Multiracial Progress Narratives: How progress narratives of a growing multiracial population increase complacency toward racism and harm multiracial communities

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Abstract

Some studies in the field of psychology argue that a growing *multiracial population*—those who identify with *two or more* racial backgrounds—will lead to cognitive and societal shifts among those who hold prejudice beliefs and morals that may improve race relations in the United States. Specifically, research suggests that increasing exposure to racially diverse and multicultural individuals or groups will help reduce racist ideologies contributing to racial inequality among those who may hold prejudice beliefs. However, discourses that exaggerate racial progress (i.e., racial progress narratives) often create *more* (rather than fewer) barriers to racial equity and may exacerbate positive stereotypes of multiracial communities. Therefore, this dissertation is divided into three chapters: Chapter 1 sought to explore the presence of multiracial progress narratives in news media outlets. Chapter 2 sought to test the hypothesis that multiracial progress narratives increase the strength of people's beliefs that the future will be racially egalitarian, which in turn will decrease their support for anti-racist policies (e.g., equal employment opportunities). Lastly, Chapter 3 sought to explore how multiracial progress narratives exacerbate stereotypes of multiracial people as ameliorating racial tensions between racial minorities and White people in the United States (i.e., social model minorities), which may be harmful positive stereotypes that could deter emotional and mental well-being.

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Multiracial people[1]—those who identify with more than one racial identity—have always had a presence in the United States, but due to the stigmatization of mixed-race identities throughout history, their presence has been poorly documented. It was not until 2000 that the US census allowed respondents to select multiple responses to identify their racial backgrounds, creating the impression that the multiracial population is a rapidly increasing demographic in the US (Pew Research Center, 2015). Consequently, mainstream news outlets started paying greater attention to the mixed-race population, emphasizing the growth and novel nature of the group's flexible racial backgrounds and diverse identities (Spencer, 2014). Specifically, news outlets began to conflate a large multiracial population (i.e., *multiracialism*) with a positive interracial co-existence that may result in a more racially harmonious society (i.e., *multiracial progress narratives*; Ropp, 1997; Spencer, 2014). For example, a *New York Times* article interviewed social psychologists who study topics relations to mixed-race individuals' experiences and postulated that multiracial people could "work like a vaccine against... tribalist tendencies," suggesting that the United States "may be gaining immunity" against racism (Velasquez-Manoff, 2017). This conflation of a growing multiracial population with a racially egalitarian future may stem from lay beliefs that multiracial people—because of their mixed and fluid racial identities—are more adept at orchestrating interracial dialogues and relations than monoracial people (Wilton et al., 2022). Thus, there seems to exist a broader narrative that multiracial

[1] Throughout this proposal, "multiracial" and "mixed-race" will be used interchangeably to describe those who have more than one racial identity or background.

people, as their population continues to grow, will benefit society in ways that will lead to future racial egalitarianism.

The belief that the presence of multiracial individuals can lead to racial egalitarianism can be understood through multiple mechanisms. Firstly, it can be argued that the relationship between a multiracial population growth and shifts in racial egalitarianism is spearheaded through active and purposeful dialogue, wherein multiracial individuals serve as mediators or leaders who directly address interracial tensions (Rockquemore et al., 2009). Additionally, a passive mechanism emerges where the casual increased exposure to diverse and multiracial individuals challenges traditional racial categories and essentialist beliefs, particularly among White individuals (Norton & Sommers, 2011; Pauker, Carpinella, et al., 2018). Such challenges prompt individuals to reconsider their preconceived notions of race and potentially adopt more inclusive attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, a nuanced understanding may involve a combination of both active and passive elements. For instance, residing in communities with diverse multiracial populations exposes individuals to a multitude of perspectives and dialogues, fostering empathy and challenging entrenched racial biases (Wells & Crain, 1997). By engaging in meaningful relationships with multiracial individuals who are viewed as the ideal mediators between racial groups, White individuals will actively contribute to the dismantling of racial hierarchies and the promotion of racial equality. Thus, multiple mechanisms likely underlie the assumption that a growing multiracial population will lead to racial egalitarianism, though, for the purposes of this dissertation, I focus more on highlighting how these narratives are perpetuated in US society and its consequences.

Furthermore, while these assumptions appear to be positive, they may also justify the use of multiracial communities to exaggerate notions of racial progress in a damaging way. The US

has made little progress toward racial equity even if perceptions of racial progress remain optimistic. Indeed, between 2019 and 2021, the wealth gap between White and Black people remained the largest gap in comparison to White people and other racial minorities (Pew Research Center, 2023). In addition, Black and Brown communities continue to face barriers that impact their ability to attend or graduate from college (Beatty et al., 2020; Love, 1993; Morales, 2014), and to access quality healthcare (Feagin & Bennefield ,2014; Hamed et al., 2022), and equitable employment (Bielby, 2000; McConahay, 1983). Despite evidence that the US struggles to make monumental progress toward racial equality, majority of US American perceives the wealth gap between Black and White individuals as smaller than reality, indicating a large ignorance of racial inequality (Kraus et al., 2019). The distorted perception of racial progress likely stems from *racial progress narratives*, which are narratives that exaggerate racial progress in a way that is detached from reality, resulting in a façade that a racially egalitarian society has been built (Kraus et al., 2019). For example, genuine movements toward racial progress such as the Civil Rights Movement, are often used to portray a linear trajectory of racial progress, yet fail to address ongoing issues like police brutality, economic disparities, and systemic racism (Richeson, 2020).

Consequently, racial progress can create *more* (rather than fewer) barriers to racial equity by, for example, decreasing peoples' motivations toward equity, inclusion, and diversity efforts (Kaiser et al., 2009; Kraus et al., 2019). For example, as the first Black US President, Barack Obama's election was viewed as a catalyst for a society free from racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice (i.e., *post-racialism*; Valentino & Brader, 2011). Specifically, a Black man being elected to the most powerful position in the US—a position in which all preceding occupants were White—resulted in the belief that racism was no longer an issue and

that racial progress had been achieved (Moore & Bell, 2010; Valentino & Brader, 2011). However, this election created a political climate in which it was difficult to promote anti-racist policies. For instance, when examining perceptions of racial progress and support for policies designed to address racial inequality (e.g., affirmative action) both prior to and after Barack Obama's presidential victory, there was an increase in the belief that racism is less of a problem and a decline in support for anti-racist policies (Kaiser et al., 2009). Therefore, racial progress narratives—including progressive narratives of a growing multiracial population—may paradoxically limit racial progress in society.

Previous work on racial progress and support for anti-racist policies have focused on the relationship between progressive narratives and shifts in perceptions of past, current, and future racial issues (see Onyeador et al., 2021; Richeson, 2020); however, little-to-no work has examined the relationship between multiracialism and post-racialism. Specifically, messages that imply a growing mixed-race population can lead to racial progress may also shift perceptions of mixed-race people to be more positive. Interestingly, past work on perceptions of multiracial people has shown that perceivers may already associate mixed-race individuals with progress and/or positive race relations. For instance, past work has shown that when White perceivers are asked to have conversations about racially sensitive topics (i.e., affirmative action), they feel more comfortable having these conversations with mixed-race individuals than Black monoracial individuals (Gaither et al., 2018). In addition, when both White and Black participants are asked about who would be most suited to facilitate conversations about race between the Black and White community, participants were more likely to select a mixed-race moderator than a monoracial one (Wilton et al., 2022). Such beliefs of multiracial people being ideal moderators for racial dialogue are influenced by perceivers' beliefs that mixed-race people are better at

perspective-taking and being empathetic than monoracial moderators (Wilton et al., 2022). Thus, it is assumed that multiracial people are more well-equipped to handle racially sensitive conservations due to their flexible identities, which is assumed to give them an increased ability to demonstrate perspective taking between and empathize with multiple racial groups.

In addition, other research has also examined how increased exposure to multiracial populations or individuals may also decrease problematic beliefs that may contribute to racism and discrimination. That is, research has shown that White individuals who move to a racially diverse and multiracial population report decreased levels of race essentialism in comparison to those who were born and raised in the same diverse context (Pauker, Carpinella, et al., 2018). Another study found that increased exposure to racially ambiguous stimuli labeled as being multiracial (e.g., Black/White) decreased White individuals' colorblindness through social tuning (Gaither et al., 2019). Thus, messages that imply a growing mixed-race population can lead to racial progress may also be spearheaded through assumptions that increased exposure to multiracial communities naturally decrease racist ideologies in White individuals. Taken together, prior work suggests that multiracial people can amend racial tensions, either through their own efforts or through the passive exposure to multiracial populations.

In other words, not only are multiracial progress narratives a segment of general racial progress narratives that impede actual progress, but these narratives may also exacerbate positive perceptions of multiracial people as being the solution for racial equity. That is, multiracial people are being perceived as social model minorities, which is defined as individuals who have advanced communication and progressive racial beliefs that allow them to amend racial tension and divides due to their multiple racial and ethnic background (Squires, 2007). While such perception may appear positive, I argue that the perception of being a social model minority

functions as a positive stereotype which may have downstream negative consequences. While past work demonstrates that mixed-race people have progressive racial ideologies (see Pauker, Meyers, et al., 2018; Shih et al., 2007), are assumed to be advanced facilitators for racial dialogues (see Wilton et al., 2022), and exposure to mixed-race individuals can lead to reductions in racist ideologies in White individuals (see Gaither et al., 2019; Pauker, Carpinella, et al., 2018), there has not yet been a confirmation that this work is perpetuating positive stereotypes. For example, past work has shown evidence that Asian Americans have advanced mathematical capabilities compared to other racial groups (see Hsin & Xie, 2014), are over-represented in STEM fields (see Min & Jang, 2015), and have higher median incomes compared to all US households (Pew Research Center, 2021); however, the generalized association of Asian Americans as mathematical gifted and successful minorities in the US is also known as the model minority myth (Kawai, 2005). In other words, while we have work to suggest that the model minority myth is a highly probable representation of Asian Americans, there is enough evidence to also show that these perceptions are generalized stereotypes that has caused harm to the mental well-being of Asian Americans (see Kim & Lee, 2014; Shih et al., 2019). Thus, I argue a similar form of stereotyping exists for multiracial people, where multiracial progress narratives exacerbate positive stereotypes of multiracial people as social model minorities.

Therefore, this dissertation is divided into three chapters in which I propose that discourses about multiracial communities can function as racial progress narratives, and promote positive stereotypes, doing more harm than good to racial progress and to multiracial people. For Chapter 1 of my dissertation, I conducted a content analysis of articles and op-eds published on mainstream news platforms (e.g., CNN, New York Times) to show that the broad narrative of multiracialism leading to racial progress exists—as such a connection has yet to be shown in the

literature. In Chapter 2, I experimentally examined whether multiracial progress narratives—narratives that imply multiracialism will fuel society's ascent toward a racially equitable and harmonious future—can contribute toward complacency for racism, causing more barriers toward racial equity. Lastly, in Chapter 3, I examined whether progress narratives exacerbate perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities.

A Historical Analysis of Multiracial Discourse in the United States

Multiracial people today are often portrayed in a positive light in mainstream media in online articles written often by White authors (Spencer, 2014; Squires, 2007); however, positive perceptions and general multiracial acceptance was not always the normative treatment of multiracial people. Blood Quantum Laws, which quantified native blood to legitimize or illegitimize a persons' indigenous ancestry, was used to actively oppress and displace those with Indigenous and White ancestry, strategically dwindling the Indigenous population and withholding their rightful access to native land and resources (Harmon et al., 2021; Schmidt, 2011; Spruhan, 2006). In addition, the *one drop rule*, which decided that all children born to enslaved Black women would also be enslaved, regardless of the father's race or station, was used to justify the subordination and enslavement of mixed-Black children (Hollinger, 2005). Furthermore, before Loving vs Virginia (1967) set forth positive change in how interracial families were perceived, multiracial children were seen as devious and sinful (Thompson, 2006). While multiracial individuals are often portrayed positively in modern media, historical practices such as Blood Quantum Laws and the one-drop rule reflect a legacy of oppression and discrimination against those with mixed ancestry, underscoring the complex and fraught history of multiracial identity.

However, due to grassroots multiracial advocacy groups, perceptions of multiracial people began to shift toward a more positive sentiment. Multiracial advocacy groups, spearheaded by White women who married Black men and had mixed-race children, had the moral conviction that a growing multiracial population would help the nation beyond its racial impasse (Williams, 2003, 2005, 2006). In the early 1990s and 2000s, multiracial activists and scholars celebrated multiracial identity, as they viewed multiracialism as challenging distinct racial categories which would undermine the racial hierarchy (Squires, 2007). These activists and scholars (i.e., Maria P. P. Root, Teresa DeLeon, G. Reginald Daniel) made efforts to reclaim multiracial identity as a positive quality to be celebrated and push back against prejudice directed at mixed-race individuals (Daniel et al., 2014; Garay & Remedios, 2021; Squires, 2007). Additionally, many White family members who became aware of racial issues due to their association with their partners of color and mixed-race children viewed the goal of multiracial activism as transcending race rather than dismantling racial biases (Squires, 2007; Williams, 2005). Through these advocacy efforts, there emerged a positive reclamation and celebration of multiracial identity, marking a significant shift in societal perceptions of multiracial individuals.

Indeed, we see some of the fortition these efforts in how multiracial people are perceived and spoken of today. Multiracial people are often cited as having advanced racial flexibility (Gaither et al., 2015), defusing racial differences and tensions (Harrison et al., 2017; Wilton et al., 2022), and multiracial societies are often portrayed as having fewer racial issues than homogeneous societies (see Fujikane & Okamura, 2008; Hellwig, 1990; Rohrer, 2008). However, multiracial people still face struggles in the current day that are reminiscent of the prejudice set by Blood Quantum Laws and the one drop rule. For example, the psychological legacy of *hypodescent* (Ho et al., 2011), which asserts that perceivers categorize mixed-race

multiracial people with White ancestry as their lower-status racial identity (i.e., Black; Ho et al., 2011; Peery & Bodenhausen, 2008), stems from the one drop rule. Hypodescent then upholds the same subordination of mixed-Black people as the one drop rule by maintaining White people's power and disenfranchising Black communities. For instance, mixed-Black multiracial defendants in court settings are often categorized as Black by the judge and jury, receiving the same judicial punishments as their Black-monoracial counterparts (Hernandez, 2001). Such patterns reflect the history of the one drop rule, which enslaved all multiracial Black children to maintain distinct power separation between Black and White communities (Hening, 1823). Additionally, while Blood Quantum Laws have been abolished, remnants of their implications remain. Ideologies that mixed-race individuals—whether Indigenous or not—needing to prove their membership in their communities became a prevalent issue that multiracial people continue to face (see: Albuja et al., 2019; Garay et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2019). Therefore, despite positive portrayals of multiracial individuals as agents of racial harmony, they still face biases rooted in historical injustices which perpetuating racial prejudices. While multiracial people still face struggles around identity today (see Jackson et al., 2012; Museus et al., 2016; Sanchez et al., 2020), overall acceptance, and even celebration, have shaped discourses of multiracial identity in US society.

Discourses of Multiracialism in Mainstream Media

As the multiracial population gained more recognition in society after the US Census allowed a "check more than one" option in 2000, attention directed toward multiracial children, communities, and individuals began to rise (DaCosta, 2006; Harrison et al., 2017; Spencer, 2014). As previously mentioned, interracial relationships and mixed-race individuals were thought of as racial problems, which engendered prejudice laws against mixed-race people

(Hollinger, 2005; Harmon et al., 2021; Schmidt, 2011; Spruhan, 2006), leading to social perceptions of mixed-children as sinful (Thompson, 2006). Though, due to anti-miscegenation laws being passed (Loving vs. Virginia in 1967), discourse shifted toward a more positive perceptions and celebrations of multiracial identity (Squires, 2007). Ongoing socio-political events continue to shape the growing acceptance of multiracial people as symbols for racial harmony. For example, a steady increase in *globalism*—the ideology or policy of advocating for increased cooperation and interconnectedness among nations and peoples around the world—has led to a rise in the visibility and acceptance of mixed-race people due to increased immigration and integrations across and within cultures (Diamond, 2024; Winant, 2004). In addition, Civil Rights Movements generated attention on denouncing racism and acceptance for increased racial diversity and inclusion (Rogers, 1988), causing cultural shifts that resulted in the increased support for interracial interactions, cooperation, and relationships (Roberts, 2014). Thus, due to past historical events such as multiracial advocacy groups, along with ongoing trends in globalism and advocacy for racial equity, multiracialism slowly became a part of larger conversations on how to achieve racial harmony in the US (Squires, 2007). Therefore, the recognition and acceptance of multiracial people has been shaped by historical events, ongoing socio-political movements, and cultural shifts, highlighting a growing trend towards racial cooperation, inclusivity, and harmony in US society.

Thus, society's support for multiracial groups and communities began centering on the belief that multiracial individuals exist for the benefit of society. Indeed, mainstream media, from the 1990s to the present day, often promote the premise that mixed-race identities, people, children, and/or communities are actively diminishing the concept of race in the United States, leading us to a post-racial destiny (Hollinger, 2008; J. Lee, 2008). For example, in 2009, John

Cloud published an op-ed in TIME discussing the prospect that mixed-race children are better adjusted than monoracial children due to their multiple identities granting them more psychological flexibility in comparison to monoracial children. Indeed, mainstream news outlets have demonstrated support for multiracial groups by coupling multiraciality with some sort of racial progress (Spencer, 2014; Squires, 2007).

Other examples of multiracialism being coupled with racial progress also exist in how multiracial people are portrayed in media. For instance, Brazil, a majority-multiracial country, is portrayed—through the lens of racial progress narratives—as though its diverse and multiracial population has created a climate in which there are few racial problems (Hellwig, 1990; Osuji, 2013). Additionally, Hawai'i, a US state with the largest multiracial population in the country, is considered a racial paradise or melting pot (Okamura, 1998). Furthermore, research shows that mixed-race representations in media (e.g., marketing, media, advertising; DaCosta, 2006) are used to represent a racial bridge, physically (e.g., ambiguity) and culturally (i.e., race relations), meant to ameliorate racial divides in the US (Harrison et al., 2017). While such positive impressions of multiraciality were meant to combat the tumultuous history of multiracial communities, much of the current discourse surrounding multiraciality has been disconnected from a sociopolitical context (Harrison et al., 2017). Because of this disconnection, these narratives are possibly taking shape in ways that may produce unintended consequences for racial progress and multiracial communities.

Multiracialism and Racial Progress Narratives: The *Multiracial Progress Narrative*

The celebration of multiraciality in the US is not the only form of celebration of racial and cultural diversity that occurs in our society. In US society, there have been tremendous efforts to center discussions of diversity, race, and multiculturalism in politics and social justice

due to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950-1960s. Civil Rights Movements helped introduce race-conscious politics to enforce policy changes that would end segregation and discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Peller 1990; Reed, 2019; Williams 2003). Such historical and political accomplishments set the foundation to continue advocacy for racial and social justice in the US, cultivating more discussion on racial diversity and the impact of diversity on US society (Borysovych et al., 2020; Doane, 2006). Though, monumental moments meant to uplift and support marginalized communities in US society are simultaneously leveraged by liberal White communities to maintain the status quo. Specifically, historical and political moments are exploited to propagate narratives that the US is "naturally" ascending toward a racially egalitarian future by White individuals. These racial progress narratives are myths, because they don't match the reality of our inadequate progress on racial issues (Richeson, 2020).

Racial progress narratives, on the surface, appear to be positive discussions of racial progress made in the US; however, they do lead to negative consequences. Research suggests that such racial progress narratives do more to fulfill the interest of White people than to dismantle racism (Richeson, 2020; Garay & Remedios, 2021). Furthermore, Critical Race Theory's concept of interest convergence—which posits that significant racial reforms are more likely to happen when they benefit the dominant group (i.e., White Americans in the US), rather than solely for the purpose of achieving racial equality or justice (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Knowles et al., 2009)—is evident in these racial progress narratives. For example, the election of Barack ; Valentina, 2011 was used by left-leaning communities as a racial progress narrative, which created a political and social environment in which policies and interventions dedicated to fueling racial progress were undermined (Kaiser et al., 2009; Moore &

Bell, 2010). That is, Obama's election as the first Black president of the United States was seen as a symbolic victory for racial progress and equality for liberal White Americans (Moore & Bell, 2010). In addition, prevalent trope in media was the idea of a post-racial society, often framed because of Obama's election, which suggested that racial barriers had been overcome and that the United States had entered an era where race was no longer a significant factor in social or political dynamics (Dawkins, 2010; Love & Tosolt, 2010). Therefore, legislative attempts to enact anti-racist policies, including his endeavor to amend Criminal Justice Reform by reducing incarceration rates and advocating for accountability in cases of police violence, failed (Kamarck, 2018). Thus, Obama's election aligned with White liberal's values of supporting racial equity and diversity; however, his election did not actually yield significant progress for racial minorities in the US (Dawkins, 2010; Love & Tosolt, 2010; Moore & Bell, 2010; Valentino & Brader, 2011).

Similarly, the judicial ruling in Brown vs. the Board of Education was supported by White individuals because the de-segregation of schools—while beneficial to Black and Brown children and families—supported alternative motives to improve the US's global reputation, at a time when World War II had damaged perceptions of the US as a respectable country (Bell, 1980). Brown vs. The Board of Education resulted in the de-segregation of schools and is now hailed as a monumental moment in which the US achieved racial progress—though historical moments such as Obama's election or the ruling of Brown vs. the Board of Education are sanitized to reflect the interest of White people (see Salter et al., 2018). Thus, racial progress narratives portraying the US as naturally achieving racial equality are rooted in creating a myth with no intention to improve racial dynamics.

Similarly, current discourse that associates a growing multiracial population with benefits for US race relations may function as racial progress narratives. Describing the mere presence of multiracial people as reducing individual racism and improving interracial relations without discussing the need for anti-racist policy interventions—such as hate crime legislations or equal employment opportunities—could signal that racial inequality may naturally resolve with the growth of a multiracial population (see Reed, 2008). Individuals may then believe that, once the multiracial population grows to a point of large exposure and visibility, a racially egalitarian society will follow (Spencer, 2014), decreasing motivations to support anti-racist policies or interventions and thus, maintaining the status quo. Therefore, I suggest that multiracial progress narratives exist and function similarly to racial progress narratives, which ultimately undermine racial progress in the US. Not only would multiracial progress narratives have consequences for racial progress, but they may also harm multiracial communities.

Perceptions of Multiracial People as Social Model Minorities

Not only may multiracial progress narratives undermine racial progress, but these narratives may also imply that multiracial people or communities are responsible for racial progress. Specifically, multiracial progress narratives may allude to the idea that multiracial people are a sort of social model minority, in which multiracial people are individuals with fluid racial identities, which better equip them to facilitate interracial unity between White people and racial minorities in the US. Specifically, Squires (2007) explains that multiracial people are a model minority because 1) multiracial people are seen as models in their attitudes about racial differences (i.e., being empathetic, less essentialist; Wilton et al., 2022; Shih et al., 2007) and 2) they are presented as models for the future of race relations, modeling a world where color and culture are no longer barriers (Williams, 2003, 2005; Spencer, 2014; Harrison et al., 2017). This

type of Social Model Minority paints an image of multiracial people and communities as vehicles for healing racial tensions (Squires, 2007). Indeed, as previously mentioned, prior research has shown that multiracial people are associated with some aspect of racial harmony or progress (see Gaither et al., 2018; Wilton et al., 2022). However, it is plausible these perceptions are positive stereotypes which can have negative consequences, like how the model minority myth has negative consequences for Asian Americans.

The term model minority myth was coined in 1966, when sociologist William Peterson wrote a New York Times op-ed claiming that Japanese Americans are highly educated, value family, and therefore, are progressing further in US society in comparison to other racial minority groups. Thus, a larger narrative that Asian Americans are well-off was spurred and leveraged by White Americans to justify discrimination and violence toward other racial minority groups (i.e., if Asian Americans are successful in the US, then Black and Hispanic communities should be too; see Tran & Curtin, 2017). While this narrative was used to pit racial minority groups against each other for a broader political purpose, it eventually became a common stereotype directed toward Asian Americans (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Indeed, stereotypes of Asian Americans include perceptions of them being highly educated, hardworking, and well-off in US Society (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). However, when Asian Americans are perceived or stereotyped as Model Minorities, they experience detriments in their mental well-being and cognitive depletions (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2011; Gupta et al., 2011). Such emotional distress often results in poorer mental health; however, due to being positively stereotyped as being “well-off” in society, many Asian Americans do not seek help for their mental well-being (Gupta et al., 2011).

Thus, it is important to understand the relationship between multiracial progress narratives and perceptions of mixed-race people because it may help develop a foundation for understanding how these narratives may be harmful to multiracial communities. Indeed, as previously mentioned, we see preliminary evidence that multiracial progress narratives are within our mainstream media and discourse (DaCosta, 2006; Harrison et al., 2017; Spencer, 2017; Squires, 2007). In addition, research shows that there do exist some perceptions that multiracial people can positively impact race relations (Gaither et al., 2018; Wilton et al., 2022). However, work has not yet shown the relationship between multiracial progress narratives and perceptions of mixed-race people. Specifically, multiracial progress narratives likely are creating or reinforcing a stereotype that multiracial people are social model minorities—like how the model minority myth functions as both a broader narrative and a stereotype directed toward Asian Americans (Wu & Nguyen, 2022). Thus, I anticipate that multiracial progress narratives increase perceptions that multiracial people are social model minorities (i.e., perceived as having more racially progressive attitudes and creating a more racially equitable future).

Overview of Dissertation Proposal

This dissertation aimed to show that multiracial progress narratives are persistent in our broader mainstream media and culture (Chapter 1) and sought to show the negative consequences of these narratives (Chapters 2 and 3). More specifically, the first chapter explored published online articles and op-eds published in reputable news websites (i.e., NTY, Huffington Post) for themes of multiracial racial progress narratives. Articles sourced from these media sources were analyzed using a content analysis to explore themes via inductive coding (ground-up coding approach in which codes are derived from the data; Neuendorf, 2018).

In Chapter 2, I then experimentally showed the negative consequences of these multiracial progress narratives on racial progress using piloted fictitious news article to show that news articles with multiracial progress narratives embedded in them undermine racial progress by decreasing White peoples' support for anti-racist policies and interventions. Though narratives that are not removed from current sociopolitical contexts, and call for anti-racist action, are not expected to result in the same complacency. Lastly, Chapter 3 intended to show that multiracial progress narratives impact perceptions that multiracial individuals are social model minorities—thus, exacerbating positive stereotypes about mixed-race communities—which in turn will exacerbate the belief that multiracial people will indeed cause racial progress and change.

Chapter 1: Do Multiracial Progress Narratives Exist in Mainstream Media and Discourse

US media representations and generalized beliefs simultaneously create and reinforce perceptions, judgments, and beliefs of social groups that society upholds. These generalized beliefs or stereotypes often result in negative treatment or discrimination directed toward minority group members (Fiske, 2015; Hamilton et al., 1990; Tajfel & Tajfel, 1963). Often, we see stereotypes presented in media, as our general beliefs of a social group can seep into media representations given that those who may hold biases and stereotypes can contribute to news coverage and reporting (Jacobs Henderson & Baldasty, 2003). For example, media coverage of Black communities disproportionately emphasizes violent crime (Entman et al., 2001) and US Americans often associate Afrocentric features with crime (Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Oliver et al., 2004).

