Multiple Identities in Social Perception and Interaction: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Categorization plays a fundamental role in organizing daily interactions with the social world. However, there is increasing recognition that social categorization is often complex, both because category membership can be ambiguous (e.g., multiracial or transgender identities) and because different categorical identities (e.g., race and gender) may interact to determine the meaning of category membership. These complex identities simultaneously impact social perceivers' impressions and social targets' own experiences of identity, thereby shaping perceptions, experiences, and interactions in fundamental ways. This review examines recent research on the perception and experience of the complex, multifaceted identities that both complicate and enrich our lives. Although research has historically tended to focus more on difficulties and challenges associated with multiple identities, increasing attention is being paid to opportunities that emerge from the possession of identities that include multiple distinct or overlapping groups. We consider how these opportunities might benefit both perceivers and targets.

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INTRODUCTION

Although it usually happens almost effortlessly, interfacing with the social world is a tremendously complex enterprise. In any given day, we interact with a multitude of other humans, whether we encounter them in person, virtually, or symbolically, intimately or simply in passing. Within milliseconds of encountering others, we readily process and react to information about their various personal characteristics and social group memberships, and within 30 seconds, we are able to accurately predict a variety of important interpersonal outcomes (e.g., Ambady & Rosenthal 1992; Ito & Urland 2003; Rule & Ambady 2008, 2011). To say the least, this kind of information processing is tremendously impressive—in a recent demonstration, modeling one second of human brain activity took Japan's "K computer," one of the world's most powerful supercomputers, 40 minutes of dedicated processing time (Sparkes 2014). What makes human information processing so complex? When it comes to processing social information, decades of research on person perception have shown that processing people is complex because people themselves are complex. Understanding how we navigate these complexities is the focus of this review.

Social categories provide powerful tools for organizing and streamlining person perception (Macrae & Bodenhausen 2000). Our understanding of the role these categories play in social perception has in many respects been upended by recent research showing that social categories are not independent but instead interact and intersect to influence perception. These interactions and intersections make it quite tenuous to think in unqualified, general terms about the psychological impact of any particular category (e.g., race or gender). Moreover, recent research has highlighted the ways that social categories previously considered to be mutually exclusive (e.g., black or white, male or female) are being recast as overlapping or continuous in recognition of the many individuals whose identities lie within the intersections of these conventionally binary distinctions (e.g., multiracial and transgender persons). These complications have important psychological implications for both the social perceiver's impressions as well as the social target's own experience of identity. Interpersonal and intergroup processes depend in a profound way on both the categorical identities we perceive in others and those we impose upon our multifarious, complicated selves. Social perception is often guided by the stereotypes that are linked to social categories (Macrae & Bodenhausen 2000), and self-regulation is often guided by the group norms and standards that are linked to our self-categorizations (Turner & Reynolds 2011).

In this review, we examine recent research on the perception and experience of complex, multifaceted identities (for a review of earlier literature on this topic, see Frable 1997). Although research has tended to focus more on the difficulties and challenges posed by multiple identities, increasing attention is being paid to opportunities associated with identities that simultaneously

Multiple identities:
the collection of identities available for individuals to identify with or be categorized according to (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, occupation)

involve multiple distinct or overlapping groups. We consider how these opportunities might benefit both perceivers and targets.

The time for such a review is apt, given the recent surge of scholarly interest in these questions. This scholarship has no doubt been driven in part by demographic trends that involve the blurring and breakdown of simple, one-dimensional, conventional social categorization schemes. As one example, the recent surge in the population of multiracial individuals in the United States highlights the importance of conceptualizing and studying social understandings of race in more complex ways (Sanchez et al. 2014). Over the past ten years, the overall population of multiracial individuals has grown by over 30%, with projections predicting that 20% of all Americans will identify as multiracial by 2050 (Farley 2001, Humes et al. 2011). In fact, minority/white biracial individuals currently represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the overall US population. In addition, the population of individuals who possess multinational and multicultural identities is also growing (Sanchez et al. 2014), as is the opportunity to interact and identify with individuals from all kinds of different racial and cultural backgrounds around the world.

The nature of our modern lives also highlights the importance of multiple identities. At no time in human history have the opportunities for self-definition been so vast. We can now search for, define, and interact with potential identity groups not only within the sphere of our actual face-to-face encounters, but also within the vast reaches of the online world. These identity groups are never further than one's smartphone. Thanks to the internet, the spread of popular media, and relative increases in the accessibility of travel for more and more people, the perception and experience of complex social identities is a reality that complicates and enriches our lives on a regular basis.

In what follows, we focus on recent research examining challenges and opportunities for both perceiving and experiencing multiple identities (see also Cole 2009, Crisp & Meleady 2012, Shih & Sanchez 2009). Additionally, we consider the benefits of integrating scholarship on both the perceiver's and the target's perspectives, examining how perceptions and experiences of multiple identities might interact with and influence one another. Finally, we offer some suggestions for future research on this timely topic.

Social categorization: process by which humans sort others into groups on the basis of their social category memberships, most commonly age, race, and gender

PERCEIVING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: CHALLENGES

Perceiving and integrating information about multiple group memberships can be a challenging task for perceivers (see Crisp & Hewstone 2007, Johnson & Carpinella 2011, Wood & Hutter 2011). Multiple identities provide a perceptual challenge to perceivers in terms of categorization fluency (e.g., Stangor et al. 1992) and can lead to the activation of multiple, potentially conflicting stereotypes and prejudices (e.g., Fiske & Neuberg 1990). This processing disfluency can also lead to important interpersonal consequences. For example, perceivers tend to smile less at a biracial target and to judge him or her as less attractive (Halberstadt & Winkielman 2014). Resolving this perceptual challenge might include privileging a dominant category and suppressing others, either globally or selectively (e.g., Kang & Chasteen 2009, Macrae et al. 1995); forming evaluations based on the additive effects of perceived group identities (e.g., Blakemore & Boneham 1994); or creating an emergent subcategory by fusing together two or more salient identities (e.g., Weber & Crocker 1983). In this section, we consider recent research on multiple identities and the challenges they present to perceivers seeking well-structured, clear-cut representations of the social world.

Social categorization is complicated by the fact that it occurs under conditions of volatility (dynamically shifting contextual emphases), uncertainty (missing information), complexity (multiple potential bases for categorization), and ambiguity (unclear implications of available cues; Bodenhausen & Peery 2009). Perceivers are usually able to wade through this complexity

effectively, but their resultant cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors are often fraught with bias. A combination of excitatory and inhibitory processes guide perceptions when multiple target cues are available (Macrae et al. 1995), a process that can be heavily influenced by attitudes and categories that are already active in a perceiver's mind (Freeman & Ambady 2011, Smith et al. 1996).

In much of the classic research on social categorization, the emphasis was on studying the effects of a clearly defined category membership on processes of perception, evaluation, inference, and memory. Stimuli were explicitly structured by the researchers to convey a target's unambiguous membership in a given category (e.g., Asian) while providing little information about the target's other identities (e.g., age group, socioeconomic category). This approach yielded important insights, yet it has left unanswered the central question of whether different identities can interact in ways that alter seemingly basic categorization outcomes. More recent research confirms that different social categories can and do influence one another, depending on whether their implications coincide or clash. For instance, cues about a target's social status can interact with phenotypic cues to drive racial categorizations; Freeman and colleagues (2011) showed that low-status clothing increased the likelihood that a target would be categorized as black, while high-status clothing increased the likelihood that the target would be categorized as white. This effect was amplified as phenotypic cues to race became increasingly ambiguous. These findings provide evidence that a target's perceived race is not always a straightforward "fact" dictated by phenotypic (e.g., facial) cues. Rather, much can depend on the degree to which the racial category suggested by the target's phenotypic cues aligns with the implications of the individual's other characteristics and identities.

