2003

The invisible minorities : identity construction of multiracial Asian Americans

Jennifer Huynh Thi Anh Morrison
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

THE INVISIBLE MINORITIES:

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF MULTIRACIAL ASIAN AMERICANS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Jennifer Huynh Thi Anh Morrison

August 2003

UMI Number: 1417491

Copyright 2003 by
Morrison, Jennifer Huynh Thi Anh

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy
submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and
photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper
alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized
copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI®

UMI Microform 1417491
Copyright 2004 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
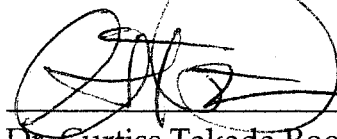
STUDIES

_____

Chair

Dr. Rona T. Halualani

Department of Communication Studies

_____

Dr. Wenshu Lee

Department of Communication Studies

_____

Dr. Curtiss Takada Rooks

Department of Social Science

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

_____

ABSTRACT

THE INVISIBLE MINORITIES:
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF MULTIRACIAL ASIAN AMERICANS

by Jennifer Huynh Thi Anh Morrison

A review of the literature found that Ethnic Studies focused on multiracial

Asian American identity more than any other field. However, multiracial Asian

Americans are still in need of further research because of the many different

types of identity construction that may occur. From the array of literature found

in Communication Studies, only a few encompass how a multiracial individual

communicates her or his identity construction. Thus, in my Master's thesis I

found that the complexity of multiracial identity construction encompasses three

types of communication cues in relation to familial closeness. Through the

analysis of five in-depth interviews I found there to be a profound influence on

how the double minority multiracial individual is raced and how she or he

identifies. Therefore, after examining the construction of double minority

multiracial Asian Americans, there is a greater ability to understand how a

complex multiracial identity is communicated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: THE WORLD OF MULTIRACIALITY

Introduction

Throughout the United States history, minority groups have steadily

increased in numbers (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991). According to the US Census,

the year 2000 recorded increase of 72% in the Asian American population, 13.2%

in the African American population, and 57.9% in the Latino population (Barnes

& Bennett, 2002; Guzman, 2001; McKinnon, 2001). Asian American represented

the fastest growing population when compared to other major racial/ethnic

groups (Asian-Nation, 2002b). In addition, Asian Americans have had the

"largest proportion of intermarriages" in California (Root, 2001b, p. 7). Since the

civil rights period (1963-1974) Asian American's out-marriages have doubled

(Asian-Nation, 2002a). These marriages have produced mixtures of race and

ethnicity, individuals who are capable of living with multiple identities:

multiracial Asian American children (Root, 1997).

The number of multiracial children within the US continues to rise. This

increase is due to the growing number of Asian minority groups who continue to

intermarry and have multiracial Asian American offspring. In addition to this

population increase of multiracial Asian Americans, an array of socially and

historically constructed identities continues to flow through academia unnoticed. One may encounter such an identity, only if, she or he interacts with a multiracial Asian American individual. However, the types of identity encountered depend on the contextual and situational circumstances of the interaction. Arguably, this is true because of the complex nature of multiracial identity.

Since the immigration of Asian/Pacific Islanders started in the United States, Asian American groups have increased tremendously (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991). The 2000 Census recorded that 1.7 million reported being Asian and one or more other races (Barnes & Bennett, 2002). In addition, from 1945 to 1965 a generation of "War Babies" was born as a result of the War Bride Act of 1945. This act enabled spouses and adopted/born children of US military members to enter and live in the United States (Minato & Bustillo-Hutchins, 2002). Moreover, percentages currently show that Asian husbands and wives who are being married to another Asian American are higher than those who are married to Whites (Asian-Nation, 2002a). Because of this, many multiracial Asian American children are born everyday within the United States. Unable to fit into one specific category of race, multiracial Asian Americans find it hard to choose between the races within themselves.

Within the Communication Studies field, the research area of identity has been the subject of several articles (for e.g., Collier, 1996, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1989; Eisenberg, 2001; Hecht, 1993). Yet, these articles do not examine the complex nature of multiracial Asian American identity. For the most part, a monoracial individual in society deals with a sense of complexity. However, a multiracial individual intensifies the complexity by two or four times that amount. Moreover, Asian American double or multiple minority combinations of multiracial identity (e.g., Chinese - Filipino identity) have not been examined in past identity studies within the Communication Studies field.

Rationale

I became intrigued with the construction of multiracial identity because I am multiracial. My father is European-American (Scottish, German, Irish, Dutch, and English) and my mother is 3/4 Vietnamese and 1/4 Chinese. Today, I can say this proudly but I did not always feel this way. Torn between two worlds, my White world and my Asian world, I have never been able to fit completely into either world although I associate with my Vietnamese and Scottish identities. For example, my Asian friends do not accept me into the Asian culture because I am not Asian enough. Similarly, my White friends say I am not White enough to

be fully accepted within the White culture or society. So where do I fit? Do I just sit around and wait for my identity to appear? What is funny about that question is that one day, it actually did.

I never noticed that I am of mixed race until I reached high school. One day at school, my English teacher told my class to develop a family tree. I thought it would be an easy and fun assignment. By the end of the day, I began to feel alienated and frustrated. Most of my friends at that time were White and thought of me as being the same. As I started to fill in my mother's side of the family tree, my friends began to snicker, offering racial slurs like, "I never knew you were a 'chink'." I felt humiliated. I did not even know what a "chink" was. Everyone laughed. I went home and completely erased everything from my mother's side of the family tree. When looking at the tree, I saw that half of it was full and the other half was empty. It was comparable to taking a knife and cutting myself right down the middle. I had just erased half of myself, half of who I am. After that day, I decided never to do that again.

It is easy to walk past an individual on the street and say she or he looks multiracial. What if that person does not perceive her or himself as multiracial? What if she or he chooses to associate her or himself with only one ethnic group? For example, someone could be Latino(a) and have grown up in an Asian

neighborhood. She or he might feel more comfortable seeing her or himself as a part of the Asian American race. Therefore, her or his identity as Asian American is shaped by the influences of the neighborhood. Thus, showing the many different factors such as demographics, physical appearance, age, generation, gender, cultural knowledge, cultural acceptance, among others that influence multiracial identity. In addition to the personal relevance of this topic, I chose to pursue multiracial Asian American identity because of the limited research on (a) multiracial identity in general within the Communication Studies field and (b) multiracial Asian American double minority identity within Ethnic Studies fields.

Key Terms

Before pursuing this matter further, I must explained certain terms that are crucial to understanding the topic at hand. Many terms used interchangeably in popular and academic discourse create much confusion in the area of intercultural study (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991). To alleviate such confusion an explanation of each term is below.

Ethnicity & Race

Ethnicity is often used interchangeably with race, but has a different

meaning altogether (Root, 1992a). Ethnicity is the learned behaviors of a "unique

social and cultural heritage" which have been passed down from generation to

generation (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991, p. 10). A few examples of ethnicity are

code of behavior, language, organization affiliation, religion, among others

(Ponterotto & Casas, 1991). On the other hand, race is a seen as a concept that

"signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different

types of human bodies" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 55). Although some scholars

(Zack, 2001; Ponterotto & Casas, 1991) view race as one's geographical origins or

genetic ancestry, Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) see race as more of a

process. This evolving process deals with the situational ramifications of an

individual's racial background at any given situation. This fluid definition of

race invokes many different interpretations depending on the situation and

context an individual could encounter thereby making the notions of race an

evolving concept charged by the historical and political implications of a given

situation.

Monoracial

Monoracial individuals are descendents of parents from one racial group (Frazier, 2002; Hall, 2001). Monoracial is a term used for individuals who are racially from one group (e.g., African American, Chinese American, Korean American, Mexican American).

Multiracial

A multiracial individual is a person born from an interracial relationship made up of two people who are racially different: someone who has two or more racial backgrounds (i.e., African American-Chinese, Irish-English, Chinese-Vietnamese, Japanese-Latino(a), Korean-Hawaiian-African American) (Christian, 2000). Biracial, multiracial, hapa, mixed-raced, mestizo(a), Afro-Asian, Amerasian, half-breed, Eurasian, mulatto, among others are appellations that are used interchangeably or in place of multiracial throughout the literature (for e.g., Christian, 2000; Frazier, 2002; Harris, 2000; Kimoto, 2000; Root, 1990, 1992a, 2001; Spencer et al., 2000; Valverde, 2001; Williams, 1992, 1997; William-Leon, 2001). Historically, politically, and pragmatically, all hold different implications in a given context. For the remainder of this Master's Thesis, I refer to these particular individuals as *multiracial* individuals.

Minority Group

A minority group is one that "is restricted in terms of educational, economic and political opportunities" (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991, p. 11). In general, the minority group does not receive all of the privileges within a specific society. The oppression that a minority group experiences comes from the majority group of that particular area. However, such oppression could also come from another minority group as well. This happens when one minority group tries to suppress any other minority groups within the same area.

Majority Group

The fabrication of a majority group is a direct correlation of a minority group's fabrication. The majority group "is that group whose value system is deemed by its members to be the model value system, the one to be emulated" (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991, p. 12). Within the United States, most of the majority group consists of all white ethnic groups (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991), however there could always be turmoil among minority groups, generating a majority group within the sea of minority groups. For example, Japanese and Chinese are the leading contenders for the majority position among Asian groups. This has

8

been apparent by the influential effect that both have had on other Asian groups during times of war.

Overall, I examined the communicative practices of identity of multiracial Asian Americans: how they process, develop, and construct their ongoing identity. Past research creates identity models for monoracial majority (i.e., White) and minority (i.e., African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino(a) Americans) individuals (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Cross, 1995; Helms, 1995; Phinney, 1990, 1992). However, current models are not able to fully-include multiracial individuals because of the complex nature of multiracial identity construction (Root, 1990, 1992a; 1992b).

Literature Review

For the scope of this literature review, I focus on identity and the disciplines of Communication Studies and Ethnic Studies in terms of the examination of multiracial Asian American identity construction. Multiracial individuals "develop identity under a unique set of circumstances" due to the way identity is socially constructed (Hall, 2001, p. 2), meaning it is vital to analyze many different aspects of a multiracial individual's life. Root (1992a) denotes influences that may affect the ways in which a multiracial individual

develops her or his identity: the ethnic combination of each parent, the gender of

the individual, where she or he grew up, and other historical, social, political,

and economic factors that could influence an individual's identity.

Identity

Historically, identity has evolved to include the acceptance of an

individual's racial/ethnic classification within our society. The Civil Rights

Movement throughout the 1960's shows how a multicultural setting integrated

into our predominately White society. It essentially led individuals towards a

greater acceptance of multiculturalism. This acceptance changed the outlook of

race and identity because it left individuals with the opportunity to choose how

they would socially construct their identity. Meaning identity is how an

individual accepts or adapts to her or his surroundings in addition to being a

social construct of the surrounding. For instance, society assigns each individual

to a particular racial category based upon their physical appearance and/or

geological heritage thereby constructing how the individual will perceive her or

himself in addition to how others will see the individual.[1] If a multiracial

individual is to believe she or he is Asian American [when the racial background

---

[1] I use the term "others" as having no family relations to the multiracial individuals (i.e., friends, co-workers, classmates, boyfriends/girlfriends, among others).

of the individual is Chinese-Latina(o)] then an influence generated from the

individual's surroundings (society) transposed that identity. Therefore, based off

the influences from society I frame identity as a socially constructed

phenomenon.

In a collaborative article, *Dialogue on the Edges: Ferment in Communication

and Culture*, co-author Wenshu Lee (2001) indicates that identity is not a

biological trait but a socially constructed one. Expressing that both the

individual and the society (that encompasses the individual) fabricate the

identity.

> Yet no matter how insistent we are that identities are provisional
>
> and in between and should not be essentialized as biological, we are in
>
> danger of falling into the trap of "social essentialism" or "constructivist
>
> essentialism." For example, "whiteness" or "gender" is socially constructed
>
> rather than biologically based... (Collier, Hedge, Lee, Nakayama, & Yep,
>
> 2001, p. 260)

Identity is the understanding of one's self in regards to the societal influences

that surround the individual. However, in context to multiracial identity blood

or parentage is underscored. I frame these as social constructions in that society

forces individuals to choose who they are racially. For example, a school

application or US Census surveys has columns of racial classifications for an individual to choose from. Within the same article, Lee poses a question to Mary Jane Collier on why Collier identified herself as "European American and White together" (Collier, 2001, p. 255). As Collier explains her identification, she notes that both ethnic and racial categories are social constructs. "...that we are marked biologically by each other in conversations, politicians' speeches, organizational policies, and media texts with powerful consequences" (Collier, 2001, p. 256).

Concerning authenticity, identity is how authentic or inauthentic an individual is within society's racial classifications. I also frame authenticity as being socially constructed pointing out that society assigns placement for individuals to keep them out of particular racial classifications, in addition to keeping certain individuals in specific ones. No matter how "Asian" an African-Vietnamese individual may feel society will cast her or him as African American because of her or his African American characteristics. Thus, by holding stereotypical traits of a particular racial group, society will assign a place for an individual and treat them accordingly. Therefore, the construction of authenticity originates from the individual or society.

Root's Biracial Identity Schematic Metamodel

In regards to identity development, Maria Root (1990) suggests a biracial identity schematic metamodel in which a multiracial individual flows through while constructing her or his biracial identity. This flow is not stagnant, yet it continues because of significant conflicts within a multiracial's life. Root suggests that there are three main surrounding influences: societal, familial, and political systems. From these larger surrounding influences, she narrows down on four resolutions that could help explain how a multiracial individual develops her or his identity. She notes that these resolutions could happen frequently over a multiracial individual's lifetime, which give her schematic metamodel a spiral affect that projects into infinity.

Identification as a new racial group. Dealing with the issues of marginal status, the multiracial individual may not feel a strong connection towards any of her or his racial backgrounds (Root, 1990). Therefore, she or he will view her or himself as being mixed, multiracial, biracial, among others. However, Root notes that a problem with this resolution. She states:

> This individual would continually experience being assigned to a racial
>
> identity and would need to inform people of the inaccuracy when it felt
>
> important to them. (Root, 1990, p. 201)

Identification as a single racial group. In this resolution, the multiracial individual chooses and accepts one of her or his racial background. Root (1990) states that this is similar to "acceptance of the identity society assigns" however the difference is that the multiracial individual chooses (not society) her or his racial classification.

Identification with both racial groups. The more "idealistic" of the four resolutions, acceptance with both racial groups is apparent when a multiracial individual responds as "I'm part Black and part Japanese" or "I'm mixed" (Root, 1990, p. 200). The multiracial individual accepts she or he is mixed. However, she or he views her or his multiraciality as being unique in that no one else is like her or him (Root, 1990).

Acceptance of the identity society assigns. How other's see an individual determines how the multiracial individual will be assigned racial placement into society (Root, 1990). Root states that this is the "most tenuous" of all the resolutions (Root, 1990, p. 199). The multiracial individual has to negotiate between races whenever someone places her or him into a particular racial group. This type of placement/assigning that occurs reflects the type of situation the multiracial individual is experiencing. For instance, if a Vietnamese-Latina woman is eating at a Vietnamese restaurant, others may see her as being

Vietnamese or Asian because of where she is and how she looks. She may appear to look Vietnamese or have physical characteristic of being Asian.

