Perceptions of "Multi-Racial Children" in Japan and the United States

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Outline

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- Research Questions
- Research Background
- Research Method
- Research Findings
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Significance of the Study

- First of all, I am a person of mixed-race
- While studying abroad in Japan, I became more aware of my mixed race identity because of the homogenous culture I was living in.
- Mixed race is a social-norm in America
  - Not often seen in Japan
- I feel as though the perception of mixed-race people were changing
  - This is why I choose this topic for my capstone

Research Questions

1. What kind of issues do mixed-raced people encounter?
2. What are the perceptions of multi-raced people and what factors affect them?

Background Research

1. Ethnicity and Race Definition
2. Multiculturalism in Japan and America
3. WWII and the social stigma
4. Various issues that mixed-race and half-Japanese people encounter
5. Multiculturalism in the media

Ethnicity and Race Definition

Ethnicity	*Race*
• Population of people who **identify with each other**. • Can be based upon real or presumed genealogy or ancestry. • Some share **linguistic or religious backgrounds**, however this is not always the case. (James, 2008)	• A group of people that **share a common biological trait or gene** • This trait is **inherited** from generation to generation • Physical phenotypes • ie: bone structure, skin color, eye shape, etc. (James, 2008)

Trends of Multiculturalism in Japan

Japanese	98.5%
Korean	0.5%
Chinese	0.4%
Other	0.6%

(cia.gov, 2004)

White	79.96%
Black	12.85%
Asian	4.43%
Amerindian/Alaska	0.97%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.18%
Two or More	1.61%

- Japanese Census asks for nationality, rather than ethnicity.
- Naturalized and native-born Japanese with multi-ethnic background are considered ethnically Japanese by the census. (Ministry of Justice Immigration Bureau, 2009)

- "separate listing for Hispanic is not included because the US Census Bureau considers Hispanic to mean ... any race or ethnic group (white, black, Asian, etc.); about 15.1% of the total US population is Hispanic"

(cia.gov, 2004)

WWII and the Social Stigma

- Post WWII (1950s)
  - "Japanaphobia," "Nipponophobia," "Anti-Japanism," were terms used by American people after WWII.
  - Dehumanized by anti-Japanese propaganda.
                        (Emmott, 1993).
- "Japan was evolutionary inferior,"   (Navarro, 2000).
- Japanese American people still face discrimination based on WWII.

Art: The Tokio Kid. Time Magazine, June 15, 1942.

Issues mixed-race and half Japanese people encounter

Japanese-American: A person of Japanese decent.

- Mixed race Japanese people can no longer identify with Japanese-American because the communities have become complex.

- *Issei, Nisei, Sansei* vs. people who are more mixed

  (Kikumura Yano, 2008)

- "one drop rule" anyone with "one drop" of a minority is considered a minority

  (Williams-Leon, Nakashima, 2001)

Issues con't: Ijime

- "**Ijime**" is the Japanese word for "**bullying**," and tends to be **more severe**. There is often a mean or negative attitude with intentions of humiliating others.

- Physical, verbal, psychological, and social are the common forms of *ijime*

$$\text{(Taki, 2003) (Kawagoe, nd)}$$

- Discriminatory terms that stem from ijime/bullying

Japan	America
• "ha-fu（ハーフ）" • "daburu（ダブル）" • "ainoko（間の子）" (Williams-Leon, Nakashima, 2001).	• *"hapa"* • Hawaiian term that means a fragment of something. (Fulbeck, n.d.)

Issues con't: Stereotypes

- Stereotypes
  - Can be both **negative** or **positive**.
- Demonizing
  - To be accepted is to assimilate
  - Demonized because one isn't "Japanese anymore"
  - Being half was only cool if you were good looking or talented.

(Shoji, 2013)

- Idolizing
  - Recently in Japan, many people look up to people who are half-Japanese.
    - "You think that all half-Japanese people are 'cute,' 'bilingual,' or 'rich'"
    - This quote is used to demonstrate the frustration amongst the half-Japanese community. (Haefelin, 2012).

Issues con't: Stereotyping Phrases

- Most often used words to describe Japanese people
  1. **Polite**
  2. **Punctual**
  3. **Kind**
  4. **Hard-working**
  5. **Respectful**
  6. Shy
  7. Intelligent
  8. Grouping
  9. Formal
  10. Clean

  (Gerhold, 2013).

- Most often used words to describe American people
  1. **Friendly**
  2. **Generous**
  3. **Hard-working**
  4. **Overweight**
  5. **Uninterested in other cultures**
  6. Religious
  7. Optimistic
  8. Loud
  9. Live with lots of luxuries
  10. Rich

  (Murray, 2010).

Multiculturalism in the Media

- Media **provides outlets that form one's identity**.
- The stories in media give symbols, myths, and resources of what "identity" is.

(Kellner, 2011)
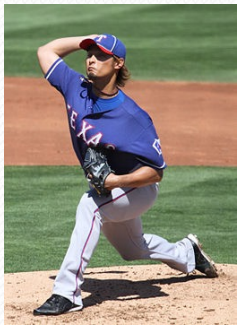
Yu Darvish
Born August 16th, 1986
Japanese-Iranian
Baseball Player
Predominant in both

Anna Tsuchiya
Born March 11th, 1984
Japanese-Polish
Model, Actress, Singer
Prominent in Japan

Jesse Lewis
Born June 11th, 1996
Japanese-American
Johnnys Entertainment
Prominent in Japan

Apolo Ohno
Born May 22nd, 1982
Japanese-American
Olympic Athlete
Prominent in USA

Media con't: Miss Universe

- This is Ariana Miyamoto: The first half-Japanese, half-African American Miss Universe.
- Although many people think having a half-Japanese woman represent Japan is an issue, the fact that she was chosen shows huge progress for Japanese society.