While it is difficult to determine what comes first—does media influence stereotypes or do stereotypes influence media coverage—stereotypes and media coverage are inextricably

linked (see Entman et al., 2001; Gandy, 1998). Thus, media can play a vital role in shaping general perceptions of social groups and individuals, while also revealing the cultural beliefs a society holds (Cotter, 2005; Hall, 2002). Uncovering messages and themes in media reveals how certain groups of people are perceived in a culture, and provides insight into individuals' stereotypes, beliefs, and prejudices (Turner, 2013). Thus, Chapter 1 of my dissertation is a content analysis of news articles that discuss multiracial people, populations, and societies.

News Articles and Stereotypes

News articles are important to consider when examining cultural stereotypes because news articles or stations report actual events, causing their headline, story, or claims to be very influential in molding social and cultural norms (Callanan, 2012; Dixon et al., 2019; Romer et al., 2003; Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012). Therefore, racial stereotypes[2] found in news content are viewed as factual rather than opinion-based, increasing an article's ability to influence an individuals' perceptions of racial groups. Furthermore, if people have existing stereotypes or beliefs about asocial group, they likely seek out or pay attention to news articles that confirm their beliefs (i.e., *confirmation bias*; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2020; Nickerson, 1998). Overall, news articles play a major role in stereotype development *and* reinforcement.

When we look at analyses examining news content, themes emerge that identify stereotypes directed toward racial groups. Black communities are often stereotyped as violent or poor, and such stereotypical beliefs are present in news articles (Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Eberhardt et al., 2004). Indeed, when Hurricane Katrina struck the southeastern US, news

[2] While stereotypes of other social groups (gender, sexual orientation) found through credible news websites or articles may also be prone to the same level of influence on society's impressions and perceptions of these social group—I am focusing on racial stereotypes for the purposes of this chapter.

coverage of predominately Black neighborhoods often contained stories of looting and crime (Sommers et al., 2006). Furthermore, in 2020, news coverage of Black Lives Matter supporters protests against police violence portrayed them as violent, causing physical harm, and enticing crime, whereas protesters protesting COVID-19 restrictions were portrayed as patriotic citizens seeking to uphold their rights and freedoms (Reid & Craig, 2021). Additionally, at the height of COVID-19, there was an 800% increase in the use of the term "Chinese Virus" in conservative news media articles, exacerbating stereotypes of Asian Americans as foreigners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In addition, news articles about Latinx communities often portray them as illegal immigrants and associate Latinx individuals with crime (Chavez et al., 2010; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). As we can see, the content of news articles that happen to report news relating to racial or ethnic groups in the US can be influenced by—or reinforce—racial stereotypes depending on who the authors/producers are of the coverage. Although people turn to news articles for accurate and truthful reports, the news can also perpetuate existing stereotypes people already hold. Thus, a content analysis of articles and op-eds published on news sites can help uncover what general discourses and stereotypes exist in our society about racial groups, including multiracial groups.

Racial Progress Narratives and Racial and Ethnic Stereotypes

There is a synergy between media representations, narratives, and stereotypes. For example, throughout US history, Asian Americans have been stereotyped as perpetual foreigners or spies (S.J. Lee, 2008; Lee & Hong, 2020). These stereotypes were created by White Americans, politicians, and government officials to use Asian Americans as a scapegoat for economic shortcomings occurring in the US (e.g., including economic despair, wars, terrorism, and the coronavirus pandemic; Lee, 2007; Thompson, 1957). The phenomenon that resulted

from these stereotypes was known as "*yellow peril*" (Lee, 2007; Shim, 1998), in which Asian immigration was viewed as a threat to US democracy and America's way of life (Chen et al., 2020; Lyman, 2000). This stereotype was portrayed in media and news outlets to push narratives that Asian Americans were not to be trusted (Chun, 2020; Shim, 1998). Such stereotypical narratives had serious political consequences, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act (Lee, 2007) and the enforcement of Japanese concentration camps after World War II (Okihiro, 1973; Okihiro & Sly, 1983). Overall, the US wanted to maintain its status as a respectable and wealthy country, and the perpetual foreigner stereotype provided a foundation to support broader concerns (i.e., yellow peril), allowing the US government to enact policies, such as The Chinese Exclusion Act, to maintain their power and control by preserving the economic and social advantages of White Americans by restricting competition from Chinese laborers (Chun, 2020).

To summarize, the history of Asian Americans in the US serves as an example of how stereotypes, narratives, and cultural discourses function together—that is, a broader narrative or cultural discourse can often reveal the stereotypes circulating through society. Taken together, multiracial progress narratives (i.e., the belief or narrative that a larger, more visible multiracial population will naturally ascend the US to a racially egalitarian future) may stem from stereotypes that mixed-race people are models for race relations and attitudes. Consequently, these stereotypes and narratives function together to create a progress narrative, which ultimately maintains the status quo in the US.

Perceptions and Representations of Multiracial People

Thus far, I have covered the ways in which it is theorized that multiracial people are representations for racial harmony and egalitarianism; however, within social psychology literature, there has yet to be evidence that suggest multiracial progress narratives are evident in

our social perceptions and representations of mixed-race people. For instance, Charmaraman et al. (2014) was one of the first peer-reviewed papers to investigate the major thematic trends in US-based peer-reviewed publications about multiracial people between 1990-2009, which found that identity, phenotype, categorizations, peer and family influence and socialization, stigmatization, and mental well-being were the most prominent themes within multiracial literature. More recent work by Garay and Remedios (2021) found that social psychological literature on mixed-race people between 2000-2020 did have themes of racial egalitarianism being influenced by or linked to multiracialism, though, the frequency or prevalence of this topics was not explicitly quantified. Therefore, within peer-reviewed articles, it has not yet been systematically established that multiracial progress narratives are prevalent in anyone's representations of mixed-race people or multiracial communities.

However, work that examines themes and trends outside of peer-reviewed work show more consensus that multiracial progress narratives are abundant in the US' discussions and portrayals of multiracial people. For example, Squires (2007) examined thematic trends of mixed-race people in op-eds and news articles between 1980 and 2005, finding that there is a consensus that multiracial people are discussed as fixing racial tensions in the US in publication outlets that are catered to a White audience, though the frequency or relevance of this theme was also not explicitly quantified. In addition, communication and sociological work that investigated messaging in marketing and advertisement found that multiracial people are represented to show the middle-ground of two racial communities. That is, multiracial people are portrayed as physically representing two racial communities (i.e., having features from their respective racial groups/identities) and socially being able to speak to their respective racial communities with the purpose of advancing interconnectedness between racial groups (Harrison et al., 2017).

Furthermore, another analysis of marketing advertisements revealed that multiracial individuals are often used to promote social justice, bridge divides between racial groups, go against normative social conventions, and symbolize the future (DaCosta, 2006). Thus, while there has been a variety of work to understand broader depictions of multiracial people, in peer-reviewed articles, marketing, or online articles, no work has yet quantified the frequency of these depictions nor has there been an updated analysis of themes beyond the early 2000s.

Therefore, both academic and non-academic investigations failed to adequately demonstrate the existence of multiracial progress narratives as a representation of multiracial people in society. While there is a minimal baseline of evidence to suggest that multiracialism and post-racialism are often discussed in parallel, these themes and messaging have not been fully investigated and quantified to show its prevalence or frequency in news articles, which serves as a proxy for significance and importance in content analyses (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Given that news outlets are particularly impactful at reinforcing existing stereotypes, we can identify the existence of a general stereotype through a content analysis of news media (Taylor, 2003). Thus, conducting a content analysis of news articles published about multiracial populations will help uncover what stereotypes broadly exist about multiracial people and communities and identify if multiracial progress narratives are part of these stereotypes.

Study Overview

Chapter 1 reports a content analysis of news articles published about multiracial groups, people, and communities to identify stereotypes that may be evident in such publications. Content analysis is the process of systematically identifying trends and patterns in documents (or audio and visual data) through coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; Stemler, 2000, 2015). Themes that show up from content analyses can be indicative of stereotypes that exist

within society. For example, Taylor (2003) showed through their content analysis of children's shows that female characters were often portrayed as submissive or unintelligent, whereas male characters were portrayed as assertive and strong.

Method

Article Search

One research assistant was tasked with finding news articles about multiracial people and populations in the US. The following keywords, and variations of them, were used to find articles: Multiracial people, multiracial population, biracial people, biracial population, multiracial society, biracial society, mixed-race population, mixed-race people, and mixed-race society. The research assistant was told to search for articles that came from credible news sites (e.g., New York Times, LA Times, Huffington Post). Articles that involved a paywall preventing open access were searched for through Tufts University's library database of news subscriptions. In total, 50 articles were found. Of the 50 articles, six were articles that reported the facts and figures of a growing multiracial population with limited commentary from the author, meaning that the remaining 44 articles had some form of thought leadership or commentary from the author. Such breakdown could suggest the lack of purely analytical pieces about the multiracial population. Nonetheless, despite the overwhelming presence of op-eds in the content analysis, such articles are still associated with a credible online news reporting website. See Table 1 for the full list of articles analyzed.

Table 1

Article Descriptions.

Title	Author(s)	Publisher	Year
2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country	Nicholas Jones, Rachel Marks, Roberto Ramirez, Merarys Rìos-Vargas	United States Census Bureau	2021
Multiracial population grew in almost every county in the US. It doesn't mean racism is over	Nicole Chavez	CNN	2021
The Census Has Revealed A More Multiracial US One Reason? Cheaper DNA Tests	Hansi Lo Wang	NPR	2021
Behind the Surprising Jump in Multiracial Americans, Several Theories	Sabrina Tavernise, Tariro Mzezewa and Giulia Heyward	NY Times	2021
Survey: America's multiracial population surges	Nick Gass	Politico	2015
Multiracial in America	Kim Parker, Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Rich Morin and Mark Hugo Lopez	Pew Research Center	2015
Multiracial Boom Reflects US Racial, Ethnic Complexity	Astrid Galvin and Michael Schneider	Associated Press	2021
Acknowledging the growing population of multiracial youth and families	Laurie “Lali” McCubbin	American Psychological Association	2013
Our rising white-black multiracial population	William Frey	Brookings	2015
Census: US sees unprecedented multiracial growth, decline in the white population for first time in history	Mabinty Quarshie, Donovan Slack	USA Today	2021
Don’t Gerrymander Away the New Multiracial America	Michael Li	Boston Globe	2021
America's Changing Population: Why It's Time to Consider Multiracial Families in Poverty	Katherine Kennedy	ProsperityNow	2018
Census Data Shows Growth In Multiracial Population	Adrian Florido	KPBS	2013
The Dramatic Rise in the Nation's Multiracial Population	Kate Choi	Psychology Today	2021
California is the Home of the Multiracial Movement	Saera Khan	USF	2019
US multiracial population is growing, nears 7 percent: survey	Suzannah Gonzales	Reuters	2015
The New Multiracial America	Julianne Malveaux	Los Angeles Sentinel	2021
Fond du Lac's multiracial population has nearly tripled since 2010, the 2020 census shows	Daphne Lemke	FDL Reporter	2021
America's largest multiracial group doesn't think of itself that way	Jenée Desmond-Harris	Vox	2015
Census Was Wrong: 7 Percent of Americans Are Multiracial, Not 2 percent	Alexia Fernández Campbell	The Atlantic	2015
The loneliness of being mixed race in America	Vox First Person	Vox	2021

When the Boxes No Longer Fit	Kate Hermsmeyer, George Dou and Kelsey Oberbroeckling	InsideHigherEd	2021
More Americans consider themselves multiracial	Emily Alpert	Los Angeles Times	2013
Multiracial America is fastest growing group	Source: The Associated Press	NBC News	2009
Multiracial Population Three Times Larger Than Census Count, Pew Survey Says	Carolina Moreno	Huffington Post	2015
The Biracial Advantage	Jennifer Latson	Psychology Today	2019
Confronting Complex Multiracial Realities	Saera Khan	Psychology Today	2017
Why Mixed-Race Americans Will Not Save The Country	Alexandros Orphanides	NPR	2017
Biracial Identity: My Choice, Not Society's	Natasha Sim	Huffington Post	2015
When your own family is racist toward you	Faith Karimi	CNN	2021
A Sign of ‘Modern Society’: More Multiracial Families in Commercials	Joanne Kaufman	NY Times	2018
Asian Americans Are Skeptical of Biracial People’s Loyalties	Jacqueline Chen	Psychology Today	2019
RACE: I'M JUST WHO I AM	Jack E. White/Washington	TIME	1997
On College Forms, a Question of Race, or Races, Can Perplex	Susan Sulny and Jacques Steinberg	New York Times	2011
For Many Latinos, Racial Identity Is More Culture Than Color	Mireya Navarro	New York Times	2012
Bridging a Divide	Felicia R Lee	New York Times	2000
Black? White? Asian? More Young Americans Choose All the Above	Susan Saulny	New York Times	2011
What Biracial People Know	Moises Velasquez-Manoff	New York Times	2017
Chapter 1: Race and Multiracial Americans in the US Census	Kim Pauker, Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Rich Morin, Mark Hugo Lopez	Pew Research Center	2015
What The New Census Data Shows About Race Depends On How You Look At It	Connie HanZhang Jin, Ruth Talbot, Hansi Lo Wang	NPR	2021
‘We’re talking about a big, powerful phenomenon’: Multiracial Americans drive change	Silvia Foster-Frau, Ted Mellnik and Adrian Blanco	Washington Post	2021
More Americans consider themselves multiracial	Emily Alpert	Los Angeles Times	2013
President Obama: At Odds With Clear Demographic Trends Toward Multiracial Pride	Gregory Rodriguez	Los Angeles Times	2014
A Rich History of Mixing	Gregory Rodriguez	Los Angeles Times	2009
Are Mixed-Race Children Better Adjusted?	John Cloud	USA Today	2009
The blurring of racial lines won't save America. Why 'racial fluidity' is a con	John Blake	CNN	2018

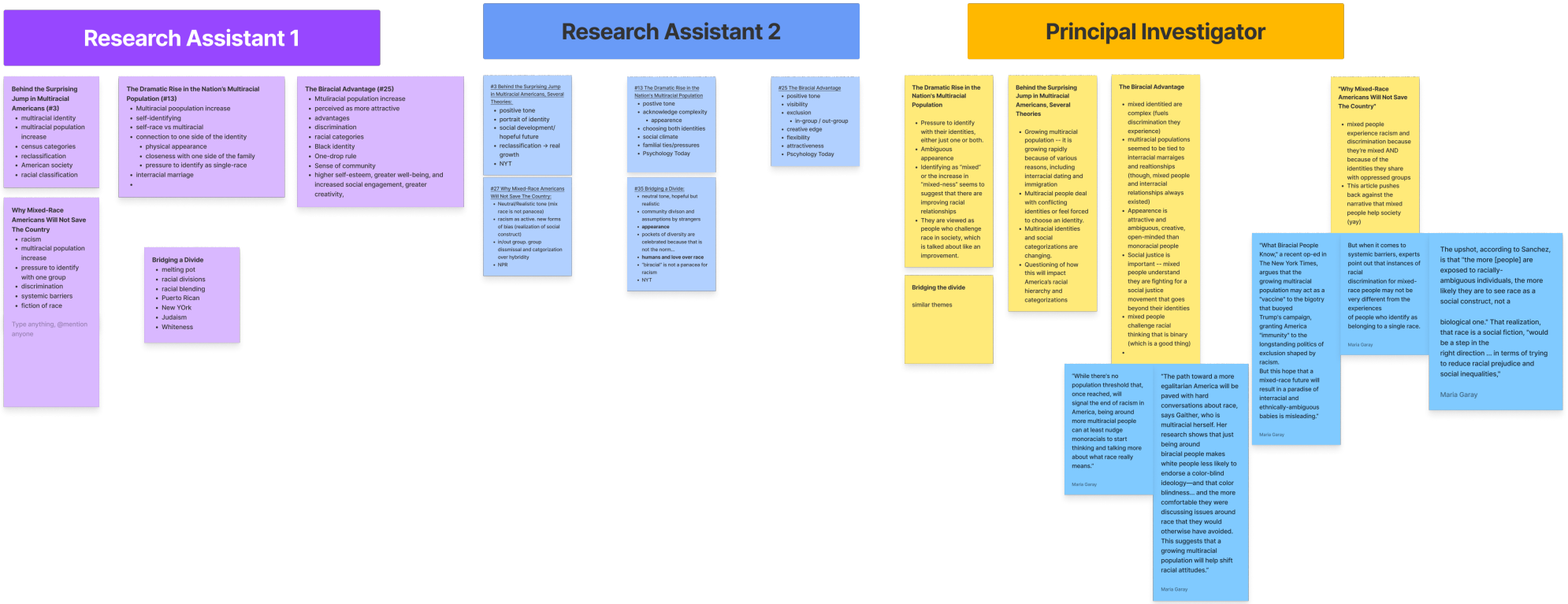
Blurring the lines	Jon Marmor	University of Washington Magazine	1996
In Los Angeles, a Festival of Love and Hapa-ness	Lawrence Downes	The New York Times	2017
Interracial marriages at record 8.4%	Hope Yen	Associated Press	2012

Codebook Development

A codebook was developed to help guide the coding process. Using an inductive coding process (i.e., reading text and creating themes from the text; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), two research assistants and I were tasked with reading 5 of the 50 articles, documenting general observations about the topic(s) of the articles. These observations took shape in the form of identifying keywords or topics mentioned throughout the article. All observations and notes by the RAs were done separately to not influence each other. Then, all the keywords identified across the five articles were consolidated in an online Figma Whiteboard. I participated in this portion of the inductive coding process to ensure that the RAs were accomplishing the task correctly. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

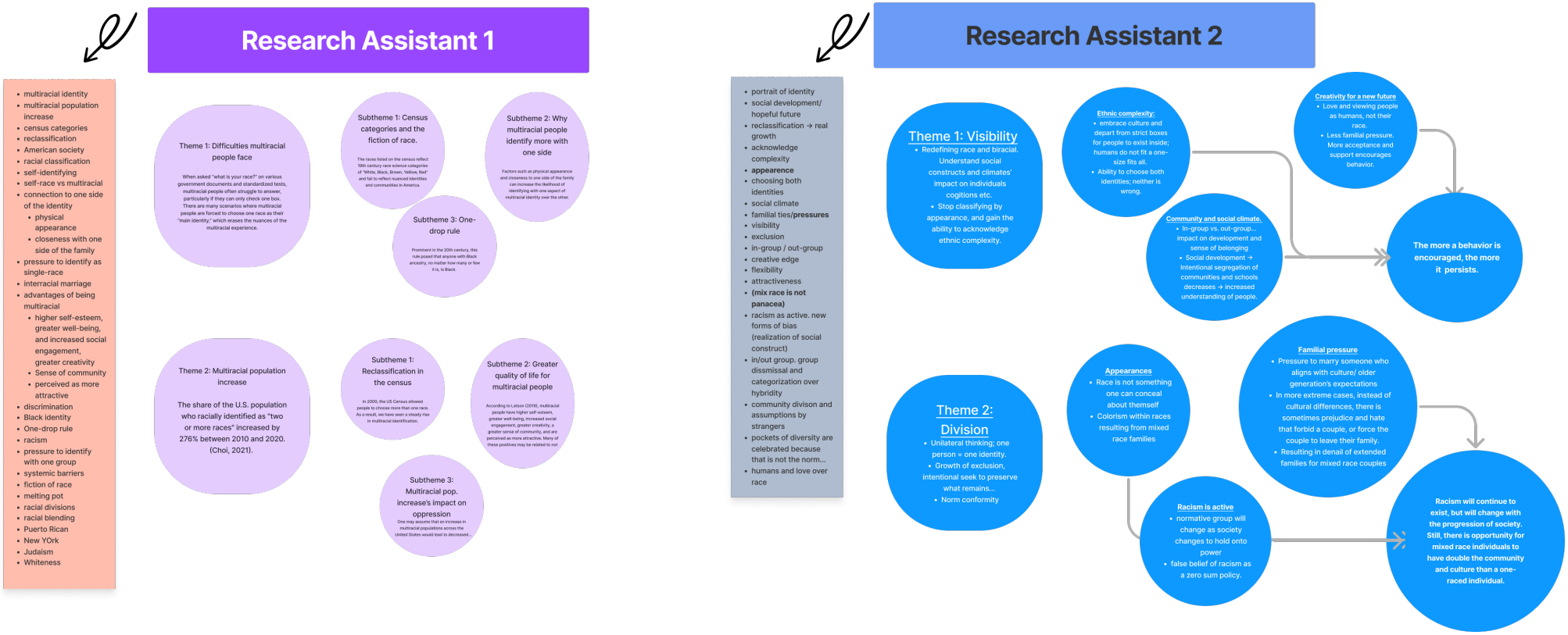
Keywords identified to represent general topic of articles in the 5/50 articles read.



Next, I tasked the RA's with organizing the general keywords of the articles into themes separately. Here, the goal was to take these general fragmented topics from the articles and combine them together in ways that reflect the general sentiment and messaging of the article. Thus, RAs took their initial list of keywords and combined them together to create the themes they felt most accurately reflected themes present across all five articles. This then set the foundation for the development of the themes and subthemes of the coding process. The themes were aimed at representing a recurring pattern or significant idea that emerged from the keywords identified in the first phase of the coding process. Furthermore, subthemes were identified to capture nuance within the general themes. For example, a general theme of identity emerged, but there were multiple ways in which the articles discussed the topic of identity. Thus, the subthemes helped contextualize the general themes. See Figure 2.

Figure 2

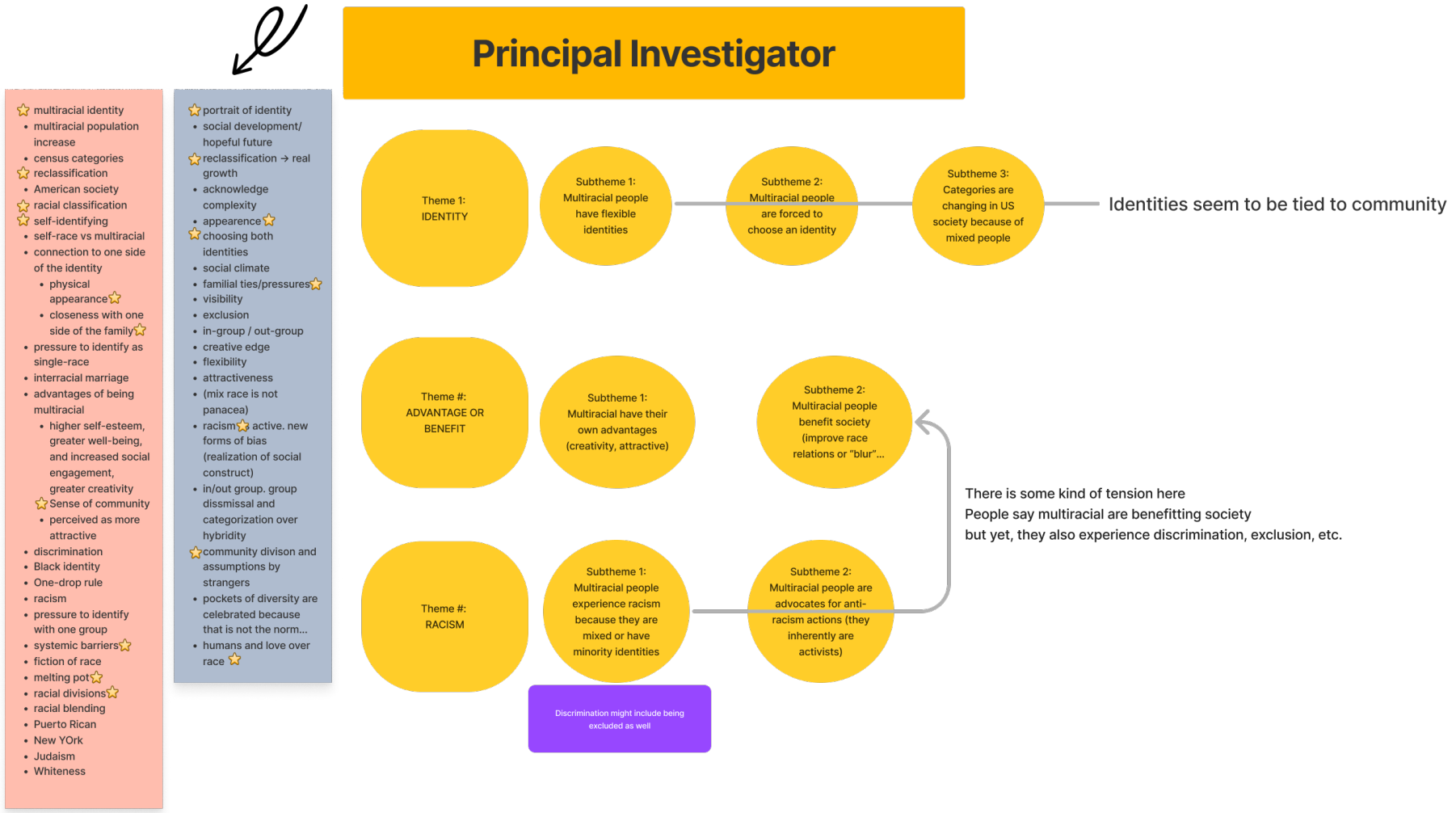
Consolidation of keywords into themes and subthemes of articles.



Lastly, I looked at the keywords, themes, and subthemes the two RAs created and consolidated the overlapping themes and subthemes into the final set of themes used to code passages in all 50 articles (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Initial set of final themes.



After this initial attempt to consolidate the overlapping themes from both RAs, a review workshop was scheduled to discuss the final set of themes. In this workshop, RAs were to express whether they agreed or disagreed with the core set of themes to be used to code passages in the articles. Here, the RAs expressed that they believed two themes were not reflected in the initial set of themes: 1) themes about multiracial people's appearance and how it impacts their identity and 2) commentary about multiracial people and their growth not being a panacea. Thus, the final set of themes were agreed upon and finalized for the next phase of the coding task (see Table 2 for final themes used in the codebook).

Table 2

Content Analysis Themes and Codebook.

