

The long-term health of our global society depends on humans' ability to live in diverse groups. Social psychologists have a lot to contribute to public discourse on diversity issues, and I am well-poised to become a leader in the field as we confront this global challenge. Broadly, my research seeks to cultivate an understanding of how people interact with individuals with backgrounds and appearances different from their own. My current work focuses on fundamental questions regarding the perception of race and the diversity-related experiences of underrepresented minorities in organizations.

The Perception of Race. My primary research area centers on major questions of how people perceive multiracial individuals. These perceptions shed light on assumptions and beliefs that people hold about race and carry widespread implications for the future of race relations in the U.S. (by 2050, approximately one in every five Americans will be multiracial; Farley, 2001). Research in this area also highlights fundamental psychological processes related to face perception, impression formation, and intergroup relations.

I am one of the main contributors to the literature on multiracial person perception. To date, there are three published articles reviewing the literature, and I co-authored two of them. Specifically, I was the single author on a social cognitive review (Chen, 2019) and co-authored another review that also presented an integrative theoretical model of how sociopolitical motives and intergroup threats could jointly impact the perception of multiracial people (Ho, Kteily, & Chen, 2020). Below, I provide greater detail on my theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature.

For years, I have argued that researchers need to diversify their samples and that our field needs to prioritize understanding the psychology of people with non-dominant identities (e.g., Chen & Norman, 2016; Gaither, Chen, & Rule, 2020). Others' research on multiracial person perception has focused on White American perceivers, demonstrating that they (a) typically categorize Black-White multiracials according to a rule of *hypodescent*, associating them more with their lower status parent group than their higher status parent group, and (b) do so in part to preserve the hierarchical status quo. I have spearheaded efforts to extend this literature to understand the factors that determine how racial minorities perceive part-ingroup/part-White multiracials, in particular whether they engage in hypodescent and why or why not (Chen, Kteily, & Ho, 2019; Chen & Ratliff, 2015; Ho, Kteily, & Chen, 2017; Fine et al., in prep).

I have also pioneered the approach to investigating whether and on what basis perceivers will adopt a novel "Multiracial" category to accommodate the increasing diversity in their social environments. There are societies (e.g., Brazil) in which mixed-race categories are fully cognitively developed and frequently used. However, due to the culturally reinforced view of existing monoracial categories as mutually exclusive and legitimate, I predicted that perceivers would have difficulty using a "multiracial" category. In Chen and Hamilton (2012), I established that perceivers do not use the Multiracial category with the same accuracy and efficiency that they use White, Black, and Asian categories, and its use is further inhibited by the perception that monoracial categories are important, meaningful, and legitimate. In follow-up research (Chen, Moons, Gaither, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2014), I found that individuals with strong egalitarian values were more likely to use the Multiracial category when categorizing Black-White multiracial faces. Our findings were consistent with the idea that egalitarian people may be more willing to validate non-traditional identities.

Throughout my work in this area, I have only found moderate support for hypodescent. Yet the existing literature suggests that hypodescent is the *predominant* mechanism by which people, especially White Americans, categorize Black-White multiracial faces (Freeman, Pauker, & Sanchez, 2016; Ho, Sidanius, Cuddy, & Banaji, 2013; Ho, Sidanius, Levin, & Banaji, 2011; Noyes & Keil, 2018; Peery & Bodenhausen, 2008, Experiment 1; Roberts & Gelman, 2015, 2017). I have argued that the field needs to develop a more systematic understanding of the dispositional and contextual moderators of hypodescent. In Gaither, Chen, Pauker, and Sommers (2019), we showed that the type of biracial face stimuli used (computer-generated versus real) and the categorization task (Black/White vs. Black/Multiracial/White) dramatically impact the likelihood of hypodescent. Building on this work, I am currently developing a theoretical framework for understanding the moderators of White Americans' use of hypodescent (Chen, Meyers, Pauker, Gaither, Hamilton, & Sherman, in prep).