Research Method

- Total of 106 People (58 Japanese and 48 American)
- Demographics
  - 58 Japanese People
    - 27 Female, 31 Male
    - Ages 18-65
  - 48 American People
    - 25 Female, 23 Male
    - Ages 18-65
- Online Survey (Japanese & American)
  - [Google Docs](#)

Survey Results

General Data: Gender and Age
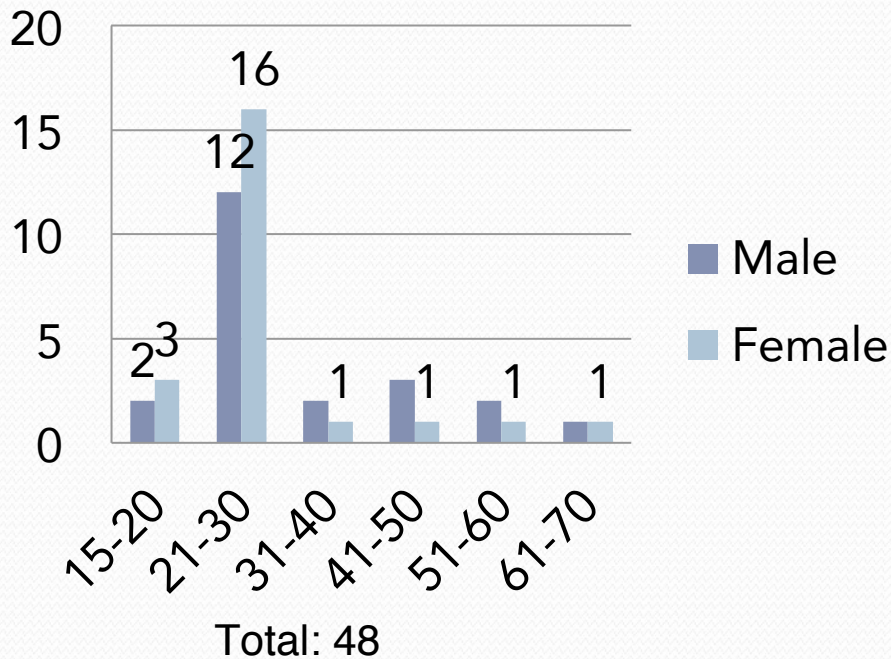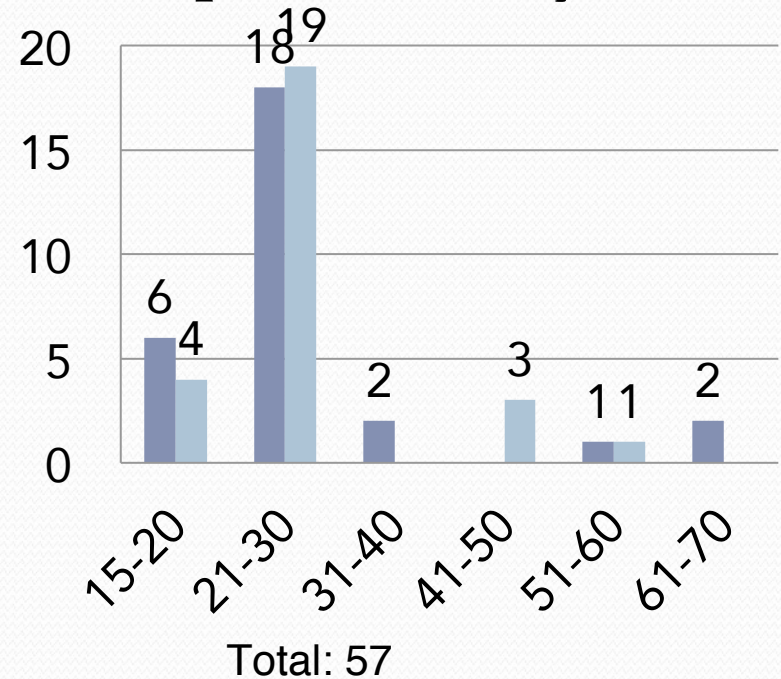
A wide range of ages took the survey, with varying answers for each age group.

Survey Results

General Data: What type of area do you live in?
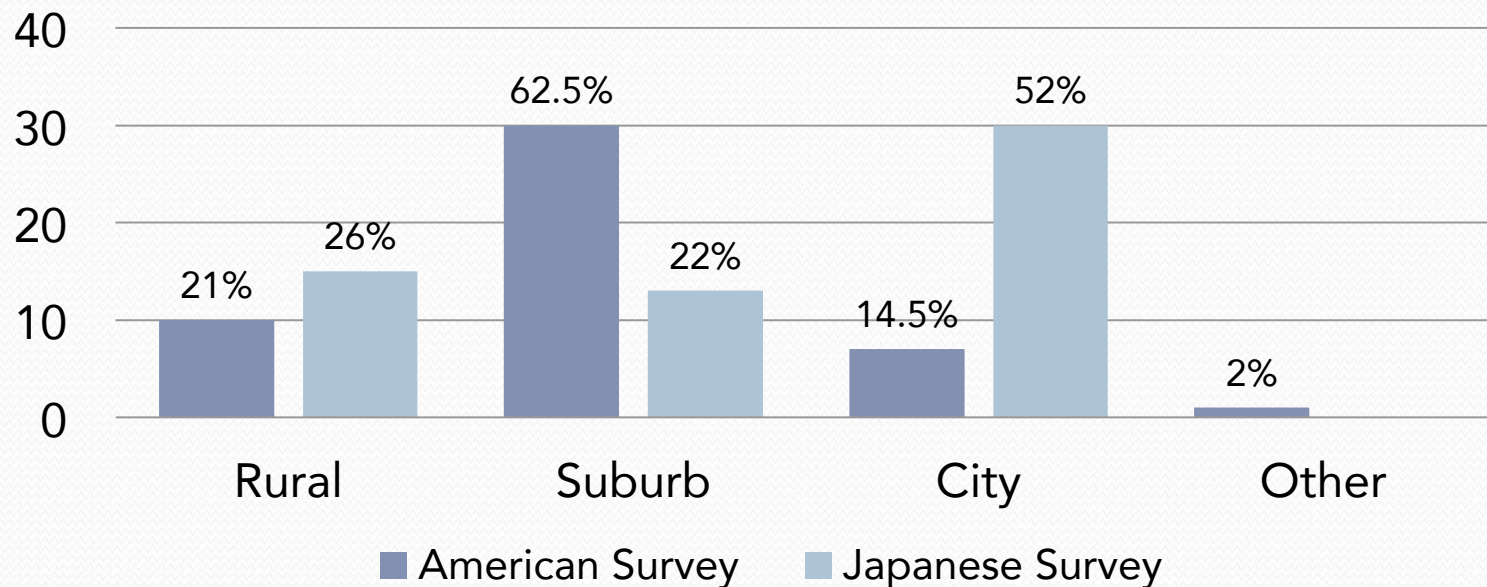
Depending on the area that the survey taker lived in, there were different views on multi-raced and ethnic people.

