



Mixed 'race' people



Dr Nick Banks, Ph.D
Clinical Psychologist
Nick.banks@wlv.ac.uk

Exercise

- list ALL those terms you are aware of that label or describe people of mixed 'race' background. For the purposes of the exercise, do not be afraid of recording negative terms.

British Dictionary definitions for mixed 'race'

- **mixed-race** -adjective
- relating to or characteristic of people of different ethnic origins
- Usage note (!)
- The term mixed-race may well cause offence. The people so labelled might object to being thought of as a mixture, and identify with one ethnic group. Possible alternatives when referring specifically to ethnic origins are of mixed ethnicity and of mixed ethnic origin.

Mixed 'race' statistics

- In the 2001 census, 677,177 classified themselves as of mixed race, making up 1.2 per cent of the UK population. Office for national Statistics estimates some 956,700 mixed race people were resident in England (as opposed to the whole of the UK) as of mid-2009, compared to 654,000 at mid-2001. As of May 2011, this figure surpassed 1 million. It has been estimated that, by 2020, 1.24 million people in the UK will be of mixed race. 3.5 per cent of all births in England and Wales in 2005 were mixed race babies, with 0.9 per cent being Mixed White and Black Caribbean, 0.5 per cent White and Black African, 0.8 per cent White and Asian, and 1.3 per cent any other mixed background.

Mixed 'race' statistics

- The 2011 Census for England and Wales suggested that compared with 2001, the proportion of the population describing themselves as "White and Black Caribbean" rose from 0.5% to 0.8%, "White and Asian" from 0.4% to 0.6%, "White and Black African" from 0.2% to 0.3% and "Other Mixed" 0.3% to 0.5%. (The census in Scotland and Northern Ireland did not include sub-groups, only single categories: "Any Mixed Background" in Scotland and only "Mixed" in Northern Ireland.)

- Celebrities such as formula one champion Lewis Hamilton, footballer Ryan Giggs and X Factor star Leona Lewis have helped boost the image of mixed race people, according to a new study.
- Psychological testing found they outstrip people who are white or black in terms of perceived attractiveness, with a rating that far exceeds their representation in British society.
- Overall, there was a 55 per cent chance that mixed-race faces were perceived as being more attractive than either black or white faces.
- But the 'extremely attractive' ratings were dominated by mixed race faces, who made up one in 10 of them.
- This is a much greater proportion than would be expected based on their representation in British society of around three per cent, said Dr Lewis of Cardiff university

Images of mixed 'race' people

- He says a 'fusion' of black, white and mixed races would lead to 'Mr and Mrs Average' being mixed race, resulting in people more readily identifying with them.
- But there could also be a Darwinian explanation, with cross-breeding between diverse genetic backgrounds naturally leading to more genetically 'fit' people who tend to be more attractive.
- However, TV's X Factor could be responsible for the trend by exposing relatively more talented people from mixed race backgrounds to the public gaze.
- Dr Lewis and colleagues from Cardiff University's School of Psychology collected a random sample of 1,205 black, white, and mixed-race faces from Facebook communities, including 'mixed race and proud'
- Each face was then rated for their perceived attractiveness to others on a scale of one to 10 by 40 female students.

Images of mixed 'race' people

- A more complex explanation was first put forward by Darwin in 1876, who described a biological phenomenon called heterosis or hybrid vigour.
- This predicts that cross-breeding will lead to offspring that are genetically fitter than their parents.
- It is possible that humans are also subject to this process, so the mixing of diverse genetic background leads to greater genetic fitness 'which tends to be linked to attractiveness', said Dr Lewis.

The Daily Mail- 28.06.2013

- **Mixed race girl, seven, told to 'F*** off back to where you come from' after she accidentally stumbled into National Front meeting**
- **The girl's parents were thinking of using the venue for wedding reception**
- **The far-right National Front was holding a meeting there**
- **14 men screamed racist abuse at the girl and made monkey noises**
- **The seven-year-old has a white mother and a father from Sierra Leone**

Four Key Stereotype Themes in Racial Representation- social stereotypes

- **exotic**
- **dangerous**
- **humorous**
- **pitied**
- (Alvarado *et al.* 1987: 153)
- **sexualised** (Banks, 2014)

Racial identity and self-concept

- Root (1990) postulated that when racial identity and self-concept are difficult for mixed 'race' people, it is because of the tension between the two racial components of the self (which reflects the tension in the greater society between those two "components"). She asserted that mixed 'race' people demonstrate internalised oppression if they reject either part of their heritage.
- Sebring (1985) suggests adopting a mono-racial (Black) identity can lead to guilt and "feelings of disloyalty" (pp. 6-7), and many mixed 'race' people have reported that it is emotionally damaging (Watts, 1991).