Research on identity intersections has focused particularly on the ways that race and gender categories can constrain and modify one another. A variety of research has begun to document how race and sex categories are psychologically and phenotypically intertwined (Freeman & Ambady 2011, Johnson et al. 2012). In their dynamic interactive model of social categorization, Freeman and Ambady argue that bottom-up perceptual cues (e.g., skin color, wrinkles, dirty clothing) interact with top-down social cognitive factors like stereotypes, resulting in interactions between categories. These authors predicted and confirmed that common facial cues and overlapping stereotypes would lead sex categorizations to be biased by racial category. Because men and women share stereotypes (as well as prototypic phenotypic facial structures) in common with blacks and Asians, respectively, sex categorization is facilitated when sex and race cues align (e.g., Asian women) but is impaired when sex and race cues do not align (e.g., black women). Galinsky et al. (2013) showed that these gendered race effects have implications for real-world outcomes in diverse domains, including interracial marriage, leadership selection, and athletic participation; these studies show that Asians are advantaged over blacks in contexts where femininity is valued, but blacks are advantaged over Asians in contexts where masculinity is valued.

Further, gender cues associated with race can bias perceptions of a third, often uncertain identity: sexual orientation. Perceivers are more accurate in judging the sexual orientation of targets whose race and gender identities feature overlapping stereotypes (e.g., black men, Asian women) and are more likely to judge targets as gay if their race and gender identities do not have corresponding stereotypic content (e.g., Asian men, black women; Johnson & Ghavami 2011). These studies indicate that conceptions of race are gendered in ways that carry noteworthy implications for social perception and interaction.

Another way race and gender are interrelated can be found in evidence that the default stereotypes associated with racial groups are actually stereotypes about the male rather than female members of the group (Ghavami & Peplau 2013; see also Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach 2008). At the same time, default stereotypes about women tend to focus on members of the white majority group rather than ethnic or racial minorities (e.g., Goff & Kahn 2013). Taken together, these

findings imply that women who are members of minority groups run the risk of "intersectional invisibility" because they are not considered the most relevant and representative members of either their racial or their gender group (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach 2008). Confirming this invisibility effect, Sesko & Biernat (2010) documented that the faces of black women were more likely to be forgotten, relative to those of black men or white men and women, and their contributions to a group discussion were more likely to be mistakenly attributed to others. Furthermore, participants completing a speeded categorization task were slower to associate black women with the categories "black" and "woman" than to associate black men and white women, respectively, with these categories (Thomas et al. 2014).

The interactive dynamics of race and gender are further complicated by a higher-order interaction with socioeconomic status. Using a large longitudinal data set collected over almost 20 years, Penner & Saperstein (2013) examined the "simple" racial categorizations of participants in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. Specifically, interviewers were asked to categorize an interviewee as black, white, or "Other" at the end of an interview, and the researchers looked back at the overall data to examine the factors predicting this racial classification. The results show remarkable evidence of the intersectional influence of social class and gender on racial categorization. Some social class indicators operate similarly to promote the categorization of both men and women as black (e.g., unemployment, living in the inner city) or white (e.g., being married, living in the suburbs). However, other social class indicators impact racial categorization more strongly for one gender than the other (e.g., a history of receiving welfare makes it more likely for women, but not men, to be categorized as black). These effects present challenges not only for perceivers (and targets) but also for society as a whole—indeed, as the authors argue, these types of intersectional effects underlie interactive inequalities at a societal level.

Just as Penner & Saperstein (2013) argue that three key dimensions (race, sex, and social class) intersect to guide perception, another recent framework similarly argues that three fundamental social dimensions combine to provide a foundation for social perception (Neuberg & Sng 2013). According to the life history theory of social perception, age, sex, and ecology have special significance for social perception. In this framework, ecologies are categorized as harsh and unpredictable ("desperation ecologies") or secure and predictable ("hopeful ecologies"). In the United States, because race acts as a reliable cue to ecology, these two categories often function interchangeably. However, ecology stereotypes can override race stereotypes in situations where targets exhibit ecology cues that are incompatible with their race (e.g., poor whites are more likely to be targeted by stereotypes about their social class than about their racial group). The authors argue that these categories are universally important and always interact, and they should thus be conceived of as "AgeSexEcology." AgeSexEcology helps perceivers to predict and understand the goals, strategies, and capacities of others—effectively the fundamental challenge facing the human perceiver—but can also lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. This framework thus provides a comprehensive and interdisciplinary perspective on how cues combine to inform perceivers about the social threats and opportunities inherent in others.

Taken together, much recent research points to the conclusion that the meaning imputed to a particular social category can depend substantially on its interactions with other detectable identities, even to the point of altering judgments of category membership. The complexities of determining category memberships are further complicated by the fact that category boundaries, as well as the meanings attributed to particular category interactions, are not static but vary as a function of perceiver and situational characteristics. For example, affective states and social contexts have been shown to bias perceptions of multiply categorizable targets. For example, negative mood encourages perceptual salience of outgroup features over ingroup features (e.g., Crisp et al. 2002, Turner et al. 1994, Urban & Miller 1998). Recent research has further shown

that the perception of multiple identities can depend on the perceiver's own group identities, motivations, and implicit biases. For example, Pauker & Ambady (2009) examined how perceiver racial identity (monoracial versus multiracial) affects categorization of racially ambiguous faces. They tested Asian, white, and biracial Asian/white participants' memory for Asian, white, and biracial faces that were labeled as either Asian or white. Whereas monoracial perceivers relied on the provided labels and had better memory for ingroup faces, multiracial people disregarded the labels and demonstrated better memory overall, regardless of face type. This effect was particularly pronounced among perceivers who did not endorse essentialist views of race (i.e., the belief that race is genetically determined and that there is little, if any, overlap between individuals from different racial groups). These results highlight how a perceiver's own racial identity and belief systems can shape perceptions of race, with ensuing implications for facial recognition accuracy.

These results are in line with other evidence indicating that a perceiver's implicit biases and ideologies can play an important role in shaping social categorization outcomes. Implicit racial prejudice is one such bias that can impact perception, coloring perceivers' perceptions of the valence and intensity of facial affect, which has implications for how a racially ambiguous face is categorized (Hugenberg & Bodenhausen 2003, 2004; Hutchings & Haddock 2008). Specific belief systems can also play an important role. For example, perceivers who endorse essentialist beliefs about race are more likely to engage in race-based categorizations and are more sensitive to variations in phenotypic racial cues (Chao et al. 2013), and individuals who believe in low genetic overlap between racial groups are more likely to perceive discrete boundaries between racial groups (Plaks et al. 2012). Each of these perceptual biases impacts the process through which biracial and multiracial individuals are perceived, often with detrimental consequences for intergroup attitudes and interactions (e.g., Kang et al. 2014). Moreover, category assignments tend to reinforce perceivers' a priori biases. For instance, compared to when racially ambiguous faces are labeled as biracial, labeling them with monoracial labels can increase the perceiver's endorsement of essentialist beliefs (Young et al. 2013). To the extent that subjective perceptions of category membership are both shaped by and reinforcing of cognitive biases, perceivers can face a substantial challenge in escaping from overly simplistic conceptions of racial identity.

Two final examples of perceiver variables affecting the perception of social category memberships concern perceivers' momentarily salient goals and motives. Perceivers strategically emphasize a shared identity with a positive target but emphasize distinct identities with a negative target. For example, Canadian newspapers tended to emphasize Olympic medalist Ben Johnson's Canadian identity after he won the gold medal, but emphasized his Jamaican identity after he was disqualified for using steroids (Stelzl et al. 2008). Finally, perceivers are more likely to activate multiple categories when viewing a multiple-identity target after being primed with distrust (Friesen & Sinclair 2011). Distrust signals uncertainty about an interaction with a target, and activation of multiple categories helps perceivers prepare for all possible interpersonal outcomes. These effects highlight the flexibility with which social categories guide the construal of ambiguous and multifaceted targets. The capacity to tune social categorization processes to serve perceivers' momentary goals is surely adaptive, but it also complicates the accurate anticipation (and prevention) of particular forms of unwanted bias.