Subtheme	Description	Example
Theme 1: Multiracial Identity and Experiences		
Identity Flexibility	Multiracial people have flexible or fluid identities that either go beyond normal conceptions of racial categories or are "challenging" racial categories. Usually is a positive description of multiracial identity.	*"Multiracial identity, however, is fluid and large shares of individuals of mixed-race change their racial identity (i.e., from single-race to multiracial and vice versa) at different points in time"*
Choosing an Identity - Community (friends and family)	Multiracial people are forced to choose an identity, community, or side because of their multiple identities. Either they're forced to "check one race" or feel pressure from family or friends to pick an identity. This usually is a challenge or struggle for multiracial people.	*"Even when the question is posed out of demographic interest rather than leering curiosity, you're typically forced to pick a single race from a list or to check a box marked "other."*
Choosing an Identity - Society	Multiracial people may have feelings relating to their identities because of historical or legal implications. For example, history or legal matters (e.g., the one-drop rule) can shape how society pressures multiracial people to choose an identity.	*"There were, she came to realize, compelling reasons to identify as black and only black. The legacy of America's "one-drop rule"—the idea that anyone with any black ancestry was considered black—lingered."*
Appearance - Ambiguous or Ethnic	Multiracial people are often characterized as ambiguous or very "ethnic" in their appearance. Some may say that this is a benefit or advantage because it is usually associated with being attractive. Some view it as a source of tension.	*"Emotional paper cuts are what most racially blended families face as they navigate the city. Mothers of racially mixed children talk about being mistaken for nannies (if they are not white) or teachers (if they are white)"*
Theme 2: Advantage or Benefit		
Internal or Individual benefit	Multiracial people, because of their identities, are benefitted in some capacity. Either they're more attractive, creative, better problem solvers, etc.	*"Multiracial people have higher self-esteem, greater well-being, increased social engagement, greater creativity, a greater sense of community, and are perceived as more attractive."*

Societal benefit	Multiracial people, because of their identities, are a benefit to society in some capacity. Either they challenge conceptions of race and blur racial boundaries, improve race relations, or provide society with a new way of thinking about race.	*"Overall, the rising share of individuals of mixed-race backgrounds who identify as "multiracial" is likely a sign of... improving race relations"*
Not a Panacea	Some articles will push back against the idea that multiracial people do benefit society. They may mention that this idea they will help society is a facade, not actually real, and explain other reasons why this might not be the case.	*"This hope that a mixed-race future will result in a paradise of interracial and ethnically-ambiguous babies is misleading."*
Theme 3: Multiracial Racism and Activism		
Multiracial people experience racism	Multiracial people experience racism, both because of their identities (being Black) but also because of their mixedness (being multiracial or ambiguous). This often hurts multiracial people and makes them feel oppressed or stigmatized.	*"Being a mix of races can lead to discrimination of a different kind than single-race minorities face, since multiracial people often endure stereotyping and rejection from multiple racial groups"*
Multiracial people are activists	Multiracial people, either as an expectation from others or themselves, are thought to be natural activists for racism. They are ones to advocate for their communities and want to fight back against racist and oppressive systems.	*"Still, young voices are driving our reality... This is the future of our nation--young, bold, bodacious, multiracial energy"*

The final phase of the inductive coding process included reading all 50 articles and coding sentences or passages in the articles if it represented any of the final themes identified in Table 2. This process is the final content analysis of the articles. For this portion of analyzing the articles, one RA used the final codebook and read all 50 articles and highlighted any sentence, quote, or paragraph in the articles they felt represented any of the final themes. The RA completed this task through a qualitative coding software called Dedoose and were told to code passages with as many themes or subthemes they felt were represented in the passages they highlighted. Finally, I examined the RAs final set of coding for the articles to ensure their coding appeared reliable and consistent to conclude the content analysis.

Results

The results represent the total counts of how many times certain themes occurred across all 50 articles. Results show that there are a plethora of coinciding themes and stories across the 50 articles (see Table 3). Thus, I will only touch on the themes that relate to multiracial progress narratives. To see other themes, please see the Appendix. In total, there were 11 passages within the 50 articles that suggest multiracial people, because of their identities, are benefitted in some capacity, such as being more attractive, of cognitively more creative than monoracial people (*internal or individual benefit*). In addition, there were 16 passages within the 50 articles that suggest multiracial people, because of their multiple identities, are a benefit to society, either because their presence challenges conceptions of race, improve race relations, or provide society with a new way of thinking about race (*societal benefit*).

Table 3

Total Count of Themes Coded.

Themes	Count
Theme 1: Multiracial Identity and Experiences	57
Identity Flexibility	24
Choosing an Identity	24
Appearance - Ambiguous or Ethnic	9
Theme 2: Advantage or Benefit	37
Internal or Individual benefit	11
Societal benefit	16
Not a Panacea	10
Theme 3: Multiracial Racism and Activism	33
Multiracial people experience racism	24
Multiracial people are activists	9

Internal or Individual Benefit

As noted earlier, some themes of how mixed-race people experience benefits (i.e., being perceived as attractive) or how they may benefit society (i.e., challenging race), were identified through the articles. Specifically, themes of how mixed-race people may have more advanced capabilities than monoracial people because of their multiple, fluid identities were discussed. For example:

> "Research has shown that mixed race children exhibit greater identity flexibility in a variety of social settings. That is, mixed race children can easily switch between racial identities depending on the situation. This flexibility makes them more adaptable to diverse environments and experience more positive social interactions across different groups of people compared to their monoracial peers."
> – Confronting Complex Multiracial Realities, E.J.R. David, 2017

> "The genetic diversity that comes with being mixed race may in fact lead to improved performance in a number of areas. As evidence, [Cardiff University psychologist Michael B. Lewis] points to the seemingly high representation of multiracial people in the top tiers of professions that require skill, such as Tiger

> Woods in golf, Halle Berry in acting, Lewis Hamilton in Formula 1 racing, and Barack Obama in politics."
> – The Biracial Advantage, Jennifer Latson, 2019

Such discussions about the benefits of being multiracial often coincide with how these benefits may improve US race relations. Indeed, past literature does suggest that there are beliefs or perceptions of multiracial people as having advanced capabilities, such as more flexible and creative cognitive skills compared to monoracial people—however, such phenomenon is also present when any person is reminded that they hold multiple identities in general (Gaither et al., 2015). Furthermore, some research also suggests that multiracial people have progressive racial attitudes, such as having stronger beliefs that race is a social construct in comparison to monoracial people, which may result in positive psychological outcomes such as empowerment, reliance, and overcoming adversity (Shih et al., 2019). Therefore, these passages identified in the articles highlight the perceived benefits of being multiracial, such as increased adaptability, improved cognitive skills, and progressive racial attitudes which are portrayed as being components that monoracial individuals may not poses due to their singular racial identity.

Societal Benefit

In addition to discussing how multiracial people may be experiencing some advantages or benefits due to their racial identities, there were also discussions of how these advantages may improve US society's race relations. For example:

> "Fortunately, all these questions of racial identity are becoming less important, as we inch ever closer to the day when the US has no racial majority. One of these days, after all, we will all be celebrating our multiracial pride."
> – Are Mixed-Race Children Better Adjusted, John Cloud, 2009

> "With less family opposition, interracial couples and their offspring have more contact with relatives from both sides of the family. Greater exposure to their multiracial heritage may mean that larger shares of individuals of mixed-racial heritage will embrace all their ethno-racial backgrounds more fully."

– The Dramatic Rise in the Nation's Multiracial Population, Kate Choi, 2021

The most common reasoning for why mixed-race people can change US race relations is that being exposed to multiracial individuals can help reduce stereotyping or prejudice. For example, in *Why Mixed-Race Americans Will Not Save The Country* (Orphanides, 2017), the interviewed expert states, "'the more [people] are exposed to racially-ambiguous individuals, the more likely they are to see race as a social construct, not a biological one.' That realization, that race is a social fiction, 'would be a step in the right direction ... in terms of trying to reduce racial prejudice and social inequalities.'" While this article takes a nuance approach, providing counterarguments to the idea that exposure to multiracial individuals can potentially lead to reduced racial prejudice and social inequalities, it still highlights the belief that society can progress toward racial equity through the growth or and exposure to a mixed-race population. Indeed, some past psychological literature shows support for the premise that multiracial populations may help improve race relations by changing racial attitudes of White individuals who have not been exposed to multiracial and diverse contexts previously (see Pauker, Carpinella, et al., 2018).

However, some articles acknowledge that the benefits multiracial people could bring to society are limited. For example, in *'We're talking about a big, powerful phenomenon' Multiracial Americans Drive Change* (Foster-Frau et al., 2021), the interviewed expert acknowledges that "[Multiracial people's] presence could 'lead to moments in which racial stereotypes and people's expectations are disrupted,'" however, their presence "won't make systemic, structural change" needed to see racial equity take shape in the US. Such pushback against optimistic themes of societal change driven by a multiracial population was a theme as well (see Table 3). In conclusion, the passages in the articles highlight both the individual

benefits, such as increased adaptability and progressive racial attitudes, and the potential societal benefits of challenging stereotypes and reducing racial prejudice through the growth of and exposure to multiracial individuals.

Discussion

As a reminder, Chapter 1 intended to uncover themes about multiracial people, communities, and societies, guided by the prediction that multiracial progress narratives would represent a theme in news media. Indeed, a content analysis of articles published by credible news sites found evidence of multiracial progress narratives. Themes about multiracial people's identities were most common across the articles, suggesting that their identities are flexible and multiracial people are often pressured to choose their identities. Such themes tended to correspond with themes of multiracial people having internal advantages (i.e., being more creative) and contributing to societal benefits (i.e., challenging conceptions of race). Furthermore, themes of multiracial people being a societal benefit positioned multiracial people and communities as inherent activists who would advocate for racial progress in the US. Altogether, the analysis shows that multiracial progress narratives—narratives that imply multiracialism will fuel society's ascent toward a racially equitable and harmonious future—do exist within mainstream news articles about multiracial people.

In addition, these themes also suggest that stereotypes or perceptions of multiracial people being social model minorities are present within US society. Indeed, many articles suggested that multiracial people are vehicles for racial progress, such that their identities, experiences, and assumed activism will contribute to a more racially egalitarian future. Thus, the content analysis from Chapter 1 shows evidence for multiracial progress narratives and multiracial people as social model minorities. Audiences who consume content from credible

news sites are more influenced by the information published on these sites compared to audiences consuming content from non-credible sources like Twitter, online blogs, forums, or social media (see Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015). When credible news sites depict multiracial progress narratives and portray stereotypes of multiracial people as social model minorities, it may reinforce the belief in these stereotypes as true. Therefore, the themes uncovered in the content analysis may shape how multiracial people are perceived and how people envision future racial progress (see Chun, 2020; Lee, 2007; Shim 1998).

However, the themes coded throughout the articles were not one-sided, as many discussed the complexities of being multiracial in the US. Themes of multiracial identity and being pressured to choose one identity also corresponded with themes of multiracial people experiencing racism. Additionally, some articles highlighted the ways in which multiracial communities are victims of the same systemic oppression monoracial minorities experience in the US (i.e., poverty, and unfair judicial treatment). Indeed, themes of multiracial people not being a panacea came up across the articles, which pushed back against the ideologies of multiracial progress narratives and perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities. Thus, while multiracial progress narratives were uncovered, discussions of multiracial people were nuanced and highlighted the complexities of being mixed-race in the US. Although, the present analysis does not reveal the consequences of multiracial progress narratives, thus, Chapter 2 aimed to examine the negative consequences of multiracial progress narratives.

Chapter 2: Experimentally examining the relationship between multiracial progress narratives and support for anti-racist policies

As the multiracial population gained more recognition in society after the US Census allowed a “check more than one” option in 2000, attention directed toward multiracial children,

communities, and individuals began to rise (Charmaraman et al., 2014; Song, 2021; Spencer, 2014). As previously mentioned, interracial relationships and mixed-race children/individuals were thought of as a racial problem; however, in the twenty-first century, such discourse shifted toward representing multiracial people as solutions for racial tensions in the US (Squires, 2007; Williams, 2003). Eventually, news outlets began writing about mixed-race people and populations, adopting similar racial progress and harmony themes. Indeed, from the 1990s to the present day, mainstream news articles promote the premise that mixed-race identities, people, children, and/or communities are actively diminishing the concept of race in the United States, leading us to a post-racial destiny (Spencer, 2014).

Thus, there seems to exist broader cultural discourse that a growing multiracial population benefits society (Garay & Remedios, 2021). Research thus far has not examined the consequences of narratives that position multiracialism as something that may inherently "fix" race relations in the US. Indeed, Chapter 1 showed that multiracial progress narratives exist in mainstream US news articles and that multiracial individuals are portrayed as having inherent advantages or benefits due to their multiple and flexible identities. Chapter 2 seeks to examine the consequences toward racial progress that multiracial progress narratives may have, causing White US Americans to undermine racial progress and be complacent toward racism.

Racial Progress Narratives and Multiracialism

Racial progress narratives, on the surface, appear to be positive discussions of racial progress made in the US; however, they may pose negative consequences. That is, these suggest that anti-racist actions are not necessary for positive social change, diminishing White individual's support for anti-racist initiatives (see Garay & Remedios, 2021; Kaiser et al., 2009; Moore & Bell, 2010; Richeson, 2020). In addition, the phenomenon of advocating for racial

progress yet not actively working toward racial progress is seen in larger institutions. For example, predominately White universities and academic institutions often exclaim their participation in equity, inclusion, and diversity initiatives as a marketing ploy to recruit talented students of color; however, students of color at these institutions do not feel supported nor see efforts made to uplift their communities (Lewis & Shah, 2021). Additionally, K-12 schools in White neighborhoods tend to celebrate movements for civil rights by highlighting positive outcomes (i.e., posters with Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* Speech) rather than by addressing historical acts of racism and violence that drove such movements (i.e., known as the *sanitization of history* to keep White audiences comfortable; Salter & Adams, 2016).

Similarly, narratives positing that multiracial individuals positively shape interracial relations may reduce support for policies needed to address systemic inequality (Garay & Remedios, 2021). Describing the mere presence of multiracial people as reducing individual racism and improving interracial relations without discussing the need for anti-racist policy interventions could signal that racial inequality will naturally resolve with the growth of a multiracial population (see Reed & Lewis, 2009). Such narratives then appeal to White individuals, who are motivated to reaffirm passive routes to racial progress and egalitarianism that provide convenient opportunities for preventing social and racial progress (Roberts & Rizzo, 2020), preserving their own status and power in US society (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Therefore, we may anticipate that narratives that imply the multiracial population will naturally ascend the US into a more racially egalitarian future, with no calls for systematic or institutional level changes, may appeal to White individuals because it allows them to be complacent toward racism.

Racial Progress Narratives and Threat

Multiracial populations are not the only growing racial minority demographic in the US; indeed, the US is projected to be a minority-majority country by 2050 (US Census Bureau, 2022). Increased racial diversity, cultural mixing, and the prospect that the US is slowly shifting into a minority-majority country (i.e., a country in which White-identifying individuals are the minority) can be threatening to White individuals; Craig & Richeson, 2014; Craig et al., 2018; Danbold & Huo, 2015). For instance, White individuals experience heightened group-status threat when exposed to the idea that immigration is causing White Americans to become a minority in the future because it challenges their position in society as being at the top of the racial hierarchy through their group size and population (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Morrison et al., 2009). Additionally, other work shows that White Americans disfavor support for immigration if those who immigrate do not assimilate into US American cultures (Danbold & Huo, 2022). In other words, White Americans show discomfort surrounding the premise that a social group not assimilated to Whiteness may overtake them in population size and disrupt the status quo that keeps White Americans as the prototypical US American (Danbold & Huo, 2015). Therefore, one could argue that seeing progress narratives about a growing multiracial population may evoke threat rather than acceptance (see Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014).

However, while White Americans may be uncomfortable with increased racial diversity (Craig et al., 2018), they also applaud narratives that create a façade that the US is racially progressive (Richeson, 2020). As a reminder, racial progress narratives result in the maintenance of White individuals' power and dominance. In return, White individuals applaud narratives that prioritize passive routes to racial equality, as it suggests initiatives to systemically change racist systems and institutions are unnecessary (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Therefore, while threats or other individual-level beliefs may impact the way White participants respond to or interpret narratives about multiracial people (see Berg, 2014; Chen, de Paula Couto, et al., 2018; Ho et al., 2013), the motivation to maintain the status quo to preserve their own status in society undercurrents their behaviors and attitudes (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Crenshaw, 2010).

Furthermore, White Americans are particularly threatened by the growth of a population that is *not* assimilated to US American culture nor adjacently related to Whiteness (see Danbold & Huo, 2015; Danbold & Huo, 2022). Thus, not only are narratives of a growing multiracial population one that provides a passive route toward equality that benefits White individuals, but it is likely that White Americans are not threatened by a multiracial population because there is assumed assimilation to Whiteness within the group. That is, White Americans may assume that the predominate racial group spearheading the multiracial population growth are part-White mixed-race people. Indeed, people tend to believe a part-White mixed-race person (e.g., Black/White, Asian/White, or Latinx/White) is the more prototypical of a multiracial person in comparison to other identities (e.g., Black/Latinx, Black/Asian, or Latinx/Asian; Vinluan, Bonam, et al., in prep). In addition, a conceptual review and meta-analyses has shown that scientific work largely represents mixed-race people with part-White stimuli or recruit part-White multiracial participants into studies about multiracial experiences (see Garay & Remedios, 2021; Young et al., 2021).

This suggests that part-White multiracial people are the prototypical representation people in the US have when imagining a mixed-race population, and thus, are possibly less threatened by the growth of their group. While Chapter 2 does not explore levels of threat White people experience when exposed to narratives about the multiracial population growing versus

other populations (e.g., minority-majority shift; Craig & Richeson, 2014), prior work suggests another mechanism behind White people's support for multiracial progress narratives. That is, multiracial progress narratives absolve the need for actionable and systematic change, upholding White people's power in society, *and* pose no threat for White Americans due to the assumption that the growing mixed-race population will be predominately part-White. Therefore, Chapter 2 seeks to examine how multiracial progress narratives impact White individuals' perceptions of future race relations, discrimination, and support for anti-racist policies.

Study Overview

Chapter 2 examined whether White participants believe that racism and discrimination will be less of a problem in the future than they are currently. As a result, White participants may show less support for anti-racist interventions after reading discourse positing that a growing multiracial population will lead to a racially equitable future. I aimed to test this by showing White participants three fictitious articles meant to mimic an op-ed published in a credible new stie: 1) a neutral/control article, 2) an optimistic article, and 3) a pragmatic article. The neutral/control article talks about the growth of a multiracial population with no additional commentary on what this growth means for the US. The optimistic article is meant to mimic the multiracial progress narratives highlighted in Chapter 1, discussing the growth of a mixed-race population and how it will lead to a more racially egalitarian future. Lastly, the pragmatic article is meant to counter the optimistic article, representing a balanced discussion of a growing mixed-race population. That is, it discusses that the multiracial population is growing and could lead to positive social benefits for race relations, but to see racial progress in the US, systemic and policy drive initiatives are still needed. Additionally, I focus on White participants because, in a society that values Whiteness, White people have the most power to influence social change and

uplift the voices of those who are oppressed (Feagin, 2013). Additionally, White individuals in US society promote and benefit from racial progress narratives (Richeson, 2020). In this study, I hypothesize (all hypotheses are pre-registered here: https://osf.io/wzs54):

H1) Participants reading an optimistic fictitious news article will report greater agreement with the belief that future race relations will become more positive in comparison to those who read a pragmatic or a neutral fictitious article.

H2) Participants reading an optimistic fictitious news article will report greater agreement with the belief that racial discrimination will be less of a problem in the future in comparison to those who read a pragmatic or a neutral fictitious article.

H3) Participants reading an optimistic fictitious news article will report less agreement with the belief that anti-racist interventions will be needed in the future in comparison to those who read a pragmatic fictitious news article or a neutral fictitious article.

H4) Perceptions of future race relations and racial discrimination will predict support for anti-racist interventions.

H4a) Those who read the optimistic article will have more positive assumptions of future race relations and lower perceptions of future racial discrimination in comparison to the neutral article, which will predict lower support for anti-racist interventions.

H4b) Those who read the pragmatic article will have fewer positive assumptions of future race relations higher perceptions of future racial

discrimination in comparison to the neutral article, which will predict higher support for anti-racist interventions.

Method

Participants

I conducted a power analysis using PANGEA Power Analysis (Westfall, 2015) and determined that 80 participants per condition, or 240 participants total, were needed to detect a medium effect (d=0.45) with 80% power for a 3-condition between-subjects ANOVA. A medium effect size is being used because this was the effect found from pilot testing of the experimental conditions (discussed in more detail in Materials). In addition, a sample size of 100 is needed detect a medium effect for the path analysis needed to explore the relationships between the dependent variables in the study (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). Thus, I intended to sample 240 participants.

A total sample of 231 White participants from Prolific were compensated $4.00 to participate in a 30-minute survey. Two participants were removed for not providing a valid Prolific ID, 2 were removed for not re-consenting during the debrief [3], and 10 were removed for not providing the correct response to a quiz item embedding into the survey. Thus, the final sample was 217[4] participants who were generally liberal in their political identification (woman/female = 104, man/male = 108, non-binary/third gender = 3, prefer not to answer = 2; M_{age} = 40.69, SD_{age} =13.37; $M_{politicalID}$ = 3.12, $SD_{politicalID}$ = 1.85).

[3] Per IRB guidelines, participants must indicate whether they are still comfortable with their participation in the study after completing it. Thus, those who do not provide a response or indicate they are no longer comfortable with the researchers using their data are removed from the final data analysis.

[4] To support the pilot studies in Chapter 2 and 3, as well as the study in Chapter 3, funds had to be conserved to complete the entire dissertation. Consequently, due to limited funding, additional participants could not be sampled to accommodate the 270-sample size of the Chapter 2 study.

Materials and Procedures

Stimuli. Three fictitious news articles that described the growth of the multiracial population were created. As a reminder, the control news article discussed the growth of a multiracial population in a neutral manner with no commentary on the implications of the growing demographic for society. The optimistic news article discussed the growth of a multiracial population and highlighted the positive implications of a growing multiracial demographic, specifically saying that it would improve future race relations. Lastly, the pragmatic news article discussed how, despite the growth of a multiracial population, institutional and structural changes would still be necessary to improve future race relations.

The articles went through two rounds of pilot testing (Pilot A, $N = 214$; Pilot B, $N = 77$) to ensure that the articles created were equivalent on dimensions that we did not intend to be manipulate. Overall, pilot testing revealed that the articles were equivalent in the extent to which they seemed interesting, engaging, credible, believable, easy to read, and understandable (see Table 4 for means from pilot testing, and Appendix for full details about Pilot studies A and B). The control article was rated as significantly less interesting, engaging, credible, and believable, yet as easier to read and understand in comparison to the optimistic and pragmatic articles. However, this is not a concern given that the article was very brief with no commentary. Thus, I would not expect the control article to yield results like the experimental conditions.

Table 4

Pilot studies mean and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the fictitious articles.

	Interesting	Engaging	Credible	Believable	Easy to read	Understandable
Pilot A						
Control Article	4.43 (1.25)	4.25 (1.21)	4.56 (1.48)	5.33 (1.38)	6.33 (0.90)	6.34 (0.91)
Optimistic Article	5.19 (1.09)†	4.98 (1.07)†	5.42 (1.20)	5.57 (1.20)	5.89 (1.04)†	6.09 (0.93)†

Pragmatic Article	5.22 (1.25)†	5.06 (1.24)†	5.64 (1.05)	5.99 (0.96)	5.86 (1.15)†	6.07 (1.02)†
Pilot B						
Optimistic Article	4.97 (1.75)	4.79 (1.63)	5.25 (1.34)†	5.36 (1.43)†	5.84 (1.08)	6.09 (0.93)
Pragmatic Article	4.78 (1.74)	4.60 (1.62)	5.25 (1.27)†	5.47 (1.45)†	5.64 (1.32)	5.88 (1.25)

Note. † = equivalent.

In addition, through pilot testing, I showed that the optimistic and pragmatic articles successfully manipulated what they were intended to manipulate That is, the optimistic article (M = 4.87, SD = 1.26) had statistically significantly higher agreement that race relations would be better in the future in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.42, SD = 1.07). The optimistic article (M = 4.71, SD = 1.60) had statistically significantly higher agreement the US would eventually work out solutions for racism in the future in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.04, SD = 1.67). Lastly, the optimistic article (M = 3.90, SD = 1.51) had statistically significantly lower agreement that racial discrimination would still be a problem for racial minorities in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.31, SD = 1.57; see Appendix for more details and final stimuli).

Measures and Procedures. Participants first read one of the fictitious news articles and were immediately prompted to complete one quiz item about the article ($N_{Neutral}$ = 73; $N_{Optimistic}$ = 77; $N_{Pragmatic}$ = 67). This quiz item served as an attention check, and those who failed the quiz item were not included in the final analyses. After completing the attention check, participants were given an opportunity to leave any opinions about the article in an open-response textbox. Afterward, participants were asked to complete two endorsement measures, which captured whether they believe the article was accurate and a positive reflection of multiracial people (adapted from Bastian & Haslam, 2006; α = 0.46). Participants were then prompted to complete

the dependent measures below in random order (to see more details on the measures used, see the Appendix).

Perceptions of Future Race Relations. Participants completed the Perceptions of Future Race Relations Measure (adapted from Gabbidon & Higgins, 2009), which included two items to examine participants' perceptions of future race relations. Participants rated whether they think relationships between White people and racial minorities will be better or worse in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely bad*) to 7 (*extremely good*) scale, and rated whether they think relationships between White people and racial minorities will be a problem in the future, or eventually be worked out on a scale ranging from 1 (*will always be a problem*) to 7 (*will eventually get worked out*; $\alpha = 0.75$).

Perceptions of Future Discrimination. Participants completed the Racial Progress Measure (Greene, 2020), in which they rated whether they believed racial minorities will still experience racial discrimination in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*no discrimination at all*) to 7 (*a significant amount of discrimination*).

Support for Anti-Racist Policies. Participants completed a Support for Anti-Racist Policies measure (adapted from Kaiser et al., 2009), in which they rated how much they agree certain policies will still be needed in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Specifically, participants rated how much they believed affirmative action programs, desegregation in schools, equal access to healthcare, and EDI initiatives to promote diversity will still be needed in the future ($\alpha = 0.96$).

Exploratory: Perceptions of Improvement. Participants were asked to rate their beliefs about how much the US would improve its racial climate using a five-item measure, aiming to capture their perceptions of improvements towards racial equity in the country (adapted from

Brodish et al., 2008). Participants rated how much they believed progress would be made toward racial equity and how much they expected conditions to improve for racial minorities in the future on a scale ranging from 1 *(little progress/improvement*) to 7 (*a lot of progress/improvement*). This measure was not pre-registered, and thus, served as an exploratory measure to examine how the article influenced their perception of how much improvement is made toward racial progress ($\alpha = 0.75$).

Exploratory: Future Intergroup Affect. Participants rated their future perceptions of intergroup affect between White people and racial minorities on a four-item scale (adapted from Turner et al., 2008). For example, participants rated how friendly they think White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) will be toward each other in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a lot*). This measure was not pre-registered, and thus, served as an exploratory measure to examine how the article influenced their perception of intergroup affect ($\alpha = 0.96$).

Exploratory: Threat Measures. Before completing the study, participants completed a series of individual level measure, which included the following: Social Dominance Orientation (i.e., the tendency to favor hierarchy enhancing ideologies; Pratto et al., 2013; $\alpha = 0.86$), Realistic Threat (i.e., the belief that out-group members pose a risk to society; Stephan et al. 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2013; $\alpha = 0.83$), and Symbolic Threat (i.e., your group's values and beliefs are at risk due to an out-group; Stephan et al. 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2013; $\alpha = 0.92$). Given that perceptions of demographic shifts, in general, tend to be moderated by ideologies of hierarchies and feelings of threat (see Craig & Richeson, 2014; Craig et al., 2018), these measures were not pre-registered and are exploratory to examine if levels of threat are impacted after reading the article.

After completing all survey measures, participants are debriefed and given an option to remove their data responses from the survey, should they feel uncomfortable with their participation after fulling completing the study.

Results

All analyses are ANOVAs using Tukey post hoc comparisons unless otherwise stated. To see bar graph visualization of the means and standard deviations, see Figure 4. To see the results for perceptions of improvement and future intergroup affect, please see the Appendix.

