the lower AIC is a superior fit to the data. Recall that the hypothesized model had an AIC of -39.76 . Consistent with a false consensus approach, the first alternative model shown in Figure 4 tests whether the model fits better if personal identity directly predicts perceptions of parents and colorblind attitudes. This model was a decent fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 59.31$, $df = 40$, $p = .03$, $CFI = .96$, $NFI = .88$, $NNFI = .92$, $RMSEA = .05$, 90% CI [.02, .07], AIC = -20.69 , but the hypothesized model was superior because it had better fit indices, including lower AIC.

The second alternative model tested whether colorblind attitudes and perceptions of parent identities predicted personal ethnic identity (see Figure 5). This model tests the reversed causal pathways between colorblind attitudes and personal ethnic identity suggesting that colorblind attitudes influence ethnic identity. This model was a good fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 47.99$, $df = 41$, $p = .21$ ns, $CFI = .98$, $NFI = .90$, $NNFI = .97$, $RMSEA = .03$, 90% CI [.04, .09], AIC = -34.01 , but the AIC was better for the hypothesized model though the model fit indices were similar. Although none of these analyses can rule out alternative causal paths, these additional analyses lend further support to the hypothesized model.

Discussion

The present study provides unique evidence of the role parents may play in the ethnic identity of their biracial children—not just by virtue of their race or gender (e.g., Bratter & Heard, 2009), but also in how their ethnic attachments and commitments are perceived by their children. The present study suggests that the degree

of closeness to one's parent and the perceived ethnic identity of that parent predict the degree to which part-White biracial individuals identified with their respective minority and White identities. As hypothesized, the relationship between perceived parent and self-identity was stronger for those who felt closer to their parent, although this effect was only found for minority identity. These findings support previous research showing an association between parent-child warmth and frequency of race-related discussions in the family (Brown, Tanner-Smith, Lesane-Brown, & Ezell, 2007), but extend these findings to biracial populations who have been largely excluded in prior research. Closer familial relationships may provide opportunities to discuss and explore issues related to race and culture, which in turn has been shown to relate to a stronger identity with that cultural group (Thompson, 1994).

A similar pattern of results was found for multiracial identity. Greater perceived White and minority identity of parents was associated with greater multiracial self-identity. Although not statistically significant at conventional standards, closeness with one's minority parent may moderate the parent-self-identity link as it similarly did for minority self-identity. Thus, it seems that minority parents, when closer with their children, may play an important role in fostering identification with generally stigmatized identities. Given that fostering a positive ethnic identity is related to more positive well-being for monoracial minorities and multiracial individuals (Binning, Unzueta, Huo, & Molina, 2009; Jackson, Yoo, Guevarra, & Harrington, 2012; Smith & Silva, 2011), it is important to identify familial and peer sources that support multiracial identities. In prior theorizing, a frequently cited challenge for multiracial individuals is the lack of multiracial role models (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). The present study shows that

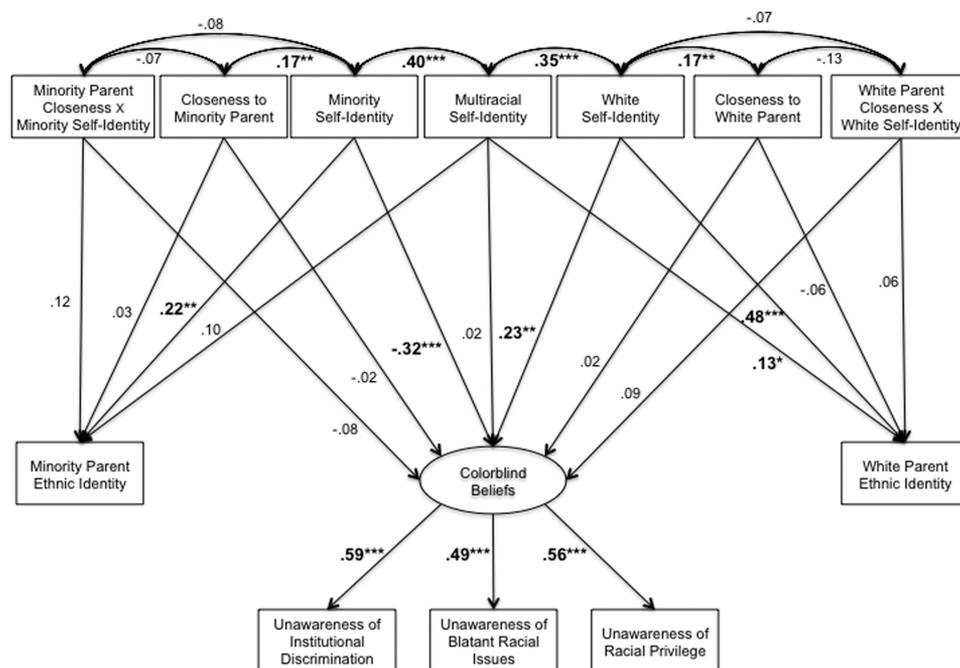


Figure 4. Alternative Model 1. $\dagger p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