Broader cultural and historical factors can also shape the way perceivers deal with category ambiguities. For example, American legal traditions emphasized the principle of hypodescent in assigning individuals to racial categories (e.g., Banks & Eberhardt 1998). The principle of hypodescent holds that individuals with a mixed racial heritage should be assigned a monoracial identity based on their most socially subordinate ancestral group (e.g., a black/white biracial person would be considered black). This legal categorization denied people with racially mixed ancestry access to socially privileged identities, and the categorizations of laypeople often show

Hypodescent: assigning a monoracial label to a mixed-race individual based on his or her most socially subordinate ancestral racial group

a similar pattern. In an experiment comparing reflexive and deliberate categorization of biracial targets, Peery & Bodenhausen (2008) found that quick, reflexive judgments are often made in line with the principle of hypodescent. When asked to rapidly categorize biracial targets as black/not black or white/not white, perceivers were significantly more likely to categorize targets who were described as having both black and white ancestry as black, not white. However, this work also showed how this process might be overridden. When allowed the opportunity for slower, more thoughtful deliberation, perceivers became more likely to categorize black/white targets as multiracial, suggesting that perceptions based on hypodescent can be disrupted by encouraging more deliberative processing.

Further work on hypodescent has helped to clarify when and how this principle guides social perception. Ho and colleagues (2011) compared Americans' perceptions of black/white and Asian/white targets, confirming that hypodescent directs perceptions of both types of mixed-race targets, with stronger effects observed for black/white targets. In line with hypodescent, black/white and Asian/white targets were more likely to be categorized as black and Asian, respectively. The authors also used a face-morphing task to determine what proportion of minority content was required for a face to be perceived as belonging to the minority group and what proportion of white content was required to categorize a face as white. Participants were shown pictures of an Asian, black, or white face and asked to press the space bar to make the face appear more white in the first two cases or to make the face appear more Asian or black in the latter case. The results showed that target faces required a lower proportion of minority content to be perceived as minority than they required white content to be perceived as white. Again, this effect was stronger for black faces, suggesting moderation of hypodescent by type of minority group. To account for this pattern, the authors argued that social class moderates hypodescent. Specifically, hypodescent should be stronger for minority groups that are lower on the social class hierarchy. In addition to social class, hypodescent effects have also been shown to be moderated by the political views of the perceiver, with hypodescent more likely to govern perceptions among political conservatives (Krosch et al. 2013).

Researchers have also examined why categorization of multiracial targets tends to follow the principle of hypodescent. In addition to the possibility that culture-specific sociolegal history shapes these processes, more basic psychological mechanisms may be at work. According to Halberstadt et al. (2011), learning about minority groups requires attention to distinctive features that best distinguish a to-be-learned category from familiar categories. So, for example, a young white child exposed to a black person for the first time will automatically pay attention to the unfamiliar target's distinctive features (e.g., skin color, facial structure). These distinctive features tend to capture more selective attention, leading subsequently encountered ambiguous or multiracial people who have these features to be categorized according to minority group membership. Results of two experiments using both real (white, Chinese) and experimentally manipulated (red, yellow, blue) groups supported this hypothesis (Halberstadt et al. 2011). Native New Zealanders (white) were much more likely to categorize ambiguous Chinese/white faces as Chinese than were native Chinese. For native New Zealanders, Chinese faces are distinctive and therefore Chinese cues capture attention, which is not the case for native Chinese. Similar effects were found with the experimentally manipulated groups. In this case, majority groups were learned before minority groups, and ambiguous faces were more likely to be categorized into the minority group. This work suggests that early learning has important implications for later categorization, with more hypodescent-guided perceptions expected among individuals with less exposure to minority groups.

In this section, we have summarized some of the recent work highlighting the challenges that multiple identities present for social perceivers. Many of these challenges are related to

disfluency in categorization and increased propensities for categorizing unclear cases into devalued social categories, with subsequently biased evaluations and behavior. Despite these challenges, social interactions with multiple- and ambiguous-identity targets are often positive, and many opportunities exist for complex identities to lead to more positive perceptual outcomes, a topic to which we turn in the next section.

PERCEIVING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the opportunities inherent within multiple identities relate to the finding that multiple categorizations can often be beneficial for intergroup relations (see Crisp & Hewstone 2007, Migdal et al. 1998, Mullen et al. 2001). The differentiation-decategorization model of multiple categorization effects provides a comprehensive framework for how these positive intergroup effects are realized (Crisp & Hewstone 2007). According to this framework, initial categorization (e.g., female or male, young or old) leads to category differentiation and bias when the perceiver and target belong to different groups. However, this differentiation process can be disrupted if crosscutting, shared identities become salient, thereby reducing intergroup bias (see also Tajfel 1982). For example, a black Christian woman may initially categorize a white target as an outgroup member, but upon noticing that the target is wearing a necklace with a Christian symbol, their shared religious (and perhaps also gender) identities may come into focus, undercutting the perceiver's sense of the target's otherness. Even a novel, minimal crosscutting identity can undercut consequential forms of bias. For example, Gündemir et al. (2014) showed that whites' implicit bias against ethnic minority leaders was significantly diminished by a crosscutting minimal-group identity that was shared with a minority leader being considered for a promotion. The salience (and indeed, creation) of shared ingroup identities can be enhanced by any moderating factor that increases positive mood and decreases negative affect (Crisp & Hewstone 2007, Urban & Miller 1998).

A second tenet of this model is that multiple categorization is associated with decategorization, a move toward more individuated processing of a target. Because multiple identities are complex and processing them requires cognitive effort, person perception tends to shift away from simple categorization and stereotype application toward individuation of encountered targets (e.g., Crisp et al. 2001). Individuation leads to greater engagement with a given target, which often leads to increased liking, a reduction in evaluative bias, and more accurate perceptions in general.

Recognizing inclusive superordinate categories (even the extremely broad category of *Homo sapiens*) can provide a particularly powerful basis for undercutting intergroup differentiation and bias (e.g., Dovidio et al. 2009). For example, combining multiple and superordinate categorization (by making a shared human identity salient) reduces dehumanization of blacks (Albarello & Rubini 2012). By including information about a target's religion, age, and birthplace, in addition to information about his or her race, and also activating a human identity by presenting four sentences about identifying and feeling connected to all humans, the dehumanization otherwise seen when only the target's race was presented was circumvented. The fact that such a simple intervention brought about these positive effects is good news for the development of interventions aimed at decreasing dehumanization and encouraging more favorable intergroup attitudes. Some additional benefits of multiple categorization are an associated decrease in racial essentialist beliefs (Young et al. 2013) and increased commitment to democratic norms, outgroup tolerance, and belief in egalitarian values (Vasiljevic & Crisp 2013). This relationship between complex categorization and belief in equality is not unidirectional. Dispositional allophilia (positive intergroup attitudes) and valuing of equality are also important predictors of supporting social policies that benefit multiracial individuals (Pittinsky & Montoya 2009).

A central issue in work on crossed categorization concerns the ease with which shared, ingroup categorizations can overcome the countervailing effects of outgroup memberships. For example,

upon encountering a disabled target, how many shared ingroup identities would an able-bodied perceiver need to identify in order to override the initial perception of the target as a devalued outgroup member? In order to investigate this question, Urada and colleagues (2007) examined participants' evaluations of targets who could be categorized according to a mixture of single or multiple in- and outgroup memberships. Their results indicated that, in general, it takes two shared ingroups to overcome the influence of one dimension of differentiation. When the number of shared ingroup memberships reaches this threshold, perceptions of an outgroup target become identical to those of an ingroup target (for an explanation of how group importance affects this relationship, see also Crisp et al. 2006). These results have implications for interventions designed to improve intergroup relations. Any intervention that makes multiple identities salient—even ad hoc groupings that are created or identified simply for this purpose (e.g., work groups, people who enjoy the same type of music)—and encourages the recognition of common ingroups should facilitate positive intergroup interactions.