Perceptions of Future Race Relations

There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of future race relations between article condition, $F(2, 214) = 0.77$, $p = 0.46$, $\eta^2_p = 0.007$. That is, across conditions, the variations in perceptions of future race relations were not statistically significantly different, and their perceptions of future race relations were relatively high on a 7-point Likert scale ($M_{neutral} = 5.08$, $SD_{neutral} = 1.13$; $M_{optimistic} = 4.84$, $SD_{optimistic} = 1.27$; $M_{pragmatic} = 5.00$, $SE_{pragmatic} = 1.28$). In general, participants had positive perceptions of future race relations, and these beliefs did not differ by condition. Thus, H1 was not supported.

Perceptions of Future Discrimination

There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of future racial discrimination between article conditions, $F(2, 214) = 2.12$, $p = 0.12$, $\eta^2_p = 0.02$. That is, across conditions, variations in perceptions of whether racial discrimination will occur in the future were not statistically significantly different, and their perceptions of future racial discrimination were relatively low on a 7-point Likert scale ($M_{neutral} = 3.45$, $SD_{neutral} = 1.33$; $M_{optimistic} = 3.79$,

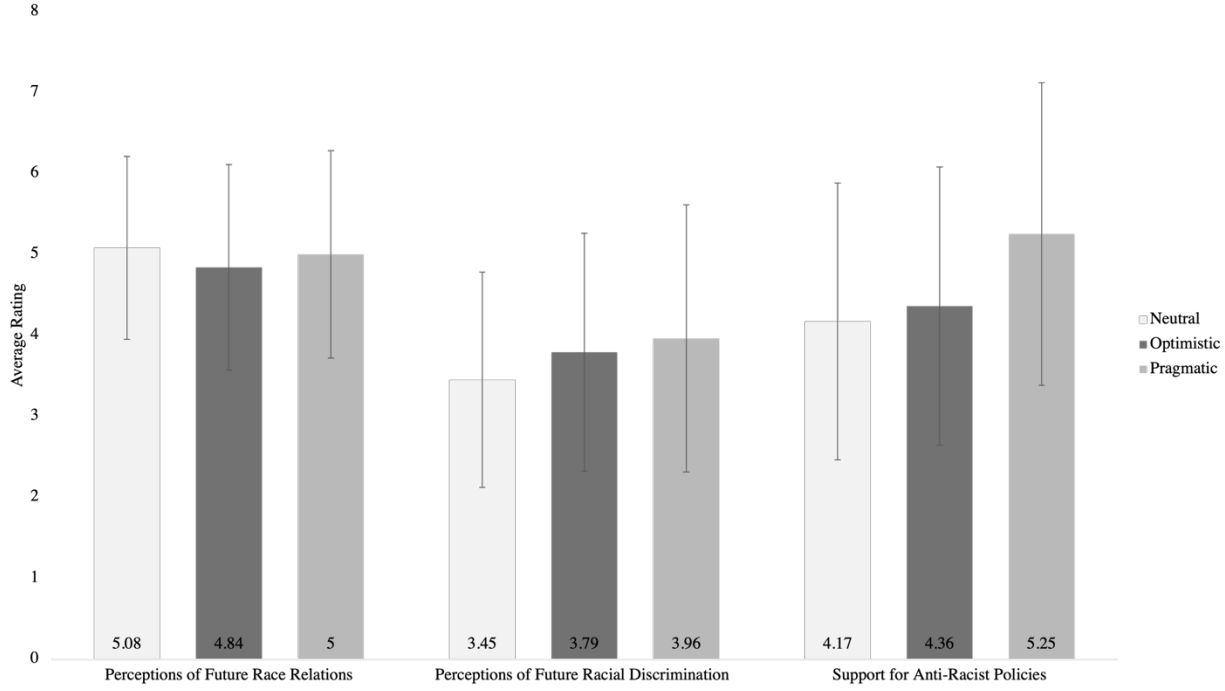
$SD_{optimistic}$ = 1.47; $M_{pragmatic}$ = 3.96, $SD_{pragmatic}$ = 1.65). In general, participants believed that racial discrimination would not be much of an issue in the future, though these beliefs did not differ by condition. Thus, H2 was not supported.

Support for Anti-Racist Policies

There was a statistically significant difference in support for anti-racist policies in the future between article conditions, $F(2, 214) = 7.36$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.06$. Specifically, those who read the pragmatic article ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 1.87$) had a stronger belief that anti-racist policies will still be needed in the future compared to both the neutral article ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.71$; *Cohen's d* = -0.61) and the optimistic article ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.72$; *Cohen's d* = -0.50), $ps < 0.01$. In addition, there was no statistically significant difference between the optimistic article and neutral article, *Cohen's d* = -0.11; $p = 0.80$. A sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) confirmed that, despite not reaching the full 240 sample, a sample of 214 and large effect sizes resulted in over 90% power for all statistically significant comparisons. Thus, H3 was not supported because I anticipated that the optimistic article would decrease support for anti-racist policies. However, results suggest that the optimistic article does not impact support for anti-racist policies, given the null results between the optimistic and neutral article. Rather, results suggest that the pragmatic article increases support for anti-racist policies.

Figure 4

Bar Graph for Means and Standard Deviations (error bars).



Moderation Path Analysis

As a reminder, I anticipated that assumptions of future race relations and perceptions of future racial discrimination will predict support for anti-racist interventions (H4a and H4b). Specifically, those who read the optimistic fictitious article (with the neural fictitious article set as reference) will have positive assumptions about future race relations and lower beliefs about future racial discrimination, predicting lower support for anti-racist policies. However, those who read the pragmatic fictitious article (with the neural fictitious article set as reference) will have fewer positive assumptions about future race relations and higher beliefs about future racial discrimination, predicting more support for anti-racist policies.

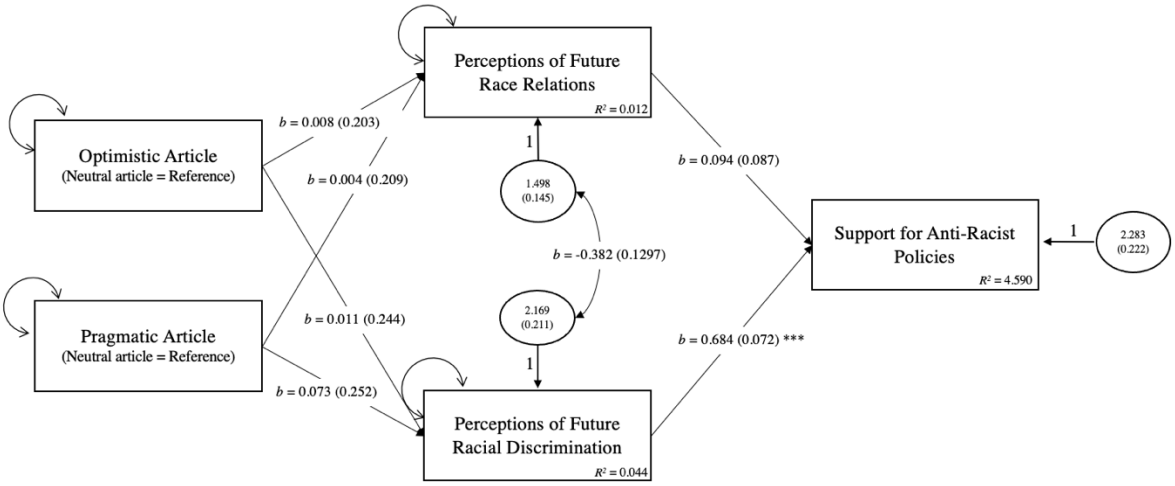
Thus, I conducted a moderation path analysis with Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) using maximum likelihood estimation method. Several goodness-of-fit indices can be used to

evaluate model fit: chi-square, comparative fit index (CFI), root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). For CFI, an acceptable fit is indicated by values of .90 or greater, and a good fit is indicated by values of .95 or greater; for RMSEA, values of .06 to .08 represent an acceptable fit, and values of .05 or less indicate a good fit for SRMR, a value less than .08 is generally considered a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The model indices indicated an adequate fit, $X^2(9) = 107.91$, $p = 0.000$; $RMSEA = 0.219$, $CI_{90\%}$ [0.14, 0.31], $p < .00$; $CFI = 0.80$; $SRMR = 0.07$.

Results. Overall, there were no statistically significant relationships between the articles participants read and their perception of future race relations and discrimination (see Figure 5 for path diagram and parameters). However, there was one statistically significant relationship between perceptions of future racial discrimination and support for anti-racist policies. That is, those who believed racial discrimination would continue to be a problem in the future showed more support for anti-racist policies. It is worth noting that the RMSEA suggests the model's predicted relationships do not match well with the actual relationships observed in the data, suggesting that the model's goodness of fit is within non-ideal ranges (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Additionally, residuals of the model indicate that the relationships between the variables were reproduced well by the current model specifications, except for the relationship for support for anti-racist policies between the pragmatic and neutral condition (see Table A3 in the Appendix for residual output). Therefore, the prediction accuracy of the model is likely compromised; however, results still give insight into an interesting relationship between perceptions of future racial discrimination and support for anti-racist policies, which partially support H4.

Figure 5

Path Analysis Diagram.



Note. Coefficients are unstandardized path coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses. Residuals of endogenous variables were allowed to covary.
$p < .05$*, $p < .01$ **, $p < .001$***

Exploratory Measures: Threat

Lastly, just to determine whether reading of a growing multiracial population exacerbates feelings of threat, we examined threat differences across conditions. There were no statistically significant differences in SDO ($F(2, 209) = 2.78$, $p = 0.06$, $\eta^2_p = 0.03$), Realistic Threat ($F(2, 214) = 2.10$, $p = 0.12$, $\eta^2_p = 0.02$), and Symbolic Threat ($F(2, 214) = 0.67$, $p = 0.51$, $\eta^2_p = 0.006$) across the three conditions. Thus, the manipulation did not impact perceptions of threat.

Exploratory Analyses: Coding Open-Responses

Lastly, participants were given the option to provide an open response regarding their thoughts, feelings, or opinions of the article. The qualitative data was examined and coded to explore why across conditions participants did not have statistically significant variations in their beliefs about future race relations, intergroup affect, etc. Specifically, the optimistic and

pragmatic articles did not differ from the neutral article for all the dependent variables, except for support for anti-racist policies. Thus, evaluating the open responses may provide more insight behind the null findings among the measures included in this study. Open responses were analyzed with a Chi-Square test, and all results can be seen in the Appendix.

Overall, results showed that, between the optimistic and pragmatic condition, respondents had primarily optimistic responses toward the articles, $X^2(1) = 0.92$, $p = 0.33$. That is, participants expressed that they felt positive about the content of the article for both conditions (for example: "*I think it is wonderful*" and "*I was happy to read that the increasing number of interracial persons was helping the problem of disparity in the US*"). In addition, between the optimistic and pragmatic articles, respondents had expressed they had positive beliefs that future racial progress is possible in the US, $X^2(1) = 2.35$, $p = 0.13$. Specifically, participants conflated mixed-race population growth with racial progress in both articles (for example: "*I agree that the increase in multiracial population should eventually lead to less racism and stereotypes"*). Results support the null findings in H1 and H2, such that the null results are likely a reflection of the general optimism participants expressed after reading the article.

However, there was an interesting difference in responses between the optimistic and pragmatic condition, such that the pragmatic condition had more support for anti-racist initiatives ($X^2(1) = 8.24$, $p = 0004$; for example: "*I tend to agree with the second perspective. A rising multicultural population is not going to eliminate systemic racism and we need to act in other ways*"). Thus, these results show that the optimistic and pragmatic article generate positive responses and impacts people's conflation between multiracial population growth and future racial progress; however, it is only the pragmatic article that influences people to consider anti-racist policies and adopt these beliefs. Lastly, there was no evidence to suggest participants

conflated the articles and belief in racial progress with the rise in interracial relationships, $X^2(2) = 2.09$, $p = 0.35$.

Discussion

Chapter 2 sought to experimentally manipulate multiracial progress narratives and examine the consequences of these narratives. Specifically, it was anticipated that participants reading an optimistic fictitious news article (i.e., a growing multiracial population will benefit US racial progress) would report greater agreement with the belief that future race relations will become more positive, racial discrimination will be less of a problem in the future, and anti-racist interventions will be less needed in the future in comparison to those who read a pragmatic fictitious news article (i.e., a growing multiracial population will not benefit US racial progress unless anti-racist efforts are made) or a neutral fictitious article (i.e., trends in a growing multiracial population).

Perceptions of future race relations and perceptions of future racial discrimination did not statistically significantly differ between the articles; however, support for anti-racist policies did. Specifically, those who read the pragmatic article were most likely to believe anti-racist policies will still be needed in the future in comparison to the neutral and optimistic article. Thus, the hypothesis that reading an optimistic article would result in less support for anti-racist policies was not supported given that it was the pragmatic article to increase support for anti-racist policies. Additionally, a moderation path analysis—intended to identify a mechanism behind people's support for anti-racist policies and multiracial progress narratives—showed that those who believed racial discrimination would continue to be a problem in the future showed more support for anti-racist policies; however, the path analysis did not show any other statistically significant relationships between the articles and other variables. Thus, because the hypotheses

were only partially supported, the open-responses participants provided in the article were examined to derive more insight into how multiracial progress narratives impact beliefs about future race relations and support for anti-racist policies.

There are likely several explanations behind why the pragmatic article influenced respondents in a way that made them more supportive of anti-racist policies. Simply, it could be that the pragmatic article states the need for anti-racist policies, and therefore, participants who read it would agree that these policies are important. Such perspective holds true, given that in Chapter 1, it is stated that news articles are often viewed as more credible sources of truth in comparison to other forms of online content (Callanan, 2012; Dixon et al., 2019; Romer et al., 2003; Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012). However, given that H1, H2, and H4 yielded non-significant results even when compared to the neutral condition—which had no commentary on a growing multiracial population—it can be inferred that perceived credibility or validity of the article likely did not impact the null results. That is, the neutral article should have been statistically significantly lower across all ratings due to the lack of commentary of the implications of a growing multiracial population. Furthermore, open responses revealed that participants who read the optimistic or pragmatic article had more positive sentiments about multiracial people and future racial progress in comparison to the neutral article, which had mostly idiosyncratic responses. Therefore, between the null statistical findings and open responses, results could suggest that reading about multiracial people, in general, causes people to have more favorable impressions of future race relations.

However, the results suggest that reading a pragmatic article about the growth of a multiracial population caused people to attend to the need for anti-racist policies. Interestingly, the path analysis suggest that perceptions of ongoing racial discrimination predicted support for

anti-racist policies, given that individuals who believed racial discrimination would continue to be a problem in the future were more supportive of anti-racist policies. Thus, even if participants felt racial progress was possible and discrimination would be less of a problem in the future, the pragmatic article may have presented a more realistic or critical view of racial issues, and therefore, impacted participants' assessment of whether there is an ongoing need for anti-racist measures. On the other hand, the optimistic articles may have downplayed the severity of racial discrimination or suggested that progress alone would solve these issues, leading readers to have unchanged beliefs about the necessity of anti-racist policies in the future. Indeed, when examining open responses, those who read the pragmatic article expressed more anti-racist motivations and ideologies in comparison to those who read the optimistic article (meant to represent multiracial progress narratives). This suggests that, while reading about a multiracial population growth does cause people to view future race relations more positively, multiracial progress narratives do not impact support for anti-racist policies like how a more pragmatic approach would.

While Chapter 2 did not fully support the hypotheses, it is still important to understand how multiracial progress narratives may have consequences for society. In Chapter 2, I focused on how multiracial progress narratives might impact support for anti-racist policies and explored several avenues to understand why that may be the case. In general, results showed that multiracial progress narratives are not beneficial for anti-racist motivations and actions, as these narratives do conflate multiracial population growth with racial progress in such a way that is not conducive to actual progress. Indeed, carefully talking about multiracial growth that is grounded in the realities of racial progress and incorporating systemic-level discussions of racism are needed to curate a healthy and productive narrative of mixed-race people and population growth.

In Chapter 3, I examined another angle of the multiracial progress narratives, which is how such narratives impact perceptions or stereotypes of multiracial people. Specifically, Chapter 3 explores how multiracial progress narratives exacerbate lay beliefs that mixed-race people are Social Model Minorities.

Chapter 3: Examining multiracial progress narratives as positive stereotypes and its consequences

Stereotypes are simplified mental shortcuts that link our judgments of individual traits and characteristics to form general impressions and judgments about entire social groups (Dovidio et al., 1986). For example, most countries stereotype women as incompetent and nurturing, yet stereotype men as competent and dominant (see Sczesny et al., 2004; Shu et al., 2022). In the US, Black Americans are stereotyped as criminals (Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Zou & Cheryan, 2017), Asian Americans are stereotyped as Model Minorities (Kawai, 2005; S.J. Lee, 2008; Zou & Cheryan, 2017), and Latinx Americans are stereotyped as illegal immigrants (Bellovary et al., 2020; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Stereotypes are inaccurate and are the source of problematic discrimination and prejudice within society (Fiske, 1998). In addition, the traits associated with a specific social group can be positive (e.g., smart) or negative (e.g., incompetent; Czopp et al., 2015; Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983). Regardless of a stereotype's positive or negative nature, they are leveraged in ways that maintain hierarchies and power dynamics in society (Fiske, 2010; Fiske et al., 2016). For example, the Model Minority stereotype of Asian Americans—a seemingly positive stereotype—is leveraged to pit racial minority groups against each other, making it difficult for minority groups to act in solidarity to oppose and challenge oppressive systems (see Tran & Curtin, 2017; Yi & Todd, 2021).

Not only are stereotypes utilized to maintain hierarchal power dynamics and are inextricably linked with discrimination and prejudice, but stereotypes can also cause interpersonal harm. For instance, Black students are often stereotyped as being athletic by White students, which causes them to feel belittled and targeted for their race (Sailes, 2010, 2017). Furthermore, Asian Americans who endorse Model Minority stereotypes for themselves are less likely to seek out mental health support (Gupta et al., 2011), even if they experience negative cognitive outcomes, such as emotional distress (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Thus, stereotypes—specifically racial stereotypes—hold a multitude of negative consequences. However, little work has investigated stereotypes of multiracial individuals—and the work that has investigated multiracial stereotypes has largely left the consequences of those stereotypes unexamined.

As a reminder, Chapter 1 conducted a content analysis of articles published through established news websites to examine whether multiracial progress narratives existed within discussions of multiracial people. While Chapter 1 found support for the existence of multiracial progress narratives, it also uncovered a plethora of other themes targeting multiracial individuals' identities and experiences. For example, themes surrounding multiracial people having flexible identities and progressive racial attitudes emerged, suggestion that mixed-race people are associated with traits akin to characteristics of a social model minority. While Chapter 1 did not delve into the implications of these themes, Chapter 3 hopes to further explore perceptions of mixed-race people as social model minorities and how multiracial progress narratives can exacerbate these positive stereotypes of mixed-race people.

Stereotypes of Multiracial Communities

Thus far, there has been little research on stereotypes of multiracial communities or individuals. Literature has largely focused on perceptions and categorizations of multiracial individuals (see Pauker, Meyers, et al., 2018; Young et al., 2021). Though, from categorization and perception research, inferences can be drawn on how a multiracial target may be stereotyped. For instance, the majority of categorization and perception research finds that multiracial targets who have White and minority identities are perceived to be minorities (see Chen, Pauker, et al., 2018; Ho et al., 2011). From here, we might assume that multiracial targets are then stereotyped in accordance with their minority identity. However, it seems as though the identities of a multiracial person are influential in a perceiver's stereotype development of a mixed-race person (Chen, 2019; Garay et al., 2021). Indeed, research shows that stereotypes of mixed-race individuals tend to be comprised of various traits associated with their respective component identities (Skinner et al., 2020). For example, part-White multiracial individuals are stereotyped as being more competent than multiracial individuals who do not have a part-White identity, paralleling the same stereotyping of monoracial groups (i.e., White people are stereotyped as being more competent than other racial groups; Cuddy et al., 2009; Garay et al., 2022).

Though, a multiracial person's ancestry is not the only cue used to develop stereotypes of a mixed-race person. Multiracial individuals are often perceived as being racially ambiguous (Chen & Hamilton, 2012; Pauker & Ambady, 2009; Skinner et al., 2020), which also causes perceivers to view mixed-race individuals are attractive (Reece, 2016). Therefore, cues such as hair, skin tone, or facial features are used by perceivers to generate impressions of individuals (see Blair et al., 2002; Hellström & Tekle, 1994; Maddox & Gray, 2002). For instance, a perceiver may view a face to appear more Black than White and associate that face with

stereotypical Black traits (Vinluan, Hinzman, et al., in prep). In addition, morphed Black-White faces with low Black racial phenotypicality targets are less likely to be perceived as victims of racial discrimination in comparison to morphed faces with high Black phenotypicality (Skinner & Nicolas, 2015). Thus, there are a multitude of cues people can use to develop stereotypic impressions of a mixed-race person, including appearance and ancestry.

More recently, there has been more research dedicated to understanding how perceivers develop impressions of multiracial people's behaviors beyond their appearance or identities. For example, research shows that when multiracial people engage in activism for their minority group, they're more likely to be perceived as an in-group member by their minority group (Garay et al., 2021). Furthermore, recent research found that monoracial people view multiracial people being more empathetic and having better perspective-taking skills in comparison to monoracial people (Wilton et al., 2022). However, majority of previous research struggles to identify stereotypes of mixed-race people that are not influenced by their respective identities or pre-existing judgements of monoracial groups. One study found that multiracial stereotypes not associated with their monoracial identities consist of aspects of their appearance (ambiguous or attractive) or not belonging to a specific racial group (Skinner et al., 2020).

Thus, it is difficult to isolate stereotypes of mixed-race people that is unique to their group and not tangentially related to stereotypes of monoracial groups. Although, perceptions of mixed-race people as a social model minority may be a novel contribution to the literature of multiracial stereotypes that is specific to their group because of its defining characteristics being anchored to a group that holds multiple racial identities.

The Social Model Minority Stereotype is a Stereotype

As stated previously, research on multiracial stereotypes presents an interesting challenge, which is that it is difficult to isolate stereotypes of mixed-race people that is not adjacently related to or influenced by their monoracial identities. In addition, there has been limited work that has experimentally explored the idea of mixed-race people as social model minorities and called attention to this as a phenomenon. Specifically, Squires (2007) describes multiracial people as a social model minority because 1) multiracial people are seen as models in their attitudes about racial differences and 2) they are presented as models for the future of race relations, modeling a world where color and culture are no longer barriers (Harrison et al., 2017; Spencer, 2014; Williams, 2003, 2005). Such beliefs align with key beliefs about what is needed be anti-racist. That is, the average US American specifies that challenging the status quo, reducing interpersonal racism, and promoting equality are needed to be anti-racist and achieve racial progress (Pham et al., 2023). Thus, combining these lay beliefs together, people are likely assuming that multiracial people challenge the status quo through their disruption of racial categories, reduce interpersonal racism in others through increased exposure to multiracial people, and promote equity through their progressive and idealized racial attitudes toward racial differences.

Indeed, previous literature has highlighted that perceivers of multiracial people indeed hold assumptions of mixed-race people having advanced racial attitudes (i.e., being empathetic, less essentialist; Wilton et al., 2022; Shih et al., 2007), exposure to multiracial groups can challenge White peoples existing racist ideologies (Gaither et al., 2019 Pauker, Carpinella, et al., 2018), and exposure to multiracial people can challenge the usage of strict racial categories

(Chen & Hamilton, 2012). Thus, it appears that there is scientific evidence to suggest that the idea of multiracial people being a social model minority is reasonable or valid.

However, looking at real-world contexts and literature that focuses on multiracial experiences, we can see how these perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities is an over-generalized stereotype. For example, contexts with large multiracial populations should show evidence of being racial egalitarian because their population is comprised of individuals that blur racial categories and have racially progressive attitudes. However, Hawaii and Brazil, two geographical locations known for their large multiracial populations, still have systems and policies that oppress racial minorities (see Agier, 1995; Hosaka et al., 2021; Mossakowski et al., 2017; Pacheco, 2008; Taira, 2021). In addition, multiracial people themselves experience racism and discrimination in the US (Reid Marks et al., 2020), and experience harmful stigma from racial minorities and White individuals (see Franco et al., 2020; Franco et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2013), making it counterintuitive that exposure to them would racist ideologies and they could serve as mediators between racial minorities and White individuals. Taken together, it could be argued that prior work, which seems to provide evidence that perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities is reasonable, could be over-generalizations or stereotypes of this group. Indeed, scientific research has perpetuated harmful stereotypes before, such that standardized testing was once used to argue Black Americans were naturally less intelligent, which is now recognized as a racist, harmful stereotype (Stoskopf, 2012). Therefore, Chapter 3 explores perceptions of mixed-race people as social model minorities as a stereotype that is unique to multiracial people and may be exacerbated by multiracial progress narratives.

Multiracial Progress Narratives and The Social Model Minority

As a reminder, multiracial progress narratives are discussions that conflate multiracialism (i.e., a growing multiracial population) with post-racialism (i.e., a racially egalitarian future). In Chapter 1, I showed evidence that multiracial progress narratives are part of our society's larger dialogue when discussing the growth and implications of a mixed-race population. In Chapter 2, I showed that these narratives, which was experimentally manipulated, have downstream negative for racial progress. That is, White participants showed less support for anti-racist policies after reading an article representing multiracial progress narratives. Such results align with other work, which suggest that viewing racial progress as natural and linear inhibits people's willingness to make further progress on social issues (Hur & Ruttan, 2023). However, beyond impeding racial progress, multiracial progress narratives may also exacerbate positive stereotypes of mixed-race people as social model minorities.

Specifically, because multiracial progress narratives place emphasis on mixed-race people as having natural qualities that may improve racial issues in the US, readers of these narratives then focus on an individual-level forms of racial progress rather than a systemic-level forms of racial progress. Specifically, systemic-based language highlights the importance of acknowledging the systems and policies that contribute to various forms of oppression (Buchanan et al., 2021). Without systemic-based language, the responsibility of addressing oppression then falls onto individuals, resulting in the belief that simply changing one's prejudice or being exposed to diversity is enough to dismantle racism (see Banaji et al., 2021; Bonilla-Silva, 2021). While both systemic (e.g., addressing policies, regulations, laws) and individual (e.g., interpersonal biases and prejudice) efforts are needed to cause radical change for racial equity in the US (Bonilla-Silva, 2021), discussions of racial progress and lay beliefs of

racial progress often neglect to highlight systemic-focused progress (Richeson, 2020). Thus, the implication that multiracial people can resolve racial tensions because of their fluid and diverse backgrounds in multiracial progress narratives emphasize an individual-level approach toward marking racial progress. This fixation on multiracial people—rather than anti-racist policies or interventions—likely intensifies beliefs that mixed-race people are social model minorities by creating the assumption that mixed-race people are in part responsible for generating social progress.

Therefore, Chapter 3 aimed to explore how multiracial progress narratives exacerbate stereotypes of multiracial people as being social model minorities. To be clear, there does exist some impression that multiracial people are stereotyped as social model minorities (see Wilton et al., 2022); however, Chapter 3 is focused on examining the relationship between progress narratives and perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities.