Survey Results

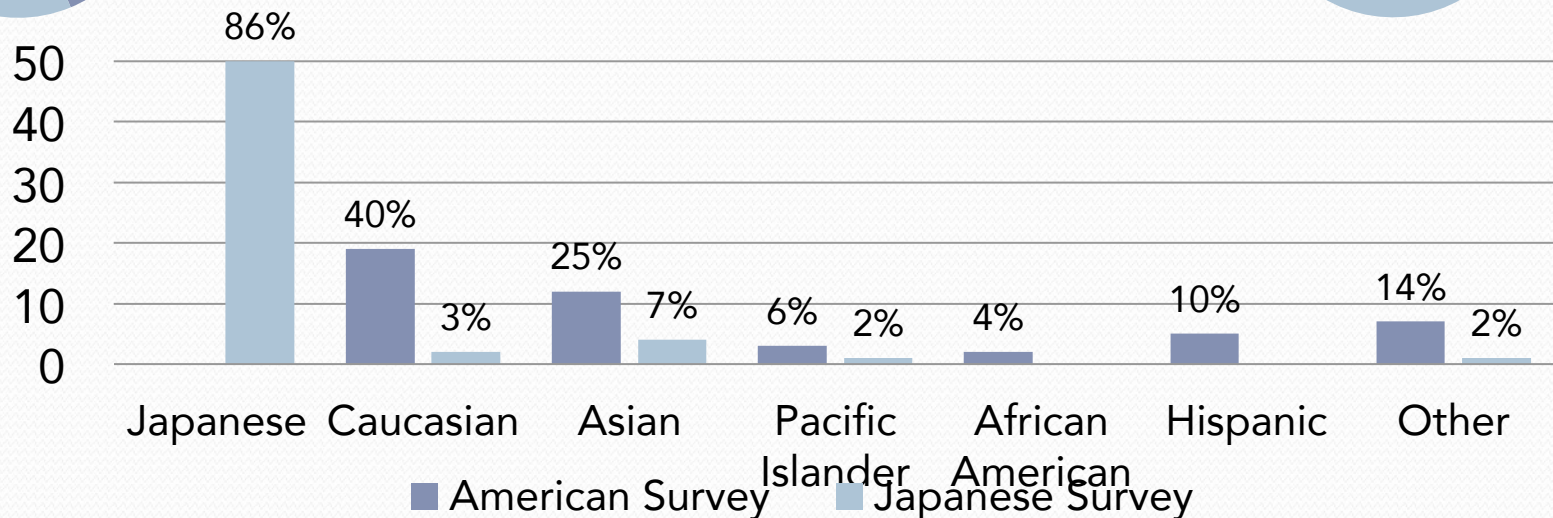General Data: Do you consider yourself mixed-race? How do you identify yourself in terms of ethnicity?
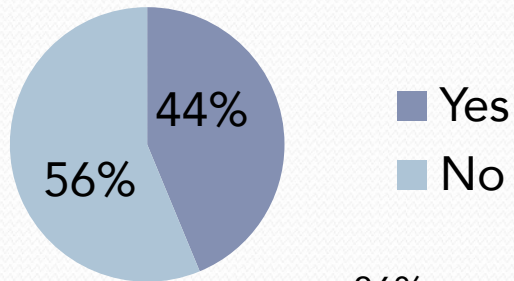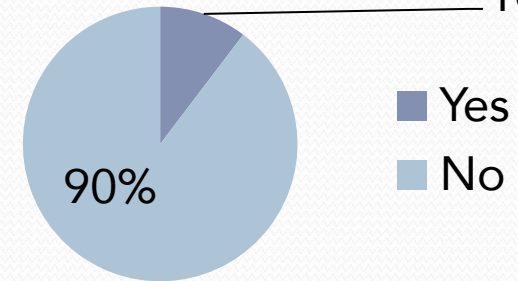
Research Question Findings

Research Question 1:
What kind of issues do mixed-raced people encounter?

Views Towards Multiculturalism

American Survey

Seeing multicultural families makes me feel uncomfortable. — 4% | 10% | 86%

A homogeneous country is better than a country with many ethnicities and races because it is more ethnically pure. — 10.5% | 2% | 87.5%

In your country, there should be a quota for hiring people of different races in the work place. — 33% | 25% | 42%
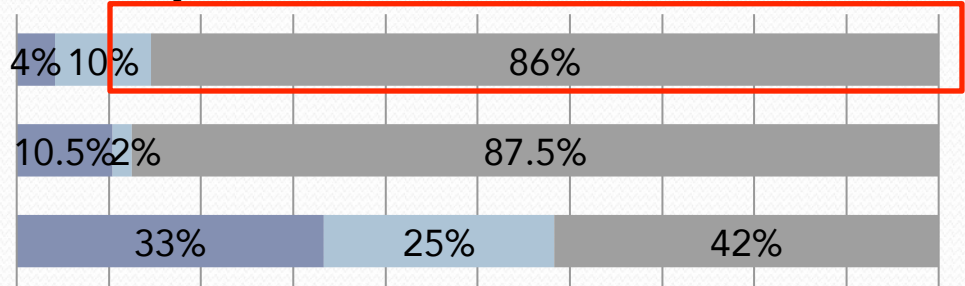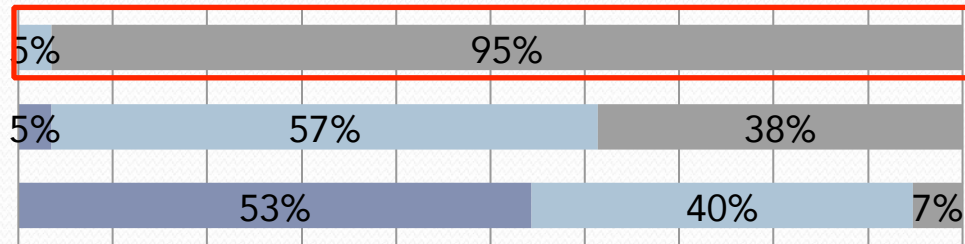
■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Japanese Survey

Seeing multicultural families makes me feel uncomfortable. — 5% | 95%

A homogeneous country is better than a country with many ethnicities and races because it is more ethnically pure. — 5% | 57% | 38%

In your country, there should be a quota for hiring people of different races in the work place. — 53% | 40% | 7%

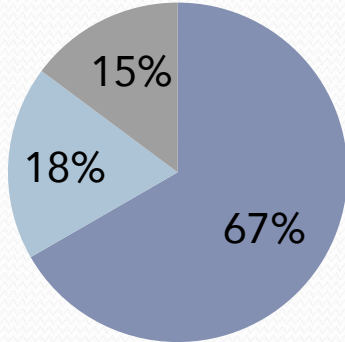0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Both the Japanese and the American surveys showed **open mindedness** towards **mixed-race families**.
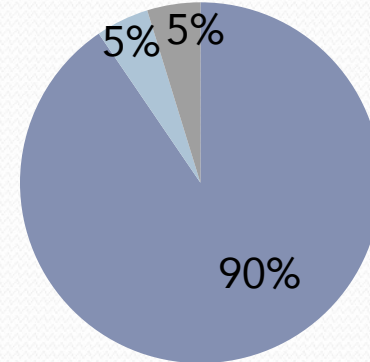
Discrimination: American
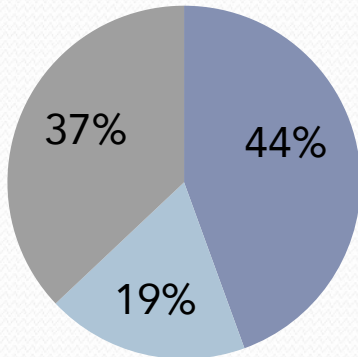