The above examples of the benefits of identity complexity focus on the idea that evaluative intergroup biases can be reduced when crosscutting, shared identities come into focus. However, shared identities are not a prerequisite for bias reduction in the case of a multiply categorized target. Indeed, considering a target's multiple identities can reduce intergroup biases even when the perceiver does not belong to any of the relevant social categories. These benefits derive from the ways categories interact in modifying the perceiver's stereotypic expectations about the target. Social groups tend to be stereotyped in terms of their warmth versus coldness and competence versus incompetence (Fiske et al. 2002). If two different categories possessed by a target have similar implications for these dimensions, then no benefits of cross-categorization would be expected; however, when the different categories carry conflicting expectations, negative stereotypes may be canceled out or substantially diminished. For example, Kang & Chasteen (2009) found that negative racial stereotypes can be undercut by crosscutting age stereotypes. In this experiment, perceivers were asked to judge the facial emotion of black and white, old and young targets. Although young black targets were judged negatively in line with stereotypes linking them to anger and hostility, older black targets were judged favorably. In effect, the negative perceptual effects of the black hostility stereotype were reduced when perceiving individuals who are also old. Although age-related stereotypes can certainly be problematic in their own right (e.g., Meisner 2012), in this context they confer a protective benefit for older black men because stereotypes about older adults (e.g., frailty, kindness) conflict with racist associations of hostility and danger with black men. Interestingly, it is not only old age that confers these protective benefits against racial prejudice: Young black children also experience less discrimination than do older black students (Small et al. 2012), given that young children are perceived to be nonthreatening. Livingston & Pearce (2009) showed that this kind of threat diffusion can also benefit adult black men who happen to have a more childlike facial appearance. Although racial bias directed at black children may be less extreme than that targeted at adolescents and young adults, perceivers nevertheless do view black children in a more dehumanized way than white children, and this can contribute to consequential forms of bias such as differential targeting for police violence (Goff et al. 2014).

Stereotypes about race and sexual orientation (Pedulla 2014, Remedios et al. 2011) have also been shown to interact in ways that modify the impact of negative stereotypes. Because stereotypes about gay men tend to conflict with the black hostility and danger stereotypes, gay black men were perceived more positively than straight black men (Remedios et al. 2011). A recent experiment on personnel decision making demonstrated that these positive perceptions have important consequences (Pedulla 2014). Specifically, participants suggested that gay black men receive higher starting salaries than straight black men, an effect that was explained by the fact that gay black men were perceived to be less threatening. These few studies suggest a promising opportunity whereby

negative perceptions linked to one social identity can be overridden by conflicting perceptions linked to another identity (see also Freeman et al. 2011). Thus, perceivers can avoid or reduce unwanted forms of bias in their social perceptions by attending to multiple identity dimensions that bring clashing stereotypes into focus. Whether or not perceivers notice and are influenced by such identity intersections is likely to depend on a number of factors, including the salience and contextual relevance of the target's various social categories.

The benefits of selectively highlighting particular social categories are not limited to social evaluations and judgments; there are also salutary influences on basic processes of perception and memory. One example is the cross-race facial recognition effect (Meissner & Brigham 2001), where perceivers show superior memory for ingroup faces relative to outgroup faces. A recent study demonstrates the fluidity of this effect by testing memory for faces categorized according to race or university affiliation (Hehman et al. 2010). Better memory was indeed demonstrated for ingroup faces, but the definition of who constitutes the ingroup was entirely flexible; participants remembered racial ingroup faces better, irrespective of university affiliation, when race was highlighted, but they remembered university ingroup faces better, irrespective of race, when university affiliation was highlighted. Interestingly, the bias toward remembering ingroup faces is continuous, and even partial ingroup members are remembered more accurately than full outgroup targets (Hehman et al. 2011). The potential for shifting the dividing line between in- and outgroups is an important opportunity to undercut traditional forms of bias and discrimination, even at the early perceptual level. Because they provide multiple opportunities for possible shared ingroup memberships, multiple identities can be extremely beneficial toward this end.

The definition of the ingroup of course depends not only on how others are categorized but also, critically, on how one categorizes oneself (e.g., Turner & Reynolds 2011). By allowing for contextual shifts in self-definitions that emphasize shared identities, the inherent complexity of the self can afford important opportunities to experience solidarity with individuals who might otherwise be considered outgroup members. For example, one study had participants self-categorize as either "Americans" or "students" and then measured their feelings of anger and respect toward Muslims and the police (Ray et al. 2008). Participants who self-categorized as Americans felt more anger and less respect for Muslims than did participants who self-categorized as students. On the other hand, participants who self-categorized as students felt more anger and less respect for the police than did participants who self-categorized as Americans. These results demonstrate that positive perceptions can be encouraged when perceivers engage in relevant self-categorization. Relatedly, simply thinking about occupying a subordinate position on one social dimension (e.g., social class) can highlight privilege on a different dimension (e.g., race), which helps to enhance dominant group members' support for social policies aimed at reducing inequity (Rosette & Tost 2013). These findings highlight that it is not only how perceivers think about targets that is important for eventual perceptual outcomes, but also the way in which perceivers think about themselves.

Although multiple identities can prove challenging to perceivers, they also provide a number of opportunities to decrease unwanted bias. Each additional identity possessed by a target represents an additional possibility that an identity might be shared with the perceiver or that a negative stereotype associated with one broad social identity will be undermined by contradictory stereotypes about another identity. Thus, by recognizing the multifaceted social identities of others, perceivers can take an important step toward less biased decisions and more positive social interactions.

EXPERIENCING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: CHALLENGES

When Walt Whitman famously wrote, "I contain multitudes" in his "Song of Myself," he acknowledged the profoundly multifaceted nature of the self. For individuals who possess stigmatized or

marginalized identity facets, processes of self-understanding and self-regulation are further complicated by having to contend with the biases of others. In the following sections we turn our attention to the challenges and opportunities inherent in the possession of complex, intersectional, or ambiguous social identities.

The fact that individuals possess multiple social identities can complicate experiences of stigmatization, particularly when individuals happen to belong to more than one socially devalued category. Some researchers have argued, for example, that women of color are likely to face a situation of double jeopardy in the professional sphere, being subjected to the additive stresses of both sexism and racism (e.g., Berdahl & Moore 2006, Buchanan & Fitzgerald 2008, Derous et al. 2012). A recent examination of payroll data with over 500,000 observations showed that individuals who identify with more than one disadvantaged group experience significantly greater pay penalties than those who identify with just one disadvantaged group (Woodhams et al. 2013). Other research has documented an inurement effect (Raver & Nishii 2010), whereby minority women experience better psychological outcomes than white women or minority men because they become more habituated to experiences of stigma and workplace harassment (presumably because these types of events are experienced more frequently) and are thus less bothered by them. Although becoming inured to harassment may confer some psychological benefits, it is clearly not an optimal pathway to well-being, particularly given that it is likely to undermine the confrontation and reduction of sexism and racism in the workplace.

Research indicates that multiple-minority individuals who seek restitution for their experiences of discrimination are often unsuccessful. An examination of 34 years of equal employment opportunity cases in the US federal courts found that, compared to individuals making claims of a single form of discrimination, plaintiffs who brought intersectional claims were only half as likely to win their cases (Best et al. 2011). Importantly, this effect was unique to intersectional claims specifically (e.g., a Native American woman alleging discrimination based on her intersectional identity); the same penalty was not observed among those making multiple claims (e.g., a Native American woman alleging separate incidents of racism and sexism).

A different conception of the interactive roles of race and gender in shaping vulnerability to bias is proposed in the "outgroup/subordinate male target hypothesis" (Navarrete et al. 2010; see also Sidanius & Veniegas 2000), which argues that racial bias is a highly gendered phenomenon. Specifically, these researchers claim that because of evolutionary concerns about male dominance and aggression, race bias has evolved to be primarily male targeted. This pattern creates a unique challenge for male racial minorities and was demonstrated to exist among both male and female perceivers, but for different reasons (Navarrete et al. 2010). Whereas male perceivers exhibited greater bias against male racial outgroup members due to concerns about aggression and social dominance, female perceivers exhibited this bias due to concerns about sexual coercion. Similar effects were observed in a telephone survey study in which nonwhite men reported more discrimination than women reported, an effect that was especially pronounced among men with the lowest levels of educational attainment (Veenstra 2013a). Another set of field experiments examining hiring decisions made by recruiters shows further support for a subordinate male target hypothesis (Derous et al. 2014). Recruiters rated résumés belonging to Arab women more positively than those belonging to Arab men, particularly when considering jobs requiring traditionally feminine traits (e.g., interpersonal contact). Although this perspective argues that minority women are targeted by less racial bias than are minority men, this of course does not imply that they live lives free of racial bias, nor does it take into account their experiences of sexism; women of color do face noteworthy bias concerns, as the research on double jeopardy described above indicates.