Study Overview

Thus, Chapter 3 examined whether White participants believe that multiracial individuals are social model minorities. Specifically, I hypothesized (all hypotheses are pre-registered here: https://osf.io/hvtwc)

H1) Participants reading an optimistic fictitious article[5] would report greater agreement that multiracial people have more effective communication for race-related dialogue.

H2) Participants reading an optimistic fictitious article would report greater agreement that multiracial people have more effective perspective

[5] The same Optimistic and Pragmatic articles used in Chapter 2 are used in Chapter 3 to represent multiracial progress narratives with minor revisions, see Appendix for Pilot C results.

taking skills between racial groups in comparison to those who read a pragmatic fictitious article.

H3) Participants reading an optimistic article would report greater agreement that multiracial people are the catalyst for improved race relations in comparison to those who read the pragmatic article.

H4) General racial positive (e.g., smart, rich) and negative stereotype (e.g., criminal, poor) ratings would not differ between the optimistic and pragmatic articles to isolate the effect multiracial progress narratives have on exacerbating social model minority stereotypes.

H5) Participants who read the optimistic article would be more likely to describe a part-White mixed-race person in comparison to those who read the pragmatic fictitious news article. This is because the multiracial progress narrative focuses on ameliorating relationships between racially marginalized groups and White communities (see Omi & Winant, 2014).

Method

Participants

In Chapter 2, 240 participants were sampled (80 participants per condition) to detect a medium effect ($d = 0.45$) with 80% power for a 3-condition between-subjects ANOVA because a medium effect size had been detected in the pilot testing for Chapter 2. However, Chapter 3 sought to detect a small effect ($d = 0.20$) with 80% power for a 2-condition[6] between-subjects ANOVA. To detect a small effect, 800 participants needed to be sampled.

[6] The neutral condition from Chapter 2 was omitted in Chapter 3 due to limited funding to fund a 3-condition study (N = 1200 vs N = 800) and due to insignificant results from Chapter 2.

Participants were recruited through Prolific, sampling 888 respondents. However, 51 were not allowed to complete the study because they were in the European Economic Area (N = 18) or did not identify as White (N = 33). Additionally, 61 were removed because they did not consent in the debrief to having their data used after completing the study or did not complete the debrief[7], and 50 failed the quiz item after viewing the stimuli. All other participants passed the click count rates and attention checks.

Thus, the final sample size for the study was 760 White participants ($N_{optimistic}$ = 396; $N_{pragmatic}$= 363; male/man = 371, female/woman = 366; non-binary/third gender = 20, prefer not to answer = 3; M_{age} = 45.34, SD_{age} = 14.33). The sample was more liberal-leaning as well ($M_{politicalID}$ = 3.21; $SD_{politicalID}$ = 1.82) and mostly college-educated (Did not graduate high school = 10, Have high school diploma = 103, did or currently doing some level of college = 177, Have a liberal arts degree = 56, Have or working toward a bachelor's degree = 264, Have or working toward a master's degree = 124, Have or working toward a PhD = 26).

Materials and Procedures

Stimuli and Procedures. In Chapter 3, edits were made to the stimuli used in Chapter 2 to increase the experimental/internal validity of the stimuli. In Chapter 2, counterarguments were added to the fictitious news articles to increase perceptions of credibility and believability of the stimuli during pilot testing. However, the counterarguments may have added an extra factor to the manipulation, making it harder to ensure a clear cause-and-effect link from the articles to the results (Brewer & Crano, 2000). Thus, to amend this issue, edits to the stimuli were made to remove the counterarguments. A pilot test was conducted to ensure that the changes did not

[7] Per IRB guidelines, participants must indicate whether they are still comfortable with their participation in the study after completing it. Thus, those who do not provide a response or indicate they are no longer comfortable with the researchers using their data are removed from the final data analysis.

impact other confounding variables, such as perceptions of credibility, understandability, or engagement (see Appendix for Pilot C results).

Effective Communication. Participants completed an effective communication scale, which captured how much they believed multiracial people are effective communicators of racial dialogue (adapted from Wilton et al., 2022). Specifically, participants were asked questions such as "how much do you agree or disagree that multiracial people would be able to communicate equally with both you and members of other racial groups about race and diversity?" (1-*strongly disagree* to 7-*strongly agree;* $\alpha = 0.93$). To see all measures in detail, see the Appendix.

Effective Learning Strategies. Participants completed a learning strategies scale, which captures to what extent they believe multiracial people demonstrate empathy or perspective taking in racial conversations or dialogues (adapted from Wilton et al., 2022). Specifically, participants were asked questions such as "how much do you agree or disagree that multiracial people try to take the perspective of other people?" (1-*strongly disagree* to 7-*strongly agree*; $\alpha = 0.95$).

Interracial Improvements. Participants completed a series of questions to capture their impressions of to what extent they perceive multiracial people to be the funnels for race relation improvements between racial groups (see Table 5 for measure items). Participants rated how much they disagree (7-*strongly disagree*) or agree (1-*strongly agree)* with each statement ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Table 5

Interracial Improvements Scale Items.

Adapted from…	**Measure Items**
Harrison, R. L., Thomas, K. D., & Cross, S. N. (2017). Restricted visions	The presence of multiracial people in the United States will improve relationships between racial groups.

of multiracial identity in advertising. Journal of Advertising, 46(4), 503-520	
	The presence of multiracial people in the United States will resolve tension between racial groups.
	The presence of multiracial people in the United States will unionize racial groups.

Positive and Negative Stereotypes. To isolate perceptions of multiracial people as Social Model Minorities participants rated their perceptions of multiracial people on racial positive and negative stereotypes. That is, participants rated five positive stereotypes commonly associated with Asian Americans (Zou & Cheryan, 2017*;* $\alpha = 0.69$)—due to the similarities between social model minorities and model minorities—to see if multiracial progress narratives impact positive perceptions of mixed-race people beyond social model minority traits. In addition, participants rated five negative racial stereotypes, such as criminal or poor (Zou & Cheryan, 2017; $\alpha = 0.90$), to avoid participants rating only positive traits, resulting in an extreme response bias (i.e., participants only provide high ratings on all items; Hellevik, 2016).

Perceptions of a Prototypical Social Model Minority. Lastly, to understand who participants imagine when they imagine someone who represents a social model minority, I asked participants to indicate what type of ancestry they believe a person has if they are effective communicators and empathetic toward both White people and racial minorities. Specifically, participants were provided the prompt below.

> "In the United States, racial tensions are still prevalent. However, a lot of research and activism has been done to help progress us toward a place where these tensions can be or are resolved.
>
> When you think about a future in which racial groups exist harmoniously, there is possibly a particular type of person you imagine who is more capable of

spearheading this change than other people.

Please describe the racial identity or identities you imagine this person having when you think of someone who has the potential to alleviate racial tensions in the United States. Feel free to provide as much detail as you'd like."

After reading the prompt, participants were given the opportunity to write and elaborate on who this person they imagine might be in terms of race. Responses were then coded to examine what racial identities participants indicated in their response ($\alpha = 0.97$). Coding scheme was developed by condensing all possible racial identities that could be mentioned into a series of simplified categories. For example, it was more simplistic to code responses as (2) – White Multiracial Individual to represent multiple, yet similar answers (e.g., Black/White, Asian/White). See Table 6 for the coding schemes.

Table 6

Chapter 3 Open Response Coding Scheme.

Code/Theme	Definition
Minority Multiracial Individual (1)	Any mixed-race person, multiple racial identities, mixed cultural background, or multiracial, but does not mention White. For example, they might say, "someone who is Asian, Black, and Hispanic." Additionally, they might say a public figure (e.g., "someone like Tiger Woods"). In this case, that would count as a Black-Asian mixed-race person.
White Multiracial Individual (2)	Any mixed-race person with multiple racial identities, mixed cultural background, or multiracial background, and does mention White. For example, they might say, "someone who is Asian and White." Additionally, they might say a public figure (e.g., "someone like Barack Obama"). In this case, that would count as a Black-White mixed-race person.
Any Multiracial Individual (3)	Any mixed-race person with multiple racial identities, mixed cultural background, or multiracial background but does not have any specifications on what their racial identities are. For example, they might say, "someone who is mixed race." Additionally, they might describe an appearance, such as: "someone who is tanned" or "someone who is ambiguous."

Monoracial Minority (4)	Any monoracial minority (e.g., just a Black person or Hispanic person, or they might just say "any minority"). Additionally, they might say a public figure (e.g., "someone like AOC"). In this case, that would count as a racial minority person.
A White Person (5)	A White person (i.e., they say a White person is most suited to fix racial tensions"). Additionally, they might say a public figure (e.g., "someone like Donald Trump").
Characteristics (6)	No race is mentioned but respondents are describing someone's characteristics, personality, or general traits rather than specifying a racial identity (e.g., "they need to be open minded and charismatic").
Nobody (8)	These responses indicate that they believe no one can fix racial tensions in the US. They will say things like, "I don't think anyone can do this," or "no one is capable of this because we will always have differences."
Idiosyncratic (7)	Idiosyncratic. These responses are things like "I don't know," "I can't think of anyone," "NA."

Exploratory measures. I examined support for anti-racist policies to replicate and validate the results from Chapter 2. Participants completed the same Support for Anti-Racist Policies measure (adapted from Kaiser et al., 2009), in which they rated how much they agree certain policies will still be needed in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree;* $\alpha = 0.94$). Additionally, I included all measures from the pilot in the study to ensure perceptions of interests, credibility, or understandability did not impact main results. See the Appendix for these results. Lastly, I included measures of Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto et al., 2013; $\alpha = 0.86$), Realistic Threat (Stephan et al. 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2013; $\alpha = 0.87$), and Symbolic Threat (Stephan et al. 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 2013; $\alpha = 0.58$) to mimic the same measures as Chapter 2 and examine possible effects moderated by ideologies of hierarchies and feelings of threat (see Craig & Richeson, 2014; Craig et al., 2018).

After completing the measures, participants were debriefed and given the option to have their data removed from the survey, if learning about the study's hypotheses made them uncomfortable with contributing their data.

Results

All analyses are ANOVAs using Tukey post hoc comparisons unless otherwise stated.

Perceptions of Effective Communication

There was a statistically significant difference in perceptions of effective communication as a function of article condition, $F(1, 757) = 13.54$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.017$. Participants in the optimistic condition ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.24$) were more likely to endorse multiracial people as effective communicators of racial dialogues in comparison to participants in the pragmatic condition ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.21$). Thus, H1 was supported, such that participants reading the optimistic fictitious article reported greater agreement that multiracial people have more effective communication for race-related dialogue than participants who read the pragmatic article.

Perceptions of Effective Learning Strategies

There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of effective learning strategies as a function of article condition, $F(1, 757) = 0.18$, $p = 0.67$, $\eta^2_p = 0.0002$] (e.g., perspective taking; $M_{optimistic} = 4.57$, $SD_{optimistic} = 1.13$; $M_{pragmatic} = 4.53$, $SD_{pragmatic} = 1.02$). Thus, H2 was not supported.

Perceptions of Interracial Improvements

There was a statistically significant difference in perceptions of interracial improvements between article condition, $F(1, 757) = 64.67$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.085$. Participants in the optimistic condition ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.39$) were more likely to believe that multiracial people are facilitators of interracial improvements than participants in the pragmatic condition ($M = 4.12$,

SD = 1.34). Thus, H3 was supported, such that participants reading the optimistic article reported greater agreement that multiracial people are the catalyst for improved race relations in comparison to those who read the pragmatic article.

Perceptions of Positive and Negative Stereotypes

There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of positive stereotypes as a function of article condition, $F(1, 757) = 2.13$, $p = 0.15$, $\eta^2_p = 0.002$ ($M_{optimistic} = 4.31$, $SD_{optimistic} = 0.74$; $M_{pragmatic} = 4.24$, $SD_{pragmatic} = 0.63$). In addition, there was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of negative stereotypes between article condition, $F(1, 757) = 2.13$, $p = 0.31$, $\eta^2_p = 0.0005$ ($M_{optimistic} = 2.42$, $SD_{optimistic} = 1.16$; $M_{pragmatic} = 2.37$, $SD_{pragmatic} = 0.99$). Thus, H4 was supported, such that positive (e.g., smart, rich) and negative stereotype (e.g., criminal, poor) ratings did not differ between the optimistic and pragmatic articles.

However, it is worth noting that the positive stereotype ratings were much higher than the negative stereotype ratings. Thus, I conducted a two-way 2 (condition: optimistic vs pragmatic) x 4 (stereotype: effective communicator vs learning strategy vs interracial improvement vs positive stereotype) mixed ANOVA with repeated measures on the stereotype ratings to determine if stereotypes of multiracial people as social model minorities (i.e., ratings of effective communicators, learning strategies, and interracial improvement) were statistically significantly higher than overall positive stereotype ratings.

Indeed, there was a statistically significantly main effect for condition, $F(1, 757) = 24.4$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.031$. That is, the optimistic condition had higher stereotype ratings in comparison to the pragmatic condition, $t(757) = 4.94$, $p < 0.001$. Additionally, there was a statistically significantly main effect for stereotype, $F(3, 2271) = 59.7$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.073$. Specifically, all stereotype ratings relating to social model minority traits were statistically

significantly different from positive stereotypes, such that social model minority stereotypes had higher ratings than positive stereotype ratings ($4.80 < ts(757) < 13.50$, $ps < 0.001$). Lastly, there was a statistically significant interaction between condition and stereotype ratings, $F(3, 2271) = 33.9$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.043$. I will only be covering post-hoc comparisons that are relevant for H4, which compares social model minority stereotype ratings to positive stereotype ratings within each condition.

Specifically, ratings of multiracial people as effective communicators were statistically significantly higher than general positive stereotype ratings in the optimistic and pragmatic condition (see Table 7 for all post hoc comparisons). Similarly, ratings of multiracial people as having effective learning strategies was statistically significantly higher than general positive stereotype ratings in the optimistic and pragmatic condition. Lastly, ratings of multiracial people as catalysts for improving race relations was higher than general positive stereotypes in the optimistic condition, but not the pragmatic condition. Therefore, it appears that the optimistic article led to stronger perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities more so than general positive perceptions. See Figure 6 for bar graph visualization of means and standard deviations.

Figure 6

Bar Graph for Means and Standard Deviations (error bars).

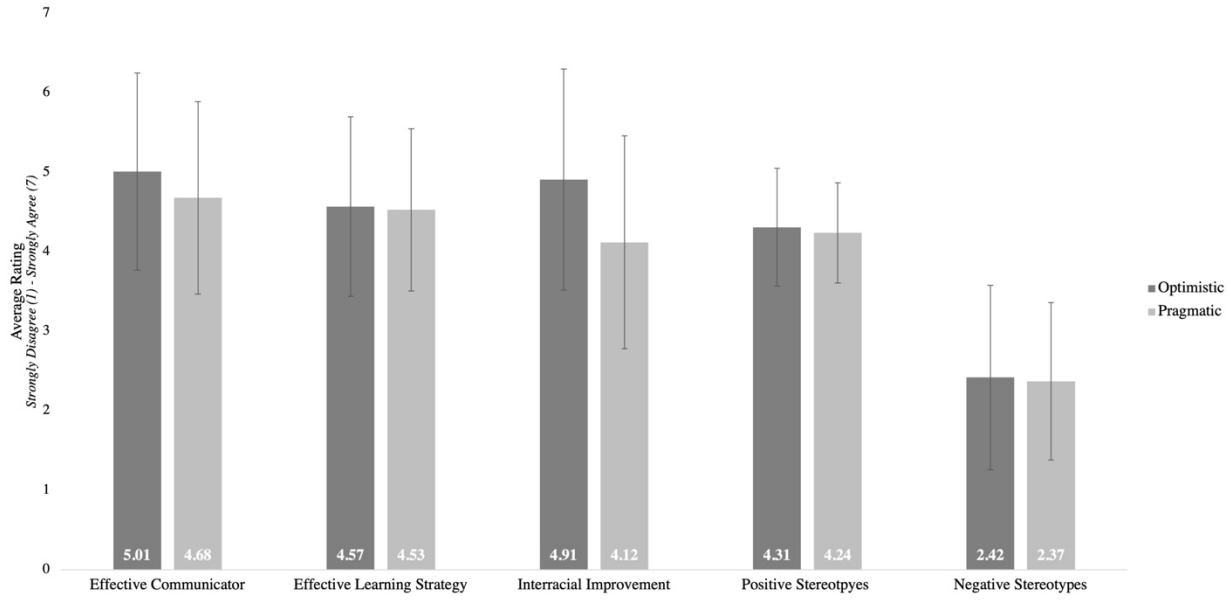


Table 7

*Stereotype Ratings * Condition Post Hoc Comparisons.*

Comparison									
Stereotype	**Condition**		**Stereotype**	**Condition**	**Mean Difference**	**SE**	**df**	**t**	**p_{tukey}**
Effective Communicator	Optimistic	-	Effective Communicator	Pragmatic	0.3277	0.0891	757	3.679	0.006
		-	Learning Strategies	Optimistic	0.4432	0.0523	757	8.477	< .001
		-	Learning Strategies	Pragmatic	0.4765	0.0836	757	5.696	< .001
		-	Interracial Improvement	Optimistic	0.0939	0.059	757	1.591	0.756
		-	Interracial Improvement	Pragmatic	0.8904	0.0944	757	9.432	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	0.6952	0.0584	757	11.911	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	0.7686	0.0715	757	10.748	< .001
	Pragmatic	-	Learning Strategies	Optimistic	0.1155	0.0841	757	1.373	0.869
		-	Learning Strategies	Pragmatic	0.1488	0.0546	757	2.724	0.117
		-	Interracial Improvement	Optimistic	-0.2339	0.094	757	-2.489	0.202
		-	Interracial Improvement	Pragmatic	0.5627	0.0616	757	9.13	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	0.3675	0.0731	757	5.025	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	0.4409	0.061	757	7.233	< .001
Learning Strategies	Optimistic	-	Learning Strategies	Pragmatic	0.0333	0.0783	757	0.425	1.00
		-	Interracial Improvement	Optimistic	-0.3493	0.0641	757	-5.451	< .001
		-	Interracial Improvement	Pragmatic	0.4472	0.0897	757	4.983	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	0.252	0.0513	757	4.913	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	0.3254	0.0652	757	4.989	< .001
	Pragmatic	-	Interracial Improvement	Optimistic	-0.3826	0.0889	757	-4.306	< .001
		-	Interracial Improvement	Pragmatic	0.4139	0.0669	757	6.184	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	0.2187	0.0664	757	3.293	0.023
		-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	0.2921	0.0536	757	5.452	< .001
Interracial Improvement	Optimistic	-	Interracial Improvement	Pragmatic	0.7965	0.099	757	8.042	< .001

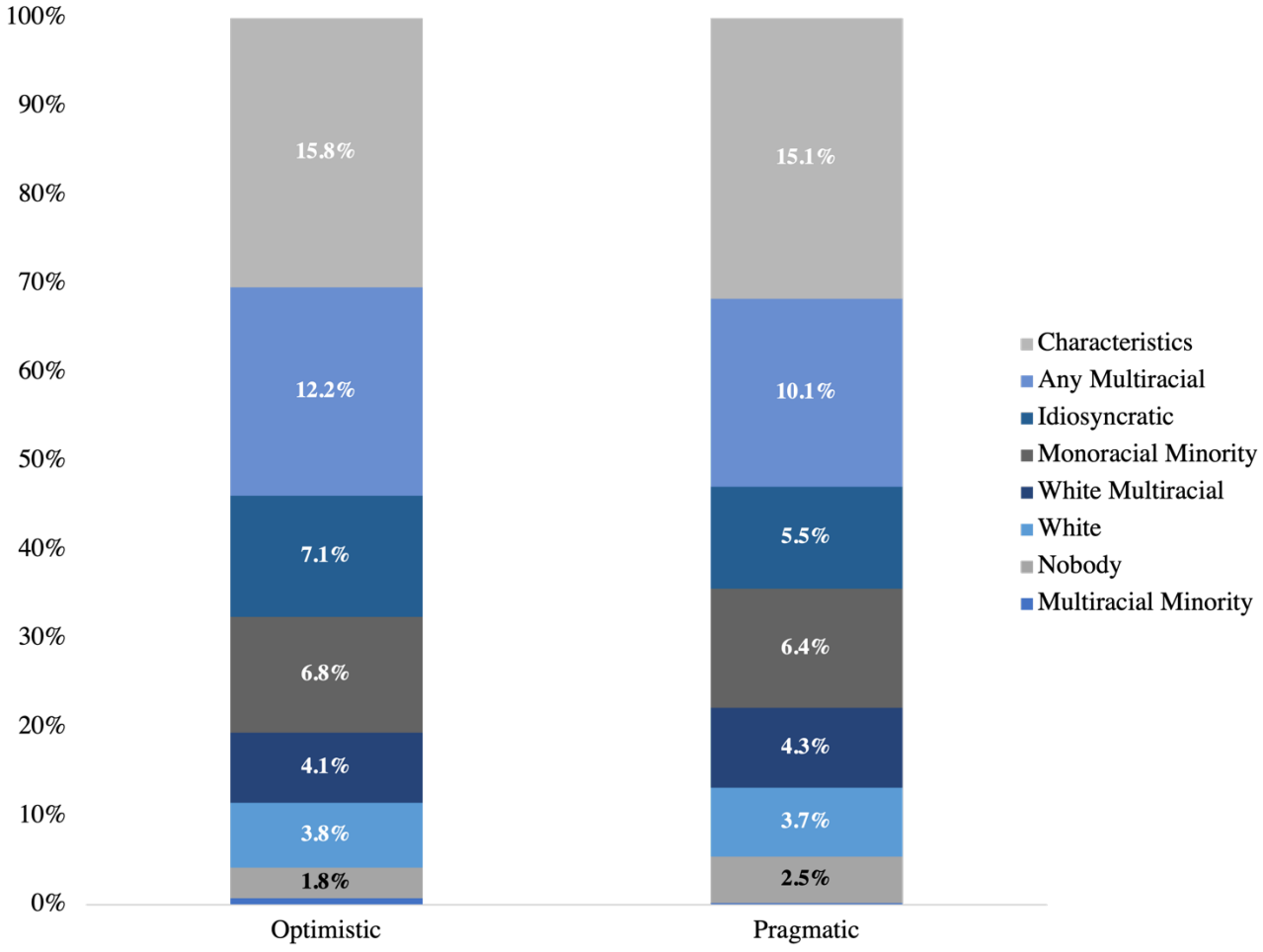
		-	Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	0.6013	0.0669	757	8.985	< .001
		-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	0.6748	0.0775	757	8.703	< .001
	Pragmatic	-	Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	-0.1952	0.0796	757	-2.454	0.217
		-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	-0.1218	0.0699	757	-1.742	0.66
Positive Stereotype	Optimistic	-	Positive Stereotype	Pragmatic	0.0734	0.0503	757	1.46	0.829

Perceptions of a Prototypical Social Model Minority

Using an open-response prompt, I explored what racial identities respondents report when thinking of a person who has the potential to alleviate racial tensions in the United States, hypothesizing that those who read the optimistic condition would be more likely to list a part-White multiracial person in comparison to those who read the pragmatic article (H5). Results show there was no statistically significant difference in total counts of codes between conditions, $\chi 2(7) = 3.70$, $p = 0.81$ (see Figure 7 to see code distribution rebased for each condition). Thus, H5 was not supported.

Figure 7

Code percentage distribution between conditions.



However, respondents' answers yielded interesting results on how they represented as a prototypical social model minority. That is, majority of respondents described the characteristics or qualities this individual would need to resolve racial tensions (N = 235), such as being open-minded and having strong perspective-taking skills (for example: *"I think this type of person is someone who listens and does not dismiss the ideas of minorities or white people"*). In addition, the second most common response was stating that any mixed-race person would be best suited to resolve race relations (N = 170) because they're able to understand and communicate for multiple groups (for example: *"A person of mixed race would be able to do this because they could understand both sides"*). While both responses do not explicitly reference a racial identity, their prototypical social model minority is a that a person capable of seeing multiple perspectives and navigate those discussions as a middleman. Given that racial tensions most contentious in the US are between racially marginalized groups and White communities (see Omi & Winant, 2014), it can be inferred that a part-White mixed-race person is the prototypical social model minority being described in the open responses due to the description that this individual must be able to "see both sides" or understand multiple perspectives of racial issues. However, more work should be done to further explore who is the prototypical social model minority.

Exploratory Measures: Replication and Threat

Due to a small sample size in Chapter 2, a replication was performed in Chapter 3 to determine if the effects for supporting anti-racist policies remained when testing for a small effect size. Indeed, there was a statistically significant difference in support for anti-racist policies between article condition, $F(1, 757) = 14.52$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.02$. That is, participants in the optimistic condition ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.70$) had lower support for anti-racist policies in comparison to participants in the pragmatic condition ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.74$). Thus, my

hypothesis from Chapter 2 that participants reading the optimistic article would report that anti-racist interventions will be less needed in the future in comparison to those who read a pragmatic article was still supported and the effect was successful replicated.

Lastly, there were no statistically significant differences in SDO ($t(757) = -0.73$, $p = 0.46$, $95\%CI[-0.40, 0.18]$, $d = -0.05$), Realistic Threat ($t(756) = -0.31$, $p = 0.12$, $95\%CI[-0.27, 0.20]$, $d = -0.02$), and Symbolic Threat ($t(757) = 0.53$, $p = 0.59$, $95\%CI[-0.11, 0.19]$, $d = 0.04$) across the conditions. Thus, the manipulation did not impact perceptions of threat.

Discussion

Chapter 3 sought to examine the effects multiracial progress narratives have on perceptions of mixed-race individuals. Specifically, it was anticipated that participants reading an optimistic fictitious news article (i.e., a growing multiracial population will benefit US racial progress, meant to represent a multiracial progress narrative) would report greater agreement that multiracial people are more effective communicators, use more effective learning strategies, and improve interracial relations in comparison to those who read the pragmatic fictitious news article (i.e., a growing multiracial population will not benefit US racial progress unless anti-racist efforts are made).

Indeed, perceptions of multiracial people as effective communicators and improving interracial relations was statistically significant between the articles. That is, those in the optimistic condition did report greater ratings of multiracial people as effective communicators for racial dialogue between White people and racial minorities and did report greater agreement that multiracial peoples' presence would improve race relations in comparison to those in the pragmatic condition. Thus, hypotheses for these measures were supported (H1 and H3). However, perceptions of multiracial people as using more effective learning strategies in

conflicts was not statistically significant between the articles. While this does not support my hypotheses (H2), a limitation to the study could be that the measure was not optimized for the context of the study. Specifically, respondents were not asked to imagine a conflict, nor were they primed with a conflict. Thus, it may have been difficult for participants to provide a response based on an ambiguous statement about a non-existent confrontation or conflict. Nonetheless, there is support for my thesis, which is that multiracial progress narratives do exacerbate positive stereotypes/impressions of multiracial people as Social Model Minorities or cultural bridges.

Additionally, I also hypothesized that multiracial progress narratives would only bolster positive impressions of multiracial people as they relate to Social Model Minority traits (i.e., effective communicator, using effective learning strategies, and interracial improvements) and not other positive traits (e.g., rich, educated). Indeed, perceptions of other positive stereotypical traits were not statistically significantly different between the two conditions, supporting hypothesis H4. In addition, perceptions of mixed-race people as model minorities were statistically significantly higher than perceptions of general positive traits across conditions, except for perceptions of multiracial population growth improving race relations. That is, perceptions of a multiracial population growth improving race relations did not statistically significantly differ from perceptions of positive stereotypes in the pragmatic condition, specifically.