Although Root's suggestion of a schematic metamodel is a step towards creating a generalized model for multiracial identity construction it can not stop here. In order to understand the whole (the macro) one must break apart pieces and examine them one by one (the micro) thereby creating a more in-depth understanding. While studying identity construction, past researchers (for e.g., Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Phinney, 1990) found that monoracial minority individuals constructed their identity differently from monoracial majority individuals. This led to the examination of specific monoracial minority populations concluding the differences in identity construction between each one. Therefore, if there is a difference between minority and majority monoracial identity construction, there may exist a difference between double minority and minority-majority multiracial identity construction.

Within the fields of Communication Studies and Ethnic Studies, identity theory advances in various ways. Communication Studies scholars theorize identity in terms of cultural, ethnic, and multiracial belonging/affiliation (for e.g., Collier, 1996, 1998; Collier & Thomas, 1989; Harris, 2002; Kimoto, 2002). As a whole, identity is a phenomenon that is communicative towards racial/ethnic

belonging and acceptance. Along the same lines, Ethnic Studies scholars have theorized identity in regards to cultural, ethnic, minority, multiethnic, and multiracial identity (for e.g., Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Hall, 1980; Iijima Hall & Cooke Turner, 2001; Phinney, 1992; Ponterotto & Casas, 1991; Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993; Root, 1990, 1992b, 1997, 2001a; Spickard, 1997; Stephan, 1992; Williams, 1992). In the following sections, I explain the above theories in greater depth.

A bulk of the literature compiled on multiracial identity is in the form of anthologies from both, monoracial and multiracial researchers (for e.g., Iijima Hall & Cooke Turner, 2001; Jacobs, 1992; Miller, 1992; Nakashima, 1992; Nash, 1992; Root, 1992a, 1992b, 2001a; Stephan, 1992). However, there are articles that have filled journals in such fields as Ethnic Studies, Psychology, Anthropology, Education, Youth Adolescence, among others (for e.g., Grove, 1991; Hall, 1980; Hall 2001; Haug 1998; Phinney, 1990, 1992; Oka, 1994; Root, 1997; Spickard, 1997; William, 1997).

The Communication Studies field is just starting to venture into the realm of multiracial identity. With the brief mention of multiracial identity from Tina M. Harris (2000) and Diane M. Kimoto (2000), readings about multiracial experiences are limited and lack the academic attention needed for thorough

research in this area. Moreover, the complexity of multiracial identity within

Harris and Kimoto's research is not fully explored because of the lack of

multiracial double minority combinations. Future research on multiracial

identity construction within the Communication Studies field will help an

understanding of how these individuals communicate their identity with

monoracials and other multiracial individuals. This understanding would then

bring us one step closer to seeing how we can battle the boundaries of racism

and discrimination within our multicultural society. Once more, this

demonstrates the explicit need for multiracial identity research within this field.

Mary Jane Collier & Milt Thomas (1989), when referring to ethnic identity, state

that the identity frames and texts for an individual may differ significantly from

context to context.

> For example, the identity that is managed for a student may be
>
> "American" when friends visit from outside the country, "Mexican" at
>
> home with the extended family, "Chicano" with friends at college,
>
> "minority" when registering for courses, and "student" in class. (Collier &
>
> Thomas, 1989, p. 110)

From this, one could see that even ethnic identity has its own variation

depending on the situation of a particular minority individual. A person is not

just an ethnicity or race. The nature of an individual, being a part of many groups, complicates the understanding of identity. Like in Root's (1990) schematic metamodel the social, familial, and political systems help create the situation. Suppose the person was not only Mexican or Chicano but was also Chinese or Asian. More variation may occur because of the conflicting or complementary minority groups within that individual. The level of variation may differ between different types of double minority combinations but unfortunately, these speculations are not verifiable because of the lack of research in both fields. Therefore, the need for further research on multiracial Asian American identity construction is highlighted here to better understand the complexities of being a double minority multiracial Asian American.

Multiracial Identity

Communication Studies Multiracial Identity Research

Housed within the Communication Studies field, only a handful of intercultural communication scholars (for e.g., Harris, 2000; Kimoto, 2000) examined multiracial identity. Harris (2000), an African American - Euro American - Native American multiracial woman, focuses her article on physical appearance and how it influences a person's static or fluid cultural identity.

Harris understands the theoretical concept of cultural identity as a communication phenomenon that demonstrates how a multiracial individual defines her or himself. Keeping this in mind, there should be many articles on the subject of multiracial identity within the Communication Studies field. Unfortunately, there is little research on this topic creating the demand for further research on multiracial identity within the Communication Studies field.

In addition to physical appearance, Harris transcends three factors that influence one's static or fluid cultural identity: cultural duality, parents/family, and society. While explaining each area, Harris provides personal examples from particular individuals: illustrating how physical appearance is used to the benefit or disadvantage of each. Throughout the examples, only one (Japanese American - Euro American multiracial) gives a multiracial Asian American perspective on the matter. Furthermore, all of the examples used were of a minority-majority multiracial combination excluding all double minority multiracial individuals. "People of the minority are alienated just for being who they are" (Harris, 2000, p. 184). Assuming this is true, double minority multiracial individuals would receive different treatments because of their double minority status. Further, this suggests that each double minority multiracial individual would receive different treatment depending on her or his

racial combination. Therefore, further research on double minority combinations is necessary to further the Communication Studies field's knowledge of multiracial identity construction.

In the article, *Being Hapa: A Choice for Cultural Empowerment*, Kimoto (2002) compares her experiences of being multiracial (Japanese, Mexican, Spanish, and Indian) to the different words used to describe her multiracial identity: hapa, multiracial, and doubling. In addition, Kimoto theorizes that while one searches for cultural knowledge one finds their own identity within the process; while she went through life trying to learn her adopted parent's cultures, she found her own as well. However, as the knowledge increased and changed, so did her identity.

Kimoto's double minority multiracial combination combined with her own experiences brings a strong minority perspective of multiraciality to her article. Nevertheless, this is only one perspective on the matter of multiracial identity. "Just as people identify themselves differently according to their varied social roles... multiracials have the right even the privilege to identify themselves differently in response to the social demands of the situation" (Kimoto, 2000, p. 192). Therefore, if each multiracial may or may not act the same in any given

situation then more research is necessary on the double minority multiracial perspective dealing with identity construction.

Moreover, further research will delineate the different ways in which a double minority Asian American individual will or will not communicate her or his multiracial identity.

Identities are enacted in social interaction through communication and may be defined as those messages. We can only experience identity through communication and one may frame identity in terms of its enactments. Not all messages are about identity, but identity is part of all messages. Thus, identity may be expressed as part of a message or may be the central feature of the message, and messages may express more than identity. (Hecht, 1993, p. 79)

Although some Communication Studies researchers have tried to incorporate multiracial identity within the realm of scholarly research, there still remains an unanswered question: How do double minority multiracial Asian American individuals communicate their identity with themselves, monoracial, and multiracial individuals?

Ethnic Studies Multiracial Identity Research

Sarah Haug (1998) reported multiracial children clearly are active participants in the construction of their own identities. Even if the adult community does not recognize their constructions and if adults, according to adult needs and perceptions, label them. This suggests that many multiracial individuals form their own identities regardless of the quarrels they may have with others. As Haug inquired, how do multiracial children form their identities?

From reading recent literature, influences such as demographics, age, gender, cultural knowledge, political participation, and language are introduced as influential factors towards a multiracial individual's identity development (Hall, 1980). In addition, the political, social, and historical aspects of a given ethnic group or individual may come into play when determining how a multiracial individual develops her or his identity in regards to specific influences (Root, 1992a; 1997). While intertwining all of the given influences a multiracial individual may experience a more complex form of looking at multiracial identity construction is recommend: ecology.

Ecology is the way in which an individual and her or his environment interact with one another, while forming patterns from this interaction (Mish,

1999). Through this ecological perspective, a way of looking at identity from a multiracial perspective is formed (Miller, 1992; Root, 1992a, 1997). Many earlier identity stage models have been linear in the ways they explain identity. Unfortunately, these linear stage models overgeneralize the many influences that shape how a multiracial individual develops her or his identity (Root, 1997). Therefore, a new method of looking at multiracial identity construction needs to be established to show the complex nature of the process.

Although some have looked at multiracial identity construction in complex ways (for e.g., Hall, 1980; Iijima Hall & Cooke Turner, 2001; Root, 1997; Root, 2001a), the question remains is there a model simple enough to explain yet complex enough to include everything. Hall's (1980) study on multiracial African American-Japanese reported that many found to have a sense of duality and complexity in the way they identified themselves. This suggests a multiracial individual would not be able to follow linear stage models thus leaving some multiracial individuals out of the picture when dealing with identity construction. This seems odd due to the complex nature that multiracial individuals bring to identity construction that no other ethnic group whether minority or majority can experience such complexity as a multiracial individual can. Therefore, the exclusion of multiracial individuals in the matter of identity

construction demonstrates the need for research to include such people into the realm of identity.

Most have found multiracial individuals unable to fit into current models on monoracial identity however one has tried to look further. Root (1990) suggests that there is a way to express multiracial (biracial) identity. This expression of multiracial identity takes the first attempt to try to explain the complexity of multiraciality. Because of this attempt, many multiracial individuals are able to imagine a world in which they can fit. However, this is not completely true. I contend that every multiracial individual is different whether it being culturally, sexually, geographically, socially, among others. This difference among multiracial individuals brings much complexity to multiracial identity. Therefore establishing the need for more focused research on the multiracial population.

Multiracial individuals base their identity on the experiences they absorb throughout their life. These experiences may differ depending on the demographics, physical appearance, age/generation, gender, cultural knowledge/acceptance, language, social status of groups, parentage, among others. Therefore, there are many influences multiracial individuals experience, creating the need for more complex ecological model (Root, 1997). However,

each particular influence may have its own type of indicator, to help point out and explain the given influence. Thus, the preliminary indicators I concentrate on are demographics, physical appearance, age/generation, gender, and cultural knowledge/acceptance. Within the following sections, I explain what each indicator is and how each is important.

Demographics. Where an individual grew up may have a large influence on how she or he sees her or himself. In addition, the type of company she or he keeps is also a factor. What is the racial makeup of her or his friends and neighbors? How does this influence the way in which she or he perceives her or himself? Will an individual be the same if she or he hung out with all African American or all Asian American individuals? Ronald Hall (2001) takes an in-depth look at how the "looking glass self" helps the growth of one's identity through public perception. How an individual perceives her or himself is influenced by how others see that individual. It depends on whom you interact with and go to school with and who lives in your neighborhood, among others. Therefore, it is vital that I focus on the demographics of multiracial individuals in order to see how much of an influence they have on different multiracial Asian American combinations. Therefore, if the demographics were to affect the

identity construction process, multiracial identity construction would not be the same as a monoracial identity construction.

Physical appearance. Within lines of appearance some multiracial individuals are able and willing to pass as being associated with a particular race or be raced by others (society) that judge by appearance (Williams, 1997). For example, many multiracial African Americans have darker complexions and physically carry African American traits. However, I pose the question what is an African American trait? Because of physical appearance, they are not able to pass as a multiracial individual of any other racial backgrounds thereby placing them into a socially constructed category of race.

The ways in which others perceive us reflect how we perceive ourselves. The theory of the "looking glass self" (as mentioned in demographics) entails that the perceptions others have of us are very important. While placing physical appearance within the guidelines of the "looking glass self" how others physically perceive a multiracial individual influences how a multiracial individual would see her or himself physically. In other words, the socially constructed appearance of race has a huge influence on how a multiracial individual identifies. For instance, an Asian-Latina woman has light skin, round eyes, and a medium body frame. How would she be socially categorized based

on her or his physical features? To start, she does not stereotypically look like an Asian. She does not have a small body frame and does not have the almond/slanted shaped eyes. As such, multiracial individuals seen differently because of the physical stereotypes they may encounter.

During her Biracial Sibling Project, Maria Root (2001a) found that the majority of her multiracial White-Asian women participants saw themselves as more acceptable. The women of multiracial White-Asian decent felt that their "Whiteness" gave them a more exotic appeal. On the other hand, women of multiracial African-Asian decent felt that African American men would prefer monoracial African American women. So does this influence the multiracial African-Asian woman to feel she is not African American or the multiracial White-Asian woman to feel more White or Asian? Physical appearance is a major factor of how a multiracial individual views her or himself and how others view her or him: thus verifying the presence of the difference of how a multiracial individual constructs her or his identity when compared to a monoracial individual's identity.

Age & generation. As an individual ages, she or he is likely to accept both races concurrently. This awareness comes with age, experience, and self-evaluation (Hall, 1980). Hall suggests that a state of militancy causes youth to

become distraught and pick one race over the other. This sense of militancy dissolves over time; however, the individual or individual's influences determines how fast this happens. Also with age come more experiences. As a multiracial individual grows up the more complexity of the identity develops.

The generation in which the multiracial individual was born plays a role in how multiracial identity is developed (Root, 2001a). Curtiss Takada Rooks (2001) found that generation is a major factor in the variation between multiracial and monoracial Asian American households in Alaska. Moreover, the multiracial individuals that were born around wartime (World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War) may have different experiences of developing their identities than multiracial individuals who were born after a war had subsided. This suggests that around the time of war, multiracial individuals were perceived in a negative light. Many multiracial Vietnamese, who were born during the Vietnam War, did not receive kindness. They were forced out of school and left to roam the streets in Vietnam (Valverde, 1992). There are few studies about multiracial Vietnamese and other multiracial Asian Americans on the nature of their identity construction, thus expressing the need for more research on multiracial Vietnamese and other Asian American identity construction.

Gender. A multiracial individual's gender influences her or his identity, as seen in Valverde's (2001) study on multiracial Vietnamese: "...male multiracials are regarded as more acceptable than females, according to a Vietnamese patriarchal mindset in which men and boys rank above women and girls" (Valverde, 2001, p. 135). Does this pertain to all multiracial Asian Americans or does it depend on their specific racial combination?

Based on the results from the Biracial Sibling Project, involving multiracial Asian-White and Asian-African participants, Root (2001) explains that "Whiteness" increased multiracial women's attractiveness while "Blackness" was seen as a way for men to boost their masculinity. Unfortunately, this study did not look at all multiracial combinations. Therefore, there is a need for more in-depth studies of all combinations in order to examine the affects of appearance of multiracial identity construction.

When looking at the relationship between multiracial children and their parents, Grove (1991) found that "...58% of Asian/White subjects were closer to their Asian parent and 42% were closer to their White parent..."(Grove, 1991, p. 621). Unfortunately, Grove did not look at the gender of the parents, leaving some questions open: Did the multiracial individuals within this study identify more with their mother or father because of race or gender? Therefore, it is

important to consider the gender of the parents while researching multiracial

identity construction. Kieu Linh Caroline Valverde (2001) points out that within

the Vietnamese culture, multiracial Vietnamese with Vietnamese fathers have a

higher status compared to those who had Vietnamese mothers. Therefore, there

is a need for further research because communities judge multiracial individuals

on the gender of the Vietnamese parent.

   Cultural knowledge and cultural acceptance. The amount of knowledge held

by a multiracial individual coincides with acceptance when it comes to

influencing her or his identity construction. "...cultural knowledge may aid in

the individual's acceptance by a group or comfort with that group" (Iijima Hall &

Cooke Turner, 2001, p.86). Christine C. Iijima Hall and Trude I. Cooke Turner

(2001) do not believe that knowledge of a particular ethnic group is an essential

influence in how multiracial individuals develop their identity. Cultural

knowledge may help in the acceptance within a particular ethnic group but not

guarantee it.

   Speaking the language of a culture may also influence the construction of

one's identity. Valverde (2001) found that most monoracial Vietnamese

individuals would judge multiracial individuals based on whether or not they

could speak Vietnamese. Most who are trying to learn Vietnamese gain positive

responses for their efforts. This demonstrates the importance of cultural knowledge and the need to look at this matter further when researching multiracial individuals.