Another challenge related to the experience of multiple identities that is commonly examined in organizational contexts is the idea of group fault lines. Fault lines refer to the imaginary lines

Double jeopardy hypothesis: the idea that individuals with two or more subordinated social identities (e.g., black women) experience more discrimination and identity stress than those with one such identity (e.g., white women, black men)

dividing a group into various subgroups on the basis of demographic categories such as sex or race (Lau & Murnighan 1998). When multiple-minority identities exhibit a correlated pattern in an organization (e.g., minority women all occupy secretarial positions rather than being distributed across a range of organizational roles), these relatively homogeneous subgroups can present a number of challenges for the organization. These challenges include increased conflict, decreased team satisfaction, and decreased team performance, which are exacerbated to the degree that the demographic fault lines are salient (e.g., Jehn & Bezrukova 2010; for a meta-analysis of these effects, see Thatcher & Patel 2011).

Several studies have also examined the effect of multiple group memberships and identification on health-related outcomes (e.g., Gee et al. 2007; Grollman 2012, 2014; Sanchez et al. 2009). Studies examining large samples of adolescents and young adults, for example, have found that those who identify with more than one disadvantaged group have elevated risk for mental and physical health consequences (e.g., headaches, sleep problems) and behavioral problems (e.g., smoking, skipping school) compared to those who identified with only one disadvantaged group (Grollman 2012, Udry et al. 2003). Interestingly, these effects were consistent across a variety of racial combinations (e.g., white/black, black/American Indian, Asian/American Indian; Udry et al. 2003). A recent large-scale examination of adults demonstrates that this pattern of multiple risks extends into adulthood, showing that signs of major depression and poor physical health are more common among multiply disadvantaged adults (Grollman 2014). Importantly, this study confirms that the link between multiple stigmatized identities and poor health is partially mediated by the experience of multiple forms of discrimination (Grollman 2014). Generally speaking, studies examining multiple identities and health outcomes suggest that it is important to consider both additive and interactive effects of group memberships on health (e.g., Thoma & Huebner 2013, Veenstra 2013b). For example, although race, gender, social class, and sexual orientation are all important predictors of high blood pressure, examining the effects of these group membership interactively predicts outcomes better than does examining the effects in an additive fashion (Veenstra 2013b).

In a further test of interactive effects of discrimination on health, a recent study examined concurrent experiences of racism and antigay discrimination among African American lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) adolescents (Thoma & Huebner 2013). In response to previous work indicating that racial minority LGB individuals represent a particularly vulnerable group (Harper et al. 2004), Thoma and Huebner tested three different models—additive, prominence, and exacerbation (Raver & Nishii 2010)—describing how different forms of discrimination might combine to affect health outcomes, specifically suicidality, depression, and substance use. Each of these models posits a unique combined effect of different forms of discrimination on health outcomes: The additive model posits that different forms of discrimination have independent effects on health, the prominence model posits that one form of discrimination will have prominent effects and other forms will have no additional effect, and the exacerbation model posits that each additional form of discrimination exacerbates the effects of the others. Results revealed that both racism and antigay discrimination were associated with negative health outcomes for LBG African American youth (see also Kuper et al. 2013). Specifically, both racism and antigay discrimination predicted higher instances of depressive symptoms and suicidality, and racism was particularly strongly associated with substance use. Overall, additive effects of racism and antigay discrimination were found for depressive symptoms, highlighting the mental health challenges experienced by multiply stigmatized youth.

A broad challenge facing members of subordinated groups concerns how to situate a stigmatized self-aspect within a broader constellation of personal aspects and identities. The success of coping processes has been linked to the way other available identities are emphasized or integrated. For

example, social identity complexity (SIC) theory (Roccas & Brewer 2002) argues that multiple group identities can be subjectively represented in distinct ways that vary in the degree of overlap between the groups. For example, imagine a female Indian lawyer. If she subjectively represents her Indian, female, and lawyer ingroups as fully overlapping (low SIC), only other Indian women who happen to be lawyers will be considered ingroup members. On the other hand, if she represents her ingroups as only partially overlapping (high SIC), she will be more likely to recognize ingroup membership with anyone who is a lawyer *or* Indian *or* female. Because they provide many more opportunities for shared group memberships, higher levels of complexity predict lower levels of ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias (see also Roccas et al. 2008). Although high SIC is associated with more favorable intergroup attitudes, there are many social and psychological factors that limit its development, including high need for closure, desire to maintain the status quo, high stress or cognitive load, and living in a monocultural or stratified society. Interestingly, one study demonstrated that minority group members tend to have lower SIC than majority group members, even though the minority group social networks were objectively more complex (Brewer et al. 2013). Unfortunately, low SIC also limits the nature of one's identification with various ingroups; while individuals with high SIC tend to identify with (and benefit from) different ingroups in different ways, individuals with low SIC tend to evince more invariant patterns of identification (Roccas et al. 2008). Another conceptualization of the process by which multifaceted identities are combined is the multiple self-aspects framework (MSF) (McConnell 2011). The MSF posits that the self is composed of multiple self-aspects (e.g., roles, social identities, social relationships, goals) that are context dependent, organize attention, and direct action. These self-aspects are associated with personal attributes and interactively shape our affective states. Broad theoretical approaches such as SIC and MSF offer many potential insights into the psychology of intersectional identities, but more research is needed to integrate the specific role of identity-related stigma and subordination into these conceptual frameworks.

In addition to the complexities created by identity intersections, identity ambiguity is an issue that faces an increasing number of individuals in modern society. Social perception would be a rather straightforward process if social categories were clearly defined and mutually exclusive, but as we have noted, demographic trends defy the preference for simple structure. In particular, the rising population of multiracial people has resulted in a blurring of racial and ethnic distinctions (Lee & Bean 2004). Early work on multiracial identity focused on the "problem approach" or "marginal man" perspective (Collins 2000, Shih & Sanchez 2005, Thornton 1996). This approach centered on the argument that biracial individuals are minorities not only in reference to society as a whole, but also within their own minority communities. According to this perspective, a black/white individual living in the United States, for example, would experience difficulties fitting into both the white majority culture and the black minority culture. Furthermore, each "parent" group represents and discusses black/white multiracial identity and experiences in different ways (Thornton 2009). Although this perspective can be criticized as overly negative, a substantial research literature has supported the assertion that experiencing these relatively indeterminate racial identities can present a number of challenges (e.g., Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz 2013, Tine & Gotlieb 2013, Zhang et al. 2013). Research suggests that identity conflict or denial (being denied an important aspect of one's identity by others) tends to be associated with lower levels of perceived inclusion, identity pride, and well-being, and higher levels of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos 2005, Chen et al. 2008, Cheng & Lee 2009, Cheryan & Monin 2005, Sanchez et al. 2014). Unfortunately, identity denial can be a common experience for multiracial individuals, who are often asked to choose one (and only one) racial background on demographic questionnaires (Townsend et al. 2009) and are more likely to be categorized according to their minority group membership by perceivers (Halberstadt et al. 2011).

Social identity complexity (SIC): subjective representation of the overlap between an individual's multiple identity groups; higher SIC (less overlap) is associated with intergroup advantages

Multiracial people regard race as an important aspect of their self-identity, and they seek verification from others that their racial identities are understood. For this reason they are more interested in interactions with people who express understanding, rather than confusion, about the racial backgrounds of multiracial persons (Remedios & Chasteen 2013). Instances of identity constraint are associated with tension, decreased motivation, and damaged self-esteem (Townsend et al. 2009). Identity expression, on the other hand, can be something of a double-edged sword for biracial individuals, as disclosure of a biracial identity can make them more likely to be the target of and to be vulnerable to the effects of racial bias (Sanchez & Bonam 2009). Dilemmas regarding the decision of whether to disclose or hide a biracial identity, therefore, can present an additional challenge beyond simply possessing a biracial identity in the first place.