However, general positive stereotype traits were still rated rather high, and general negative stereotypes were rated very low. This could suggest that simply reading about a multiracial population growth, like Chapter 2, generates positive sentiment toward mixed-race people. Interestingly, this positive affinity toward multiracial groups may stem from lack of

threat regarding a mixed-race population. That is, White Americans often experience levels of threat when it is signaled that a racial minority or non-assimilated group is rapidly growing in the US (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Danbold & Huo, 2015; Danbold & Huo, 2022). However, messages of a growing mixed-race population may not signal the same threat that make White Americans fear the status quo is changing in an unfavorable way for their group. That is, it is possible that White participants are imagining a growing mixed-race population that is part-White, and thus, adjacently related to Whiteness or the status quo. Indeed, open responses on the social model minority prompt suggest that respondents are imaging a person with qualities and traits that make them well equipped to me a "middleman" between racial groups.

Specifically, responses highlight that a mixed-race person would be the ideal moderator between racial groups because of their ability to be cognizant of racial groups perspectives, and thus, alleviate racial tensions. As stated previously, given that the most contentious relationship between racial groups often reside between racial minorities and White Americans (Omi & Winant, 2014), respondents are likely imagining a mixed-race person that has a racial minority and White identity, giving them the ability to demonstrate perspective taking skills to resolve racial tensions. Furthermore, Chapter 2 and 3 included various measures of threat, of which yielded no statistically significant results across conditions, further suggesting that White individuals are not threated by a growing mixed-race population.

Therefore, Chapter 3 supported my hypotheses that multiracial progress narratives do exacerbate perceptions of multiracial people as social model minorities. While the implications of these positive stereotypes on the multiracial community are unclear through the study above, it can be inferred based on model minority myth literature for Asian Americans (see Gupta et al., 2011; Kim & Lee, 2014) that the unnecessary pressure to achieve unrealistic and unprompted

expectations may have negative mental health or social outcomes for multiracial people. Furthermore, the model minority myth often causes limited social, educational, and health resources that would benefit Asian Americans because they are assumed to be well-off and successful in US society (Walton & Truong, 2023). Similarly, multiracial individuals may be experiencing racial inequalities that may go unnoticed and unaddressed if they are assumed to be social model minorities. Therefore, it is important to carefully talking about a growing multiracial population—in a way that is pragmatic and based in the realities of US' social inequalities—is important for racial progress and for multiracial communities.

General Discussion

Research on racial progress narratives has examined how impressions of an egalitarian future lead participants to overestimate actual racial progress made in the present (Kraus et al., 2019). For instance, those who believe the US has made great progress toward egalitarianism underestimate the wage gap between White and Black communities (Kraus et al., 2019). Such impressions make it difficult for legitimate progress and change to take place by creating the façade that progress is natural, decreasing support for actionable policies (Kraus et al., 2022; Richeson, 2020). However, little work has examined how multiracial progress narratives likely exist as a subsection of racial progress narratives, which imply that multiracialism will fuel society's ascent toward a racially equitable and harmonious future.

Indeed, multiracial individuals are assumed to be ideal facilitators to resolve racial tensions between racial groups in the US (Spencer, 2014; Wilton et al., 2022), resulting in portrayals of them as social model minorities (Squires, 2007). Specifically, multiracial progress narratives likely diminish White people's motivations to make further progress on social issues because they are assuming the growth of a mixed-race population will spur adequate social

change (see Hur & Ruttan, 2023). Such beliefs then likely influence perceptions of mixed-race people as social model minorities that act as funnels for racial progress, either due their assumed ability to moderate racial dialogues (see Wilton et al., 2022) or by blurring racial boundaries because of their fluid and ambiguous identities (see Lee & Bean, 2004). Thus, I explored the presence of multiracial progress narratives in discussions of mixed-race people and the downstream consequences these narratives have on racial progress and multiracial communities. That is, these narratives can diminish support for anti-racist policies and exacerbate positive, and potentially harmful, stereotypes of mixed-race people.

Indeed, Chapter 1 showed that multiracial progress narratives exist in our general discussions of mixed-race people while also providing insight into a variety of stereotypes or narratives that are common within US mainstream news outlets. Through a content analysis, themes relating to identity (choosing an identity, flexibility/fluidity), appearance (ambiguity, attractiveness), benefits (either to themselves or to society), and multiracial experiences (activism, discrimination) emerged. Notably, multiracial populations serving as a benefit to society—because their existence is assumed to blur racial boundaries, improve race relations, or challenge conventional thinking about race—was the theme most relevant to the concept of a multiracial progress narrative. As a reminder, I define *multiracial progress narratives* as narratives that imply multiracialism will fuel society's ascent toward a racially equitable and harmonious future. Based on my working definition of multiracial progress narratives, Chapter 1 showed that, indeed, news articles tend to couple multiracialism with an improvement in race relations—often highlighting the hopefulness a mixed-race population brings to the US.

Furthermore, Chapter 2 showed how these progress narratives do not generate support for anti-racist policies by experimentally manipulating multiracial progress narratives and examining

the consequences of these narratives for racial progress. Specifically, fictitious news articles that discuss a growing mixed-race population were created to understand how various discourses can impact White individuals' perceptions of future race relations and issues, which may then impact their support for anti-racist policies. The results showed that, indeed, the news article implying the multiracial population will inherently benefit society did not generate more support among White individuals for anti-racist policies in comparison to the news article that discussed the need for structural change despite the growing multiracial population. In addition, open response coding showed that across the optimistic (i.e., multiracial progress narrative) and pragmatic (i.e., calls attention to systemic-level change) articles presented, participants did express positive sentiment toward the growth of a multiracial population; however, it was only the pragmatic article that had responses indicating that participants recognized the positive influence of a multiracial population along with the need for anti-racist policies.

Lastly, Chapter 3 showed that multiracial progress narratives do have negative implications for multiracial individuals by exacerbating positive stereotypes of multiracial people. That is, multiracial progress narratives may exacerbate positive stereotypes that insinuate multiracial people are social model minorities because there is something inherent about multiracial people that contributes to positive racial progress. Indeed, Chapter 3 results showed that reading the optimistic article caused White people to believe that mixed-race people were a social model minority by inflating perceptions of them as effective communicators and improving interracial relations. In addition, open response coding shows that across both articles, participants described a person capable of fixing racial tensions in the US as one who has qualities and an identity that allows this person to see the perspectives of racial minorities and White people. This suggests that a mixed-race person is, indeed, imagined as being a

prototypical social model minority. Therefore, Chapters 2 and 3 provided insight into the implications of multiracial progress narratives, such as how these narratives pose a barrier to racial progress and exacerbate positive stereotypes of multiracial communities.

There are several limitations or considerations to the dissertation. Firstly, the studies largely focus on a very niche manipulation, which is limited to how news articles are discussing mixed race people and how fictitious news articles impact White Americans. In addition, the medium of the stimuli (i.e., a news article) may have influenced the participants' responses in a way that reflects their bias toward news articles. That is, readers or audiences likely are led to believe that articles published through credible news platforms are reporting true or accurate information (Dixon et al., 2019). Thus, we may not be accurately capturing participants' true impressions, feelings, or judgments in relation to multiracial progress narratives because they are assuming that the stimuli are reporting something more accurate than their own beliefs. However, Chapters 2 includes a control article, which likely mitigates this concern given that across all conditions, respondents had similar perceptions of racial progress and discrimination.

Additionally, Chapter 1 only focuses on the examination of news articles to infer that multiracial progress narratives exist in our broader society; however, online news outlets may be inclined to publish content that is meant to garner attention (Bourgonje et al., 2017). Thus, it could be that published content is intended to hold an optimistic message to capture a wider audience, while still reporting facts or statistics, and Chapter 1's results are skewed in a way that reflects this bias in publishing. Future research should be done to further explore other avenues these progress narratives may exist in US society's broader discourse of mixed-race people and the implications of these other forms of ingesting information about multiracial population growth.

In addition, the dissertation examines the presence of multiracial progress narratives and their potential consequences, however, it does not isolate a specific mechanism to explain how progress narratives relate to perceptions of progress. While there is consensus that White Americans over-estimate racial progress (Kraus et al., 2019) and believe that progress is a natural and linear process (Hur & Ruttan, 2023), there are still multiple ways in which people are connecting a growing mixed-race population with progress. For example, people may be imagining that mixed-race people are the moderators of race relations, and thus, will have an active involvement in spearheading social change (see Wilton et al., 2022). On the other hand, it could be that people are assuming their growth—as a racially ambiguous population—will challenge racial boundaries and make these categories less significant in general society (see Chen & Hamilton, 2012). Furthermore, people may assume that the mere exposure to a racially ambiguous population will challenge racist ideologies, such as essentialist thinking or racial stereotyping, and create a society that holds racially progressive attitudes that will help create avenues for racial progress (see Gaither et al., 2019; Pauker, Carpinella, et al., 2018; Young et al., 2013). It also may be assumed that a growing multiracial population—one that may have progressive racial attitudes themselves (see Shih et al., 2007)—will become the majority, and thus, foster a racially progress society by changing racial and social norms.

Therefore, there are various mechanisms to explain the connection between a multiracial population growth and a racially egalitarian future. Though, Chapter 3 helps generate an idea of what the possible mechanism is, which is the idea that multiracial people will be active mediators to absolve racial tensions. As previously stated, the open responses suggest that the prototypical social model minority is a mixed-race person that is capable of empathizing and understanding multiple perspectives, meaning that White respondents are imagining multiracial people being

actively involved in inciting social change. Nonetheless, future research should be done to examine the association between multiracial progress narratives and perceptions of progress, identifying a mechanism to explain how this relationship takes shape in people's representation of mixed-race people and progress.

Additionally, while the research has demonstrated White Americans generally seem to have favorable sentiment toward a growing multiracial population, it has not established why that is the case. Specifically, White Americans typically showcase feelings of threat when exposed to discussions or narratives that imply a racial minority or non-assimilated group may be increasing in population size (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Danbold & Huo, 2015, 2022). To maintain their status in society, White Americans will often act in ways that maintain the status quo for their group (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023), such as voting more conservatively (Major et al., 2018; Mutz, 2018), showing less support for anti-racist policies (see Kraus et al., 2022). However, reading about a growing multiracial population in Chapter 2 and 3 yielded interesting results. Chapter 2 suggest that White participants generally had positive affect after reading all articles discussing a growing multiracial population, and Chapter 2 suggest that White participants tend to perceive multiracial people positively. In addition, both Chapter 2 and 3 showed no statistically significant results on all threat measures included in the studies across conditions. Thus, it seems that the White participants in Chapter 2 and 3 were not responding to these narratives in a way that is consistent with past literature, which would suggest that they should have felt threatened or negatively about the prospects of a rapidly growing population that is not their own.

There are possible theories behind why a growing multiracial population is less threatening to White Americans. For example, using interest convergence theory from Critical

Race Theory, it could be that White Americans associate a multiracial population growth with progress, and thus, feel absolved from the responsibility of fighting for actionable and systematic change (see Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). That is, if a growing multiracial population is one that will bring social change, then White Americans do not need to act in urgency to support or act in ways that will bring change (Hur & Ruttan, 2023; Kraus et al., 2022). Furthermore, progress narratives, in general, are supported by White Americans because it absolves the need for systemic and policy-drive change, which inevitably maintains the status quo that maintains White Americans power in US society (Richeson, 2020). Therefore, White Americans likely are not threatened by a growing multiracial population because it allows them to maintain their complacency toward racism, resulting in limited actual social change. However, another perspective for White respondents' lack of threat is through who they imagine to be representative of a mixed-race person.

That is, a growing multiracial population may be assumed to be a White-adjacent population, and thus, less threatening. Indeed, Chapter 3 open responses suggest that White respondents describe an individual capable of understanding racial minorities and White individuals' perspectives and experiences, suggesting they imagine a prototypical mixed-race person to be part-White. Additionally, research on mixed-race people has perpetuated the same bias by representing mixed-race people and their experiences through part-White stimuli or participants (see Garay & Remedios, 2021; Young et al., 2021). Research has also shown that a part-White mixed-race person is often considered the prototypical representation for multiracial people instead of a mixed-race person with only racial minority identities (Vinluan, Bonam, et al., in prep). Therefore, the lack of threat expressed by White participants in Chapter 2 and 3 may be explained by their assumption that a growing mixed-race population is mostly comprised of

part-White individuals, causing them to be unthreatened by this population growth and increasing their favorability toward mixed-race people. However, more research should be done to examine how demographic shifts (e.g., minority-majority vs multiracial growth) influence White peoples' threat response and support for these demographic changes.

Lastly, while Chapter 3 explored the implications of multiracial progress narratives on perceptions of positive stereotypes of multiracial people, it did not explore the consequences of these positive stereotypes. In general, positive stereotypes of any social group can cause harm to their mental well-being (Czopp, 2008; Czopp et al., 2015; Kay et al., 2013; Siy & Cheryan, 2013). For example, Asian Americans who are primed with the model minority stereotype often experience high pressure, resulting in negative mental health outcomes (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Furthermore, Asian Americans who endorse the model minority stereotype demonstrate less help seeking behaviors for mental health issues in comparison to those who do not endorse the model minority stereotype (Gupta et al., 2011). In addition, Asian Americans often have difficulty accessing educational, social, or health resources due to limited support for Asian Americans caused by the assumption their group is well-off in US society (Walton & Truong, 2023). Similarly, multiracial people may experience adverse side effects when stereotyped as social model minorities. They may feel extreme pressure to be activists or moderators, resulting in negative mental health consequences. Furthermore, multiracial people themselves may experience racism but do not seek help or resources to overcome these struggles. Or not enough resources exist to mitigate racial inequities they might experience because they're assumed to be removed from racial disparities. Indeed, multiracial people do already report more negative mental health outcomes compared to monoracial minorities (Fisher et al., 2014) and do report experiencing racism in their lives (Reid Marks et al., 2020). Thus, future work should

examine negative implications of positive perceptions of mixed-race people as it relates to their well-being.

Overall, I hope the results of the dissertation shed more insight on discourses of multiracial populations and bring a deeper understanding of how discussions of mixed-race people can carry negative implications, if not done carefully. Additionally, I hope the dissertation may provide a foundation for other work that may want to examine the effects of tokenizing individuals who carry ambiguous or "boundary-challenging" identities (e.g., non-binary individuals; Akita et al., 2013). It is important to cultivate discussions of those who identify in ways that challenge society's conventional ways of thinking about social groups; however, we must do so in ways that do not hinder efforts to uplift and support marginalized communities nor harm these communities. Thus, we must be mindful of how we create and attend to discourse about progress to ensure we are imposing as little barriers toward actual, impactful change.

Appendix

Chapter 1

Additional Results

For the purposes of the dissertation, themes related to multiracial progress narratives were discussed in Chapter 1. For the remaining themes, please see results below. For context, quotes pulled from the articles are meant to demonstrate examples of these themes. However, some quotes come from the multiracial interviewees that the authors of the article spoke with. Thus, one could argue that these themes are representative of actual multiracial experiences and are not portrayals of stereotypes of mixed-race people. Indeed, for every theme below, there is literature to help provide evidence that support these multiracial experiences. However, there is no definitive proof that multiracial people are unable to perpetuate stereotypes associated with their own group. Indeed, racially marginalized groups are capable of resonating with experiences that are stereotypical of their group (see Panelo, 2010), and marginalized groups can endorse stereotypes of their own group as well (see Gupta et al., 2011; Kim & Lee, 2014). In addition, it could be that the authors of the articles selectively pulled quotes from mixed-race people that support their own biases (*confirmation bias*; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2020; Nickerson, 1998). Thus, I want to acknowledge the reliance of quotes that come from mixed-race interviewees through the analysis of the themes below can be representations of multiracial experiences, and that these experiences can still provide insights into general narratives and stereotypes of multiracial people.

Multiracial Identity and Experiences

Identity Flexibility. Across all 50 articles, there were 24 passages coded as having themes of multiracial individuals' identity flexibility. These themes imply that multiracial people have flexible or fluid identities that either go beyond normal conceptions of racial categories or are "challenging" racial categories.

> "I am a mix of Brazilian and Lebanese descent. I think my identity is very much like a Venn diagram, where I keep moving around those various circles and the overlap keeps changing all the time. The one thing I have kept constant is some sense of mixedness."
> – The Loneliness of Being Mixed Race in America, Vox, 2021

> "The majority of multiracial people polled by Pew said their identity had evolved over the years: About a third had gone from thinking of themselves as multiple races to just one, while a similar number had moved in the opposite direction, from a single race to more than one."
> – The Biracial Advantage, Jennifer Latson, 2019

Indeed, these themes are supported in the literature about multiracial individuals' experiences and identity formation. Specifically, identity formation (see Deters, 1997; Renn, 2008), the pressure to choose an identity (see Sanchez, 2010; Townsend et al., 2009), and various experiences regarding being mixed or ambiguous (see Nadal et al., 2011; Shih & Sanchez, 2009), are common experiences of multiracial people. Thus, themes about the fluidity of mixed-race people were very common and discussed in great length throughout the articles sampled.

Choosing an Identity. Additionally, there were 24 passages having themes of being forced or coerced into choosing an identity by their own community (e.g., friends and family) or by society (e.g., checkboxes, teachers).

> "'I just realized that my race is something I have to think about,' she wrote, describing herself as having an Asian mother and a black father. 'It pains me to say this, but putting down black might help my admissions chances and putting down Asian might hurt it. My mother urges me to put down black to use AA' — African-American — 'to get in to the colleges I'm applying to,' added Ms. Scott,

> who identified herself on the site as Clearbrooke. 'I sort of want to do this but I'm wondering if this is morally right.'"
> – On College Forms, a Question of Race, or Races, Can Perplex, Susan Saulny & Jacques Steinberg, 2011

> "Often, biracial and multiracial people are made to feel that they have to choose between their races -- that they have to be one race. This in itself is anxiety-provoking, especially given that most mixed race individuals now prefer to identify as biracial or multiracial, but what further aggravates the situation is that we often don't get to choose which box we fall into.
> – Biracial Identity, My Choice, Not Society's, Natasha Sim, 2017

In past literature, research shows that being pressured to choose an identity can lead to negative consequences for multiracial people. For instance, past work has shown that when asked to make a forced choice on a racial demographic question, multiracial people reported experiencing negative emotions, such as decreased self-esteem (Townsend et al., 2009). Additionally, being forced or pressured to choose an identity can lead to mixed-race people feeling excluded from their respective racial communities (Museus et al., 2016). Thus, identity choice is a common theme that is explored in the articles, as well as a common experience for multiracial communities.

Ambiguous or Ethnic Appearance. Lastly, when it comes to describing or discussing multiracial identities and their experiences, appearance was a theme that came up 9 passages in the articles. Specifically, themes of being viewed as racially or ethnically ambiguous were the most common, along with some themes of being perceived as attractive.

> "I got a lot of people not really being able to recognize me on sight. I've had to deal with an ethnic ambiguity that I never had to deal with before. So I had to figure out the language that I wanted to use to describe myself."
> – The Loneliness of Being Multiracial in America, [author], [year]

> "For students of color, racial identity development is a critical aspect of psychological development. Ambiguous racial appearance is one of the main factors that prevents students from feeling a sense of belonging on college

> campuses. Those students often grapple with experiences of isolation, rejection and low self-concept."
> – When the Boxes No Longer Fit, Kate Hermsmeyer, George Dou & Kelsey Oberbroeckling, 2021

> "But saying biracial people are inherently beautiful isn't a harmless compliment—it can contribute to exotification and objectification. For many biracial people, these reports of heightened attractiveness are an unwelcome distraction, obscuring and delegitimizing the true challenges they face."
> – The Biracial Advantage, Jennifer Latson, 2019

Indeed, past literature on perceptions of mixed-race individuals has also demonstrated that they are perceived as ambiguous or attractive. For instance, past research has shown that perceivers are less likely to remember multiracial or ambiguous faces because of their lack of prototypicality for one race (Pauker & Ambady, 2009). In addition, research has shown that mixed-race people are rated as being more attractive than monoracial people (Reece, 2016); however, such perceptions are likely fueled by the fetishization of mixed-race people (Curington, 2021), or because mixed-race people are viewed as being closely aligned with Euro-centric features (Harris, 2022).

Multiracial Racism and Activism

Experiences with Racism. There were 24 passages having themes of multiracial community's experiences with racism. Specifically, these articles included discussions on both a systematic level and an individual level. The articles reported events in which interviewees recalled being called slurs, being threatened, and/or being targeted because of their perceived race. Additionally, these passages acknowledged that multiracial communities can and do experience systemic racism, which impacts their navigation through the US's judicial system, education, poverty, and/or employment.

> "Many adults of mixed racial heritage have experienced some form of discrimination, though the specific races that make up a person's individual

> background factor into this. Among biracial black and American Indian adults, 71 percent said they have been subject to slurs or jokes, for example."
> – America's Multiracial Population Surges, Nick Gass, 2015

> "Growing up as a child of a White woman and a Black man in a small town in Maine, Victoria Anderson was constantly reminded she was different. A close relative nicknamed her "jungle bunny," she said. Another relative once turned her framed photo so her face wasn't visible. And she wasn't allowed to play with some White cousins -- an insult that added to the discrimination she received from strangers."
> – When Your Own Family is Racist Toward You, Faith Karimi, 2021

> "Tanya Hernandez, professor of law at Fordham University and the author of the forthcoming book Multiracials and Civil Rights, points out that in legal cases covering a wide range of contexts, including education, employment, public accommodations, and criminal justice, 'people who identify as mixed-race ... describe ... strikingly binary, black/white or White/non-white forms of discrimination.'"
> – Why Mixed-Race Americans Will Not Save The Country, Alexandros Orphanides, 2017

Thus, there are several discussions throughout the articles that acknowledge the complex reality of being mixed-race in the US. On one hand, there are those who view the growing population as a beacon of hope for racial progress. On the other hand, there is the harsh reality that racism is an omnipresent force that impacts all racially marginalized groups in the US, including those who do not fit into a singular racial category. Past psychological work has documented the unique discrimination that multiracial people experience, largely focusing on how their mixed-race identity is stigmatized (Scranton, 2014) and excluded (Museus et al., 2016) from their respective racial communities. However, there were also themes of multiracial people being activists for racial progress within these articles.

Multiracial Activists. Lastly, there were 9 passages that were coded as having themes indicating that multiracial people are ideal activists for racial progress. These themes imply that

because of multiracial people's identities or racial attitudes, they are better equipped or more privileged to facilitate racial progress and change. In addition, some of these themes imply that multiracial people are a new type of activist, one that advocates for those who do not fit into a singular category.

> "He said his ability to navigate within both communities has given him 'a sense of responsibility to be aware of the privilege that some people afford me, to be aware of how I might use the platforms that I have to speak out on issues of race, culture and identity.'"
> –'We're talking about a big, powerful phenomenon' Multiracial Americans drive change, Silvia Foster-Frau, Ted Melinik, Adrian Blánco, 2021

> "'The No. 1 reason why [multiracial people] exist is to give people who feel like they don't want to choose a side, that don't want to label themselves based on other people's interpretations of who they are, to give them a place, that safe space,' she said. Ms. López-Mullins is Chinese and
> Peruvian on one side, and white and American Indian on the other."
> –Black, White, Asian, More Young Americans Choose All the Above, Susan Saluny, 2011

These themes of being activists tend to be coupled with themes of being a societal benefit as well, implying that multiracial people's activism is to help advance progress in broader society. Though, as noted prior, there is an over-emphasis on the progress multiracial people can bring to US society and fewer discussions on the struggles they experience in society.

Thus, the content analysis of the articles showed evidence of optimistic narratives that imply multiracialism is present in US mainstream culture. It is important to remember that such positive impressions of multiraciality took shape to combat the tumultuous history of multiracial communities. However, these optimistic narratives that imply a growing multiracial population will be a contributor to racial progress in the US are disconnected from the complex reality of being multiracial in the US. The themes coded for in the analysis imply that because of multiracial people's flexible identities, they can challenge conceptions of race and have

progressive racial attitudes that may facilitate positive change in the US. However, there are also negative implications of being mixed-race in the US, such as battling racism just as other marginalized groups experience.

Not a Panacea. While most articles tend to highlight the advantages or benefits of a growing multiracial population, some acknowledged the complex reality being multiracial in US society (N = 10 passages). Specifically, these passages acknowledge how multiracial people themselves are actively targets of racism, never asked to take on the responsibility of fixing racism, and how multiracial progress narratives are problematic for racial progress.

> "A recent essay in The Times described the creativity and mental flexibility of biracial people; critics took issue with it, arguing that race-blending is not the antidote to white supremacy, that hapas [mixed-race Asian individuals] won't save the world. To which hapas would probably say: That's not our job. And if anybody ever said saving the world was as simple as filling it with green-eyed, mocha-skinned babies, it wasn't us."
> – In Los Angeles, a Festival of Love and Hapa-ness, Lawrence Downes, 2017

> "The new reports on shifting racial demographics in American society also shed light on the distorted state of racial equity in America. Although we are an increasingly diverse nation, there remains a deep economic divide between racial groups. Multiracial families living in poverty often experience intersecting racial, economic and social challenges that leave them behind. However, the unique experience of these families has not been brought into mainstream discussions of the racial wealth divide."
> – America's Changing Population Why It's Time to Consider Multiracial Families in Poverty, Katherine Kennedy, 2018

Thus, while there are themes of multiracial being positioned as catalysts for racial progress and change due to their fluid identities or progressive racial attitudes, there are some discussions of how multiracial people are unfairly put in these positions. Some work has highlighted that, indeed, exaggerating the positive impact of a multiracial population can cause negative detriments toward racial progress (Garay & Remedios, 2021). In addition, little-to-no

work has actively examined how multiracial people's attitudes shape or impact anti-racist policies or how multiracial people, families, and communities are impacted by racism themselves (Garay & Remedios, 2021). Thus, the topic of how a multiracial population's presence in society will impact racial progress is largely overtaken by the positive implications, with little discussions of how multiracial people are affected by a racist society, placing an unfair responsibility onto multiracial communities to be agents of change in the US.

Chapter 2

Pilot A

Participants

We conducted a power analysis for an equivalence test using 'TOSTER' in R ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta\text{-}1 = 0.80$, *equivalence bounds* [-0.20, 0.20]; Lankens et al., 2018) and determined that a sample of 215 was needed for the study. However, equivalence tests are done in response to non-statistically significant effects; therefore, paired t-tests are done before the equivalence tests. Therefore, using 'pwr' in R, we also determined that 199 pairs were needed to detect a small effect for a paired t-test ($\alpha = 0.05$, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, d=0.20). Thus, we sampled a total of 214 participants from the human subjects research pool at Tufts University who were compensated 0.5 credit hours for an introductory psychology course (woman/female = 135, man/male = 72, non-binary/third gender = 5, prefer not to answer = 4; Asian = 61, Black = 9, White = 96, Hispanic/Latinx = 12, Multiracial = 33, prefer not to answer = 2; $M_{age} = 18.79$, $SD_{age} = 0.95$). No participants needed to be excluded from the survey based on attention checks items, nor did any participants revoke their consent to participants during the debrief.