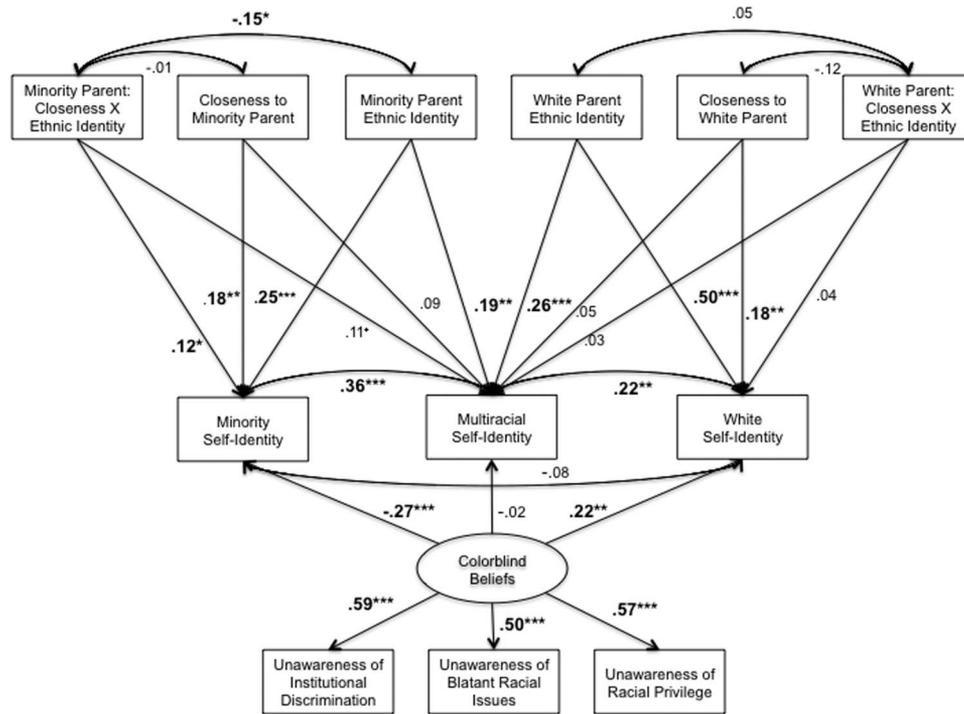


Figure 5. Alternative Model 2. All exogenous predictors were correlated (e.g., parent closeness, ethnic self-identity, and their interactions) with each other in the model. In addition, the disturbances were correlated between all of the colorblind attitudes. $^{\dagger} p < .10$. $^* p < .05$. $^{**} p < .01$. $^{***} p < .001$.

perceptions of biological parents' identity (despite not sharing their children's exact multiracial identity) may help foster positive multiracial identities. Modeling strong ethnic identities, even if their experiences are different, may suffice to foster a positive multiracial identity. Perhaps, perceiving both parents as successfully maintaining a positive ethnic identity in an interracial relationship is key to fostering positive multiracial identities because no one identity is made to appear superior. Future studies should explore this directly by examining the role of perceived relationship quality between parents. In addition, the results reveal that multiracial identity is associated with greater attachment with both White and minority ancestry (as shown in positive correlations between White, minority, and multiracial self-identity). This is consistent with prior theorizing that positive multiracial identities are contingent upon viewing one's minority and White identity as compatible (Cheng & Lee, 2009).

Understanding the process of developing a multiracial identity is important because multiracial identity may have long-term positive effects. Research shows that positive, well-integrated multiracial identities improve school engagement and reduce stress among biracial youth (Binning et al., 2009). Having a highly integrated multiracial identity (e.g., having low conflict between one's cultural backgrounds) has also been found to buffer the negative effects of racism (Jackson et al., 2012). This is not to say it is necessary for all biracial individuals to strongly identify as multiracial, but research seems to indicate having some attachment with one's ethnic background, whether White, minority, or combined biracial ancestry, is important for adjustment. In a recent meta-analysis, Smith and Silva (2011) found a consistent, positive

relationship between ethnic identity among people of color and personal well-being and self-esteem, with the strongest effect for adolescents and young adults, but still existent in adulthood.

The present study also demonstrated that ethnic identity predicts the extent to which biracial people endorse beliefs consistent with a colorblind ideology. As expected, those who strongly identified with their minority background were more aware of institutional discrimination, blatant racial issues, and racial privilege, whereas those who strongly identified as White were more likely to hold colorblind attitudes that reflected a lack of awareness. These findings suggest that one's minority identity may be key to awareness of racial prejudice and injustice, as well as motivate individuals to endorse corrective social action. Awareness of discrimination may have both negative and positive downstream consequences for biracial individuals. For example, a positive consequence of discrimination awareness may be facilitation of coping strategies for discrimination experiences. Biracial people may have more difficulty generally making attributions to discrimination because they are not sure whether others are aware of their minority background (Sanchez & Bonam, 2009) or whether others consider them to be a member of a devalued group (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). One strategy to contend with discrimination as a stigmatized group member is to attribute rejection and negative feedback to discrimination to prevent internalization of negative self-views (e.g., Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003). Being more aware of discrimination may aid biracial people in making such attributions and protecting their self-worth. However, believing discrimination is widespread

may have long-term negative effects on self-worth of stigmatized groups (Eccleston & Major, 2006).