How, then, do biracial individuals develop and maintain a sense of self? Rockquemore (1998) developed a framework for understanding self-definition and identification among biracial individuals in particular. This framework classifies self-understanding of biracial identity into four types: border, protean, transcendent, and traditional. Using the example of an Asian/black biracial individual, a border identity would lead to self-definition as biracial; a protean identity would lead to self-definition as Asian, black, and/or biracial, depending on the situational context; a transcendent identity would be associated with no personal racial identification and with racial identification as Asian, black, or biracial only offered when pressured to claim an identity; and a traditional identity would lead to self-definition as either Asian or black. Importantly, like the other frameworks discussed above, Rockquemore's framework highlights the fact that there are multiple ways to represent one's group identities and that failing to recognize and accept these multiple modes creates challenges for individuals contending with multiple group identities. Just as group identities vary and shift, so too do representations of these identities across different contexts and groups (e.g., Turner et al. 1994). Indeed, members of different biracial groups differ in their predominant representations of their biracial identities (e.g., Asian/white individuals are more likely to have a protean identity than are black/white individuals; Lou et al. 2011).

Unfortunately, no matter how they categorize themselves, the categorization "rules" used by perceivers to make sense of multiracial individuals can often mean that biracial individuals will experience bias in the allocation of resources. For example, biracial individuals with white ancestry (e.g., black/white) are deemed to be less deserving of affirmative action than are monoracial minorities (e.g., black) or mixed-minority biracial individuals (e.g., black/Native American), an effect that increases as the amount of inferred white ancestry increases (Good et al. 2013, Sanchez et al. 2011). Interestingly, this effect is driven by the belief that biracial individuals with white ancestry experience less discrimination and are thus less deserving of resources aimed at remedying inequalities propagated by discrimination (Good et al. 2013). In effect, any compensatory "benefits" that may have been conferred on the basis of the individual's minority status are negated by the individual's white identity. Furthermore, in addition to being perceived as colder and less competent than their monoracial minority and white peers, biracial students are also perceived to be less worthy of minority scholarships (Sanchez & Bonam 2009). These effects certainly present challenges for multiracial individuals in a number of important societal contexts.

To the extent that multiracial individuals must contend with both the experience of racial bias and the denial of entitlement to bias remedies (if they possess white as well as minority ancestry), they are liable to experience unique kinds of psychological stress. Indeed, investigators exploring the link between multiple group identity and adjustment problems examined the effect of malleable racial identification on psychological well-being (Sanchez et al. 2009). Specifically, malleable racial identification (i.e., identifying more or less with different racial identities in different social contexts) was associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing depressive symptoms and decreased overall psychological well-being for multiracial individuals who were low in

dialectical self-views (i.e., uncomfortable with ambiguity or inconsistency in one's self-definition). Research also indicates that multiracial individuals show a greater likelihood of engaging in substance abuse (Price et al. 2002). These psychological and behavioral patterns are linked to the challenges posed by the experience of unstable regard, or the tendency for multiracial individuals to have underlying discomfort and tension about their multiracial identities. This is consistent with prior research documenting the higher levels of stress that emerge when individuals possess identities with conflicting implications vis-à-vis social status (e.g., McDade 2002).

Thus, a variety of research supports the implications of the marginal man perspective on multiple identities, which argues that the experience of multiple group memberships—in particular socially subordinated group identities—is fraught with challenges, stress, and negative outcomes. We have reviewed a number of challenges here, highlighting potential negative outcomes for treatment at school and work and for overall health and well-being. However, recent years have seen expanding evidence indicating that there can be noteworthy benefits and opportunities inherent within the experience of multiple identities. We turn to a discussion of these opportunities in the next section.

EXPERIENCING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: OPPORTUNITIES

A central theme in the research showing positive effects of multiple identities highlights the benefits of being able to switch among different social identities according to one's current context, needs, or goals (e.g., Johnson et al. 2006; Rosner 2011; Shih et al. 2010, 2013). Having a larger number of identities increases the chances that one of those identities will be valued in a given social context, a construct referred to as identity adaptiveness (Pittinsky et al. 1999). Because multiple identities provide greater opportunities for flexible self-definition, they afford individuals greater opportunity to achieve optimal distinctiveness (i.e., find a satisfactory balance between the need to assimilate with and to differentiate oneself from others; Brewer 1991). By engaging in identity switching, individuals can emphasize their most adaptive identity while downplaying disadvantageous or less relevant identities (Pittinsky et al. 1999), a strategy that can be used to mitigate the consequences of discrimination (Shih et al. 2013). This process can occur spontaneously and automatically (e.g., Sanchez et al. 2009). For example, a recent experiment examined threats to the American identity of both white and African American participants (Rosner 2011). Under these circumstances, African Americans were able to take advantage of their racial identity to derive a more favorable sense of self.

Similarly, identity switching can help women overcome math-related stereotype threat effects (Rydell et al. 2009). By emphasizing their identities as college students (stereotypically good at math) and inhibiting their female identities (stereotypically bad at math), women are able to maintain high levels of math performance and avoid the working memory deficits normally observed under stereotype threat (but for evidence that this effect may not extend to women who have low self-esteem, see Rydell & Boucher 2010). The idea that identity switching can help to buffer against stereotype threat is in line with other work showing that racial identity shifts are a valuable protective strategy among biracial people (Wilton et al. 2013).

In addition to the benefits of identity switching in protecting against threats, multiple identities also provide multiple opportunities for need fulfillment (e.g., Deaux et al. 1995, Johnson et al. 2006, Lickel et al. 2000). For example, Deaux and colleagues identified five types of social identity: personal relationships (e.g., friend, child), vocations/avocations (e.g., student, scientist), political affiliations (e.g., feminist, Democrat), ethnic/religious groups (e.g., Asian American, Jewish), and stigmatized groups (e.g., alcoholic, welfare recipient). Each type of identity fulfills needs that the other types cannot, and the identities link together to provide an overall sense of meaning. Other

researchers have also examined the ability of different types of groups to fulfill the unique needs of the individual. For example, Johnson & colleagues (2006) examined the functions of three different types of groups: intimacy groups (e.g., friends, families), task groups (e.g., coworkers, labor unions), and social categories (e.g., women, blacks). Each type of group was found to be best suited to meet a particular social need: Intimacy groups were found to be best suited to fulfill affiliation needs, task groups to fulfill achievement needs, and social category groups to fulfill identity needs. Furthermore, when individuals were primed with a particular type of need via a sentence-unscrambling task, they were subsequently more likely to list exemplars of associated groups on a group-listing task. This research suggests that each of an individual's identities serves as a unique route toward need fulfillment. Individuals who possess devalued social category identities inevitably possess intimacy groups and task groups that can provide gratification of important needs. However, this research suggests that social categories must be called upon to specifically address identity needs. Individuals who experience conflict over stigmatized identities can nevertheless derive need satisfaction by emphasizing socially valued crosscutting social categories (e.g., religious identity). In effect, one has as many opportunities for need fulfillment as one has identities.

Studies of social identity complexity have also provided good evidence of the coping opportunities inherent in multiple identities for those who have high SIC (i.e., a subjective representation of one's multiple identities as only partially overlapping). Because each of those identity groups represents a different set of ingroup members, high SIC provides wider opportunities for ascribing shared ingroup membership. On the intrapersonal side, people with more complex social identity structures tend not only to have more diversity in their subjective representation of ingroups but also in their modes of identifying with those ingroups (Roccas et al. 2008). These scholars examined four modes of identification—importance, commitment, superiority, and deference—and suggest that while individuals with low SIC identify with various groups via the same mode, people who have higher SIC tend to identify with different groups via different modes. Linking these findings to work on differential need fulfillment, identifying with different groups in different ways should further facilitate the ability of multiple group identities to fulfill unique needs.