American – Non-Mixed
Agree Neutral Disagree
67% 18% 15%

American – Mixed-Race
Agree Neutral Disagree
90% 5% 5%

"People often stereotype me based on how I look."
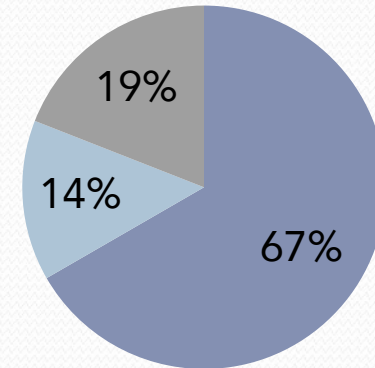
American – Non-Mixed
Agree Neutral Disagree
44% 19% 37%

American – Mixed-Race
Agree Neutral Disagree
67% 14% 19%

"I have felt discriminated against because of my identity."

Mixed-race people felt more stereotyped and discriminated against than the mono-race counterpart. However, **both parties** had a majority of stereotyping and discrimination, likely due to many races already being in America.
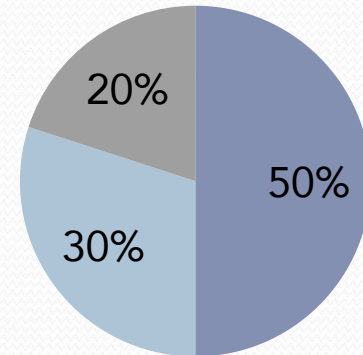
Discrimination: Japanese
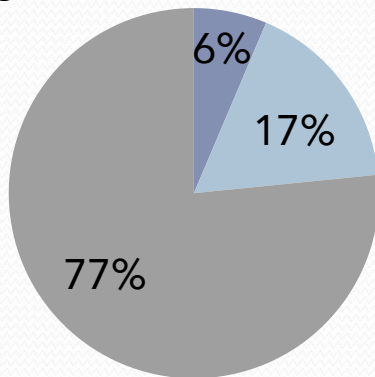
Japanese - Non-Mixed
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

62%
21%
17%
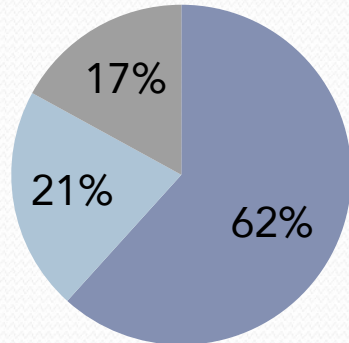
"People often stereotype me based on how I look."

Japanese - Mixed-Race
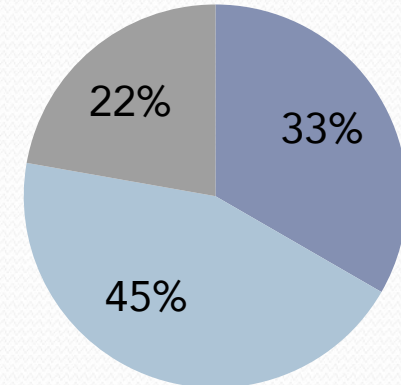- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

50%
30%
20%

Japanese - Non-Mixed
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

6%
17%
77%

"I have felt discriminated against because of my identity."

Japanese - Mixed-Race
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

33%
45%
22%

Although **both** survey takers felt as though they were stereotyped, the **mono-racial Japanese** felt as though the were not discriminated against.
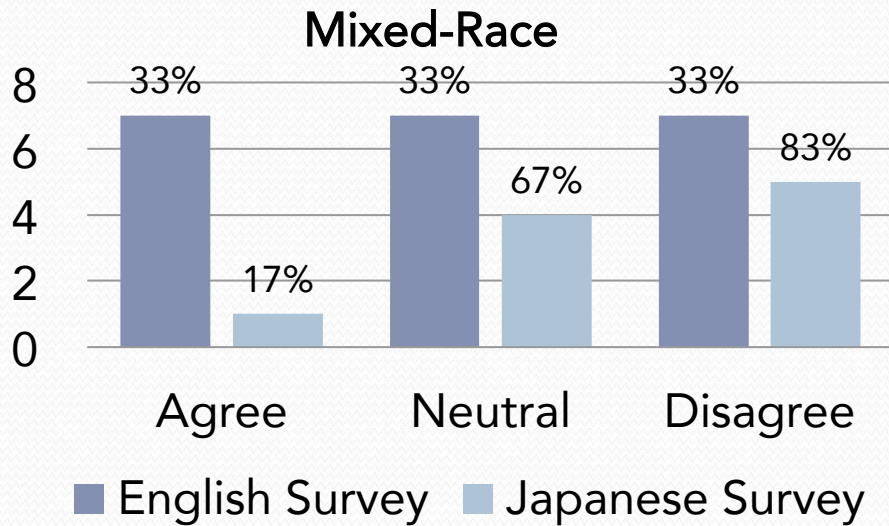
Discrimination con't: Bullying