Materials

Stimuli. Three fictitious news articles that describe the growth of the multiracial population were created. The control news article discussed the growth of a multiracial population in a neutral manner with no commentary on the implications of the growing demographic for society. The optimistic news article discussed the growth of a multiracial population and highlighted the positive implications of a growing multiracial demographic, specifically that it will improve future race relations. Lastly, the pragmatic news article discussed

how, despite the growth of a multiracial population, institutional and structural changes are still necessary to improve future race relations.

Measures. Participants were asked to rate each article on a series of dimensions unrelated to the manipulation. This included rating how interesting and engaging the articles were (1 = *not interesting/engaging* at all to 7 = *extremely interesting/engaging*), how credible and believable the articles were (1 = *not credible/believable at all* to 7 = *extremely credible/believable*), and how easy to read and understandable the articles were (1 = *not easy to read/understandable at all* to 7 = *extremely easy to read/understandable*).

Procedure

Participants electronically consented via Qualtrics prior to participating in the study. Once they consented to participate, they completed a series of demographic items (race, gender, age, etc.) and proceeded to continue with the study. Participants saw all three articles in random order. For each article, they first were told to read the article and complete one quiz item, which served as our attention check. After they completed the attention check item, they proceeded to complete all measures in random order. After they answered all the measure items, they were debriefed and given an option to have their data removed from the analysis if they were uncomfortable with the survey or their responses. Participants were then thanked for their participation and given their course credit.

Results

Interesting and engaging. Paired t-tests determined that the control article was rated as less interesting than the optimistic article and pragmatic article, $8.53 \leq |t(213)| \leq 8.95$, $ps < .001$, $95\%CIs[-0.97, -0.58]$, $0.58 \leq |d| \leq 0.61$. There was no statistically significant difference in interest ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(213) = 0.51$, $p = 0.61$, $95\%CI$[-

0.18, -0.11], $d = 0.03$. We conducted an equivalence test using the two one-sided test (TOST) procedure (Lakens et al., 2018). We set our lower and upper boundaries to Cohen's *d*s of +/-0.20 based on desired power ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$), alpha level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and sample size ($n = 213$). The TOST procedure indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(213) = 2.52$, $p = 0.006$), meaning that the two articles are equivalent in their levels of interest.

Similarly, the control article was rated as less engaging than the optimistic and pragmatic article, $7.72 \leq |t(213)| \leq 8.85$, *ps* < .001, *95%CIs*[-0.98, -0.54], $0.53 \leq |d| \leq 0.61$) There was no statistically significant difference in engagement ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, , $t(213) = 0.51$, $p = 0.35$, *95%CI*[-0.23, 0.08], $d = 0.06$. A two one-sided equivalence test (Cohen's *ds* = +/- 0.20, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $n = 213$) indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and equivalent to zero ($t(213) = 1.92$, $p = 0.03$), meaning that the two articles are equivalent in their levels of engagement. The mean and standard deviation for all measures and articles are in Table A1.

Credible and believable. Paired t-tests indicated that the optimistic and pragmatic article were rated as more credible than the control article, $10.88 \leq |t(213)| \leq 8.06$, *ps* < .001, *95%CIs*[-1.28, -0.65], $0.55 \leq |d| \leq 0.74$. In addition, the pragmatic article was rated as more credible than the optimistic article, $t(213) = -3.44$, p <.001, *95%CI*[-0.36, -0.10], $d = 0.24$.

Similarly, the optimistic and pragmatic article were rated as more believable than the control article, $2.31 \leq |t(213)| \leq 6.94$, *ps* < .001, *95%CIs*[-0.85, -0.04], $0.16 \leq |d| \leq 0.47$. In addition, the pragmatic article was rated as more believable than the optimistic article, $t(213) = -5.55$, p <.001, *95%CI*[-0.56, -0.27], $d = 0.38$.

Easy to read and understandable. The control article was rated as easier to read in comparison to the optimistic and pragmatic article, $5.93 \leq |t(213)| \leq 6.09$, $ps < .001$, $95\%CIs[0.29, 0.62]$, $0.42 \leq |d| \leq 0.42$. There was no statistically significant difference in easiness to read ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic articles, $t(213) = 0.53$, $p = 0.60$, $95\%CI[-0.10, 0.17]$, $d = 0.03$. An equivalence test indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and equivalent to zero ($t(213) = -2.50$, $p = 0.007$), meaning that the two articles are equivalent in their easiness to read.

The control article was rated as more understandable in comparison to the optimistic and pragmatic article, $3.60 \leq |t(213)| \leq 3.85$, $ps < .001$, $95\%CIs[0.11, 0.40]$, $0.25 \leq |d| \leq 0.26$. There was no statistically significant difference in understandability between the optimistic and pragmatic articles, $t(213) = 0.41$, $p = 0.68$, $95\%CI[-0.11, 0.16]$, $d = 0.03$. An equivalence test indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and equivalent to zero ($t(213) = -2.63$, $p = 0.005$), meaning that the two articles are equivalent in understandability.

Table A1.

Pilot A mean and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the piloted articles

	Interesting	Engaging	Credible	Believable	Easy to read	Understandable
Control Article	4.43 (1.25)	4.25 (1.21)	4.56 (1.48)	5.33 (1.38)	6.33 (0.90)	6.34 (0.91)
Optimistic Article	5.19 (1.09)†	4.98 (1.07)†	5.42 (1.20)	5.57 (1.20)	5.89 (1.04)†	6.09 (0.93)†
Pragmatic Article	5.22 (1.25)†	5.06 (1.24)†	5.64 (1.05)	5.99 (0.96)	5.86 (1.15)†	6.07 (1.02)†

Note. † = equivalent.

Summary

Overall, the optimistic and pragmatic articles were seen as more interesting, engaging, credible and believable than the control article. In addition, the optimistic and pragmatic articles

were rated as less easy to read and less understandable compared to the control article. Given that our control article is not intended to manipulate anything, we are not concerned about these differences. Rather, we want to ensure that the two experimental articles/conditions are equivalent to each other on dimensions not intended to be manipulated. Indeed, the optimistic and pragmatic articles were rated as equivalent in how interesting and engaging they were and equivalent in their ease of reading and understanding. However, the pragmatic article was rated more credible and believable than the optimistic one. We decided to pre-test the stimuli again, with some minor revisions.

Pilot B

Due to variations in perceived credibility and believability between the optimistic and pragmatic experimental articles/conditions, we conducted a second round of pre-testing.

Participants

Based on Pilot A, we determined that only 90 participants were needed for Pilot B, such that Pilot A detected a medium effect size for credibility and believability measures ($\alpha = 0.05$, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, d=0.30). Thus, we sampled a total of 88 participants from Prolific who were compensated $3.25 to participate in a 30-minute survey (woman/female = 36, man/male = 39, non-binary/third gender = 1, prefer not to answer = 1; Asian = 3, Black = 7, White = 56, Hispanic/Latinx = 1, Indigenous = 1, Multiracial = 5, prefer not to answer = 1; $M_{age} = 38.81$, $SD_{age} = 13.82$). 11 participants needed to be excluded from the survey based on attention checks items, and one person was excluded for withdrawing their consent during the debrief. Thus, the final sample was 77 participants. Due to limited funding, we were unable to reach the 90 participants needed. However, we conducted posthoc power analyses as needed to determine if any observed effects are powered appropriately ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$).

Materials

Stimuli. The same optimistic and pragmatic articles from Pilot A were used for Pilot B. However, some changes were made to the articles to 1) make the articles more visually appealing and 2) increase perceived credibility and believability. Changes were made to the title, figures, and images used in the articles. Additionally, to mimic an online published article that one may see in The New York Times or Huffington Post, quotes were pulled from the text and enlarged to draw attention to the key aspects of the articles. Similar changes were made to the control article from Pilot A to keep the articles consistent; however, we did not pilot the control article in Pilot

B. Additionally, we created more balance within the optimistic article, such that the original article did not consider any counterarguments (i.e., a less optimistic perspective), whereas the pragmatic article did consider a counterargument. This could have influenced whether participants viewed the optimistic article as credible because only one perspective was considered. Thus, a counterargument was included in the optimistic article to match the pragmatic article.

Measures. Participants completed the same measures as Pilot A with the addition of three manipulation checks. Participants completed the Perceptions of Future Race Relations Measure (Gabbidon & Higgins, 2009), which included two items to examine participants' perceptions of future race relations. Specifically, participants were asked to rate whether they think relationships between White people and racial minorities will be better or worse in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely bad*) to 7 (*extremely good*) scale. In addition, participants were asked to rate whether they believe problems between White people and racial minorities will get worked on in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*will always be a problem*) to 7 (*eventually get worked out*). Participants completed the Racial Progress Measure (Greene, 2020), which examines whether participants believe racial minorities will still experience racial discrimination in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*no discrimination at all*) to 7 (*a significant amount of discrimination*).

Procedure

Participants followed the same procedures as Pilot A.

Results

Interesting and engaging. A paired t-test determined that there was no statistically significant difference in interest ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(76) =$

1.57, $p = 0.12$, *95%CI*[-0.05, 0.44], $d = 0.18$. We conducted an equivalence test using the two one-sided test (TOST) procedure (Lakens et al., 2018). We set our lower and upper boundaries to Cohen's *d*s of +/-0.33 based on desired power ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$), alpha level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and sample size ($n = 77$). The TOST procedure indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically not equivalent to zero ($t(76) = -1.34$, $p = 0.09$), meaning that the results are inconclusive.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in engagement ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(76) = 1.52$, $p = 0.13$, *95%CI*[-0.06, 0.45], $d = 0.17$. A two one-sided equivalence test (Cohen's $ds = +/- 0.33$, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $n = 77$) indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically not equivalent to zero ($t(76) = -1.41$, $p = 0.08$), meaning that the results are inconclusive. The mean and standard deviation for all measures and articles are in Table A2.

Credible and believable. A paired t-test determined that there was no statistically significant difference in credibility ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(76) = 0.00$, $p = 1.00$, *95%CI*[-0.30, 0.30], $d = 0.00$. A two one-sided equivalence test (Cohen's $ds = +/- 0.33$, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $n = 76$) indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(76) = -2.88$, $p = 0.002$), meaning that the optimistic and pragmatic articles are equivalent in perceived credibility.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in believability ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(76) = -0.47$, $p = 0.57$, *95%CI*[-0.47, 0.26], $d = -0.07$. A two one-sided equivalence test indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(76) = 2.28$, $p = 0.01$), meaning that the optimistic and pragmatic articles are equivalent in perceived believability.

Easy to read and understandable. A paired t-test determined that there was no statistically significant difference in easiness-to-read ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(76) = 1.98$, $p = 0.05$, *95%CI*[-0.002, 0.42], $d = 0.23$. A two one-sided equivalence test indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically not equivalent to zero ($t(76) = 0.99$, $p = 0.16$), meaning that the results are inconclusive.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in understandability ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(76) = 1.82$, $p = 0.07$, *95%CI*[-0.02, 0.44], $d = 0.21$. A two one-sided equivalence test indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically not equivalent to zero ($t(76) = -1.05$, $p = 0.15$), meaning that the results are inconclusive.

Table A2.

Pilot B means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the piloted articles

	Interesting	Engaging	Credible	Believable	Easy to read	Understandable
Optimistic Article	4.97 (1.75)	4.79 (1.63)	5.25 (1.34)†	5.36 (1.43)†	5.84 (1.08)	6.09 (0.93)
Pragmatic Article	4.78 (1.74)	4.60 (1.62)	5.25 (1.27)†	5.47 (1.45)†	5.64 (1.32)	5.88 (1.25)

Note. † = equivalent.

Manipulation checks. Lastly, to ensure the piloted articles are manipulating what we Intended them to manipulate (i.e., perceptions of racial progress), we conducted paired t-test to examine whether there were differences between the optimistic and pragmatic articles on perceptions of future race relations, perceptions of future racial progress, and perceptions of future racial discrimination. We anticipated that the optimistic article would have higher ratings

on perceptions of future race relations and racial progress and lower ratings on perceptions of future racial discrimination in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Indeed, we found that the optimistic article (M = 4.87, SD = 1.26) had statistically significantly higher ratings of perceptions of future race relations in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.42, SD = 1.07), $t(76) = 3.57$, $p < 0.001$, *95%CI*[0.20, 0.71], $d = 0.41$. A posthoc analysis determined that this observed effect (d = 0.41) for the sample size (n = 77) was adequately powered ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.94$). Specifically, participants believed that race relations would be better in the future after reading the optimistic article in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Additionally, we found that the optimistic article (M = 4.71, SD = 1.60) had statistically significantly higher ratings of perceptions of future racial progress in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.04, SD = 1.67), $t(76) = 4.70$, $p < 0.001$, *95%CI*[0.39, 0.96], $d = 0.54$. A posthoc analysis determined that this observed effect (d = 0.54) for the sample size (n = 77) was adequately powered ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.99$). Specifically, participants believed that the US would eventually work out solutions for racism in the future more so after reading the optimistic article in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Lastly, we found that the optimistic article (M = 3.90, SD = 1.51) had statistically significantly lower ratings of perceptions of future racial discrimination in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.31, SD = 1.57), $t(76) = -3.14$, $p = 0.02$, *95%CI*[-0.68, -0.15], $d = 0.36$. A posthoc analysis determined that this observed effect (d = 0.36) for the sample size (n = 77) was adequately powered ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.88$). Specifically, participants believed that racial discrimination would be less of a problem for racial minorities after reading the optimistic article in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Summary

Overall, while some of the equivalence tests were inconclusive, meaning we are unable to draw any conclusions from them, we were able to achieve a set of stimuli that did not statistically differ in how interesting, believable, credible, believable, easy to read, and understanding they were. Additionally, we confirmed that the edits made to the articles ensured that the articles did not vary in credibility and believability. Lastly, we confirmed that the articles do manipulate what we intended, that is participants have more positive impressions of future race relations and progress after reading the optimistic article (i.e., conflates multiracialism with racial progress) in comparison to the pragmatic article (i.e., calls attention to anti-racist interventions/policies despite multiracialism). Thus, we have validated and verified the manipulation that was used in Chapter 2.

Exploratory Measures

Exploratory: Future Intergroup Affect

There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of future intergroup affect between article conditions, $F(2, 213) = 0.10$, $p = 0.90$, $\eta^2_p = 0.001$. That is, across conditions, variations in perceptions of how intergroup affect may take shape in the future were not statistically significantly different, and their perceptions of intergroup affect were relatively high on a 7-point Likert scale ($M_{neutral} = 5.36$, $SD_{neutral} = 1.01$; $M_{optimistic} = 5.32$, $SD_{optimistic} = 1.02$; $M_{pragmatic} = 5.40$, $SD_{pragmatic} = 1.06$). In general, participants believed that intergroup affect would be rather positive in the future, and these beliefs did not statistically differ by condition.

Exploratory: Perceptions of Improvement

There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of how much the US is improving their racial issues between article condition, $F(2, 214) = 0.52$, $p = 0.59$, $\eta^2_p = 0.005$. That is, across conditions, variations in perceptions of whether racial issues in the US are improving were not statistically significantly different, and their perceptions of improvement were relatively high on a 7-point Likert scale ($M_{neutral} = 5.41$, $SD_{neutral} = 0.85$; $M_{optimistic} = 5.24$, $SD_{optimistic} = 1.06$; $M_{pragmatic} = 5.34$, $SD_{pragmatic} = 1.08$). In general, participants believed that the US is improving racial issues and equality, and these beliefs did not statistically differ by condition.

Path Analysis Residuals

Table A3

Standardized Residuals (z-scores) for Covariances

	Future Race Relations	Future Racial Discrimination	Support for Anti-Racist Policies	Optimistic Condition	Pragmatic Condition
Future Race Relations	0.022				
Future Racial Discrimination	-0.017	0.029			
Support for Anti-Racist Policies	-0.051	0.013	0.01		
Optimistic Condition	0	0	-1.612	0	
Pragmatic Condition	0	0	4.319	0	0

Open Response Analysis

Chapter 2 results showed several null results for perceptions of future racial discrimination and future race relations. While such results suggest that participants generally have similar responses after reading about a growing multiracial population, examining open responses may help add more context behind these null results. Indeed, we find that people generally have positive sentiment toward narratives of a growing multiracial population and are likely to endorse that racial progress can and will be made in the US. This likely influences their beliefs that future race relations will be positive and racial discrimination would be less of an issue.

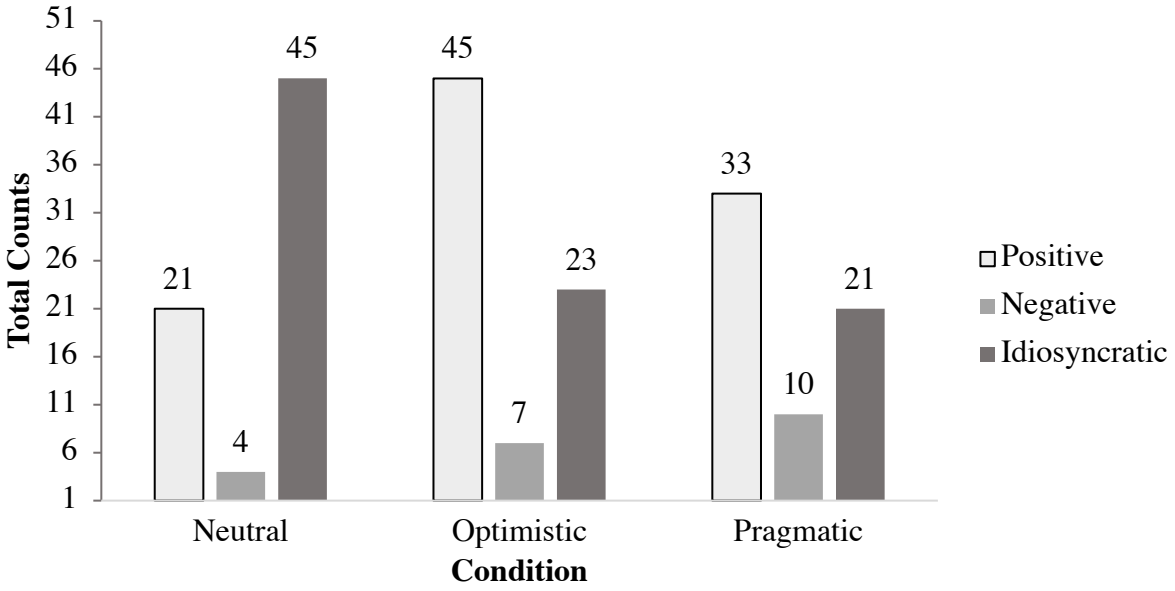
Affect

The first theme research assistants coded for captured whether participants agreed/disagreed with the article they read, including whether participants seemed to have a positive or negative impression of the article (*Positive-1, Negative-2, Idiosyncratic-3; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Neutral} = 0.75$*; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Pragmatic} = 0.83$*; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Optimistic} = 0.76$). A chi-square test was conducted to examine differences by conditions and found statistically significant results, $X^2(4) = 22.23$, $p = 0.0002$. Examining the observed counts, the neutral condition largely accumulated idiosyncratic responses. In addition, idiosyncratic responses make up an observationally small portion of responses for the optimistic and pragmatic article (see Appendix for total counts across conditions for all codes). Therefore, a second chi-square test was done that omitted the neutral condition and idiosyncratic responses. This chi-square test showed that affect proportions did not statistically significantly differ between the articles, $X^2(1) = 0.92$, $p = 0.33$. That is, participants expressed mostly positive affect toward the article in their responses ($N_{Optimistic} = 45$; $N_{Pragmatic} = 33$) rather than negative affect ($N_{Optimistic} = 7$; $N_{Pragmatic} = 10$). Positive

responses largely reflect that the participant agrees with the article and that they feel happy about the content of the article (for example: "*I think it is wonderful*" and "*I was happy to read that the increasing number of interracial persons was helping the problem of disparity in the US*"). See Figure A1 for bar graph of total counts.

Figure A1

Total Counts for Affect Responses by Condition.



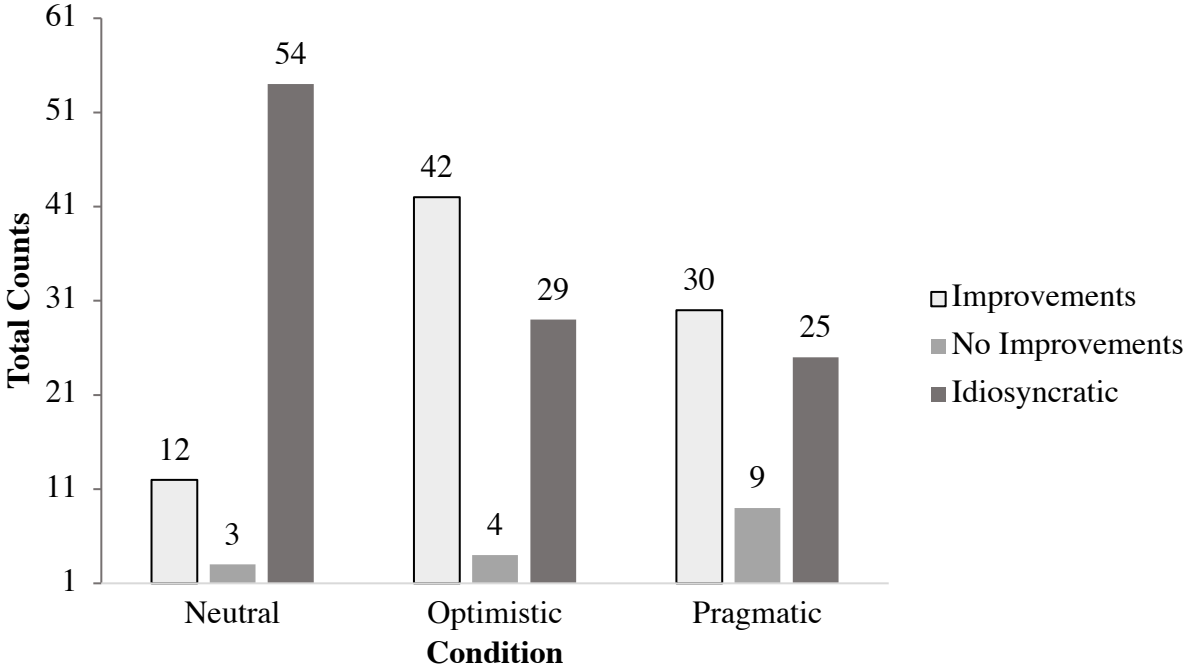
Belief in Progress

The second theme research assistants coded for captured how participants are associating the contents of the article with racial progress. Some participants appeared to have some sort of impression that mixed people improve race relations or racism, and others thought the opposite (*Improve US Racial Progress-1, Does Not Improve US Racial Progress-2, Idiosyncratic-3; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Neutral} = 0.86$*; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Pragmatic} = 0.87$*; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Optimistic} = 0.79$). Results show that there are differences in perceptions of progress by condition, $X^2(4) = 32.94$, $p < 0.0001$. Like affect, the neutral condition and idiosyncratic responses were omitted for a second

chi-square test, which showed that beliefs in future racial progress proportions did not statistically significantly differ between the articles, $X^2(1) = 2.35$, $p = 0.13$. That is, participants expressed more sentiment that a mixed-race population in the US would improve future race relations or positively impact racial progress ($N_{Optimistic} = 42$; $N_{Pragmatic} = 30$) than sentiments that the mixed-race population would not impact racial progress ($N_{Optimistic} = 4$; $N_{Pragmatic} = 9$). Responses that show carry a progressive sentiment conflate mixed-race population growth with racial progress (for example: "*I agree that the increase in multiracial population should eventually lead to less racism and stereotypes"*). See Figure A2 for bar graph of total counts.

Figure A2

Total Counts for Belief in Progress Responses by Condition.



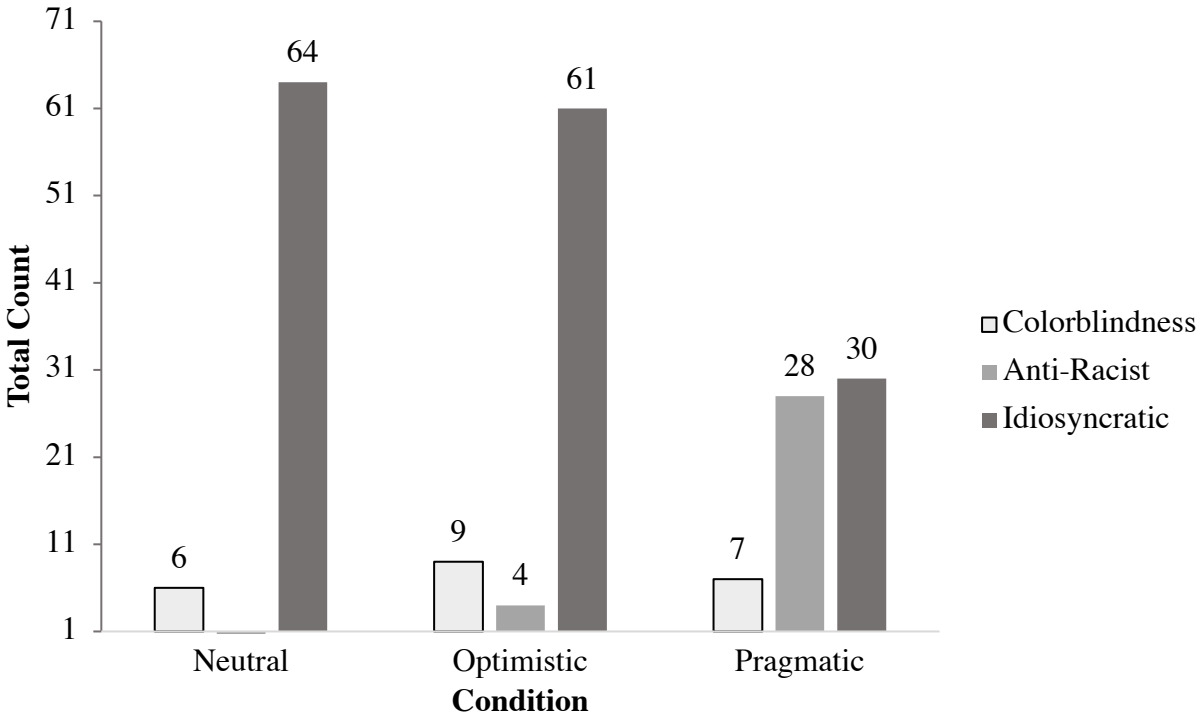
Racial Ideologies

The third theme research assistants coded for captured what ideologies participants mentioned as it related to a growing multiracial population. Some participants seemed to

associate a growing multiracial population with colorblind ideologies, while others agreed that anti-racist policies are needed for progress (*Colorblind Ideology-1, Anti-Racist Ideology-2, Idiosyncratic-3; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Neutral} = 0.72$; *Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Pragmatic} = 0.84$; *Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Optimistic} = 0.70$). Results show statistically significant results, $X^2(4) = 59.11$, $p < 0.0001$. Indeed, after omitting the neutral condition and idiosyncratic responses, the proportions in ideologies were still statistically significantly different across the optimistic and pragmatic articles, $X^2(1) = 8.24$, $p = 0004$. That is, people's expression of anti-racist ideologies was higher in the pragmatic article than in the optimistic article ($N_{Optimistic} = 4$; $N_{Pragmatic} = 28$). However, the optimistic condition also had many idiosyncratic responses ($N_{Optimistic} = 61$), meaning that people largely did not experience any differences in their ideologies about race after reading the article (like the neutral article; $N_{Neutral} = 66$). Thus, these results show that the optimistic and pragmatic article receives positive responses and impacts people's perceptions of mixed-race people and future racial progress; however, it is only the pragmatic article that may influence people to consider anti-racist policies and adopt these beliefs ("*I tend to agree with the second perspective. A rising multicultural population is not going to eliminate systemic racism and we need to act in other ways*"). See Figure A3 for bar graph of total counts.