Moreover, I have argued that the overestimation of hypodescent in the literature is misleading and in fact problematic, because the specific racial categorizations of faces lead to race-specific consequences for downstream processes such as stereotyping and discrimination. Therefore, we must obtain a deeper understanding of what categories are applied to multiracials most frequently and why. Chen, Pauker, Gaither, Hamilton, and Sherman (2018) documented a novel categorization bias, the minority bias: when people encounter racially ambiguous Black-White faces, they quickly judge them to be “non-White” and then generate alternative plausible categories to which they could belong. We found that the most frequent categorizations of biracial faces were Latinx or Middle Eastern, suggesting that biracial people may experience stereotyping and discrimination based on these social identities (as opposed to Black).

In ongoing research, I am focused on understanding the downstream consequences of how multiracial people are racially categorized. I have developed projects examining how the social categorizations of multiracials impact a variety of outcomes, including automatic stereotyping (Neufeld, Rivers, Chen, & Sherman, in prep), multiracial individuals’ racial identities (Norman & Chen, 2019), and multiracial individuals’ psychological well-being (Norman, Franco, & Chen, in prep). I have also cultivated international collaborations seeking to understand how race and other appearance-driven biases manifest across different cultures (Chen, Couto, Sacci, & Dunham, 2017; Chen & Francis-Tan, under review; Jacob & Chen, in prep). Furthermore, with my graduate students, I recently published the first database of multiracial face stimuli, the *American Multiracial Faces Database*, that is publicly available and free to academic researchers (Chen, Norman, & Nam, 2020). Since its release in July 2020, 68 scientists from across the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia have already downloaded it.

In summary, I have taken a leadership role in shaping the literature on multiracial person perception. My work in this area has been growing into a research agenda that cuts across traditional boundaries of social cognition, intergroup relations, stigma, cross-cultural psychology, and research methods.

Perceptions and Experiences of Organizational Diversity. Another area of my research focuses on the expectations and experiences of individuals in historically majority-dominated contexts. I am particularly interested in the social perceptions that facilitate or inhibit underrepresented minorities’ thriving in performance-based domains, such as academia and business.

Whereas past research has only documented that individuals anticipate a lack of *belonging* in settings where they are underrepresented, I found that the lack of representation also leads underrepresented minorities to doubt whether they will have *interpersonal power*, the ability to influence others, in those settings. The anticipation of low interpersonal power dissuades women from pursuing majority-male domains including business, STEM, and leadership (Chen & Moons, 2015; Goodwin, Dodson, Chen, & Diekmann, 2020).

In addition, I have examined on what basis people perceive organizational diversity. In Chen and Hamilton (2015), I tested a novel conceptual framework of “diversity.” I hypothesized and found that perceivers associate “diversity” with two concepts: the *numeric representation* of minorities and the *social acceptance* of minorities within a group. Whereas White perceivers focus on diversity in terms of representation, racial minorities think of both representation and acceptance as necessary for achieving diversity in an organization. Following up on this research, Danielle Geerling (a recent graduate of the Social Psychology PhD program) and I have investigated the extent to which *individuals’* race and gender impact their perceived ability to diversify a group (Geerling & Chen, 2020).

In ongoing research, I have proposed that supportive social relationships are key to increasing students’ capacity for academic success, in particular when they are underrepresented in a given context (Chen, Geerling, Norman, Espino-Pérez, & Gable, in prep; Norman, Fuesting, Chen, Gable, & Diekmann, R&R, *SPPS*). I have conceptualized a theoretical model to articulate how professional mentoring relationships can facilitate underrepresented minorities’ academic thriving. I was awarded an NSF CAREER grant to apply this model to understanding how STEM faculty mentors can contribute to women’s thriving in PhD programs (“*Fostering broader participation and thriving in STEM: A comprehensive investigation of faculty mentorship of doctoral students,*” Total Costs: \$803,244).