"People who are mixed race/ethnic are more likely to experience bullying
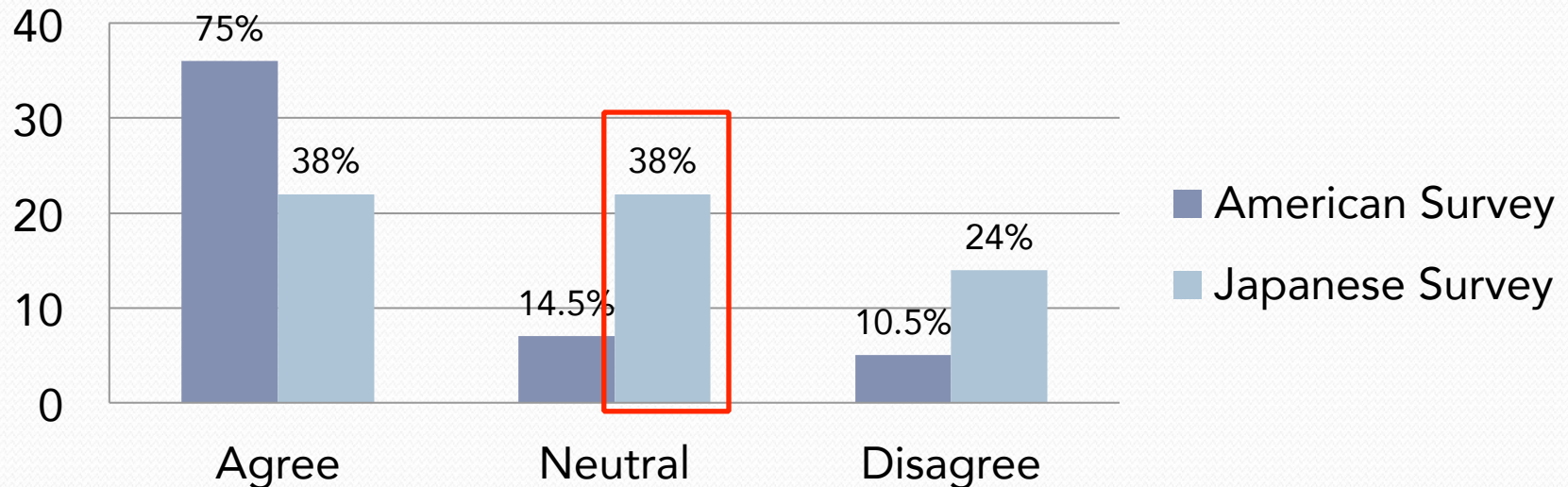
Most Japanese survey takers identified as mono-racial, therefore there were many who answered neutral (likely due to lack of personal experience).

Identity Issues

"I feel I have to choose one identity"

"I don't relate to issues regarding identity"

Mixed-Race

- Agree: English Survey 33%, Japanese Survey 17%
- Neutral: English Survey 33%, Japanese Survey 67%
- Disagree: English Survey 33%, Japanese Survey 83%

■ English Survey ■ Japanese Survey

Non-Mixed

- Agree: English Survey 44%, Japanese Survey 61.5%
- Neutral: English Survey 12%, Japanese Survey 15%
- Disagree: English Survey 44%, Japanese Survey 14.5%

■ English Survey ■ Japanese Survey
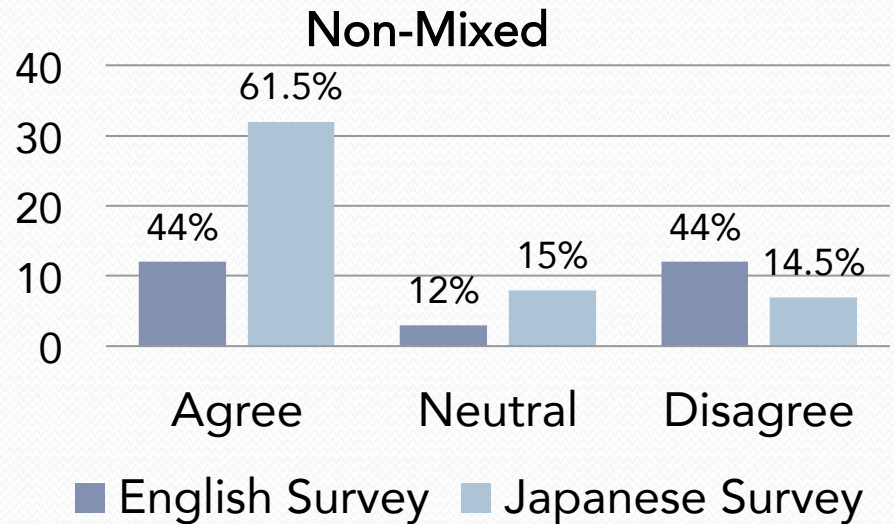
Neither group felt overly affected by identity issues; in this case, **identifying oneself** racially/ethnically.

Issues con't: Pride

American – Non-Mixed
Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

- 15%
- 18%
- 67%

Japanese – Non-Mixed
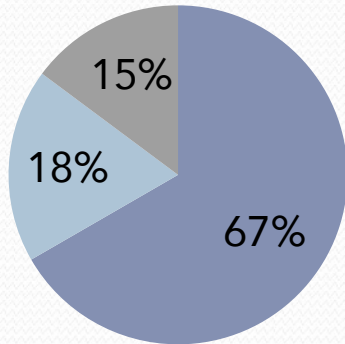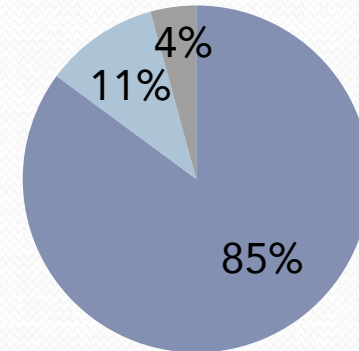Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

- 4%
- 11%
- 85%

"I feel that it is important to be proud of who I am in terms of ethnicity/race"

American – Mixed-Race
Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

- 5%
- 14%
- 81%

Japanese – Mixed-Race
Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

- 10%
- 90%
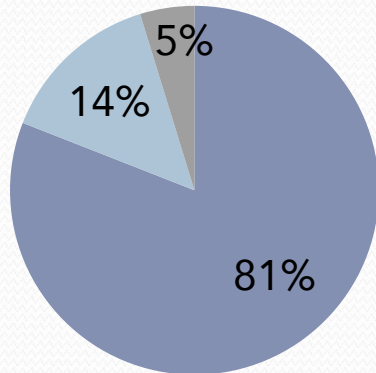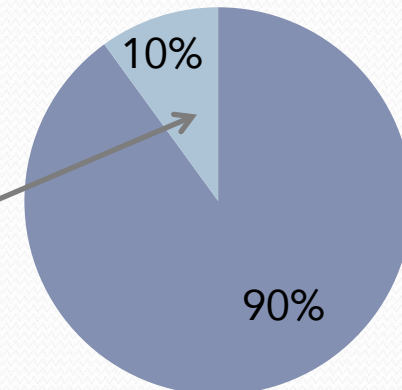
Surprisingly, there were **zero** mixed-race Japanese that thought that it was **not important** to be proud of one's ethnicity or race.

The majority of survey takers, in either language, felt that it is important to be **proud of oneself in terms of their ethnic or racial identity**.