On the interpersonal side, high SIC is associated with a host of benefits, including greater acceptance of multicultural diversity and positive attitudes toward affirmative action (Brewer & Pierce 2005) as well as more positive attitudes toward outgroups in general (Crisp & Hewstone 2007, Roccas & Brewer 2002, Schmid et al. 2009). As with adults, high SIC predicts less distance from ethnic outgroups among teens, and SIC mediates the link between cross-ethnic friendships and positive intergroup attitudes (Knifsend & Juvoven 2013, 2014). Beyond friendships, individuals with multiple racial identities also tend to be more comfortable in intimate interracial relationships, an effect mediated by the extent to which individuals see race as a social construction (Bonam & Shih 2009).

Evidence also documents several benefits of multiple identities for children and youth. For example, an examination of mixed-heritage youth found positive effects of mixed racial background on intergroup contact and attitudes, language facility, and appreciation of minority culture (Stephan & Stephan 1991). Another study replicated the finding of more favorable intergroup attitudes among multiracial youth and additionally documented that multiracial youth often enjoy self-esteem levels similar to their monoracial peers (Phinney & Alipuria 1996). Finally, a more recent study found positive effects for high school students who identify with multiple racial/ethnic groups in terms of stress levels, affect, school citizenship behavior, and perceived social inclusion (Binning et al. 2009).

As we have noted, although some evidence reports negative evaluations of and outcomes for individuals contending with multiple stigmatized identities in the workplace (e.g., Derous et al.

2012, Rosette & Livingston 2012), other research suggests that multiple identities nevertheless can also afford certain advantages in this domain (e.g., Shih et al. 2013). Recent studies have examined the potential benefits of an intersectional identity among black women in the domain of leadership (Richardson et al. 2013). Underlying this examination is the fact that white women and black men who exhibit dominant behaviors often experience backlash—hostile reactions from majority group membership toward disadvantaged group members who do not act in expected, subordinate ways (Livingston & Pearce 2009, Rudman & Glick 1999). Richardson and colleagues were curious as to whether dominant black women would also experience backlash or whether their intersectional identities would avail them of the opportunity to display dominance. Results showed that prescriptive stereotypes about black women permit them to display as much dominance and volubility as white men and that black career women who display dominance are judged to be as likeable and hirable as a comparably dominant white man. Similarly, an in-depth examination of descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes for black and white men and women found that white men and black women are allowed similar (high) levels of agency and dominance, whereas white women and black men are expected to display less agency and dominance (Hall et al. 2014). In these studies, black women experienced benefits usually reserved only for the advantaged white male group, suggesting that compared to singularly disadvantaged groups (white women, black men), members of certain intersectional identity groups can expect positive treatment at work (see also Livingston et al. 2012).

The idea that black women, specifically, are afforded certain benefits in terms of workplace treatment is related to the more general idea that being unprototypical of a disadvantaged group is associated with freedoms, both for behaving counterstereotypically and for redefinition of the self (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz 2013). For example, because black women are perceived as unprototypical of both their gender category and their racial category, they will be less bound by the stereotypes of either group and therefore freer to engage in self-definition and to act as personally desired. This freedom for autonomous self-definition should be associated with a variety of benefits for health and well-being (Sanchez et al. 2014, Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010).

In the specific context of possessing multiple racial identities, the idea that such identities are necessarily problematic in their implications for psychological adjustment was challenged in an influential review by Shih & Sanchez (2005). In direct contrast to the results reported in the previous section, this review found that most evidence pointing to negative impacts of multiracial identities was derived from qualitative examinations among clinical samples. On the other hand, quantitative examinations of nonclinical samples of multiracial individuals tend to show that they are just as well adjusted as monoracial individuals are, overall (e.g., Cooney & Radina 2000, Harris & Thomas 2002). One important implication of this review is the need to examine psychological differences between multiracial and monoracial minority and majority group members using a broader range of research methods (e.g., longitudinal studies, experiments) in order to expand our understanding of the multiracial experience. Such research will be necessary to carefully delineate the moderating conditions that determine whether multiracial identities produce stress and its sequelae versus adaptive flexibility and successful coping.

As a further example of health-related opportunities provided by multiple identities, a number of models point to the successful integration and autonomous expression of one's multiple identities as critical to overall health and well-being. Integration of identities is stressed in models such as the bicultural identity integration model (Huynh et al. 2011) and the multiracial identity integration model (Cheng & Lee 2009), both of which argue that integration of identities provides protective benefits for the psychological health of multiracial and multicultural individuals. Furthermore, the MSF (McConnell 2011) argues that the integrative experience of multiple identities is associated with positive outcomes. Finally, the identity autonomy perspective (Sanchez et al.

2014) stresses the importance of autonomous self-definition for multiracial individuals. When multiracial individuals are given choice and autonomy in their self-definition, they should experience a sense of belonging and enhanced psychological health (Sanchez et al. 2014, Sanchez-Hucles & Davis 2010).

In summary, although the experience of multiple identities can present some challenges, the outlook is not nearly as bleak as suggested by much of the early work on this topic. Individuals with multiple group identities enjoy the benefits associated with identity flexibility; they have multiple routes via which important needs are met and often experience positive outcomes for health, work, and overall well-being. One of the most important things to consider when framing multiple identities as a challenge or an opportunity is the balance between perception and experience. Every single one of us occupies multiple identities, and every single one of us perceives others who occupy multiple identities. Perceiving and enacting social identities are complementary processes that constantly interact with each other to affect outcomes. We turn in conclusion toward an integration of these two perspectives and related suggestions for future scholarship in this domain.

INTEGRATING PERSPECTIVES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Throughout this review, we have examined challenges and opportunities presented by multiple identities for social perception and interaction. A major theme that emerges from this analysis is the importance of autonomous self-definition and accurate perception by others. A perceiver's perception of someone else's identities may be similar or very different from that individual's self-defined identity structure, and carefully navigating these overlapping perceptions is of central importance in promoting positive, low-stress social interactions.

The psychological significance of achieving convergence between the perceiver's and the target's understandings of the target's identity has been most strongly emphasized, so far, by the research on multiracialism. Scholars have identified three overlapping and integrative perceptions that are important to consider when attempting to understand multiracial identity (Rockquemore et al. 2009; see also Shih & Sanchez 2009). The first, racial identity, refers to an individual's personal understanding of his or her own race. Next, racial categorization describes an individual's chosen racial identity in a given context. Finally, racial identification refers to how others perceive a target's race group membership. Identity, categorization, and identification highlight the interplay between perceivers and experiencers, and we argue that these constructs are important for any multiple identities, not just those that are racially based (e.g., sexual orientation, social class, political affiliation). What is important in navigating multiple identities is that these identities are allowed to develop autonomously and flexibly, that individuals feel free to highlight or downplay certain identities across different contexts, and that perceivers are sensitive to the existence of multiple identities within themselves and others—identities that provide the opportunity for ingroup classification.

Therefore, the first step in successfully navigating the "wholeness" of one's multiple identities is to recognize them. At least within the United States, societal recognition of multiple identities has been a slow process. It is only since 2000 that a multiracial category was added to the US Census, meaning that multiracial individuals before this time were forced to choose one category or another, rendering their multiracial identity effectively invisible (for an interesting policy discussion regarding racial reporting in the US school system, see also Renn 2009). Unfortunately, research examining perceptions of multiracial youth confirms the idea that multiple identities are often invisible to perceivers. In one experiment, perceivers categorized half of multiracial targets as monoracial (Herman 2010). As discussed previously, these instances of identity denial, constraint, or inaccuracy can be damaging for multiracial individuals, and we argue that the effects reverberate and create ongoing integrative problems between perceivers

and multiracial individuals. Multiracial persons who feel denied or constrained by a perceiver will be less likely to desire future interaction with that perceiver (Remedios & Chasteen 2013), thereby decreasing the exposure that perceiver will have to multiracial individuals, in turn decreasing the probability that the perceiver will learn to recognize and appreciate individuals with multiple racial identities. These effects are undoubtedly exacerbated by the color-blindness perspective, in which perceivers who are concerned about appearing racist avoid mentioning race altogether (Apfelbaum et al. 2012). On a more positive note, however, recent evidence suggests that perceivers who are motivated to control prejudice are more likely to categorize black/white multiracial faces as multiracial, suggesting that perceivers who are motivated to do so can create a welcoming environment for multiracial individuals (Chen et al. 2014).