Many multiracial individuals may have to prove their ethnicity for acceptance within certain ethnic groups. Valverde (2001) reported that many monoracial Vietnamese would ask a series of questions to multiracial Vietnamese individuals to determine if she or he would be accepted within the Vietnamese community. Unfortunately, this study only focused on multiracial Vietnamese, therefore revealing the need for more research on other multiracial combinations: showing how multiracial and monoracial individuals should be looked at differently, in regards to identity construction.

With these influences in mind, a multiracial individual's complex identity will not work with the linear staged models of the past. The linear manner of stage models is not capable of including the different social and/or political experiences of a multiracial individual while intertwining history throughout. Therefore, using an ecological interpretation is more effective in expressing how multiracial individuals develop their identity. In addition, it will bring greater insight into how a double minority Asian American individual communicates her or his multiracial identity within our society.

Identity of Multiracial Asian Americans

Over the years multiracial research has expanded to include Asian

American-White, Asian American-African American, and Native American-

African American individuals (Root, 1992a). Unfortunately, this is limiting

because of the many multiracial Asian American combinations left unexplored

[i.e., Asian American-Latina(o) American, Asian American-Pacific Islander,

Asian American-Asian American].

The term Asian American is used to describe many different ethnic groups

such as Koreans, Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese, Laotians, Cambodians, Asian

Indians, Pacific Islanders (Spickard, 1997). Within this large category, it is

unknown if and where multiracial Asian Americans fit. Valverde (2001) shows

that the Vietnamese community is somewhat accepting towards multiracial

Vietnamese. Multiracial Vietnamese must prove themselves for expectance by

the Vietnamese community, but this is only one of the many Asian American

groups within the United States.

Christine J. Yeh and Karen Huang (1996) conducted a study on the

identity construction of Asian American students. From their data, they

conclude that ethnic identity is a "dynamic and complex process" (Yeh & Huang,

1996). Hence, if monoracial Asian Americans have a "dynamic and complex"

way of developing an identity then multiracial Asian Americans would have more dynamic and complex ways of developing an identity. For example, a multiracial Vietnamese - Latina female would be Asian, Asian American, Latina, minority, multiracial, among others. This list could increase or decrease depending on the given multiracial individual, showing multiracial Asian Americans as being very complex individuals. Therefore, due to the increased complex nature of developing identity when compared to monoracial Asian Americans, there is a definite need for further research on multiracial Asian American identity construction.

Multiracial Asian American - Minority Combinations

Throughout the Ethnic Studies field, scholars have researched multiraciality and found that multiracial individuals are complex individuals (i.e., the norms do not apply to them when it comes to identity and social/political acceptance)(Root, 1992). Hall (1980) was one of the first individuals to look at double minority combinations among multiracial individuals. Hall believed it was vital to study double minority multiracial individuals because of the difference in treatment between African American-Asian American (double minority) and European American-Asian American

(majority-minority) individuals. In order to understand how each multiracial individual communicates and configures her or his identity construction, we must focus on Asian-minority multiracial combinations, among others.

Valverde (1992) also argued that many of the Asian cultures oppressed dark skinned multiracial Asian Americans. For example, if you were part African American, it would be hard for you to find acceptance within virtually any Asian community. However, research has not extended past African American-Asian American combinations. Still certain combinations are unexplored, showing the need for expanded research on multiracial Asian American minority combinations. Asian-Nation (2002a) notes that Asian ethnic groups have a higher percentage of being married to another Asian American that to Whites. However, researchers (for e.g., Hall, 1980; Harris, 2000; Kimoto, 2000) have only concentrated on specific combinations of Asian-minority multiracial individuals. This further reinstates that we must focus on every double minority multiracial Asian American combination in order to understand how each communicates her or his identity construction. Therefore, one can compare the identity construction of each combination to see if there is a pattern within this double minority multiracial communicative process.

In the remaining chapters, I discuss my use of qualitative in depth

interviews and the issues of selective monoracial identity and authenticity.

Within chapter 2, I lay out the methodological procedure of my study. In chapter

3, I analyze how my interviewees chose selective monoracial identities in regards

to familial communicative cues. Throughout chapter 4, I analyze the influential

abilities of authenticity on the larger issue of passing. In my last chapter, I

discuss my visual representation of multiracial identity development in addition

to the possible limitations of my study.

CHAPTER 2: INTERVIEWS FROM THE DOMAIN OF MULTIRACIALITY

Qualitative In-depth Interviews

In order to understand how different double minority multiracial Asian Americans form their identity, examining the communicative practices of multiracial Asian American identity is essential. As such, I conducted my research using qualitative in-depth interviews (interview guided approach and thematic analyst-constructed typologies) to capture the communicative nature of each interviewee's multiracial identity construction. By using an interview guided approach I followed the interviewee's train of thought on a given topic, which allowed for a more in-depth and "rich" interview (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 124). In regards to analysis, I examined the data through a thematic lens in order to "identify salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that help me respond to my research questions" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 178). More specifically, I created analyst-constructed typologies, which are themes generated from my in-depth analysis of the data (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). This allows for identifications of new typologies that will enhance further scholarly research on multiraciality (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

Research Questions

According to Root (1992a, 1992b), there is a demand for new ways of looking at identity construction, in order to delineate how a multiracial identity evolves. Roots states "clinical samples will yield only more pathological pictures of individuals supporting the negative folklore and stereotypes of multiracial people" (Root, 1992a, p. 186). In order to steer clear of any negativity that has come from such samples, I chose to select individuals who have not had any counseling or clinical support about their racial identity. However, if some degree of negativity does arise this will be new evidence supporting or pointing to the fact that there are certain issues apparent across the population of clinical to non-clinical multiracial individuals.

Efforts to include a more diverse sample of multiracial individuals is apparent within recent research studies (Harris, 2001; Kimoto, 2001; Rooks, 2001; Root, 2001a). However, recent research still has not encompassed all multiracial combinations.

Because we do not know what different effects the various ecological influences have on different racial mixtures such as White-minority versus minority-minority, it may not be appropriate to consolidate mixtures on

independent variables such as multiracial status or ethnicity until preliminary analyses are conducted. (Root, 1992a, p. 184)

This consolidation of the different racial combination can limit the development of multiracial identity research. Thus, more detailed questions pertaining to double minority multiracial individuals are necessary in order to establish an identity model for the multiracial population. For instance, additional research on specific Asian American multiracial combinations is essential in that past research (for e.g., Harris, 2000; Kimoto, 2000) has not looked at every multiracial Asian American combination. Due to Root's demand for such preliminary analysis, I examine the following research questions:

RQ1: What does it mean to be a multiracial Asian American?

RQ2: What does it mean to be double minority multiracial?

In addition, Root (1992b) comments on linear identity models (for e.g., Atkinson, Morten, and Sue, 1993; Phinney, 1990) in that they are not able to hold up with the complexities of a multiracial individual's experiences. Within the occurrence of complexities, she perceives linear identity models will look upon multiracial individuals as abnormal because each multiracial individual may/may not identify in the same way. For example, a Filipino-African American individual may perceive her or himself as being Asian American where as another

individual of the same combination may identify as being African American.

The difference in identification is what perplexes multiracial identity

construction thus making it hard for multiracial individuals to follow linear

identity models. In addition, much of the research (for e.g., Grove, 1991; Harris,

2000; Haug, 1998) presented on multiracial identity focuses on the minority-

majority perspective of multiraciality. However, there are many double minority

multiracial individuals, who are equally multiracial. Yet, there are a rare few (for

e.g., Hall, 1980; Kimoto, 2000) who have looked at the differences between

minority-majority and double minority multiracial individuals. From such

critique, I have also focused on the following research questions:

RQ3:   How do double minority multiracial Asian Americans construct their

identity?

RQ4:   What characterizes the experience of being multiracial?

Qualitative in-depth interviews constitute the specific qualitative work

that helps to unfold the identity construction of multiracial Asian Americans.

Throughout past multiracial identity research (for e.g., Hall, 1980; Harris, 2000;

Grove, 1991; Root, 2001a; Valverde, 2001), interviews have been used to grasp the

intimacies of a multiracial individual's experiences. Within the interviews I have

conducted, I gained access to the many different life stories that each individual

encountered in particular areas of her or his life. By using this qualitative

approach distortion of the interviewees' meanings or perspectives, when

elaborating on a given topic, would be alleviated (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

In addition, the use of qualitative in-depth interviews over quantitative

surveying methods proves to be more insightful for my study (Root, 1992a).

Root (1992a) argues that qualitative means of researching is more effective than

quantitative when collecting information pertaining to multiracial individuals.

By using quantitative means of data collection the issues of non-random

placement and representation on my participant sample is maintained (Root,

1992a). For example, multiracial individuals are "nonrandomly distributed in the

United States" (Root, 1992, p. 183). Moreover, the representation of sample may

be influenced by the history of racial mixing within a particular area. Therefore,

understanding emotions that arise from an individual's experiences/intimacies

are best found by qualitative in-depth interviews, questioning and probing. This

type of qualitative approach enables me to ask a question, reflect my

interpretation of the answer to the interviewee (interview guided approach), and

clarify/alleviate any misunderstandings (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Therefore, by

conducting qualitative in-depth interviews, I was able to understand the

emotions of double minority multiracial Asian American individuals and make sense of their unique identity positions throughout different phases of their life.

In addition, each multiracial individual is different (by racial combination, gender, demographics, among others) and the way in which one is treated over time by one's surroundings is what influences one's identity construction. Again, the best means of collecting historical experiences was to conduct qualitative in-depth interviews from multiracial Asian Americans (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Gretchen B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis state, "Talk" is essential for understanding how participants view the world" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 124). Therefore, I will engage this talk throughout the interviews by asking questions. This will allow each interviewee to explain her or his accounts in regards to the questions that I ask. This level of explanation on each account will be based on the elaboration of the interviewee. However, if I need further elaboration (to comprehend what the multiracial individual is saying) I will again participate in the talk. Through the technique of probing, I engaged the interviewee with talk to help her or him elaborate in order to grasp what the accounts entail. For example, whenever an interviewee brought about a topic that I did not know much about I would then ask for further information. By probing in this way, I was able to follow the interviewee's train of though. In

addition to concentrating on the initial questions, I was able to narrow in on the specifics of her or his answer.

Many of the interviewees' stories are very personal dealing with family related issues, which could not have been accessible with any other type of researching method. In order to reach into the mind of the interviewee, talk must occur in order to help the researcher understand what the interviewee is trying to express (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). This type of talk could only occur within an interviewing atmosphere, which is structured, to the point where the researcher is able to focus the interviewee on particular topics.

> Interviewing takes you into participant's world, at least as far as they can (or choose to) verbally relate what is in their minds.
>
> (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 124)

Moreover, qualitative interviews allow a researcher to fully comprehend the interviewees' position on a given matter (Lindloff, 1995). As Thomas R. Lindloff states, "interviews are especially well suited to helping the researcher understand a social actor's own perspective" (Lindloff, 1995, p. 167). Thereby the researcher is able to gain deeper understandings of the interviewees' experiences when

compared to quantitative surveying methods.[2] Therefore for the purpose of this Master's thesis, qualitative in-depth interview stands as the best means of collecting intimate data from the intricate life experiences of a double minority multiracial Asian American individual.

<div align="center">*Procedures*</div>

Participants

The interview pool consists of only double minority multiracial Asian American individuals (i.e., Chinese-Latino(a) or Vietnamese-Japanese). In addition, a personal referral system (snowballing) of recruiting interviewees helped in the recruitment of five interviewees for the qualitative in-depth individual interviews. All interviewees are between the ages of 20-27 years old. The taped and transcribed interviews are approximately 60-180 minutes in length. In addition, there are three follow-up interviews conducted two weeks after the initial interviews. Moreover, each interview took place on the interviewee's school campus. The list below identifies the fictitious names I coin for, the racial combinations, and the gender of each double minority multiracial Asian American interviewee.

---

[2] Lindloff expresses that surveying methods ignore the "issues of language, perceive responses as being independent of any context, and deny any negotiation of the topic under study" (Lindloff,

Amy: Cambodian and Chinese female

Darien: Vietnamese and Cambodian male

Lita: Hawaiian, Filipino, Spanish, and Chinese female

Mina: Mexican and Filipino female

Raye: Hawaiian, Japanese, and Chinese female

In determining the racial combination of each interviewee, I asked each

multiracial individual for the racial makeup of her or his parents. Again, I pose

the racial identity of the parents as a social construct. In our society race is based

on an individuals' geological origins and genetic makeup (Zack, 2001; Ponterotto

& Casas, 1991). However, society establishes the racial boundaries and

stereotypical appearances of each racial group, thus creating an individual's

racial identity. Race is not something we can choose. It is a placement that

society has bestowed upon us. Therefore, if both parents are of minority status, I

scheduled a meeting in which the qualitative in-depth interview would take

place.

Furthermore, I chose to include individuals that identified themselves as

having a multiracial identity in addition to individuals who identify themselves

as having a monoracial identity. By doing so, I determined why certain

---

1995, p. 164).

multiracial individuals accept and associate with both races while others do not.[3]

Meaning, indicators (physical appearance of self or by others, age/generation, cultural acceptance, cultural knowledge, among others) help distinguish influential differences between the multiracial and monoracial identification.

Interview Questions & The Interview

My interpretation of past qualitative multiracial identity research helped in the creation of the interview questions (for e.g., Rooks, 2001; Root, 2001a, Thornton & Gates, 2001; Tuyl, 2001; Valverde, 2001; Williams-Leon, 2001). When developing my interview questions I tried to choose large enough issues to help the interviewee establish "talk" and to allow the interviewee to answer freely in addition to elaborating on her or his identity construction. Because the issues of acceptance, association, and appearance are broad in context, I feel that I would be less inclined to sway the responses of the interviewee towards my researching objective. I essentially tried to start a conversation with the interviewee. By coming forth with questions that focus on large issues, I was able to initiate talk between the interviewee and myself.

Depending on how the interviewee perceives the preliminary indicators of acceptance, association, and appearance (which may be different for each

---

[3] Please refer to Chapter 3 for an explanation pertaining to the different types of identification.

interviewee), she or he will be able to elaborate on the experiences that are provoked by the questions. For example, when I talk about acceptance I focus on my association with the Vietnamese community. My inclusion into the Vietnamese culture might have some bearing on my Vietnamese mother. However, some Vietnamese individuals may not feel that I am a true Vietnamese (authenticity) for many reasons. First, I am not full Vietnamese. Second, I do not speak the language. Third, I do not physically appear to be Vietnamese. There are a plethora of circumstances that can influence why or why not I may be accepted. In the interviewing session, each interviewee will be able to report their stories and experiences. In addition, the interviewee has the freedom to change the focus of her or his answer if she or he chooses to. Therefore, such change will allow emergent themes to surface. Thus, the following preliminary list of indicators and questions may change depending on how the interviewee answers and assists in talk.

Acceptance.

I view acceptance as how a multiracial individual embraces her or his identity and how others accept that identification.

- Was there ever a period of time when you questioned your ethnicity? Questioned who you are racially? If no, why do you think this was the case?

- How do you define multiracial? When did you first know that you were multiracial?

- What difference has being multiracial made in your life?

- What does being multiracial mean to you?

    Association.

    I frame association as who the multiracial individual socialize with in addition to who socializes with the multiracial individual.

- What is your ethnic/racial identity?

- How important is this to you?

- Do you identify more with one parent? Why do you think that is the case?

- What is your relationship like with each parent?