Racial identity and self-concept

- When Cauce et al. (1992) compared biracial and monoracial (Black) 11-13-year-olds, they found no significant differences with regard to peer relationships or family relationships on measures of trust, communication, and alienation and with regard to life stress, anxiety and depression. When Field (1996) compared Black, White, and biracial adolescents on general self-concept, self- acceptance, and self-ratings of physical attractiveness and romantic appeal, she also found no significant differences.

Phinney's Identity Model

In this model, identity is achieved through crisis, search/exploration, and commitment (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990).

1. **Unexamined ethnic identity status:** little thought or exploration given to ethnicity or an acceptance of socially or familially ascribed ethnic attitudes
2. **Ethnic identity search:** is triggered by an 'encounter' that forces one to deal with ethnicity and actively explore it.
3. **Ethnic identity achievement:** involves a deeper understanding and appreciation for one's ethnic group (or groups), accepting being ethnically different from the dominant group, and coming to terms with the lower or minority status of one's group.
4. The result is a "confident sense of self as a member of an ethnic group" (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990, p. 172).

1. Awareness of parental physical differences (preschool)
2. Begin use of descriptive terms and labels provided by family to define self (entry to school)
3. Awareness that physical appearance represents group membership—may be triggered by event (preadolescence)
4. Pressure from peers to choose causes conflict over identifying with only one parent—dating brings race to forefront (adolescence)
5. Immersion in one culture and rejection of the other gives way to increasing resistance to pressure to identify monoracially (young adult)
6. Ongoing integration of mixed 'race' identity

Poston's mixed 'race' identity model

- Stage 1. **Personal identity:** Identity independent of ethnic background. In this stage, the mixed 'race' individual has previously developed her own un-integrated reference group orientations, or attitudes toward the reference groups of her background. Rather than being based on race, during this stage identity is mainly based on self-constructs that originate within the family.
- Stage 2. **Choice of group categorization:** Pushed to choose one group of orientation. Factors of influence (1) status; (2) social support; (3) personal. In this stage, the mixed 'race' individual may feel forced to choose a more dominant culture from his background. This forced feeling comes from society's need for definition and typically depends on the individual's personal appearance and knowledge of the two cultures. Faced with the question, "What are you?" the child begins to feel pressure to identify himself as one racial type instead of as mixed 'race'. In this stage, the mixed 'race' individual may also experience crisis and alienation due to the demands of society.

Poston's mixed 'race' identity model

- Stage 3. **Enmeshment/denial:** The mixed race individual feels confused and guilty as a result of feeling forced to choose a dominant culture and deny the other culture. The mixed 'race' individual may feel disloyal to the parent of the non-dominant culture and develop feelings of anger, self-hatred and shame. The mixed 'race' individual must resolve these feelings to move beyond this stage of development.
- Stage 4. **Appreciation:** The individual begins to broaden her reference group orientations to include both cultures. In most cases, the individual will still identify with a dominant culture, however, she will begin to make a significant effort to become involved with and explore the secondary culture.
- Stage 5. **Integration:** More fully appreciated multicultural identity and existence. The individual begins to acknowledge both cultures in his racial background. He continues his exploration of both cultures and gradually becomes integrated by learning to value both ethnic identities.

(Poston, 1990)

Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model

- **1. Contact:** People are:
 - Oblivious to racism
 - Lack an understanding of racism
 - Have minimal experiences with Black people
 - May profess to be colour-blind
 - Societal influence in perpetuating stereotypes and the superior/inferior dichotomy associated between Blacks and Whites are not noticed, but accepted unconsciously or consciously without critical thought or analysis. Racial and cultural differences are considered unimportant and these individuals seldom perceive themselves as “dominant” group members, or having biases and prejudices.
- **2. Disintegration:**the person becomes conflicted over un-resolvable racial moral dilemmas frequently perceived as polar opposites:
 - Believing one is nonracist, yet not wanting one's son/daughter to marry a minority group member
 - Believing that “all men are created equal,” yet treating Blacks as second class citizens
 - Not acknowledging that oppression exists while witnessing it (e.g., the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles, California, 1991).
 - The person becomes increasingly conscious of his/her Whiteness and may experience dissonance and conflict in choosing between own-group loyalty and humanism.

Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model

- **3. Reintegration:** Because of the tremendous influence that societal ideology exerts, initial resolution of dissonance often moves in the direction of the dominant ideology associated with race and one's own socio-racial group identity. This stage may be characterized as a regression, for the tendency is to idealize one's socio-racial group and to be intolerant of other minority groups. There is a firmer and more conscious belief in White racial superiority, and racial/ethnic minorities are blamed for their own problems.
- **4. Pseudo-Independence:** A person is likely to move into this phase due to a painful or insightful encounter or event, which jars the person from Reintegration status. The person begins to attempt an understanding of racial, cultural, and sexual orientation differences and may reach out to interact with minority group members. The choice of minority individuals, however, is based on how "similar" they are to him or her, and the primary mechanism used to understand racial issues is intellectual and conceptual. An attempt to understand has not reached the experiential and affective domains. In other words, understanding Euro-American White privilege, the sociopolitical aspects of race, and issues of bias, prejudice, and discrimination, tend to be more an intellectual exercise.

Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model

- **5. Immersion/Emersion:** If the person is reinforced to continue a personal exploration of himself or herself as a racial being, questions become focused on what it means to be White. Helms states that the person searches for an understanding of the personal meaning of racism and the ways by which one benefits from White privilege. There is an increasing willingness to truly confront one's own biases, to redefine Whiteness, and to become more active in directly combating racism and oppression. This stage is marked with increasing experiential and affective understanding that were lacking in the previous status.
- **6. Autonomy:**
- Increasing awareness of one's own Whiteness, reduced feelings of guilt, acceptance of one's own role in perpetuating racism, renewed determination to abandon White entitlement leads to an autonomy status. The person is knowledgeable about racial, ethnic and cultural differences, values the diversity, and is no longer fearful, intimidated, or uncomfortable with the experiential reality of race. Development of a non-racist White identity becomes increasingly strong.

Cross Model of Black Identity Development

1. Pre-encounter/Conformity status- the person holds racial attitudes that range from low salience of race to anti-Black, self-hating attitudes. People in this status may idealize Eurocentric cultural norms.
2. In the Encounter/Dissonance status, the person experiences a 'racial encounter' or series of encounters that initiate a crisis of identity and a questioning of beliefs about race.
3. In the Immersion/Emersion status, the person "immerses him or herself in the world of Blackness" (Cross, 1995b, p. 107), denigrating all that is White and idealizing all that is Black. This is an externally defined, oppositional identity, based more on opposition to White standards than on the affirmation of what it is to be Black.
4. The Internalization status occurs when the person has resolved the dissonance (confusion and conflict) of the previous statuses, bases her or his identity on personal experience, and develops, according to Jackson (1976), a "total identity matrix" in which multiple identity demands are balanced and synthesized (as cited in Cross, 1995b)

Exercise

- Using the personally relevant racial identity models, consider and discuss your personal progress with a personally selected partner

Are the single 'race' models adequate?

- The monoracial identity models do not take into account that mixed 'race' black/ white individuals have both a white and a black parent. In the context of a positive relationship with a white parent, the expression of positive, accepting, or defensive attitudes about whites by mixed 'race' people may not represent conformity attitudes as implied by Helms (1995; Helms & Cook, 1999). It may represent that individual's loyalty and love for her white parent.
- This love may be strong enough to allow mixed 'race' individuals to put oppressive experiences in social perspective and avoid generalizing their anger about oppression to all white people.

Where do I belong?

- Instead of requiring mixed 'race' people to make forced choices, research suggests it is better to support mixed 'race' people in exploring both sides of their heritage to develop positive mixed 'race' identities and healthy psychological adjustment.

Taking on a biracial identity is related to a more positive sense of identity, fewer psychological problems, and greater self-confidence than adopting a monoracial (black) label (Arnold, 1984; Watts, 1991). Root (1990) suggests regardless of how mixed 'race' people identify, they must always accept both sides of their heritage, make their own unforced choices, and develop ways to deal with the perceptions of others about them. They need to cope within mainstream society without sacrificing the integrity of their racial identities.

How can parents help support a child in the child's development?

- Openly acknowledge the child's 'difference' from you.
- Actively explore and promote the child's difference from you.
- Use of story narratives to affirm positive aspects of mixedness