Issues con't: Changing Identity

"My feelings towards my own identity have changed from when I was a child"

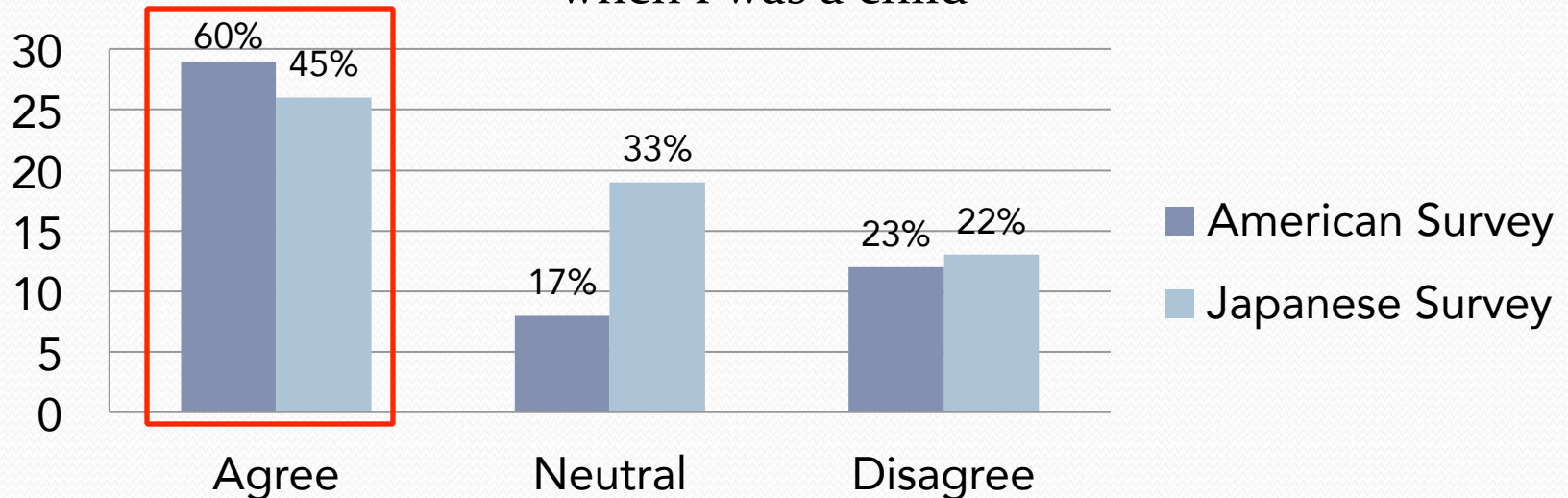| American Survey	Japanese Survey
"I have become less proud of my identity as an Asian person though out college. I'm just tired of the stereotypes, I just want to fit in."	"I had a terrible inferiority complex, but though myself and my friends, also in the eyes of others, I've come to recognize that everyone has their own way of living."
"I was always proud as well as tired of having to explain my background. This has always been the case, but now, I feel like my understanding of race as well as the emotional understanding of myself has helped to shape a more solid sense of self."	"I was ashamed and hated being Japanese until I got to Grad school where I met a Hawaiian born Japanese. I'm not sure if it was her influence or just growing up but it wasn't so bad looking into a mirror anymore"

Issues con't: Previous Thoughts

Prior to this survey, have you ever thought deeply about your own ethnic or racial identity?

American Survey

- Very Often — 21%
- Often — 26%
- Sometimes — 37%
- Seldomly — 16%
- Never

Japanese Survey

- Very Often — 11%
- Often — 29%
- Sometimes — 29%
- Seldomly — 17%
- Never — 14%
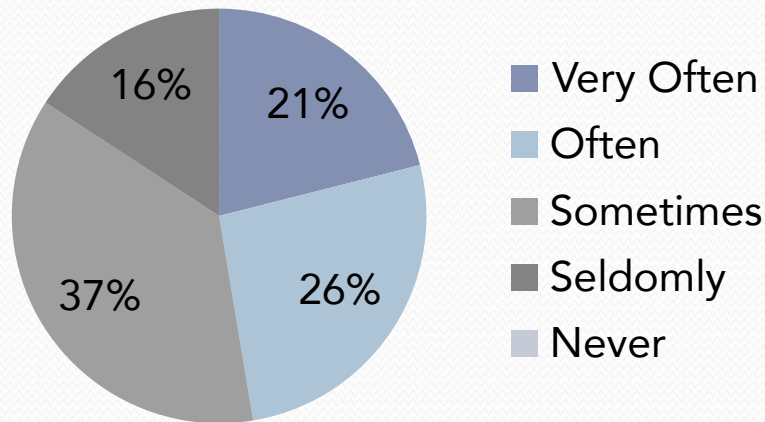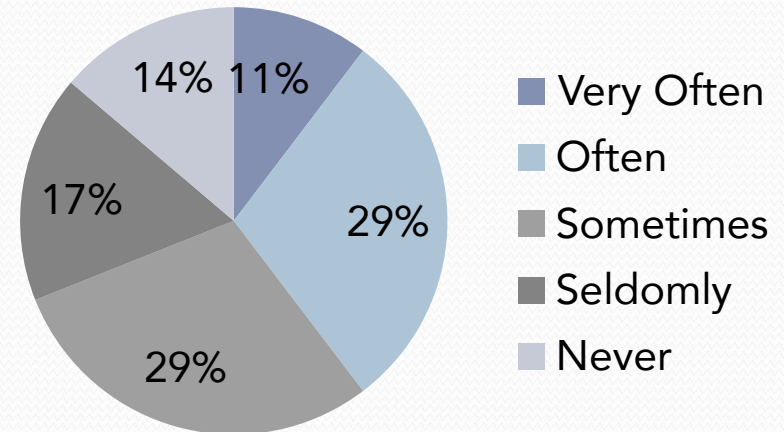
Identity issues within oneself could arise from a lack of prior awareness. The majority of people in either survey answered with a neutral answer.

Summary of the Findings 1

- Japanese people were often more neutral than anything when it came to issues of discrimination.

- Most people believed that it was important to be proud of they were in regard to their ethnicity and race. However, many also felt stereotyped and discriminated against for it.

- The majority of survey takers agreed that their feelings towards their own identity have changed from childhood.

- More Americans had previously thought deeply about their identity prior to the survey, likely due to the already present multicultural place they live in.

Research Findings Two

Research Question 2:
What are the perceptions of multi-raced people and what factors affect them?

Perceptions

One's perception on people of mixed-race/mixed-ethnicities has been affected **positively** based on how they identify themselves.