- Are you closer to a specific parent? Why do you think this is the case?

- In what ways did each parent introduce you to different aspects of their culture?

    Appearance.

    I perceive appearance as the perception that others and the multiracial individual have on the multiracial individual's physical appearance.

- Do you think you look more like your mother or your father or both?

- What do your family, friends, or other people say about how you look? How do you feel about this?

- Are you mistaken for being a part of other racial groups? Which ones? Why do you think this happens? How do you feel about this?

At the beginning of each qualitative in-depth interview, I approached the participant with a briefing statement. The statement included:

1. a thank you for participation

2. an overview and discussion of the consent form

3. a reminder that participants may leave or choose to refuse any question at any time

After the initial briefing, I explained the interview was going to be audio taped and transcribed after the interview was over. To ease the interviewee into the interview process I started out by asking her or him, "How have you been?" The tape recorder was on yet I felt that it would help the interviewee feel more comfortable with the conversation we were going to be embarking on.

After the interview was over I asked the interviewee if there were anything, she or he would like to add.[4] After which, I asked the interviewee if she or he would be available for follow-up interviews, in which three said yes. I

---

[4] Anything that I had not covered or asked throughout the interview.

closed the interview by thanking the interviewee for her or his participation.

Within the follow-up interviews, I did an extreme amount of probing. I began

my probing process by transcribing the interview and reading it repeatedly.

While reading the answers from a particular interviewee, I was able to identify

areas where I would need more information. After identifying where I needed to

probe, I scheduled an appointment with the interviewee and conducted the

follow-up interview.

Mode of Analysis

Before diving into the analysis of my interviewee's stories, I would first

transcribe the data. When transcribing the data I started with transcribing the

audiotape. After an initial audio transcription, I would then proceed in a second

audio transcription in order to fill in the areas where emotion was verbally

present. For example, when the interviewee laughed before, during, or after a

particular word I would make not of it. When the audio transcription was done,

I would go over my handwritten notes and add any nonverbal expressions that I

had noted throughout the interview. For example, I would note if the

interviewee frowned when asked a question or smiled while telling a story.

After the transcription process was completed for all interviews and follow-up interviews I began my analysis.

During my analysis, I paid close attention to the answers given by each interviewee in relation to cultural association, cultural acceptance, multiracial association, multiracial acceptance, and physical appearance from self/others. Being attentive to these issues, I was able to label "reoccurring ideas, themes, perspectives, and descriptions" that arose from each transcription (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 179). While looking for the ideas and themes, I kept in mind the research questions my study tries to answer. In doing so, I was able to delineate how the interviewees answered my research questions by furnishing examples from their stories/narratives throughout the interviews (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). For example, the first round of themes consisted of specific issues (for e.g., siblings, education/school, parents, language, geographical location, food, nostalgia, friends, significant others, divorce, assimilation, religion, dating, racism, great grand parents, among others). After doing a preliminary coding of the transcriptions, I constructed more generalizable themes and categories, which would encompass the included terms found throughout all of the interviews (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). The process of constructing categories, in relation to the ideas/themes, takes an incredible amount of re-coding to refine the

initial categories (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). This coding and re-coding schemata

creates the large categories used to explain the issues of selective identity

development and authenticity in chapters 3 and 4.

When coding the data for the initial ideas/themes, analyst-constructed

typologies were used to narrow my focus on specific influences that contribute to

the construction of a multiracial identity (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). I first started

by naming and categorizing each idea/theme that occurred throughout the

transcriptions. Through this type of categorization, I analyzed the data further to

find imbedded themes that were not visible on the surface (Rossman & Rallis,

1998).[5] In addition, I analyzed each idea/theme in regards to what influential

elements had an effect on the creation of such a theme. This additional analysis

help determine other reasons for why such ideas/themes occurred (Rossman &

Rallis, 1998). Finding alternate understandings helped in eliminating any

unsound arguments to why my interpretation was not valid. After such

analysis, I contrasted and compared the different influential ideas/themes in

order to identify, which indicators were at work, if any. "Through this process,

one's own and others' assumptions about phenomena are questioned or

---

[5] The imbedded themes within the transcriptions helped pinpoint where to start the follow-up interviews.

explored, leading to new discoveries" (as cited in Babbie, 2001, p. 366).

Therefore, I was able to reveal more about double minority multiracial Asian

American individuals by conducting this type of thematic analyst-constructed

analysis.

Thus far, I have explained how double minority multiracial Asian

American individuals have been neglected in past identity research within the

fields of Communication Studies and Ethnic Studies. Moreover, the lack of focus

on multiracial Asian American individuals further delineates the need for such

qualitative research. Therefore, qualitative in-depth interviews help to

internalize and enhance the understanding of how double minority multiracial

individuals communicate their multiracial identity construction to others (Root,

1992a). Throughout the next two chapters, I explore and analyze the issues of

selective monoracial identity and authenticity in regards to the stories told by

each double minority multiracial individual.

CHAPTER 3: SELECTIVE MONORACIAL IDENTITY

Selective Monoracial Identity

In this chapter, I examine how each multiracial individual has a selective monoracial identity (SMI) in regards to familial closeness. SMI is present when a multiracial individual identifies with both of her or his racial groups but not simultaneously. In other words, SMI occurs when the multiracial individual negotiates from one racial background to another. The individual may identify with a racial background and switch to another according to the context of the situation. Root's (1990) "acceptance of the identity society assigns" resolution partially reflects such a situation. Where or when (the context) a multiracial individual enables her or him to negotiate between her or his racial backgrounds. However, I found that society is not the only influence within a multiracial individual's SMI. I uncovered that a family influences how each multiracial individual negotiates between her or his SMIs. By using communication cues, the close family members were able to influence particular monoracial identities onto the double minority multiracial individual. Three communicative cues that transpired from the data direct, indirect, and absence cues. Direct cues were present when a close family member directly noted that the double minority

multiracial individual was from one racial group. For example, when Darian's

father only identified Darian and himself as Vietnamese Darian's identification

towards his Vietnamese identity grew stronger. On the other hand, indirect cues

transpired when a close family member incorporated interest or cultural practice

towards the double minority multiracial individual. For instance, when Lita's

father showed interest in her education of Hawaiian history or when Amy

referred to her parents teaching her the Japanese language when she was young.

The notion of absence cues was present when there was no mention of a

particular racial group. The withholding of Mina's Chinese ancestry from her

close family members shows how Mina's lack of knowledge about her Chinese

background brought a sense of intrigue towards that identification.

Overall, the familial influence facilitates the communicative cues that

transpire between close family members and the double minority multiracial

individual. Although a multiracial individual has two or more racial

backgrounds, most of the time she or he identifies as a monoracial (she or he

chooses one of her or his racial backgrounds to identify with at a particular time).

When SMI occurs one of three things could have happened: the direct or indirect

cues from close family members influence the multiracial individual to choose a

SMI. On the other hand, the absence of cues (no cues) can some how create a

level of disassociation or belongingness towards a particular racial heritage. Therefore, this ability to flow from one monoracial identity to another (SMI) is a direct result of the familial influence that facilitates the communicative cues between family members and the double minority multiracial identity.

Moreover, an ecological framework helps to express the different ways in which the family can transcend the different types of communicative cues onto the multiracial individual. Through this ecological process the indicators (e.g., physical appearance, language, cultural knowledge, cultural association, gender, among others) work cohesively towards establishing each type of communicative cue. For example, when Mina expresses her Mexican identity she talks about her experiences with the Spanish language (language). Moreover, the Spanish language influences Mina to learn more about her Mexican culture (cultural knowledge) and helps her create friendships with individuals who are Mexican (cultural association). Within this example, the indirect communicative cues of language, cultural knowledge, and association facilitated by the family work together to establish Mina's SMI.

In addition, this unique monoracial identification goes beyond the question of, "What is your racial/ethnic identity?"[6] I point this out because

---

[6] This was the first question I asked to all of the multiracial interviewees.

throughout the interviews the more indicators used to communicate the direct, indirect, or absence cues helped establish the multiracial individual's dominant race within her or his SMI. Most of the multiracial individuals spent an extreme amount of time talking about stories that pointed towards one specific race, whether it be their father's or their mother's race. Although each individual expressed two or more identifications, there was always one identity that was dominant throughout all of the interviews.

For Mina, her dominant identification is her Mexican identity. This is due to the amount of indicators used to help communicate cues from her close family members to herself. Thus, the indicators assist in the facilitation process between the familial closeness and communicative cues. Therefore, the amount of indicators expressed during the communicative cues creates a level of dominance between the racial identifications of the double minority multiracial individual's SMI. It is through their stories that each multiracial individual explores her or his closeness with particular family members and the different types of communicative cues used to express her or his SMI. Throughout this chapter, I analyze the stories of each multiracial individual to show how each chooses her or his SMI in relation to the three types of communicative cues facilitated by familial closeness: direct, indirect, absence cues.

Familial Closeness

Within each interview, I was able to find a common theme throughout, familial closeness. The issues of how close family members are in relation to the multiracial individual affects the negotiation of SMI. Root (1990) theorized that there are familial influences throughout a multiracial individual's life. This is the obvious. However, what is not obvious is the more specific issue of closeness. Yes family members can influence each other's racial identity when it pertains to cultural knowledge, language, among others. Nevertheless, it is who the multiracial individual associates with and how the multiracial individual perceives that interaction that makes familial closeness unique.

Through deeper analysis of familial closeness, I found that each double minority multiracial individual receives communicative cues based upon the relationship they have with particular family members. These relationships help each multiracial individual establish their SMI based on the type of communicative cues that arise throughout her or his relationship with a given family member.

In Lita's interview, I was able to see how her closeness with her great grandparents influenced her SMI.

Lita: I would say it's [Lita's racial identity] very important. I think you

don't think [subconscious influence] daily about what you are until

an event forces you to have to think about it filling out applications

or if someone asks you, You Asian? So I guess it's important for me

to know who I am especially as, I guess, you get older you tend to

be aware of these things and, and to know that it's important. As

for me, I'm glad I know my Filipino and my Hawaiian grandmas.

The subconscious aspect of Lita's life helps her realize the importance of

her multiracial background. She justifies it by saying that she is "glad" to have

had some relationship with her grandmothers on both sides. She accepts that she

is both Hawaiian and Filipino by stating that she knows someone to link her to

those specific racial groups. This relationship between Lita and her great

grandmother communicates an *indirect cue* towards Lita's SMIs. Her Filipino and

Hawaiian identities have not always been apparent to Lita because of the process

she went through in order to recognize the importance of her background. As

she explains how an individual's racial identity is important to them, she finds

her own importance in why she links herself to the two specific racial groups. If

her grandmothers were not a part of her life, they would have not been able to

communicate their Filipino and Hawaiian heritages to Lita (absence cues). This is apparent when she speaks of her Chinese identity.

Lita: My great grandfather was a lot of Chinese and because he was older I never really [pause] he died so I don't really know about the Chinese thing but I know my Filipino ethnicity and my Hawaiian part my father's family and I think that's very important.

Lita speaks of her Chinese ancestry, as being a part of her family's life but not of her own. This separation between her ancestors and herself forces the subtraction of her Chinese identity. Thus, creating an acknowledgement of her multiraciality that partially includes her racial background. Lita acknowledges that the lack of closeness resulted in her choice to disassociate with her Chinese identity (for e.g., her lost relationship with her great grandfather because of his death). Moreover, the lack of communication between herself and her great grandfather brought a greater distance between Lita and her Chinese identity. Therefore, the distance that was produced directly influenced the amount of cues that Lita received. The *absence cues* that Lita received made it easy for her to disassociate with her Chinese identity, which resulted in her identification with only her Filipino and Hawaiian identities.

Moreover, Mina had the same issues as Lita did in regard to her Chinese

identity. Mina's great grandmother (whom she calls Nana) was a person whom

Mina could have gone to when asking about her Chinese identity. Yet, Mina

never did talk to her Nana about it. Mina explained that when her Nana came to

the United States from Mexico, she had met a Chinese man, conceived, and gave

birth to a child. Mina's grandmother (Nana's daughter) was never questioned

about being full Mexican. Since that time, no one in Mina's family every talks

about it. However, Mina did acknowledge that she knew about her Chinese

heritage because she once questioned her grandmother's physical appearance.

Upon asking questions about her grandmother's appearance, Mina's father told

her *briefly* about the incident and never talked about it again.

Mina: You can definitely tell that my grandmother was not for Mexican

           and you can look at her and you can totally tell but no ones going

           to question it. Like who's going to question your Nana. You just

           don't do it.

The non-appearance of Mina's Chinese identification has to do with how her

family had hidden her Chinese heritage. This *indirect cue* of disassociation,

resulted in Mina not identifying with her Chinese heritage. Because Mina's

family members never questioned her grandmother's race (keeping it secret),

Mina gained a sense of negativity about her Chinese identity. Mina's family

distanced the Chinese aspect of Mina's heritage from Mina because it should

have not happened[7]. Moreover, Mina's hesitancy towards her Chinese identity is

a direct result of the family's reaction of pushing away the issue. Thus, the

distance placed between Mina and her Nana created a separation between Mina

and her Chinese identity. Therefore, the *indirect cue* that was communicated

created a disassociation between Mina and her Chinese identity.

In addition, many indicators transpired from the ecological framework

within the issue of familial closeness. Such indicators were gender, parentage,

language, and education. The ways the indicators worked together with

historical remembrance suggested an ecological framework to connect them

together. In the following sections, I analyze how each communicative cue

influences a double minority multiracial individual's SMI in relation to the

indicators used.

The Indirect and Directness of Gender

Throughout Lita's stories, she expresses her close relationships with

---

[7] For example, Mina expressed that her Nana should have never had an affair with another man because she was already married.

particular family members. While talking about particular individuals, a female

closeness transpired. This type of closeness, female closeness, is best described

as a bond between Lita and another female (her 3 sisters, her mother, and her

grandmother) within her family. Throughout her life, Lita has been very close to

her siblings and mother, which is reflective in her stories. However, she is not

completely devoid of any relationship with the males in her family. She

expresses time spent with male individuals (father and grandfather) but the time

spent is considerably less when compared to the time spent with her sisters and

mother.

Lita's entire family is extremely important to her and she first shows it by

expressing her closeness with her grandmother. She states that she knew her

grandmothers on both sides of her family. However, Lita only goes into further

detail about her Filipino (maternal) grandmother. This is the first indication that

she is somehow closer to her mother's side of the family.

My older sister was raised a lot by my grandparents because my mother

was 16 when she got her, when she got my sister. So a lot of the parenting

came from my grandmother.

The parenting that Lita recalls demonstrates the influence of her grandmother's

racial background (*indirect cue*). There have been many instances where scholars

(for e.g., Harris, 2000; Root, 1990) have noted that the family is a definite influence on how an individual identifies her or himself. Harris (2000) states, "It is the responsibility of one or both of the parents to take an active role in educating their children about the cultures and survival in a society preoccupied with categorizing race, ethnicity, and culture" (Harris, 2000, p. 186). Within Lita's family, this responsibility was given to the maternal grandmother, in that Lita's sister (who had this initial bond with Lita's grandmother) may resonate some of her upbringing on to the other siblings, Lita included. This *indirect cue* gives Lita and her sisters the opportunity to know more about their Filipino heritage, thus creating Lita's selective Filipino identity.

In addition to expressing her closeness with her grandmother, Lita also explains her closeness with her mother. In order to begin talking about Lita's mother, we must follow the order in which Lita describes her parents throughout her interview. When asking about her parents, Lita immediately started to explain her father's Hawaiian identity (which we will touch on shortly). While Lita was describing her father's Hawaiianness, she came across an interesting conclusion about her father and in doing so, she was able to establish a link between her mother, herself, and her selective Filipino identity.