The results are consistent with prior research that found individuals are more likely to endorse beliefs about race which benefit their in-group; thus, racial minorities who more strongly identify with their minority group are more likely to support affirmative action policies (Schmermund, Sellers, Mueller, & Crosby, 2001), whereas Whites who more strongly identify as White are less supportive (Lowery et al., 2006). It is possible that biracial individuals who strongly identify with their minority group are more aware of prejudice aimed at their minority group, and therefore believe policies are necessary to combat institutional discrimination. Conversely, those who more strongly identify as White may be more likely to endorse colorblind beliefs, as they see their interracial families as a reflection of racial progress. These feelings may reflect experiences of acceptance that have led them to embrace their White identity. On the other hand, endorsing colorblind beliefs may also mean they fail to see how race affects their lives or recognize discrimination directed at themselves or others. Consequently, these individuals may not see social action policies as necessary. It is important to note that although our hypothesized model supported the causal path from ethnic self-identity to colorblind attitudes, an alternative model suggested the alternate causal path was equally plausible. Being aware of the discrimination minorities face at the hands of Whites may cause biracial people to be reluctant to identify with a group that is believed to harbor prejudice. Future studies using longitudinal or experimental manipulations may give insight into causality.

Notably, the present study did not find a relationship between multiracial identity and endorsement of colorblindness. Although we had no a priori hypothesis about the direction of this relationship, given that individuals in our sample strongly identified as multiracial, it is surprising that this factor would not play a role in their belief structure. In retrospect, multiracial identity may have a stronger relationship with beliefs more directly related to the unique nature of multiracial experiences such as nonessentialist beliefs about race that recognize the fluidity and socially constructed nature of race or attitudes about interracial relationships (Shih et al., 2007). Multiracial identity may also be associated with general cognitive tendencies that reduce the need for closure (Leung & Chiu, 2010; Tadmor, Chao, Hong, & Polzer, 2013) or multicultural orientations that recognize the duality of self (e.g., dialectical self-views; Sanchez et al., 2009; Spencer-Rodgers, Peng, Wang, & Hou, 2004), because embracing a multiracial identity recognizes blurring of normally distinct categories and breaking from traditional modes of racial categorization.

Although these results have important implications of ethnic identity, familial influences, and perceptions of bias for biracial individuals, the study is not without limitations. First, this study relied on self-report data collected via the Internet. Although growing research suggests Internet samples are increasingly representative of the population (see Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004), these results should be complemented by additional research with more representative samples that are not primarily drawn from those in multiracial organizations who are potentially more focused on exploring their identity. Second, this study focused on participants' perceptions of their parents rather than parents' own reported ethnic identity. Future research should examine whether biracial

individuals' views of their parents accurately reflect their parents' self-reported identity. It is possible that children come to believe their parents' identities are aligned with their own even when they are not. Achieving balanced identities with parents (even just at the perceptual level) may be an important part of socialization. Moreover, including perceptions of parents' racial identity in addition to actual racial identity of parents may provide a more complex, and nuanced approach to the study of parent-child influences in ethnic identity research. Third, this study specifically examined biracial individuals with one White parent and therefore these results may not generalize to those with parents from two different racial minority groups (e.g., Black and Hispanic) or those who identify with more than two racial backgrounds. Future research should explore whether the association between identity and parental closeness is different in individuals of diverse backgrounds. Further, our sample size was not large enough to examine if the model held for different White-minority biracial combinations or different familial structures (dual parent households vs. single parent households). Gender and gender-parent matching may also impact the relationship between parent and self-identity as has been shown in prior work on nonbiracial populations (Hughes, Hagskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009; Thomas & Speight, 1999). In the present study, we presume closeness may work as the proxy for many of these variables (e.g., women may feel closer to the parent that shares their same gender), but these are important areas of future research and further reveal the large gaps that exist in the knowledge surrounding multiracial identity.

In addition, parents are but one of the sources contributing to ethnic identity, and therefore models including peers and other sociocultural factors are important for future directions in the field. Longitudinal studies that allow researchers to understand the impact of parental factors on the ethnic identity and belief development at various stages of the developmental process would also be important future directions.

Despite these limitations, this study importantly demonstrated the connection between parental closeness and perceived parental ethnic identity with the ethnic identity and beliefs of part-White, biracial individuals. These results highlight the role that perceived parent identity and relationships with parents play in ethnic identity for biracial individuals. Moreover, biracial individuals' patterns of identification inform their racial perceptions and attitudes, which has important implications for how biracial individuals perceive and cope with episodes of discrimination. Moreover, these findings show the utility of biracial identity research that assesses multiple levels of identification in a unified framework. Although additional research in this area is necessary, this article is an important step in understanding the processes of ethnic identity and racial beliefs for biracial individuals.

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