Grew up with *only one* ethnicity/race.
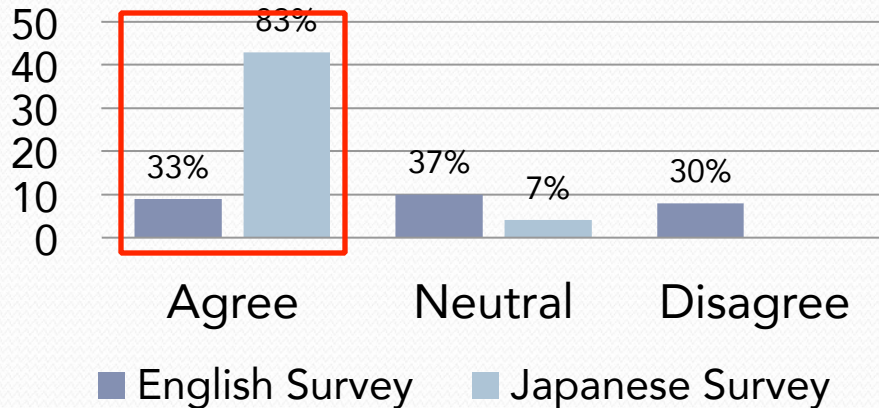
Grew up with *multiple* ethnicities/races.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
English Survey	33%	37%	30%
Japanese Survey	83%	7%	

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
English Survey	81%	14%	5%
Japanese Survey	91%	9%	
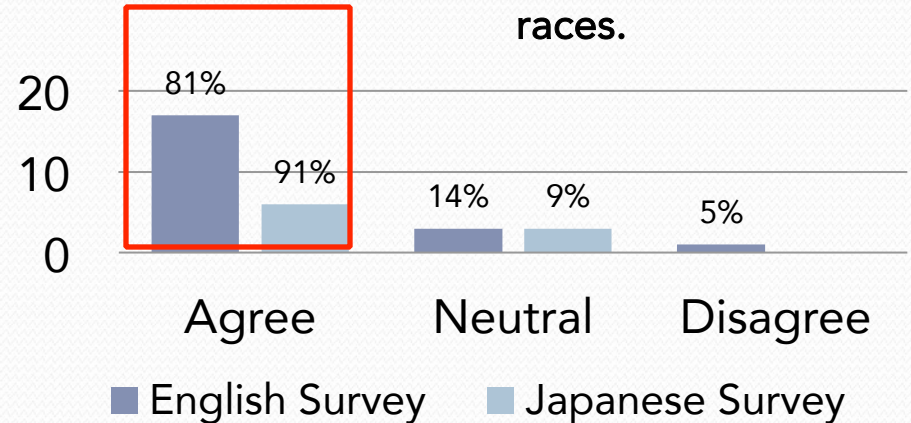
Both mono and mixed-race people felt as though their perception on people of mixed-race has been **affected positively** by their ethnicity/race growing up.

Perceptions con't: One Drop Rule

"One is considered a minority if they are mixed-race"

Bar chart showing survey responses:
- Agree: American Survey 40%, Japanese Survey 39%
- Neutral: American Survey 31%, Japanese Survey 21%
- Disagree: American Survey 29%, Japanese Survey 40%

Legend: American Survey, Japanese Survey
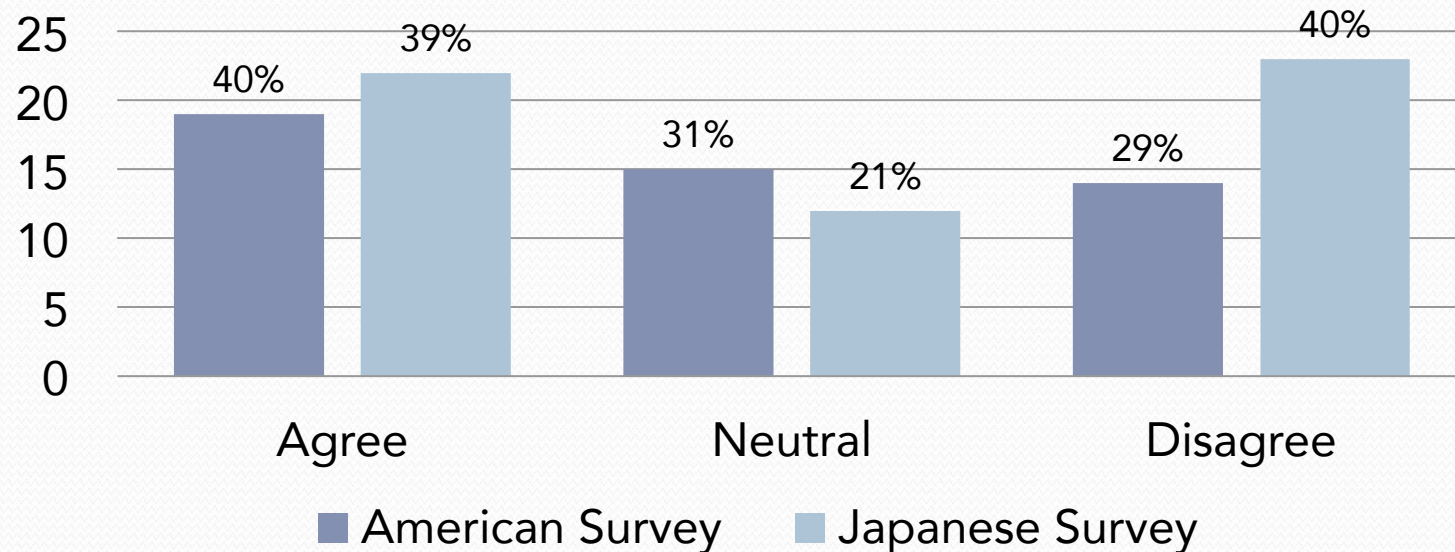
Although the "one drop rule" exists, many survey takers **did not agree** that just because one is mixed-race that they should be considered a minority.

"One Drop Rule" (Williams-Leon, Nakashima, 2001)

Perceptions

"It is important to see mixed-race/ethnic people in the media"