My father's Hawaiian but he married my mom when they were young so

he turned more Filipino than Hawaiian.

Lita's perception of her father "turning more Filipino" shows how she sees her

father's relationship with her mother. Her father had "turned more Filipino"

meaning he expressed *direct cues* of how important Lita's Filipino heritage was.

Lita's father not only accepts her mother as being Filipino but also internalizes

the identification of being Filipino.

In addition, Lita states that her father is the complete opposite of her

mother and that her relationship is more stagnant with her father than mother.

The specific reason for the constant changes in her relationship with her mother

point in the direction of gender.

Lita: So overall I think all [Lita and her siblings] of our relationships

           with my father are pretty good. My mom it ranges because we're

           all female.

Because Lita and her mother are females, Lita believes it causes both tension

(arguments and fights) and closeness (sharing of intimate stories and personal

issues) between the two of them. Although there is both tension and closeness

within their relationship, I see more of a bond between Lita and her mother than

between Lita and her father. The constant difficulties that occur within Lita's

relationship with her mother express this strong bond in order to keep such a relationship going.

When speaking of her mother, Lita has a tendency to link the experience to her sisters. This type of closeness that Lita is familiar with has been exposed to her since she was a little girl. Lita grew up in a two bedroom home, where she and her four sisters (Lita is the third child) all shared a room. She expressed several times throughout the interview, that she and her sisters did everything together. Even teachers at her school would say to Lita and her younger sister, "Oh, you are a (Lita's last name) girl." The female closeness that Lita has experienced throughout her life reflects why she selectively identifies as being Filipino. Lita's closeness with her mother and sisters has created an *indirect* Filipino association that Lita is comfortable in having. In addition, when Lita's father communicated his association with the Filipino heritage of the family Lita received additional *direct cues* of how important her Filipino heritage is. Although Lita recognizes that she has more than two racial backgrounds, she never once said that she identifies with all of them. Therefore, *the indirect and direct cues* associated with the communication between female counterparts in Lita's family helped develop her SMI, more specifically her selective Filipino identity.

Three Cues of Parentage

Similar to Lita's SMI, Mina also experienced selective monoracial identity

when confronted with the notion of family closeness. Mina identifies herself as

being both Filipino and Mexican although she does acknowledge that she is

racially Chinese too (her father is Filipino-Chinese-Mexican and her mother is

Mexican). In this section, I analyze the interviewee's stories based upon the

indicator of parentage to express their SMI in regards to the type of

communication cue each received from particular family members.

Both of Mina's parents were born and raised within the United States at a

time when individuals that spoke a foreign language were thought of as

ignorant. Mina's knowledge of such things came from her parents' stories, which

focused on the influences that Mina's grandparents had on them. Throughout

her parents' stories, Mina's parents were able to communicate *absence* and *direct*

cues that influenced Mina to selectively identify as Filipino.

By describing her father, Mina expresses a multiracial generational lineage

that begins with her Mexican-Chinese grandmother. This ladder, first built when

her great grandmother came to the United States from Mexico, has prospered

into a realm of racial mixes which fills Mina's family tree. While describing how

her father grew up, there was a large connection between Mina's father and

Mina's great grand mother, Nana. Throughout the interview, Mina expresses her closeness with her Nana in that her Nana was more like a mother to her father (although Nana is really her father's great grandmother). This familial closeness between Mina's father and her Nana establishes a connection within the family that extends from Nana to Mina highlighting her selective Filipino identity.

Mina: I never really acknowledged her [Mina's grandmother] as my grandmother I would always acknowledge my Nana as my grandmother.

When Mina talked about her Nana, she stressed her Nana's influence on her father's knowledge of his own family history. When Mina's father was younger, he lived with his twelve brothers and sisters under Nana's care. After all 13 children were born, Mina's grandmother abandoned the children. Nana did not want any type of separation between her grandchildren and decided to accept the responsibility of raising them. However, she does experience a few problems along the way. One major problem Mina talks about is a housing situation that Nana had to overcome. During this hard time, Nana was kicked out of her home and received help from her Filipino boyfriend.

Mina: He [Nana's Filipino boyfriend] and all his friends got together and

they all put in money and bought her a house, which was for sale

across the street. It was a rundown house and they helped fix it up

for her so she could live there and my great grandmother took care

of all the kids.

The majority of the parenting that Mina's father received was from Nana

providing an explanation to why Mina feels more of a grandmother connection

with her Nana. This connection brings Mina closer to her Filipino heritage thus

establishing her selective Filipino identity. In addition, Nana's Filipino boyfriend

who helped raise Mina's father and his siblings taught them Ilocano.[8] Mina,

herself, did not know her Nana's boyfriend was not her biological great

grandfather. She finally realized who Nana's boyfriend was when she listened to

the stories of how Mina's father came to the house he was raised in. Again,

through the stories told by Mina's father and grandmother *indirect cues* of

belongingness associate her with the family's Filipino heritage.

Both Mina and her father have a strong association with their Filipino

heritage. However, Mina's father's family heritage is missing an individual;

---

[8] Ilocano is not the official language of the Philippines, however it is most commonly spoken in Northwestern Luzon, La Union, and Ilocos provinces in the Philippines (Hume, 2000).

where was his father? Throughout Mina's stories, she speaks of how she found

and brought her Filipino grandfather back into her family's lives.

Mina: Everything he found out about his dad he found about from his

grandmother until like a few years ago when I found my

grandfather through writing E-mails.

For Mina, finding out about her roots from her father's family was very

important to her. She not only researched her family history but also succeeded

in finding out details about her grandfather. The importance of finding her

grandfather is made apparent by her discoveries. By uncovering a section of her

family history, she was able to educate her father about his own family heritage.

Although, Mina's grandfather passed away many years ago, she was very

excited in having found his old residence to which Mina and her family traveled

to visit.

While in Texas, Mina and her family met many of her grandfather's

friends. From the many friends that Mina's grandfather had, she and her family

found out that they had relatives in the Philippines and owned land there. By

researching and discovering where her grandfather came from and what type of

person he was, Mina recovered some of her lost family heritage. In doing so, she

educated herself as well as the rest of her family, therefore changing the

identification she had for herself[9]. This change in identification occurred in both

Mina and her father's identification with their Filipino identities because of the

communication of past and recent events. Mina's parents had told Mina (*direct*

cues) about the different family issues that arose over the years. As each story

unfolded, Mina received more and more information about her Filipino heritage.

One could say that the *absence cues* created the initial communication of the

stories, which then brought forth the *direct cues*. When this transfer of cues occur,

a multiracial individual is then able to negotiate through her or his different

identities and identify with one that she or he has never identified with before.

In Mina's case, she did not identify as being Filipino until she was told stories

about her family history. In addition, the *absence cue* brought on a sense of

longing to know more about her Filipino grandfather. Therefore, Mina received

both *direct* and *absence cues* from her close family members which resulted in her

identification with her selective Filipino identity.

Many times throughout Darian's stories, he expressed that he is a

Vietnamese/Asian American. Due to his focus on being an Asian American,

Darian is able to embrace both of his racial backgrounds at an absence level. He

---

[9] Being a multiracial individual with partial family history versus a multiracial individual who has a more complete knowledge of her family roots.

expresses that his Asian identity makes it hard to deal with his multiraciality within the United States.

Darian: There is a commonality the Vietnamese/Asian students in my age can share. But it takes talking about the experience of Asian to bridge commonality. Living in the US, as a person of color, race plays into every part of life...if it is getting accepted to college or a job interview or dealing with the supermarket checkout line...I think about myself as an Asian person. How being Asian will affect the type of situation I am in. I guess I'm too race conscious.

This feeling of being Asian and having to worry about how it will affect his everyday living reveals how Darian is struggling with his two minority races in order to fit within the US society. It is easier for Darian to concentrate on one minority aspect of his life instead of having a double minority influence to worry about. Thus, Darian links his own identification of one racial heritage to the close relationship he has with his father. Darian explained that it would have been easier for his father to give up his Cambodian identity so that Darian and his siblings could cope with their Vietnamese identity within the United States. This *indirect cue* brings forth Darian's disassociation towards his Cambodian identity. His father communicates that he does not identify as being Cambodian.

Therefore, Darian is taught that there is also no need for him to identify either. Moreover, Darian also noted that most of his mother's family lives within the United States. This leads me to believe that his mother's Vietnamese identity has more of an immediate affect on the family structure. Darian even said that "as kids we kind of make fun of the [his father's] language", thus showing even more favoritism towards the Vietnamese heritage within the family. Both of his parents did not choose to scold Darian or his sibling for laughing at the Cambodian language. This again communicates an indirect cue that the Cambodian heritage within the family is not as important. In all, Darian's experience with disassociation has limited his identity development to only one racial group. Thus, the *indirect cues* from his parents help establish Darian's selective Vietnamese identity.

When Amy was growing up she frequently stated that her parents raised her as an American. However, her parents became angry when Amy eventually became more American than Cambodian.

Amy: Oh you are trying to be like American kids. You are trying to be

               American. I remember them saying things like that.

This type of upbringing deals with the assimilation that an immigrant family must deal with within the United States. Amy's parents wanted her to hold on to

her Cambodian culture. However, she assimilated to the American ways and became a Cambodian American. Throughout Amy's stories about her upbringing within the United States, she always referred to herself as a Cambodian American. She does speak the Cambodian language and she has been living in the United States since the age of one. In this situation, Amy's parents communicated the importance of being Cambodian. Through this *direct cue,* Amy's parent's influence to identify as Cambodian help her establish and maintain her selective Cambodian identity.

In Yu Xie and Kimberly Goyette's (1997) article, *The Racial Identification of Biracial Children with One Asian Parent: Evidence from the 1990 Census,* they noted that "the assimilation perspective links the likelihood of identifying with the majority group". This is apparent in Amy's case when her parents raised her like an American. However, her identification still resides with being Cambodian, meaning that her family had communicated the Chinese identity to be the marginalized of the two. Thus, by her parents marginalizing the Chineseness within the family there is a large separation between Amy and her Chinese identity. Moreover, Amy was born outside of the country and brought here as an immigrant. Instead of learning to fit into the American culture, Amy's parents wanted to keep Amy and her sisters familiar with the Cambodian culture.

Therefore, her parents direct cues of marginalizing their family's Chinese

heritage resulted in Amy's disassociation with it.

Languages Direct & Indirect Nature

Teaching or not teaching children how to speak a language has a large

effect on whether a multiracial individual will associate with her or his racial

background. For example, Darian sees himself as being monoracially

Vietnamese American in that he would only associate with his mother's

racial/ethnic heritage. As Darian's stories unfold, I found that Darian's parents

taught him the Vietnamese language yet never taught him how to speak his

father's language (Cambodian). Through the influence of language, I analyze an

interviewee's stories to display how she or he constructs her or his SMI.

Darian: I guess since we were all really from Vietnam, although in my dad's

case his family is Cambodian-Vietnamese, my parents decided to

put the emphases on the Vietnamese part.

By placing this emphasis on the Vietnamese identity of the family, Darian's

parents marginalize the Cambodian identity of his father and of Darian.

Although Darian's father is half-Cambodian, he was forced to choose how to

educate his children culturally. The struggles of rejecting his identity set the

stage for Darian's own struggle of being Vietnamese and Cambodian. Therefore,

through communicating a disassociation towards his Cambodian heritage (language), Darian's father expressed *direct cues* to influence Darian's disassociation with his Cambodian identity.

In addition to exploring her Filipino heritage, Mina also learned about the Spanish language that coincides with her selective Mexican identity. While growing up, Mina would stay with her Mexican babysitter while her parents were working throughout the day. Because of this daytime childcare influence during Mina's childhood, she was able to learn Spanish, although her family did not speak Spanish at home.

Mina: I would speak Spanish to them all day when I was there with her. I just picked up because that was what was on the radio and on the TV.

Mina's ability to learn the Spanish language still did not change the lack of encouragement to learn either Ilocano or Spanish by her parents. Mina did point out that the main reason for this lack of encouragement was due to her parents' upbringings. Both of her parents were encouraged to speak only English, both at home and outside of the home. Both sets of Mina's grandparents thought it best for her parents *to only speak* English so that others would not look at them

differently. This would eliminate any question of whether they were American citizens.

Mina: When they [Mina's parents] were growing up they were taught you only speak English because if you spoke anything else you were considered stupid. I guess when you speak another language you are considered educated and you know your culture and all these things. But when they were growing up, if you spoke Spanish or spoke another language it was just dirty. You weren't American or something so they never bothered to learn.

This comparison of different generations shows how society and the political arena have incorporated themselves into the upbringing of an American child. Mina is fine with speaking Spanish now but when she was younger, she was afraid of being different. The largest fear Mina had was that the school would place her into an ESL class and she would be separated from her friends. Because of her fear of loosing her friends, Mina decided to stop speaking the Spanish language. Mina shared her views on education and appearance when stating, "the more educated one is the more you are seen as being well cultured". Although she stopped speaking the language, she is now trying to relearn the language again. Therefore, the *indirect cues* of selecting a babysitter created more

of a connection between Mina and her Mexican heritage thus making it easier for

Mina to identify with her selective Mexican identity.

In Rooks' (2001) article on Alaska's multiracial Asian American families,

Rooks speaks of a "generational status" that influences whether or not the Asian

language is more dominantly used at home or with friends (Rooks, 2001, p. 77).

What I became keenly aware of when listening to Mina's stories was that Mina's

family heritage goes back many generations, indicating that her family has been

in the United States for many years. This shows that a link between Mina's use

of language and her American generational status. The link is that Mina's family

has been enculturated into the American culture because Mina's family as been

in the United States for many years. Rooks' (2001) findings express that the

farther down one is in the generational ladder, the less one will speak the Asian

language in Alaska. Mina's experience is similar, yet because of her *indirect*

communication with her parents via the babysitter she has more longing to learn

both the English and Spanish languages.

Mina: When you speak another language you are considered educated

            and you know your culture and all these things.

Amy saw her parents' teachings of the Cambodian language as a way to

preserve the language and culture. Although she mentions her parents'

emphasis on her Cambodian identity, there was never any mention of preserving

Amy's Chinese culture. When I asked Amy if her nephew (who is second

generation multiracial) could speak Cambodian, she said:

Amy: My nephew in Australia can say things but he can't speak it

            fluently yet no one's really pushing on him [to learn the language].

Here again is the relationship between family closeness and language (Rooks,

2001). Because Amy is closer to her parents than her nephew is, the language is

pushed on her without any hesitation. On the other hand, her nephew who lives

in Australia is not forced to learn the Cambodian language. This is a *direct* result

of the assimilation that Amy, her parents, and her siblings had to go through

when learning about their cultural heritage in addition to learning the American

culture. Thus, Amy's parent's *direct cues* of the importance of speaking the

Cambodian language and preserving the culture resulted in Amy's identification

as a Cambodian.

Educational Directness

Lita has described her strong interests in knowing about her racial

heritage and the female closeness that influences her Filipino identity. However,

when looking at Lita's selective Hawaiian identity, Lita shares how she learned

about her Hawaiian heritage. It is through the *indirect cues* pertaining to

educational issues that Lita is able to identify with her selective Hawaiian identity with her father and grandfather.

When I started to take Asian American Studies I began educating including my father and my grandpa because they worked on the plantation...so we were reading all these books and I was giving them applause to my grandpa and father all the stuff they had to go through ... and I shared what I learned with them and that is as much as they know about anything otherwise all they are Filipino Hawaiian Chinese and Spanish and that's it they don't know any history... they don't. Basically a lot of people in Hawaii don't pay attention to that unless you're in school and your educated as well but I do think education has a lot to do with it and I think people in Hawaii do not pay attention to that, I mean... you know... as much.