At a more general level, we contend that "multiple-identity blindness" characterizes much of human interaction. All too easily, we reduce others to a single identity dimension (or a small number of such dimensions), whether or not this matches the way they prefer to be identified. Due to the widely recognized limits and biases in our perceptual systems, going beyond simple categorization may be relatively rare because it can be quite effortful. However, with practice, effortful processes become much more efficient, and future research should seek simple and effective interventions to encourage flexibility in dealing with complex social identities and to enhance the ability of perceivers to be sensitive to and respectful of the identity preferences of targets. The intervention developed by Albarello & Rubini (2012)—simultaneously activating multiple identities and making salient a shared superordinate human identity—provides initial evidence that such interventions can produce real benefits. Although training these skills in multiple domains and across the age spectrum is important, interventions with children may be especially important in helping them to develop skills related to multiple identity recognition and self-definition that they can sustain over their lifetimes. In order to recognize and appreciate multiple identities in others, perceivers must also recognize and appreciate their own multiple identities, so training this skill early and often must also be part of the intervention story. Interventions based on perspective taking could prove particularly fruitful toward this end (e.g., Todd et al. 2011).

Most of what we know about the challenges and opportunities of multiple identities has focused on the perception and experience of multiple racial identities, or the interaction between racial identities and some other identity such as age, gender, sexual orientation, or social class. Often, this work has examined only black/white racial identities. This focus makes a good deal of sense, given the pervasive societal pattern of racial disparities experienced by African Americans, yet it neglects the broader range of variables in the multiple-identity space. Such research holds the promise of identifying both general principles of identity management as well as phenomena that are specific to particular kinds of devalued social identities, whether race based or not (e.g., interactions of disabled identities with other identities; Artiles 2013, Roberts & Jesudason 2013). Although general conceptual frameworks for understanding multiple-identity management, such as MSF and SIC, offer many useful insights, they could profitably be expanded to provide a more in-depth consideration of the specific psychological issues that surround socially devalued identities—particularly how members of devalued categories can use their multiple self-aspects to cope successfully with stigma while maintaining their motivation to work for social justice for their subordinated group(s) (e.g., Glasford & Dovidio 2011, Martinovic & Verkuyten 2014). Intersectionality research should also look more often beyond the nexus of race and gender. Recent work examining simultaneous categorization by age and sex provides one example of this type of research, pointing toward more general principles regarding the role of functional relevance in shaping category intersections in the minds of perceivers (Cloutier et al. 2014). When it comes to blended identities, greater attention to multicultural identities is also extremely important, given the ubiquity of immigration processes in the modern world. Going beyond black and white will

Intersectionality: modification of the psychological meaning and experiences attached to a social category (e.g., race), depending upon membership in a crosscutting social category (e.g., gender)

likely help us to uncover even more opportunities at the intersections between a multitude of other identities.

While conducting this work, it is also important for psychologists, whether researchers or practitioners, to remain mindful about how our own methods might be preventing us from more fully appreciating the intersectional experience (Goff & Kahn 2013, Silverstein 2006). Integrating longitudinal designs, qualitative studies, and field research into our traditional research approaches will provide a broader and deeper understanding of the perception and experience of multiple identities.

CONCLUSION

Having and perceiving multiple identities are universal human experiences. Although these experiences can be challenging, they are also imbued with opportunities for perceivers and experiencers alike. Multiple identities can pave the way for positive intergroup attitudes and interactions, enhanced psychological and physical health, greater opportunities for need fulfillment, and contextually favorable self-definition. In making this assertion, we do not mean to minimize the challenges inherent in identity complexity. Indeed, these challenges are serious and have the potential to result in a number of negative outcomes. However, there are reasons for optimism that growing awareness of and interest in this topic will be associated with expanded research and policy efforts aimed at uncovering and exploiting the positive resources inherent in complex identities. Perceiving and experiencing the multiplicity of identity is becoming an ever more defining feature of modern life, so the goal of optimizing these perceptions and experiences is of paramount importance.

SUMMARY POINTS

1. Social categorization is increasingly recognized to be a complex enterprise encompassing ambiguous category membership (e.g., multiracial or transgender identities) and different categorical identities (e.g., race and gender), which interact to determine the meaning of category membership. The interactional and intersectional influences of multiple identities on person perception make it quite tenuous to think in unqualified, general terms about any particular category.

2. Multiple identities have important psychological implications for the social impressions formed by perceivers as well as the identity experiences of social targets. Thus, the perception and experience of multiple identities are tightly linked and work together to influence interpersonal and intergroup processes.

3. Understanding the perception and experience of multiple identities is becoming more and more important as the population of multiracial individuals, the potential for flexible self-definition, and the opportunity to interact and identify with individuals from all kinds of different racial and cultural backgrounds around the world all continue to grow.

4. Research on multiple identities has historically focused on their inherent difficulties and challenges. However, increasing attention is being paid to the opportunities multiple identities make available to perceivers and targets.

5. Multiple identities are challenging for social perceivers because they are related to disfluency in categorization, increased propensities for categorizing unclear cases into devalued social categories, and subsequent biased evaluations and behavior.

6. On the other hand, multiple identities and crossed categorization create the potential for shifting the dividing line between in- and outgroups. By providing multiple opportunities for possible shared ingroup memberships, multiple identities can undercut traditional forms of bias and discrimination. Every identity possessed by a target represents the potential for an associated positive stereotype or a connection to the perceiver if the identity is shared. Recognizing the multifaceted social identities of others is an important step toward more positive intergroup outcomes.

7. Recognizing multiple identities not only provides noteworthy opportunities for positive intergroup attitudes and interactions but can also have important intrapersonal benefits—improved psychological and physical health, more numerous and more creative opportunities for need fulfillment, and contextually favorable self-definition.

8. How targets define their identities can be similar to or very different from how their identities are perceived by others. Social interactions are improved whenever there is a high degree of overlap between these two perceptions or when perceivers are simply open to a target's autonomous and flexible self-definition.

FUTURE ISSUES

1. The boundaries between in- and outgroups can often be fuzzy and malleable. Future research should continue to examine methods via which these boundaries can be expanded or shifted to bring about positive intergroup outcomes.

2. Recognition and appreciation of one's multiple identities are important determinants of overall well-being. Unfortunately, multiple identities are often invisible to perceivers, resulting in impaired target-perceiver relationships. It is important to continue to develop interventions aimed at encouraging flexibility in perceiving complex social identities and enhancing perceivers' sensitivity and respect toward targets' identity preferences.

3. Most research on multiple identities has focused on perceiving and experiencing multiple racial identities or the interaction between racial identities and another identity (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation, or social class). Thus, the broader range of multiple identities has largely been neglected and should be focused on more directly in future research. Going beyond race and its intersections will likely help to uncover further opportunities for enhanced perception and experience.

4. Although it is clear that multiple identities afford both challenges and opportunities, much more remains to be learned about the moderators of specific outcomes. For example, a black woman might be targeted for greater bias than black men or white women (double jeopardy), might be ignored relative to those other groups (intersectional invisibility), or might be viewed more favorably than black men (when viewed as a gender ingroup member by a white woman) or white women (when viewed as a racial ingroup member by a black man). Currently, research supports all of these possibilities, and much more needs to be discovered about the circumstances under which these (and other) patterns are most likely to emerge.

5. Scholars examining multiple identities should employ a wider range of methods (e.g., longitudinal designs, qualitative studies, field research) in order to gain a broader and deeper understanding of these phenomena.

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