Figure A3

Total Counts for Ideologies Responses by Condition.



Interracial Relations

Multiracial populations are inherently tied to relationships and close contact between different racial groups (e.g., relationships, and marriages). Thus, it is hard to decipher how underlying messages of interracial relationships and marriages play a role in people's interpretation of mixed-race related content in the news articles. Therefore, to examine how often participants may associate multiracialism with interracial marriages or relationships—which may provide more insight into how participants conflate interracial contact with multiracialism—research assistants coded for whether interracial marriages or relationships appear in participants' responses (*Yes-1, No-0; Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Neutral} = 0.71$; *Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Pragmatic} = 0.82$; *Cronbach's* $\alpha_{Optimistic} = 0.70$). Results show no statistically significant results, $X^2(2) = 2.09$, $p = 0.35$. Specifically, most people did not mention anything about interracial marriages and relationships in their responses to the articles. Thus, we can conclude that there is not much

conflation between interracial relationships and multiracial people for this study and these articles.

Final Stimuli

Control/Neutral Condition

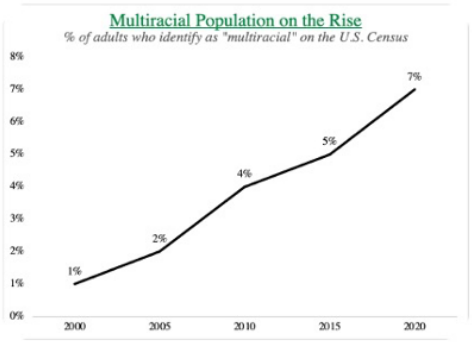
What a Multiracial Future Means for the United States

A diverse future

By: Taylor Roberts

A new analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data suggests that the nation's multiracial population—those who identify with two or more races—continues its steady climb, currently constituting 3% of the country's total population. That's approximately 9 million people.

Other analyses from Pew Research suggest that the multiracial population accounts for 7% of the U.S. population, or 22 million people. These estimates suggests that multiracial people account for 20% of the nation's population growth since 2000.



These numbers include a variety of multiracial identities, such as Black/White, or Asian/Hispanic. In fact, some U.S. cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Honolulu and Houston, are already known for their large multiracial communities.

The main reasons cited for the accelerating change are rapid immigration growth and significantly higher rates of interracial relationships. In increasingly larger numbers, younger Hispanic, Asian, Black, and White individuals are becoming involved in interracial relationships and having children, driving the U.S. multiracial population growth. While there are many speculations about how this growing demographic will impact the U.S., we can look forward to a diverse future.

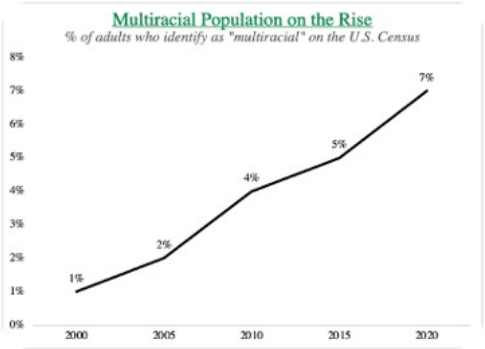
Optimistic Condition

What a Multiracial Future Means for the United States

Trends toward a hopeful future

By: Taylor Roberts

A new analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data suggests that the nation's multiracial population—those who identify with two or more races—continues its steady climb, currently constituting 3% of the country's total population. That's approximately 9 million people.



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The main reasons cited for the accelerating change are rapid immigration growth and significantly higher rates of interracial relationships. In increasingly larger numbers, younger Hispanic, Asian, Black, and White individuals are becoming involved in interracial relationships and having children, driving the U.S. multiracial population growth.

But what does the growth of a multiracial population mean? To start to answer this complex question, I met with Jeffrey Brown, an Associate Professor at the University of California, Irvine, whose research examines what the growth of a multiracial population means for the U.S.

Brown suggested that multiracial individuals' multiple racial identities challenge traditional American conceptions of race by disrupting the meaning of racial boundaries. However, he cautions that "this will unlikely push the U.S. toward becoming a more racially egalitarian society," as more pertinent institutional and systemic change is necessary.

> "the growth of a multiracial population will positively impact racial progress and race relations in the U.S."
> - Dr. Peterson

While more work is certainly needed to achieve a racially equitable future, there still benefits of being exposed to a racially diverse environment that includes a large multiracial population. Social Psychologists Dr. Chris Peterson and Dr. Steven Clove, of the University of Denver and Boston University, respectively, have found that the increased visibility of multiracial people in U.S. communities may reduce racial stereotyping, which improves relationships between racial groups.

In a phone interview, Peterson and Clove explained that their research suggests that people raised in multiracial populations are less likely to view race as fixed, which reduces their endorsement of racial stereotypes. Peterson expressed that he is "hopeful that the growth of a multiracial population will positively impact racial progress and race relations in the U.S."

Indeed, there is reason for confidence that continued growth in the multiracial population of the U.S. will largely benefit society, as multiracial people serve as a bridge between cultural, ethnic and racial groups. In this manner, the U.S. will become a thriving multiracial nation, and we can expect to see positive shifts in its racial climate as a direct result of the growing multiracial population.

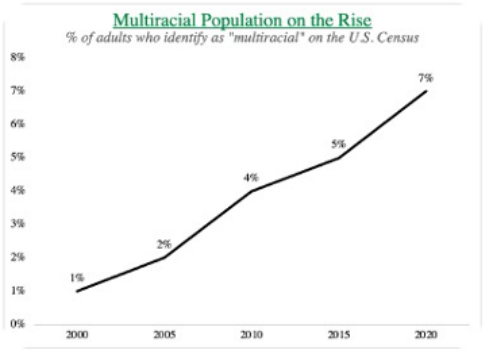
Pragmatic Condition

What a Multiracial Future Means for the United States

Action is needed for a hopeful future

By: Taylor Roberts

A new analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data suggests that the nation's multiracial population—those who identify with two or more races—continues its steady climb, currently constituting 3% of the country's total population. That's approximately 9 million people.



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Brown suggested that multiracial individuals' multiple racial identities challenge traditional American conceptions of race by disrupting the meaning of racial boundaries, explaining that "this will likely push the U.S. toward becoming a more racially egalitarian society." He expressed that the U.S. is propelling into a thriving multiracial nation.

> "a growing multiracial population is not enough to push the U.S. into a racially egalitarian society"
> - Dr. Richard

While there may be some benefits of a growing multiracial population, this may be a premature conclusion, as scientific findings suggests that racial inequalities are very persistent in U.S. society. Social Psychologists Dr. John Emmerson and Dr. Frank Richard, of the University of Denver and Boston University, respectively, found that the economic inequality between Black and White Americans is one of the starkest group disparities in the U.S. today, and such inequality is expected to continue.

In a phone interview, Emmerson and Richard explained that their research suggests that anti-racist interventions and policies are needed to address racial inequalities, or else the disparities we see in the U.S. will continue. Richard expressed that "racial demographic shifts, like a growing multiracial population, is not enough to push the U.S. into a racially egalitarian society."

Therefore, it appears that the growth in the multiracial population will cause some changes for the U.S., but we should not let that excuse us from working toward a racially egalitarian society through interventions and the development of anti-racist policies. In this manner, the U.S. will become a more multiracial nation, though, we can expect to see little progress in its racial climate if there are no direct actions taken to address racial inequalities.

Measures

Open Response
Please share any thoughts or opinions you have about the article you just read.

Endorsement
1. How much do you agree that the arguments in the article are true of multiracial people and/or populations?
    a. 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*
2. Do you consider this article to reflect positively or negatively on multiracial individuals?
    a. 1 = *very negatively* to 7 = *very positively*

Perceptions of Race Relations Measures
1. Thinking about the future, would you say relationships between the racial majority (e.g., Whites) and racial minorities (e.g., Hispanics, Asians, Blacks) will be…
    a. 1 = *extremely bad* to 7 = *extremely good*
2. Do you think that relationships between the racial majority (e.g., Whites) and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asians) will be a problem for the United States in the future, or will a solution eventually be worked out?
    a. 1 = *will always be a problem* to 7 = *will eventually get worked out*

Future Intergroup Affect
1. Thinking about the future, how friendly do you think White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) will be toward each other?
2. Thinking about the future, how happy do you think White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) will be to spend time with each other?
3. Thinking about the future, how happy do you think White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) will be to be friends with each other?
4. Thinking about the future, how much do you think White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) will like each other?
    a. 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *a lot*

Perceptions of Future Discrimination
1. How much discrimination do you believe racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) will face in the future?
    1 = *no discrimination at all* to 7 = *a significant amount of discrimination*

Perceptions of Improvement
1. How much progress will be made toward equality for racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) in the United States in the future?
    1 = *little progress* to 7 = *a great deal of progress*
2. How much further do you think the United States has to go to achieve equality for racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) in the future? (R)
    1 = *not much further* to 7 = *much further*
3. How much improvement do you think the United States will make in the future toward achieving equality for racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people)?

1 = *little improvement* to 7 = *a lot of improvement*

4. How much improvement do you think the United States has to make to achieve equality for racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) in the future? (R)
   1 = *little improvement* to 7 = *a lot of improvement*
5. How much do you expect conditions to improve for racial minorities (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian people) in the United States in the future?
   1 = *little improvement* to 7 = *a lot of improvement*

Support for Anti-Racist Policies

1. Affirmative action programs will still be needed in the future.
2. Desegregation programs that ensure diversity in public schools will still be necessary in the future.
3. Businesses will need to increase their efforts to promote diversity in the workplace in the future.
4. Efforts will need to be made to promote equal access to healthcare for minorities in the future.
   1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

Chapter 3

Pilot C

To increase the experimental validity, adjustments were made to the stimuli used in Chapter 2. That is, in Chapter 2, counterarguments were added to the fictitious news articles to increase perceptions of credibility and believability of the stimuli during pilot testing. However, the counterarguments may have added an extra factor to the manipulation, making it harder to ensure a clear cause-and-effect link from the articles to the results (Brewer & Crano, 2000). Thus, to amend this issue, edits to the stimuli were made to remove the counterarguments. Thus, counterarguments were removed from the articles and pilot tested again. In addition, previous pilot tests did not limit the sample to only White participants. Given that the study only samples White Americans, I wanted to run this pilot test with White participants as well to ensure reliability between the pilot results and study results.

Participants

To detect a small effect size ($d = 0.2$) and have adequate power for an equivalence test ($1-\beta = 0.80$), we determined a total of 215 participants were needed. In addition, because the main study only intends to sample White participants, the pilot study was limited to White participants as well. Thus, we sampled a total of 230 White participants from Prolific who were compensated $1.45 to participate in a 15-minute survey. However, 27 participants needed to be excluded from the survey based on attention checks items, and 7 people were excluded because they were not White. Thus, the final sample was 183 participants (woman/female = 106, man/male = 72, non-binary/third gender = 4, prefer not to answer = 4; White = 216; $M_{age} = 46.75$, $SD_{age} = 14.11$).

Materials

Stimuli. The same optimistic and pragmatic articles from Pilot B were used. However, some changes were made to the articles to increase experimental validity. Originally, the stimuli created intended to provide a more balanced perspective by providing a counterargument within the optimistic and pragmatic articles. This could have weakened the overall manipulation, such that participants could have seen the counterargument and influenced participants understanding of the articles' messages. Thus, counterarguments introduced in Chapter 2's stimuli to increase the credibility and believability of the stimuli were omitted for Chapter 3's stimuli.

Measures. Participants completed the same measures as Pilot B.

Procedure

Participants followed the same procedures as Pilot B.

Results

Interesting and engaging. A paired t-test determined that there was a statistically significant difference in interest ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(182) = 3.38$, $p < 0.001$, $95\%CI[0.10, 0.37]$, $d = 0.24$. Specifically, the optimistic article was rated as more interesting in comparison to the pragmatic article. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in engagement ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(182) = 4.16$, $p < 0.001$, $95\%CI[0.17, 0.47]$, $d = 0.30$. Specifically, the optimistic article was rated as more engaging in comparison to the pragmatic article. See Table A4 for means and standard deviations.

Credible and believable. A paired t-test determined that there was no statistically significant difference in credibility ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(182) = 0.38$, $p = 0.70$, $95\%CI[-0.16, 0.24]$, $d = 0.02$. A two one-sided equivalence test (Cohen's $ds = +/- 0.22$, $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $n = 183$) indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different

from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(182) = -2.68, p = 0.004$), meaning that the optimistic and pragmatic articles are equivalent in perceived credibility.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in believability ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(182) = 0.60, p = 0.55, 95\%CI[-0.15, 0.28], d = 0.04$. A two one-sided equivalence test indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(182) = 2.28, p = 0.01$), meaning that the optimistic and pragmatic articles are equivalent in perceived believability.

Easy to read and understandable. A paired t-test determined that there was a statistically significant difference in easiness-to-read ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(182) = 2.64, p < 0.01, 95\%CI[0.03, 0.27], d = 0.16$. Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference in understandability ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(182) = 2.44, p = 0.02, 95\%CI[0.02, 0.23], d = 0.18$.

Table A4.

Pilot B means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the piloted articles

	Interesting	Engaging	Credible	Believable	Easy to read	Understandable
Optimistic Article	4.90 (1.59)	4.73 (1.55)	5.23 (1.29)†	5.38 (1.32)†	5.62 (1.25)	5.86 (1.05)
Pragmatic Article	4.67 (1.63)	4.40 (1.57)	5.20 (1.36)†	5.31 (1.42)†	5.46 (1.32)	5.73 (1.08)

Note. † = equivalent.

Manipulation checks. Lastly, following Pilot B's measures and procedures, we conducted paired t-tests to examine whether there were differences between the optimistic and pragmatic articles on perceptions of future race relations, perceptions of future racial progress, and perceptions of future racial discrimination. Similarly, we anticipated that the optimistic article would have higher ratings on perceptions of future race relations and racial progress and

lower ratings on perceptions of future racial discrimination in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Indeed, we found that the optimistic article (M = 4.76, SD = 1.18) had statistically significantly higher ratings of perceptions of future race relations in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.40, SD = 1.19), $t(181) = 6.38$, $p < 0.001$, *95%CI*[0.38, 0.73], $d = 0.47$. A posthoc analysis determined that this observed effect (d = 0.47) for the sample size (n = 183) was adequately powered ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.99$). Specifically, participants believed that race relations would be better in the future after reading the optimistic article in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Additionally, we found that the optimistic article (M = 4.60, SD = 1.61) had statistically significantly higher ratings of perceptions of future racial progress in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 3.87, SD = 1.60), $t(182) = 6.95$, $p < 0.001$, *95%CI*[0.52, 0.93], $d = 0.51$. A posthoc analysis determined that this observed effect (d = 0.51) for the sample size (n = 183) was adequately powered ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.99$). Specifically, participants believed that the US would eventually work out solutions for racism in the future more so after reading the optimistic article in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Lastly, we found that the optimistic article (M = 3.84, SD = 1.53) had statistically significantly lower ratings of perceptions of future racial discrimination in comparison to the pragmatic article (M = 4.45, SD = 1.44), $t(182) = -6.17$, $p < 0.001$, *95%CI*[-0.80, -0.41], $d = 0.46$. A posthoc analysis determined that this observed effect (d = 0.46) for the sample size (n = 183) was adequately powered ($1\text{-}\beta = 0.99$). Specifically, participants believed that racial discrimination would be less of a problem for racial minorities after reading the optimistic article in comparison to the pragmatic article.

Summary

Overall, only perceptions of credibility and believability were equivalent, and we confirmed that the articles do manipulate what we intended, that is participants have more positive impressions of future race relations and progress after reading the optimistic article (i.e., conflates multiracialism with racial progress) in comparison to the pragmatic article (i.e., calls attention to anti-racist interventions/policies despite multiracialism). Thus, there are concerns around how perceptions of interests, engagement, easiness to read, and understandability could impact other effects when a participant reads the article. Thus, the same measures were included in the Chapter 3 study and tested again.

Additional Results

Chapter 3 included the same measures from Pilot A, B, and C to determine whether other dimensions and characteristics of the stimuli would influence the results of the study. That is, since Pilot C yielded statistically significant results, there was a possibility that perceptions of interest, engagement, easiness to read, and understandability could impact the main DVs of Chapter 3. Thus, the same measures were included in Chapter 3. All results below use an unpaired t-test unless otherwise stated.

Results

Interesting and engaging. There was no statistically significant difference in interest ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(751) = 1.45, p = 0.15, 95\%CI[-0.05, 0.40]$, $d = 0.11$. A two one-sided equivalence test (Cohen's $ds = +/- 0.21, 1\text{-}\beta = 0.80, \alpha = 0.05, n = 389$ per condition[8,9]) indicated that the observed effect is statistically not different from zero and not statistically equivalent to zero ($t(750) = -1.44$ $p = 0.08$; Lakens et al., 2018), meaning that the results are inconclusive. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference in engagement ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(747) = 2.29, p = 0.02, 95\%CI[0.04, 0.48]$, $d = 0.17$. Specifically, the optimistic article was rated as more engaging in comparison to the pragmatic article. See Table A5 for means and standard deviations.

Credible and believable. There was no statistically significant difference in credibility ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(743) = 1.17, p = 0.24, 95\%CI[-0.08, 0.32]$, $d = 0.09$. A two one-sided equivalence test indicated that the observed effect was statistically not

[8] Due to the unequal sample sizes across conditions, a power analysis to determine equivalence bounds was estimated for a sample size of 389, which is a close approximation based on the total sample divided by total number of conditions (760/2).

[9] The same equivalence test criteria were applied across all tests unless otherwise stated. In addition, Lakens et al., (2018) excel spreadsheet formulas were used to conducts these analyses for unpaired equivalence tests.

different from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(741) = -1.73, p = 0.04$), meaning that the optimistic and pragmatic article are equivalent in perceived credibility. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference in believability ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(756) = 0.44, p = 0.66, 95\%CI[-0.15, 0.25], d = 0.03$. An equivalence tests indicated that the observed effect was statistically not different from zero and statistically equivalent to zero ($t(755) = -2.41, p = 0.01$), meaning that the optimistic and pragmatic article are equivalent in perceived believability.

Easy to read and understandable. There was no statistically significant difference in easiness-to-read ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(744) = 1.31, p = 0.19, 95\%CI[-0.05, 0.27], d = 0.09$. An equivalence tests indicated that the observed effect was statistically not different from zero and not statistically equivalent to zero ($t(742) = -1.54, p = 0.06$), meaning the results are inconclusive. Similarly, there was a statistically significant difference in understandability ratings between the optimistic and pragmatic article, $t(705) = 2.43, p = 0.02, 95\%CI[0.03, 0.29], d = 0.18$.

Table A5.

Chapter 3 means and standard deviations (in parentheses) of the articles.

	Interesting	Engaging	Credible	Believable	Easy to read	Understandable
Optimistic Article	5.26 (1.61)	5.17 (1.53)*	5.46 (1.38)†	5.71 (1.45)†	6.04 (1.09)	6.33 (0.81)*
Pragmatic Article	5.09 (1.62)	4.91 (1.58)*	5.34 (1.46)†	5.66 (1.38)†	5.93 (1.15)	6.17 (0.99)*

Note. † = equivalent, p < 0.05*

Summary

Overall, only perceptions of credibility and believability were equivalent, while perceptions of easiness to read and interest yielded inconclusive results. Thus, there are concerns

around how perceptions of engagement and understandability could impact other effects when a participant reads the article. However, research shows that cognitive dissonance increases people's affinity for like-minded people and information (see Golman et al., 2016; Sude & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2022). In addition, general perception research shows that human cognition gravitates toward familiar and consistent information more so than unfamiliar or inconsistent information (see Margolis, 1987). Lastly, given the nature of the studies, the theory that White people are more likely to support narratives that impede progress for the sake of maintaining the status quo and upholding existing systems of oppression (Richeson, 2020) would also explain the findings. That is, the optimistic article's ratings are showcasing the effects I've been hypothesizing in these studies, such that White people would gravitate toward narratives that are familiar and consistent with their world views (i.e., progress is natural and imminent for the US, thus making the optimistic article more engaging and understandable). Therefore, concerns of perceived engagement or understandability and its influence on other variables is mitigated when examining the make-up of the sample, given that a politically liberal sample may be more engaged and better understand an article that reflects their own beliefs versus an article that challenges them.

Thus, the statistically significant results for engagement and understandability perceptions could likely be explained by these confounding biases. Nonetheless, through several testing of the articles (Pilot A, B, C, and Chapter 3 study), there is minimal concern that these extraneous variables are skewing or impacting results in a meaningful way beyond what is already hypothesized and examined.

Final Stimuli

Optimistic Article

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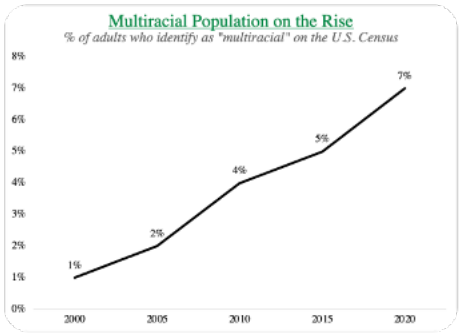
Other analyses from Pew Research suggest that the multiracial population accounted for 7% of the U.S. population in 2020, or 22 million people. These estimates suggest that multiracial people account for 20% of the nation's population growth since 2000. In fact, some U.S. cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Honolulu, and Houston, are already known for their large multiracial communities.



The main reasons cited for the accelerating change are rapid immigration growth and significantly higher rates of interracial relationships than in past decades. In increasingly larger numbers, younger Hispanic, Asian, Black, and White individuals are becoming involved in interracial relationships and having children, driving multiracial population growth.

But what does the growth of a multiracial population mean? To start to answer this complex question, I met with Jeffery Brown, an Associate Professor at the University of California, Irvine, whose research examines what the growth of a multiracial population means for the U.S.

Brown suggested that multiracial individuals' multiple racial identities will challenge traditional American conceptions of race by disrupting the meaning of racial boundaries, explaining that "this will likely push the U.S. to become a more racially egalitarian society." He expressed that the U.S. is becoming a thriving multiracial nation.

> "[the growth of a multiracial population] will likely push the U.S. to become a more racially egalitarian society"
> - Dr. Brown

While more work is certainly needed to achieve a racially equitable future, there are still benefits of being exposed to a racially diverse environment that includes a large multiracial population. Indeed, Sociologist Frank Richard from Boston University found that the increased visibility of multiracial people in U.S. cities and towns may reduce racial stereotyping, which improves relationships between racial groups. Dr. Richard explained that his research suggests that people raised in multiracial populations are less likely to view race as fixed, which reduces their endorsement of racial stereotypes.

Indeed, there is reason for confidence that continued growth in the multiracial population of the U.S. will largely benefit society, as multiracial people serve as bridges between cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. The U.S. will become a thriving multiracial nation, and we can expect to see positive shifts in its racial climate as a direct result of the growing multiracial population.

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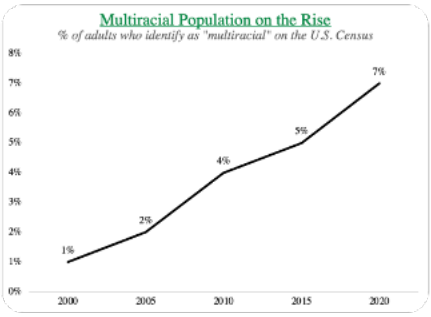

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> "a growing multiracial population is not enough to push the U.S. into a racially egalitarian society"
> - Dr. Brown

While there may be some benefits to race relations of a growing multiracial population, scientific findings suggest that racial inequalities are persistent in U.S. society. Indeed, Sociologist Frank Richard from Boston University found that economic inequality between Black and White Americans is one of the starkest group disparities in the U.S. today, and such inequality is expected to continue. Dr. Richard explained that his research suggests that anti-racist interventions and policies are needed to address racial inequalities, or else the disparities we see in the U.S. today will continue.

Therefore, it appears that the growth in the multiracial population will cause some changes in the U.S., but we should not let that excuse us from working toward a racially egalitarian society through interventions and the development of anti-racist policies. The U.S. will become a more multiracial nation, though we can expect little progress in its racial climate if no direct actions are taken to address racial inequalities.

Measures

Open Response
Please share any thoughts or opinions you have about the article you just read.

Effective Communication Measure

1. Multiracial people would be able to communicate with both White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Asian, Hispanic people) about race and diversity.
2. Multiracial people would be able to truly listen to and understand race-related concerns both White and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Asian, Hispanic people) may have.
3. Multiracial people would be able to wholeheartedly take the perspectives of both White people and racial minorities (e.g., Black, Asian, Hispanic people).
4. Multiracial people, without bias or reservation, would be able to communicate concerns of different racial groups to other racial groups.
    a. 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

Effective Learning Strategy Measure

1. When multiracial people are having conflicts with others, they try to figure out what's going wrong so they could fix it.
2. When multiracial people are having conflicts with others, they ask what the other person(s) is thinking.
3. When multiracial people are having conflicts with others, they try to take the perspective of the other person(s).
4. When multiracial people are having conflicts with others, they try to empathize with the other person/people.
    a. 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

Perceptions of Interracial Improvement Measure

1. The presence of multiracial people in the United States will improve relations between racial groups.
2. The presence of multiracial people in the United States will resolve tension between racial groups.
3. The presence of multiracial people in the United States will unionize, or bring together, racial groups.
    a. 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

Positive and Negative Stereotype Ratings

1. Multiracial people are good at math.
2. Multiracial people are intelligent.
3. Multiracial people are overachievers.

4. Multiracial people are hard working.
5. Multiracial people are rich.
6. Multiracial people are criminals.
7. Multiracial people are violent.
8. Multiracial people are dangerous.
9. Multiracial people are poor.
10. Multiracial people are uneducated.
    a. 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

Support for Anti-Racist Policies

1. Affirmative action programs will still be needed in the future.
2. Desegregation programs that ensure diversity in public schools will still be necessary in the future.
3. Businesses will need to increase their efforts to promote diversity in the workplace in the future.
4. Efforts will need to be made to promote equal access to healthcare for minorities in the future.

    1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

Social Model Minority Prototype Open Response

In the United States, racial tensions are still prevalent. However, a lot of research and activism has been done to help progress us toward a place where these tensions can be or are resolved.

When you think about a future in which racial groups exist harmoniously, there is possibly a particular type of person you imagine who is more capable of spearheading this change than other people.

Please describe the racial identity or identities you imagine this person having when you think of someone who has the potential to alleviate racial tensions in the United States. Feel free to provide as much detail as you'd like.

Response: _____

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