Lita's experience within her Asian American Studies course expresses that she learned about most of her racial background (Lita's Filipino, Chinese, and Hawaiian heritage). However, this was not the case in that Lita only focused on her Hawaiianness when it came to this class. This is apparent in that she emphasizes the Hawaiian issues brought up within the class readings. Even when sharing what she had learned from the class, Lita states that she went to

her Hawaiian father and grandfather to discuss what she had learned. This now put her father into a strange position, in that Lita earlier stated that her father had "turned more Filipino" after marrying her mother. There is now a switch in Lita's view of her father. She no longer is talking about her father from a Filipino identity but now from a Hawaiian identity. Lita is still racially Filipino and Hawaiian however she has now chosen to identify as Hawaiian because of her cultural knowledge. Thus, her father's *direct cues* about historical roots, cultural knowledge, and educational influences communicated the importance of his Hawaiian heritage. Therefore, the communication between Lita and her father resulted in Lita's selective Hawaiian identity.

In regards to the educational issues of familial closeness, all of the interviewees were/are faced with the ongoing struggle in "developing and preserving" one's multiracial identity (Zack, 1995, p. 299).[10] Zack (1995) suggests that the only way a multiracial intellectual is able to develop and preserve her or his multiracial identity is to develop and preserve her or his intellectual identity.[11] However, she encounters a problem. As a multiracial intellectual

---

[10] I frame all interviewees as multiracial intellectuals because each is in college. In addition, each has or in the process of completing the requirements for a Bachelor's degree.
[11] The intellectual identity is formed when an individual expands her or his mental capabilities within academia (Zack, 1995).

achieves her or his goals, the struggles are not alleviated.[12] The struggles evolve

into different types of struggles and the multiracial individual is back to where

she or he started. Yes, the multiracial intellectuals may have learned how to cope

with the initial sets of struggles assigned to her or him. However, as each goal is

achieved a new set of struggles surface. For example, a multiracial intellectual

would have achieved a higher status and need to maintain her or his status with

"less peer support" (Zack, 1995, p. 299). Thus the cause/effect relationship, the

goals and struggles that change, implies that a multiracial identity is constantly

developing once a base is established. In Lita's case, she has achieved her initial

goal of completing her Bachelor's degree and still only identifies with her

Filipino and Hawaiian identities selectively. Therefore, when the influence of

cultural knowledge and educational issues appear Lita shows more identification

towards her selective Hawaiian identity.

Within a multiracial identity, overlapping can occur at any moment,

during any situation (Root, 1990). This overlapping of identity is what makes a

multiracial identity so complex. In order to see these overlapping components,

one must first look at the surface and peel off layers, one at a time. For instance,

---

[12] Such goals could be a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctoral degree, publishing an article, tenure, among others (Zack, 1995, p. 299).

first one must determine familial closeness within the family. Next, decipher the communication between family members and the multiracial individual. Then you will be able to see how close family members communicate direct, indirect, and/or absence cues towards the multiracial individual. In doing so, you find that these double minority multiracial individuals form their SMI based upon the close relationships they have with particular family members. Thus, the formation of SMI is brought about by the communication cues from each family member. However, the multiracial individual has the capacity to overcome the predetermined identity that the family lays upon them. This is possible when the individual acknowledges her or his multiraciality and selectively chooses an alternate identity. After selectively choosing an identity, the double minority individual can then stay with that identity or choose another depending on the perceived cues communicated from a particular family member. Therefore, the ability to choose is what constitutes the complexity of multiracial identity. In the next chapter, I discuss the issues of passing and being raced in relation to each interviewee's stories and experiences. I discovered that each interviewee experienced internal and external struggles while trying to establish and convey their SMIs. The struggles that derived from the transcriptions established a common theme of authenticity.

CHAPTER 4: THE ISSUES OF PASSING & BEING RACED

When a multiracial individual encounters the question "What are you?"

she or he has the choice of answering in a variety of ways: racially, ethnically,

culturally, religiously, politically, among others. This ability to negotiate

between ethnic lines of separation (whether the multiracial individual is accepted

or not) deals with the issues of passing and being raced that occur within a

multiracial individual's life. In past research (for e.g., Bradshaw, 1992; Daniel,

1992; Kich, 1992; Nakashima, 1992; Valverde, 2001; Williams, 1997) "passing" has

been a way in which multiracial individuals can find their place or locate an

area/identity that she or he feels comfortable with within society.

> Passing is the word used to describe an attempt to achieve acceptability by
>
> claiming membership in some desired group while denying other racial
>
> elements in oneself thought to be undesirable. (Bradshaw, 1992, p. 79)

Carla K. Bradshaw (1992) focuses on the internal and external struggles that a

multiracial individual experiences while passing. She explains that a multiracial

individual who tries to pass as part of the majority group is not looked upon

pleasingly. This type of resentment results from the attempt at gaining an

"unfair advantage by renouncing membership in the lower-status group"

(Bradshaw, 1992, p. 79). On the other hand, when a multiracial individual passes

for a member of a minority group she or he is seen as being impure because of

her or his multiracial heritage. Although Bradshaw makes some very good

observations of minority-majority multiracial individuals, she did not specify

how the issues of passing would reflect onto a double minority multiracial

individual's life.

Similar to Bradshaw's ideas on passing, I discovered that the issues of

passing play an influential role in a double minority multiracial individual's life.

Internally, the issues of passing fuel the struggle of how the multiracial

individual perceives her or himself in relation to other's placement of her or him.

For instance, others may see a multiracial individual as being associated with a

particular race. Thus, the multiracial individual is faced with whether she or he

will accept being part of that particular race. Externally, the struggle arises when

family members and others implement the issues of being raced onto the

multiracial individual. For instance, Amy was seen as an African American

when in Japan. She found herself questioning her physical appearance and

identification while trying to defend her Japanese identification. The

communicated reactions of the family members and/or others towards the

multiracial individual's acceptance or rejection to the racial placement create the

external struggle. The multiracial individual will need to cope with others' reactions to her or his acceptance or rejection. Moreover, the family members and/or others might not agree with the multiracial individual which resulting in a conflict arising within the relationship.

In Cynthia Nakashima's article, *An Invisible Monster: The Creation and Denial of Mixed-Race People in American,* she explores the issue of racial classification to show how others perceive the multiracial individual. She states, "choice [of where to place a multiracial individual racially] is made for the person by society based on his or her physical appearance" (Nakashima, 1992, p. 176). Although a multiracial individual may look a particular way, she or he may feel differently about her or his racial classification, thus intensifying the external struggle that is placed on the multiracial individual (Nakashima, 1992). Therefore, regardless of who is doing the assigning of racial identity (the multiracial individual, her or his family, or others) the multiracial individual will have to deal with both of the internal and external struggle associated with passing.

Although there are many internal and external struggles of passing that can contribute to a double minority multiracial individual's SMI, both can happen simultaneously (Bradshaw, 1992). For instance, a multiracial individual

may struggle in choosing which racial group(s) to identify with. This internal struggle exemplifies the different choices that a multiracial individual has when negotiating her or his identity. Such issues pertain to the dilemma of self-identification and acceptance thereof. Will the multiracial individual choose to identify with all? On the other hand, does she or he choose one race to identify with at a particular point in time? In addition, which racial identification will the multiracial individual authentically pass for? Moreover, which one does she or he *want* to be accepted into? The external struggles raise the issues of acceptance from the family members and/or others. Will the family members and/or others accept the multiracial individual or will they place the multiracial individual into a different racial category all together? George Kitahara Kich's article, *The Developmental Process of Asserting a Biracial, Bicultural Identity*, states " Passing becomes a temporary process to handle social confusion and limitations about race and identity" (Kich, 1992, p. 316). In order to alleviate confusion about the physical ambiguity that some multiracial individuals have others will be more likely to place the multiracial individual into a racial category that does not always fit. Therefore, because of the external struggle (racial classification) from others the multiracial individual is now faced with the internal struggle of accepting or rejecting the classification.

A reciprocal relationship between the internal and external struggle constitutes the complexity of a multiracial identity. The tensions between internal and external that a multiracial individual struggles with coexist (Bradshaw, 1992). Seemingly, the conflicting tensions are codependent throughout a multiracial individual's life. This helps explain why multiracial identities are always in motion, never stagnant, and never still. For that reason these particular identities are not capable of following the linear stage models presented in past research (Root, 1992a). For example, a multiracial individual may perceive her or himself as being Korean while her or his family may see the multiracial individual differently and treat her or him accordingly. This situation entails two sets of struggles for the multiracial individual: First, the internal struggle of how she or he wants to identify. Second, the external struggle of how loved ones and others perceive and communicate their racial placement onto the multiracial individual. Thus, the multiracial individual needs to establish how family members and/or others see her or his identity and either accept or reject the categories assigned. Moreover, the multiracial individual also has to deal with the family's and/or others' reactions to the choice she or he makes. Therefore, the rejection or acceptance is the internal struggle and the family members' and/or others' reaction is the external struggle.

Another way of examining the situation shows that a multiracial

individual does not have a choice in negotiating through these struggles. In

order to establish her or his identity from situation to situation the multiracial

individual will need to prove her or his identity to be accepted. Thus, if the

multiracial individual is unable to communicate that she or he is a true member

of a racial group then she or he might not be accepted into the particular racial

group. This raises the issue of authenticity: whether each interviewee perceives

her or himself or is seen by others as being genuinely part of a racial group.

Throughout the rest of the chapter, I analyze how authenticity influences a

double minority multiracial individual's negotiation through SMI. In addition, I

analyze the racial status relative to authenticity to explain how others

communicate passing and how it affects the negotiations that occur during a

double minority multiracial individual's SMI.

Authenticity

What makes a multiracial identity unique and complex is that the multiracial

individual physically appears to be associated with a particular race. However,

she or he commands the cultural understanding and knowledge of a different

racial group. A double minority multiracial individual has the ability to pass as a

member of another ethnic group just as minority-majority does (Williams, 1997).

Nevertheless, I found that others did not "authentically" accept the double

minority multiracial individuals in relation to how the double minority

multiracial perceived her or himself. This exploration of authenticity occurs in

combination with: how the multiracial individual perceives her or himself, the

family's influence, and the others' perspective of the multiracial individual's

authenticity. Halualani (2002) refers to authenticity as the " the notion of what it

means to be a true or real or native member of a group" (Halualani, 2002, p. 224).

In this regard, each double minority multiracial individual interviewed was not

perceived as being a "true or real or native" member of the group they selectively

identified with.

Furthermore, these circumstances make it extremely difficult for an

individual to perceive or know if she or he is being authentic (Weider & Pratt,

1990). Therefore, a change in how the double minority multiracial individual

selectively identifies her or himself is produced. For instance, family and others

may see a multiracial individual differently relative to the multiracial

individual's racial identity. Moreover, the multiracial individual may agree or

disagree with her or his family members and/or others. Thus, if the multiracial

individual disagrees she or he may be challenged based upon why she or he

perceives her or himself as being a true member of the group. Therefore, I will analyze the stories in regards to the physical appearance and reflectivity that is communicated towards the double minority multiracial individual.

Reflexivity & Physical Appearance of Passing

Lita: I guess I don't physically appear Hawaiian. I do usually say

Hawaiian unless somebody says, "You're Hawaiian?" and then

people say, "You're not dark?"

The "I guess" assumption that Lita makes may or may not be true. Lita's use of the word "guess", in this situation is contextual. In some instances, she perceives herself as Hawaiian and in others she does not.[13] Within this situation she second guesses her racial identity and agrees with the others. She analyzes her physical appearance in reference to how society communicates stereotypes associated with physical appearance. Lita begins comparing what others have said about her appearance in relation to how she perceives herself. This is apparent when she states, "I don't physically appear." It is interesting that she talks about physical appearance in terms of features and the way she looks,

---

[13] Again, this brings up the issues of Lita's SMI when she is negotiating through her identity. The issue of SMI is discussed in Chapter 3.

implying that she is reacting to the way others perceive her. Whereas when she speaks of her father and her Hawaiian identity she states:

Lita: To be Hawaiian is just to live the customs of living in Hawaii.

It is implied that Lita's self perception of identity is shaped by her family and others. When Lita explains what it means to be Hawaiian, she refers to things that she has learned from her family and friends while living in Hawaii. Thus, she has taken these experiences and information about Hawaiian identity and transformed them into her own. However, when others resist Lita's Hawaiian identity and question her authenticity, she displays a reflexive moment to figure out why she is being questioned about her identity.

> Our identity is affected by how others reflect ourselves back to us, what
>
> they do and don't remark on, and the content of those remarks. (Frazier,
>
> 2002, p. 36)

Sundee Tucker Frazier (2002) explains that a multiracial individual's reflexivity is provoked by how others perceive and communicate the multiracial individual's physical appearance. It is the ways in which others accept or reject a multiracial individual's appearance that makes a multiracial individual question her or his authenticity. Therefore, physical appearance and the reflexivity of identity are interactive social constructs of the society we live in. The relationship between

the social construction of identity, physical appearance, and reflexivity are influential in how Lita negotiates her selective monoracial identity (SMI). In reference to Mina's encounters with the issues of being raced, she takes it into her own hands to race her brother as having a Samoan physical appearance.

Jennifer: "Do you have any brothers or sisters?"

Mina: "Yes, I have a brother who is 27 years old. I always tell him he looks Samoan."

Again, physical appearance is seen as a social construct within Mina's response to or interpretation of her brother's physical appearance. Yet, she looks at physical appearance differently than Lita does. Mina knows that her brother is Filipino/Mexican, which is the same racial combination that she is. However, she decides to go beyond her brother's identification (which Mina says is Filipino) and chooses to include him into the Samoan racial group. Appearance is an indicator of her acceptance of her brother's identification. Mina rejected her brother's self-perceived identity. She denied her brother any identification within the Filipino racial group because of his physical appearance. Mina is not upset that her brother looks a particular way but she feels more comfortable with associating his appearance within the Samoan racial group.

Compared to Mina, others' responses to Lita's physical appearance perpetuate Lita's struggles against the social construction of physical appearance by others. Lita did not like being associated with different racial groups because she feels a strong closeness with her Hawaiian heritage (family). When she doubts herself, "I guess I don't appear Hawaiian", she shows remorse in accepting the racial classification communicated from others. Lita does not want to give up her Hawaiian identity but she does not have the physical appearance to authentically be seen as one. Thus, she communicates that she is authentically Hawaiian (i.e., she comments on how she had grown up in Hawaiian and how she has a pidgin accent). In her situation, Mina is the individual who perpetuates these types of struggle for a multiracial individual. Therefore, Mina does not incorporate any type of reflexivity within her situation. This lack in reflexivity is a direct result of the way in which she is positioning herself within the situation.

Mina did not mention her brother becoming resistant towards her claims of his physical appearance. However, when I asked her to justify her Samoan classification of her brother, she began connecting him back to her own racial background. She became reflexive.

Jennifer: "What makes him look Samoan?"

Mina: "I know he has curly hair and he got the dark skin from my

            [Filipino] dad and then he has the Filipino eyes but he looks almost

            Samoan."

Initially, Mina's use of the words "looks Samoan" established a definite

classification for her brother. However, when asked for an explanation to why

her brother "looks Samoan" she justifies that her brother received most of his

traits from their father and is now "almost Samoan". This change in Mina's

standards entails that she is following the socially constructed standards of

physical appearance and establishes a link between her brother and father's

Filipino identity. In addition, she separates her brother from being a Samoan.

