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“MULTIRACIAL AND MULTIETHNIC
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: SHOULD THE
QUESTION REALLY BE ‘IS THE GLASS HALF
FULL OR HALF EMPTY?’”

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**“MULTIRACIAL AND MULTIETHNIC IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT: SHOULD THE QUESTION REALLY BE ‘IS THE
GLASS HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY?’”**

Discussant:

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Presenters (in alphabetical order):

Marla Bennett

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"The purpose of this symposium is to challenge and expand the work in identity development beyond simplistic, single identity developmental frameworks by examining the inherent complexities of multiple identity development and group affiliations."

Racial and ethnic identity development theories often have been negligent in examining the issues of multiple identity development. While most models have segmented identity development into racial, gender, sexual orientation, etc. identities, these separations have often left the illusion that identity formation and development as being relatively unrelated processes among personal identities. The purpose of this symposium is to challenge and expand the work in identity development beyond simplistic, single identity developmental frameworks by examining the inherent complexities of multiple identity development and group affiliations. In particular the historical, sociopolitical, and psychological aspects of multiracial-multi ethnic identity development of visibly

ambiguous people will be explored.

For example, many singular identity developmental models have historically emanated from an anthropological perspective by examining and contrasting the experiences of visible racial/ethnic people with people from dominant white groups in the United States. While acculturation theories have accentuated this perspective by focusing upon the experiences of visible racial-cultural people when they interact with members of the dominant white society, this scholarship has often focused upon the impact of a person's contact with another culture in a relatively unidimensional manner.

However, understanding the internal processes of dealing with multiple identities and how possible options influence a person's sense of self and others is a complex and variable developmental process. Illustrating the complexity of multiple identity development, this symposium will discuss the theoretical conceptualizations and applications of visibly ambiguous multiracial-multi ethnic identity development as an example of how resolution of multiple identities can meaningfully exist. By challenging linear notions of visible racial-cultural identity models, satisfactions and tensions between racial and ethnic components found within multiracial and multi ethnic people in context of the family and society will be explored. By utilizing a framework that illuminates the issues of simultaneous multiple group memberships, members of this symposium will explore the various facets of multiracial-multiethnic identity development, challenge participants in the ways they and others view the world, and discuss the importance of developing relevant and meaningful clinical, educational, and research programs and opportunities especially in predominately white educational institutions.

The symposium goals are to:

1. Provide participants insight into the role of how multiple identity development (e.g., multiracial-multiethnic) influences personal identity development for visibly ambiguous racial-cultural people in personal and predominately white professional, and educational settings.
2. Introduce participants to the prevailing theory and research in the areas of multiracial/multiethnic identity development. (Describe how multiracial and multiethnic identity development theories are related and disparate to theories of racial and ethnic identity development.
3. Explore how research, clinical, and personal experiences of visibly ambiguous racial-cultural people can be applied to inform research, clinical and educational methodologies, interventions, and practices particularly in predominantly white institutions.

Presenters:

Marla Bennett is a Masters Student in the Counseling Program, Division of Psychology in Education, College of Education, Arizona State University. Ms Bennett received her bachelor's degree in psychology at the Florida State University with an emphasis in Black Studies and Latin American & Caribbean Studies. Her research and clinical interests include, but are not limited to racial/cultural identity development, culturally responsive

interventions with diverse communities (particularly people from the Caribbean, African Americans, and multiracial families), and resiliency-related issues.

Natasha Borja Datta, Ed.M. is an Advanced Doctoral Student in the Department of Counseling Psychology, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University. Ms. Datta has developed a program design utilized to train urban elementary school counselors, and recently completed a program evaluation plan for a university wide mediation center. She is currently working as a psychological extern at Princeton House, the mental health division of the Princeton Medical Center in New Jersey. Her research interests include multicultural competence training, Asian racial identity in relation to vocational choice, and program evaluation and planning.

Jason Martinez is a Masters Student in the Counseling Program, Division of Psychology in Education, College of Education, Arizona State University. Mr. Martinez received his bachelor's degree in psychology with an emphasis in social influences on behavior at Arizona State University. His interests include multicultural issues as related to community counseling for people from underserved groups in mental health settings.

Vivian Ota Wang, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Counseling/Counseling Psychology & Director, Asian Cultural Studies Program, Division of Psychology in Education, College of Education, Arizona State University. Prior to receiving her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at Columbia University, Dr. Ota Wang was a Board Certified Genetic Counselor at the University of Colorado. Her writings and scholarship focus on social justice issues related to multicultural genetic education program development and evaluation, racial-ethnic identity development, and health psychology in the United States and the Asia-Pacific region.

Rick Sperling is a Masters Student in the Counseling Program, Division of Psychology in Education, College of Education, Arizona State University. Mr. Sperling received his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Michigan. His research interests include racial identity development and social perception. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in Human Development and to apply identity development research towards developing interventions aimed at assisting Hispanic/Latino(a) young adults achieve her/his personal goals.