"I look up to people who share similar ethnic/racial traits as myself"
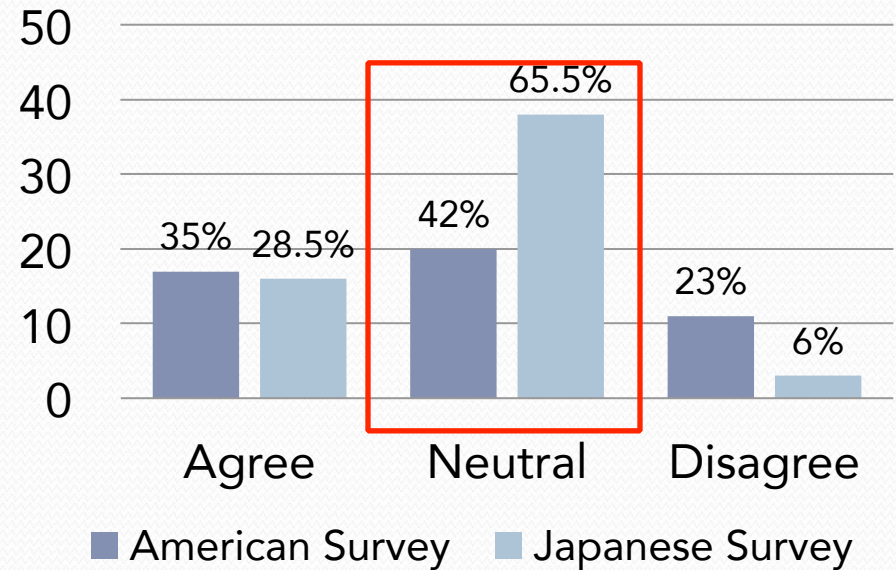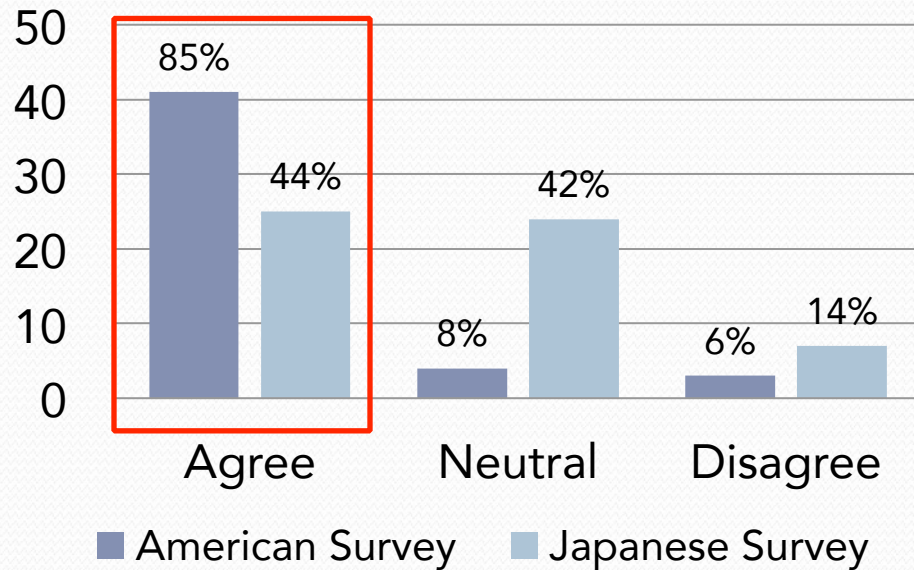
Many agreed that it is **important to see a variety of representations in the media**, many were neutral when it came to looking up to people who shared similar ethnic traits as themselves.

Factors

Where did your opinions on race/ethnicity stem from?

On both surveys, many people answered "**all of the above**" in the "other" section. Some other answers were "**my own research**" and "**studying abroad**."

Factors

Please describe the time that stuck out to you the most
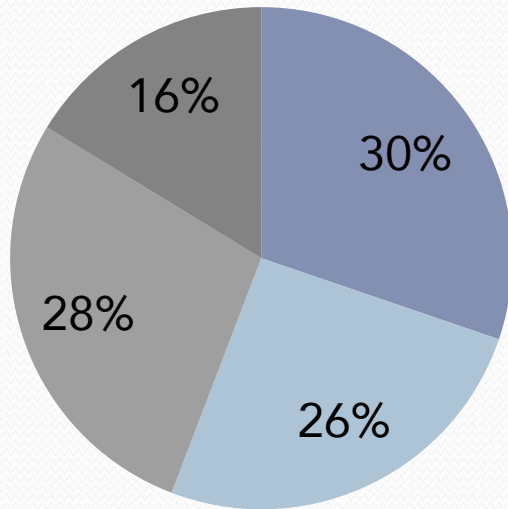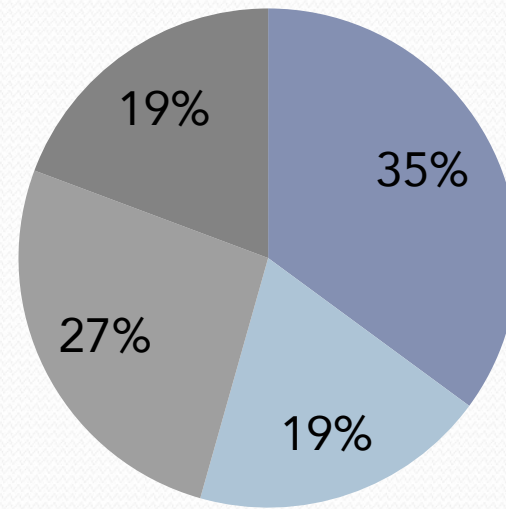when your race/ethnicity was represented by the media.
This can be **positive** or **negative.**

American	Japanese
"Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee always made Chinese people look 'cool' but then people thought I could do kung fu," (Female, 52, Chinese).	"I was extremely happy once to see ha-fu represented in a show as a journalist, and not as a model. It confirmed to me that ha-fu are not there just as models!" (Female, 28, Eurasian).
"I don't feel as if my race/ethnicity is portrayed much in the media, besides when natural disasters occur there," (Female, 19, Pacific Islander).	"When I see Turkish things in the media, I feel nostalgic… I am often considered empathetic towards Japan," (Female, 20, Japanese).
"'black twitter' regularly portrays white people as being likely to shoot up a school if made fun of or teased. I never thought about harming others despite being mocked on a very regular basis," (Male, 22, Caucasian).	"In Ghibili's 'The Wind Rises,' seeing suicide soldiers ride side by side made various emotions arise such as sadness, pride, and courage," (Male, 23, Japanese).
"I enjoy the actor Benicio Del Toro who is also Hispanic who is a well known actor and has won many awards. This makes me feel that everyone can be successful despite their ethnic background," (Male, 55, Hispanic).	"In TV programs about Japanese people, foreigners often talk about the nature of the Japanese. As a feature they say, humility, athletic, and a little reluctant," (Male, 26, Japanese).

Summary of the Findings 2

- Both Japanese and American people believed that their perceptions of multiculturalism and mixed-race people had been positively affected by the ethnic identity that they held.

- In general, the people have a positive perspective on multiculturalism in this day and age.

- One of the main factors of this was media, however the biggest factor was personal relationships such as family or friends.

Conclusion

- Although I expected Japanese people to be less open-minded about multiculturalism, they were fairly open. Sometimes more so than Americans.

- No matter if the person taking the survey identified as mixed-race or not, they still felt stereotyped and discriminated against because of their racial or ethnic identity.

- Factors like media certainly aided in one's identity, but the biggest factors were human connections.

Limitations of the Study

- The majority of survey takers were not mixed-race in the Japanese survey.

- Because of the highly academic style of research, the translation from English to Japanese proved to be quite difficult.

Future Study

- I would have liked to have more in depth interviews with people who were mixed race from Japan and America.

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