This happens because Mina's brother has an association to his father's Filipino

appearance and identity (i.e., dark skin and Filipino eyes). Mina's change of how

she perceives her brother's physical appearance concludes that she is resisting

the physical appearance stereotypes that are socially constructed by others

(stereotypes of appearance). This switch in how Mina communicates physical

appearance shows that she would negotiate being raced when she is confronted

with the socially constructed ideals of physical appearance from others. When

confronted with such ideals Mina would establish a sense of reflexivity similar to

her reflexive state when justifying her bother's Samoan physical appearance.

Mina's comparison of what she knows about her brother in relation to physical

appearance establishes a context for authenticity for herself. Moreover, she

knows her brother is not authentically Samoan but could be mistaken for a one.

Mina's brother and father have similar physical features thereby making her

brother more authentically a Filipino. Therefore, Mina had changed her

classification of her brother's racial identity because of her reflexive thinking

towards appearance.

In terms of Lita's authenticity, she was surprised that she was not

accepted as being Hawaiian. There was much resentment in her voice when she

explained how others were denying her any type of Hawaiian association.

Furthermore, Lita explained how she had to demonstrate Hawaiian identity to

individuals. She would inform others that she was born and raised in Hawaii.

In addition, she would share her experiences about attending the Kamehameha

Schools in order for people to understand that she is racially Hawaiian.[14] She

acknowledges and accepts that she does not have the dark skin to be

---

[14] Lita's emphasis on her attendance within the Kamehameha Schools supplies her the evidence that she is racially Hawaiian. The Kamehameha Schools have a policy that states, " Kamehameha's policy on admissions is to give preference to children of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law" (Kamehameha Schools, 2003).

authentically Hawaiian. However, she feels that her strong pidgin accent should help other's understand that she is from Hawaii and is genuinely Hawaiian.

However, by Lita feeling angry about her disassociation of being an authentic Hawaiian there may be a huge hindrance in how she develops her identity. If she accepts it, there may be other factors involved shaping her position towards authenticity. For example, her mother, her father, and/or her sisters (all of her loved ones) may perceive her as authentic Hawaiian. This will make her Hawaiian in her mind (which is all that counts) and in the mind of all those important to her. Again, Lita may not look authentically Hawaiian but she may act, think, and feel it in her mind. The difference between the two depends on the context of the situation. In this case, Lita may not appear authentic to people who do not know her or are not of Hawaiian decent themselves. In addition, she may not appear authentic to the individuals that have never spoken with her before. However, individuals who are close to Lita (that may not think she physically looks Hawaiian) know through conversation and interaction that she identifies as a true Hawaiian. The point is that Lita does not have to physically appear Hawaiian to be Hawaiian. By speaking pidgin (language), knowing the culture (cultural knowledge), and having a Hawaiian parent (generational and historical) Lita is able to express her Hawaiian identity to both

her family members and others. In Lita's mind, there is a picture of what a Hawaiian individual should act and look like.

Throughout her interview, Lita perceives herself as Hawaiian. She justified her Hawaiian identity by clarifying that she has a Hawaiian father and friends and is knowledgeable about the Hawaiian culture and history. In addition and most importantly, she talked about how the issues of not being able to pass as an authentic Hawaiian had an effect on how she perceives herself. Therefore, a combination of what she has learned during her upbringing from her family members and others have influenced her perceptions of what it means to be a true Hawaiian.

Similarly, Raye struggled with physical appearance. She knew that she did not fit the physical appearance standards that others had of Japanese individuals. However, she was still shocked and upset by the way individuals passed her off as being African American.

Raye: They [Japanese individuals in Japan] thought I was like black! They did not know what I was because like my body is not like Japanese. Well my eyes but everything else about me is just like different.

Raye accepts that she is physically different. However, she questions why they did not notice that she is half Japanese. She gives credit to her "eyes" and believes she should have been perceived as having some Japanese heritage. However, Raye does contradict herself when she justifies why the Japanese individuals see her as being African American. She explains that she does not follow the socially constructed image of a Japanese female. In doing this, Raye accepts the social construction of physical appearance. She knows that she can not physically pass for being Japanese and expresses it by stating "everything about me is just like different." Therefore, Raye realizes she must accept that she is not a physical representation of society's image of a Japanese woman. She still finds a way to prove her authenticity towards being a Japanese-Hawaiian multiracial individual.

Moreover, the tone in her voice and frustration on her face communicates that Raye is very uncomfortable with being seen as an African American. When I approached Amy with the question, "Do you associate with many African Americans?" she fumbled with the answer. There was no mention of any African American friends. More so, she changed the conversation to focus on her boyfriend (Raye's boyfriend is racially White). From this obscure way of answering and changing the focus of the question, Raye considers the African

American group to be an out-group.[15] This results in her resistance and anger

toward her African American classification.

Lita, Mina, and Raye's stories expressed how the issues of passing and

being raced are communicated towards their multiraciality. The internal and

external struggles that surface through their experiences show that physical

appearance and reflexivity help in their negotiation of each of their selective

monoracial identities (SMI). Therefore, in order to cope with the ideals of family

members and others a multiracial individual must incorporate reflexivity

throughout the negotiating process of SMI to keep both internal and external

struggles at bay.

Racial Status

"By passing, multiracial individuals can make radical shifts in their racial

positionality" (Williams, 1997, p. 62). Williams (1997) describes how passing can

be used to benefit the racial status of the multiracial individual. However, what

if the multiracial individual's ability to pass for a particular racial group was

communicated and decided by a family member and/or by others? When this

type of situation transpires a multiracial individual may become affiliated with a

---

[15] Myron Lustig and Jolene Koester (1999) state that in-groups are the groups you are accepted
and associated with versus the out-groups that deny acceptance and you are not associated with.

group that has a lower racial status. On the other hand, she or he might be placed into a group where the benefits surpass those of the initial group that the multiracial individual was a part of. Thus depending on the context of the situation a multiracial individual may need to choose whether she or he will accept the current placement of her or his racial identity. Therefore, a double minority multiracial individual is faced with the struggles of whether she or he is capable of passing for a higher racial status (Williams, 1997).

When analyzing each of the interviewee's stories, I found that the double minority status of the individual is not completely void of oppression. The double minority multiracial individual encounters oppression from both minority and majority racial groups. Being a Vietnamese-White multiracial individual I am able to pass for being White (the majority). This may help alleviate any racial oppression I encounter from another White individual. However, a double minority multiracial individual could move "from one minority status to a more acceptable minority status in order to raise her or his prestige" (Williams, 1997, p. 62) but never be completely void of the oppression. Having a double minority status allows for an increase in power when passing between minority groups. For example, a multiracial Vietnamese-Japanese individual may experience an increase in power when passing for a monoracial

Japanese individual in Japan. Likewise passing for a monoracial Vietnamese

individual in Vietnam may increase her or his power. The increase in power is

determined by the double minority multiracial individual's ability to pass.

However, if a double minority multiracial individual were placed into the same

situation, historically she or he would receive some degree of racial oppression

from a majority individual. Nevertheless, there is an increase in racial status

depending on how large the status difference is between the minority

backgrounds of the multiracial individual (Williams, 1997).

Within Minelle Mahtani and April Moreno's (2001) article, *Same Difference:*

Towards a More Unified Discourse in 'Mixed Race' Theory, the issues of passing are

explored in regards to double minority status. Mahtani and Moreno share their

own double minority experiences in order to establish the difference between

double minority and minority-majority multiracial individuals. Mahtani states,

"I was always seen as an outsider at family gatherings" (Mahtani & Moreno,

2001, p. 68). This type of rejection that Mahtani experienced perpetuates both the

internal and external struggles in terms of oppression within the family.

Mahtani struggles (internally) to cope with identifying as South Asian and

Iranian around her loved ones.

The struggle of wanting/needing acceptance by your loved ones generates an enormous amount of give and take on the part of the multiracial individual. Mahtani can both internally accept her multiraciality and identify with it while being rejected by particular family members or she can appease some of her family members by only identifying as one of her racial backgrounds. Regardless of the direction, the road that Mahtani decides to take creates more struggles later. If she chooses to identify with only one of her racial backgrounds, which one will she choose? Moreover, will she authentically pass for a member of that racial group? In addition, she will be faced with whether all of her family members will accept her choice of identification. Therefore, the issues of authenticity and acceptance intertwine themselves throughout the internal and external components of passing.

For Darian, identifying as an Asian American was never an issue of acceptance because he has given himself no choice. He said he has the physical appearance of an Asian American but still expresses external struggles of being a minority.

Darian: My skin, face, hair, says that I am Asian. My Asianess, the way I look to others stays the same no matter where I go.

Darian states nothing about how he feels about how he looks. He only refers to how others perceive his physical appearance. By acknowledging that his physical appearance will "stay the same", he conforms to the socially constructed view of physical appearance. Darian never went against the grain of how others perceived him because he agrees that this is true. That others will see him in only one way (as an Asian) and regardless if he is Vietnamese and/or Cambodian; he would rather agree with others than be cast off as being something else.

Mahtani and Moreno (2001) explain the issue of how whiteness affects how double minority individuals are accepted. If Darian was half White his level of struggling and/or oppression would be different in comparison to a double minority multiracial individual. However, Darian would not be completely free of any struggles and/or oppression. Darian would have different types of struggles to deal with. For example, a minority-White multiracial individual would still have the chance of being accepted into the White racial group. Yet, for a double minority multiracial individual like Darian, the glimpse of inclusion into the White racial group is not visible. He knows that people will perceive him as an Asian American. In addition, he knows that his family will identify him as an Asian American while he identifies racially as a Vietnamese American.

Within most of these situations that deal with the socially constructed issue of physical appearance, multiracial individuals are expected to fit into a particular racial group or be rejected (Nakashima, 1992). In order to be accepted, Darian knows that based upon the particular situation he will have to act accordingly regardless of how he is identified by others and/or by himself.

Darian: How I am treated by others varies where I go. For example, when I was in Nebraska, I felt that others see me as a foreigner. When I am in the Bay Area, I feel at home.

Darian perceives the Bay Area as an area that is full of "faces from all over the world" which makes it easier for him to be accepted. This feeling of acceptance helps Darian express his Vietnamese identity. However, when these feelings fade Darian's identity converts back to the pan-ethnic term Asian because it is easier for him to communicate. Others are prone to classifying a double minority multiracial individual as having minority status excluding them completely from the majority arena (Mahtani & Moreno, 2001). Therefore, in order for Darian to be placed into the highest racial status possible (in regards to the majority group) he accepts the ways in which he is raced by others and incorporates it as his own identity.

While interviewing Amy, she expresses her views on being passed by others as Asian. Similar to how Darian coped with the issue of passing for higher racial status, Amy decides to accept the general classification along the lines of her being racially from two Asian backgrounds.

Amy: Most of time, they think of you as Asian and then you're just one thing even if you are two different types of Asian ethnicity.

She does not agree with the general classification of Asian racially being from "two different types of Asian ethnicity." However, she allows for more of an acceptance of the term. This acceptance includes Amy into the higher racial classification of Asian while expressing her two separate racial backgrounds. Regardless of the fact that she is racially Cambodian-Chinese, Amy understands that being "two different types" does not constitute the communication of the general term that others use to express her identity. Therefore, she accepts the Asian term in order to achieve a higher racial status while expressing her SMI.

When dealing with the issue of passing, the ways in which others communicate the double minority multiracial individual's physical appearance influences the construction of double minority multiracial identity. This communication by others incorporates the issue of authenticity and racial status. Authenticity, in regards to each interviewee, incorporates a reflexive component

where the double minority multiracial individual is able to digest how others

classify them. In addition, she or he is able to communicate her or his acceptance

or rejection of the racial classification back to the others. However, the issue of

racial status and exclusion from the majority groups brings forth a stronger sense

of identity negotiation towards the double minority multiracial individual.

Therefore, it is a state of mind that is communicated to the double minority

multiracial individuals in turn creating a deeper level of negotiation through

their selective monoracial identities (SMI). In the next chapter, I discuss the

modifications needed, limitations, and implications that have transpired from

double minority multiracial Asian American identity construction.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Inclusion of The Invisible Minority

After analyzing the interviews, I found a difference between double minority and minority-majority multiracial identity development. The selective monoracial identities (SMI) that each double minority associated with takes over the "identification of both racial groups" resolution within Root's (1992a) schematic metamodel. In addition, I discovered that the familial influence of Root's (1990) schematic metamodel is more complex than she had perceived. I found that many of the double minority multiracial individuals interviewed have an increased amount of familial influence in their SMI. Moreover, the influence on their internal and external struggle came partially from their families. However, Root places the family as an outside influence instead of a resolution to a multiracial individual's identity. Thus, a modification to Root's schematic metamodel needs to include SMI in addition to a resolution that incorporates the familial perspective on the development of a double minority multiracial identity.

I understand that Root constructed her schematic metamodel to include biracial individuals. However, most of the multiracial individuals that I

interviewed have more than two racial backgrounds. Therefore, adjustment in

Root's schematic metamodel is apparent for two reasons: First, to include double

minority multiracial individuals who have selective monoracial identities (SMI);

second, to expand on the familial influence in regards to familial closeness and

communicative cues.

SMI

There was no multiracial identification for any of the double minority

multiracial individuals I interviewed. Each double minority multiracial

individual acknowledges that they have more than one racial heritage when

asked, "What is your racial identity?" For instance, Mina said she is, "Mexican,

Filipino, and Chinese." However, after the multiracial individual stated her or

his racial makeup she or he began explaining which racial groups she or he

identifies with during different situations. This is where I conceptualized each

multiracial individual's SMI. Depending on the ecological influences and the

context of the situation each multiracial individual chooses a particular racial

group to identify with. Similar to Root's "identification of a single racial group"

resolution each multiracial individual negotiated through their racial identities

one at a time. For example, Raye identifies as Japanese in a particular situation

and Hawaiian in the next. She selectively chooses her identity based upon the situation that arises. This is the same for all of the double minority multiracial individuals I interviewed.

What makes SMI different from Root's schematic metamodel is SMI takes over the "identification of both (all) racial groups" resolution. The "identification of both racial groups" resolution does not fit the SMI that each double minority multiracial individual has. Each double minority multiracial individual does not identity as all racial groups simultaneously. Instead, they identify with each one individually. Therefore, the first adjustment to the schematic model needs to be the inclusion of SMI. The multiracial individual is able to negotiate through her or his different SMIs while acknowledging that she or he is racially mixed.

Familial Communicative Cues

During Root's (1990) explanation of the schematic metamodel social, familial, and political systems were the surrounding influences that determine how the multiracial individual develops identity. Although Root expresses that these surrounding influences are equal in influential ability, she contradicts herself when stating:

The family environment is critical in helping the child and teenager to

understand their heritage and value both races. (Root, 1990, p. 191)

After explaining how critical family is to a multiracial individual's identity, Root

decides to include only society's influence within her four resolutions for biracial

identity development. I believe that if the family has an influence on one's

multiracial identity development (with what I found and discussed in Chapter 3)

there should be a familial resolution to that identity. The familial influence

would concentrate on the communicative patterns of particular family members.

Depending on the close relationship between the double minority multiracial

individual and certain family members, communicative cues (direct, indirect,

absence) influence the multiracial individuals SMI. In addition, both the internal

and external struggles the double minority multiracial individual experiences

could happen simultaneously (see chapter 4). However, the participants that

play an essential role in facilitating the struggle are the family members and

others. Root covers the others' participation in the "acceptance of the identity

society assigns" resolution. However, family members are just as influential to

the development of the interviewees' SMI than others if not more so. Thus,

adjusting the schematic model by adding an additional resolution to express the

influence that familial closeness has on a double minority multiracial individual.

Therefore, acceptance of familial influences shapes the racial identification of double minority multiracial individual.

A Visual Represention of Multiracial Identity Development

The following visual representation is based on Root's schematic metamodel with the incorporation of SMI and the communicative patterns of close family members. This visual representation is not stagnant. The constant motion allows the multiracial individual to incorporate her or his day to day experiences into the development of her or his identity. In addition, the family and others' influence on a double minority multiracial individual's SMI is included. The ability to negotiate through different identifications lie within the extended circle. Throughout the extended circle, the ecological indicators (authenticity, age, cultural acceptance, cultural association, cultural knowledge, gender, generation, family, history, language, physical appearance, politics, and society) maneuver throughout each of the identifications (small circles). A multiracial individual can accept or reject a particular identification depending on the situation that is influenced by any of the given ecological influences. The visual representation includes the "identification of all racial groups" resolution (i.e., mixed identity) because of past research on multiracial identity. In general,

some multiracial individuals have identified as being multiracial (Root, 1992a).

However, I must incorporate the SMI resolution to allow the visual

representation to include both double minority and minority-majority multiracial
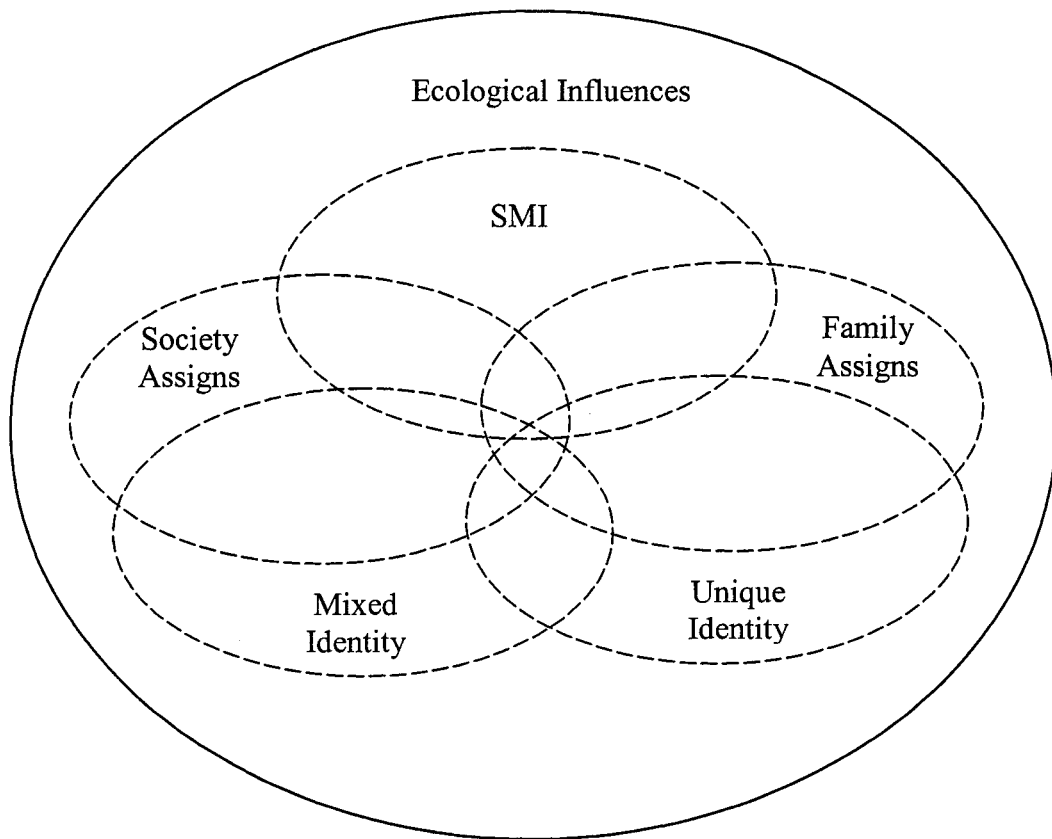
individuals. Therefore, the ability to negotiate between racial identifications

depends on the ecological influences that are effecting the identity development

in addition to how the multiracial individual identifies her or himself.

Limitations

I am a multiracial individual. However, I am racially different from my

interviewees within this study. All five of the interviewees were double minority

multiracial individuals, which is different from my majority-minority multiracial

background. Being part of the minority in addition to being able to pass as a

White woman brings different issues to this research study. In my experience, I

have been able to be the majority while understanding and experiencing what

being the minority is like (for an Asian American). This example of passing from

the majority to the minority is something that does not happen to a double

minority multiracial individual. However, I feel that being a minority-majority

multiracial intellectual might force my own multiracial views upon the

interviewees. I have a vested interest when it comes to multiracial research. I

have read the literature on the topic and conclude that multiracial individuals

have been marginalized. Thus, when I approach a fellow multiracial individual I

push my vested interest onto her or his views of multiraciality.

This type of influence became visible after my interview with Amy. Amy

states that she never realized she was Chinese until after our interviewing

session. I shaped her SMI to include her Cambodian identity in addition to her

newfound Chinese identity. Did I push her to identify with her Chinese identity

or did I help her realize that she has two racial backgrounds? Amy did not identify as both of her Asian heritages until I influenced her to change her identification.

In addition, I found it extremely difficult to understand the true double minority standing because of my own minority-majority multiraciality. Thus, my influence as a minority-majority multiracial intellectual had an effect on the type of data I received. Therefore, I will discuss the possible limitations brought about from my own multiraciality.

My Multiracial Influence

Root (1992a) states only multiracial individuals should conduct multiracial research. However, what happens if the multiracial researcher is a majority-minority multiracial and the participants are double minority among other possibilities? This question covers an important issue when dealing with my research on multiracial identity construction. When talking about multiracial research in general (consisting of all multiracial mixes) then yes there *could* be a multiracial researcher conducting the research. However, I disagree with Root (1992a) that *only* multiracial individuals can understand the experiences of other multiracial individuals. Thus, I question whether a minority-majority multiracial individual can fully understand the issues that arise within a double minority

multiracial individual's life. In addition, how will the double minority

multiracial individual perceive a minority-majority multiracial and will this

effect the interviewing relationship?

Within my interview with Mina, I saw a definite difference in how she

expresses her double minority identity when compared to my majority-minority

identity. Mina never referred to herself as being multiracial, mixed, biracial,

hapa, or any other name associated with a multiracial individual. She either said

she was Filipino or Mexican. When she referred to me during the interview, she

often placed me as being Vietnamese. This continued to happen throughout my

interviews with Darian and Amy. I felt that they were more comfortable in

thinking of me as a minority than a majority individual. I did not mind this

classification. However, I corrected their interpretation of my identity by stating,

"Well my mother is Vietnamese but my father is White." This biracial placement

could have affected the level of personal information they were willing to

disclose. Lita often referred to me as being a hapa-haole, being half White. I

again wonder how does my majority status influence Lita's or anyone else's level

of disclosure? In addition, by separating my racial background into parental

categories I influenced them to do the same. Lita recognized me as being

multiracial but was that because I mentioned that I was half White?

All of the interviews conducted were with multiracial individuals whom I had known through mutual friends. The interviewees did not know me personally but did know my name and school affiliation from their friends. It was through their friends that I was able to attain the interview by personal referral. Each interviewee might have known I would identify as being a multiracial Asian American. In addition, I found that each interviewee focused in on my Whiteness. For example, when Lita spoke about the haole[16] individuals in Hawaii, I always felt a sense of her trying to connect to me. It was almost as if I could never understand how she perceived haole individuals because I am part haole. At this point, I felt a disconnection from Lita and her experiences. I felt different from her and that I would not be able to fully understand how it is to be a double minority. Although I am multiracial, I still found it difficult to generalize their experiences because I am not a double minority multiracial individual.

Methodology

In regards to the methodology of the research, I found there were specific limitations that occurred. Although Root (1992a) mentions that the smaller the sample size the more depth will come from the data, I found that regardless the

---

[16] Haole is defined as White, American, Englishman, or Caucasian (Halualani, 2002).

number of individuals I had researched I could only go so far into their personal stories. In addition, I had an extremely hard time with finding multiracial individual willing to participate. Thus, I had more female participants, participants who were all college students and participants with similar racial heritages.

When recruiting for interviewees I found myself running in circles. Although it is hard to distinguish who is a multiracial individual (Root, 1992a) I was able to find a select few who were willing to participate. However, I did not find anyone who was of African American descent. This was surprising because I personally know quite a few minority-majority multiracial African American individuals. Nevertheless, when I was recruiting interviewees (using the snowball technique/ word of mouth) I found that the double minority individuals who were willing to participate did not know anyone who was double minority and of African American descent. This suggests many of the multiracial individuals asked to participate did not associate themselves with other multiracial individuals. Moreover, many minority groups were not included because of the lack of participation. Such groups are Laotian, Asian Indian, Portuguese, Native American, and Middle Eastern just to name a few thereby limiting the validity of data received. In addition to a lack of racial

diversity, I found myself interviewing multiracial individuals who were mostly

female college students. Darian was the only interviewee who exposed a male

perspective on the issue of multiraciality. Thus, my analysis of the interviews

focuses towards a female oriented perspective. In addition, all of the

interviewees were multiracial intellectuals. Two of the five had received a

Bachelor's degree while the remaining three are in the process of completing

their Bachelor's degree. Therefore, the affects of having a small male perspective

and a large multiracial intellectual perspective could have skewed the type of

information I received from the interviews.

Implications & Future Research

Root (1990) found that minority-majority multiracial individuals might

identify as multiracial, all, or one of her or his racial backgrounds. However, I

found there to be no correlation between the double minority multiracial

individuals interviewed and multiracial identification. This suggests that not

every double minority multiracial individual is alike and there is a selective way

in which each individual identifies (SMI). Shedding new light on the identity

development of double minority multiracial individuals helps better the

understanding of how complex multiracial identity is and how it is

communicated throughout each situation. By finding a difference in how a double minority multiracial individual develops her or his identity in comparison to minority-majority indicates the need for more in-depth analysis of all multiracial combinations. Does every double minority multiracial individual have a selective monoracial identity? Can minority-majority multiracial fit into the notion of SMI? Do particular minority-majority multiracial individuals partake in selectively identifying between their racial backgrounds? These are a just a few of the questions that can be looked at in future research

Since the issue of multiracial identity reached the attention of many scholars, much of the preliminary research has been conducted thereby suggesting that the notion of multiraciality has reached a crossroads. The three avenues in which future research should concentrate on are the individualistic, feministic, and critical perspectives of multiraciality. Through an intersectional approach, the three perspectives allow future studies to concentrate on how gender, power, history, and the individuality of the individual contribute to the identity development of a multiracial individual. By such examination, one may find new ways of seeing how the historical, political, and social aspects of our society affect the ways a multiracial individual communicates her or his identity.

Overall, I foresee the realm of multiracial identity becoming more complex as the concepts of race and multiraciality evolve within our society. According to the US Census Bureau (Jones & Smith, 2001) there is 6.8 million multiracial individuals reported within the United States. This number is continuously growing because of the high degree of interracial marriages within the United States (Root, 2001b). For this reason, research on multiraciality will never fade but instead become more complex with each passing day. The more research conducted on multiraciality the better because the more we understand how multiracial individuals bridge the gap between racial identifications the more we will be able to understand our own experiences with other racial groups. Therefore, the research on multiraciality is far from over and needs to continue.

REFERENCES

Asian-Nation (2002a). *The landscape of Asian America: Interracial dating &*
marriages. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from http://www.asian-
nation.org/issues3.html.

Asian-Nation (2002b). *The landscape of Asian America: The demographics of Asian*
America. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from http://www.asian-
nation.org/history4.html.

Atkinson, D. R., Morten, G., & Sue, D. W. (1993). *Counseling American minorities:*
A cross-cultural perspective. Dubuque, IA: Brown.

Babbie, E. (2001). *The practice of social research.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomas
Learning.

Barnes, J. S., & Bennett, C.E. (2002). *The Asian population 2000: Census 2000 brief.*
Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Bradshaw, C. K. (1992). Beauty and the beast: On racial ambiguity. .In M. P. P.
Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in American* (pp. 77-88). Newbury Park,
CA: Sage.

Christian, M. (2000). *Multiracial identity: An international perspective.* New York,
NY: St. Martin's Press, LLC.

Collier, M. J. (1996). Communication competence problematics in ethnic
friendships. *Communication Monographs, 63,* 314-336.

Collier, M. J. (1998). Researching cultural identity: Reconciling interpretive and postcolonial perspectives. In D. Tanno & A. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Communication and identity across cultures* (pp. 122-147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Collier, M. J., Hedger, R. S., Lee, W., Nakayama, T. K., & Yep, G. A. (2001). Dialogue on the edges: Ferment in communication and culture. In M. J. Collier (Ed.), *International and intercultural communication annual*: Vol. 24. *Transforming communication about culture: Critical new directions* (pp. 221-248). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Collier, M. J., & Thomas, M. (1989). Cultural identity in intercultural communication: An interpretive perspective. In Y.Y. Kim & W.B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *International and Intercultural communication annual*: Vol. 12. *Theories in Intercultural Communication* (pp. 99-120). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross, W. (1995). The psychology of nigrescence: Revising the Cross model. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Daniel, G. R. (1992). Passers and pluralists: Subverting the racial divide. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in American* (pp. 91-107). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Eisenberg, E. M. (2001). Building a mystery: Toward a new theory of communication and identity. *Journal of Communication, 51*, 534-552.

Frazier, S. T. (2002). *Check all that apply: Finding wholeness as a multiracial person.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

122

Grove, K. J. (1991). Identity development in interracial, Asian/White late adolescents: Must it be so problematic. *Journal of Youth Adolescence, 20,* 617-628.

Guzman, B. (2001) *The Hispanic population 2000: Census 2000 brief.* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Hall, C. (1980). *The ethnic identity of racially mixed people: A study of Black-Japanese.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Hall, R. (2001). Identity development across the lifespan: A biracial model. *The Social Science Journal, 38,* 119-123.

Halualani, R. T. (2001). *In the name of Hawaiians: Native identities & cultural politics.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Halualani, R. T. (2002). Connecting Hawaiians: The politics of authenticity in the Hawaiian diaspora. In M. J. Collier (Ed.), *International and intercultural communication annual*: Vol. 25. *Intercultural alliances: Critical transformation* (pp. 221-248). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Harris, T. M. (2000). I know it was the blood: Defining the biracial self in a Euro-American society. In A. Gonzalez & M. Houston & V. Chen (Eds.), *Our voices: Essays in culture, ethnicity, and communication* (pp. 184-189). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company

Haug, S. W. (1998). Ethnicity and ethnically "mixed" identity in Belize: A study of primary school-age children. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 29.* 44-67.

Helms, J. E. (1995). An update of Helms' White and people of color racial identity models. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling* (pp. 181-198). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hecht, M. L. (1993). 2002 - a research ossyssey: Toward the development of a communication theory of identity. *Communication Monographs, 60*, 76-82.

Hume, E. (2000). *Metathesis.* Retrieved April 9, 2003, from http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~ehume/metathesis

Iijima Hall, C. C., & Cooke Turner, T. I. (2001). The diversity of biracial individuals: Asian-White and Asian-minority biracial identity. In T. Williams-Leon & C. L. Nakashima (Eds.), *The sum of our parts: Mixed-heritage Asian Americans* (pp. 81-92). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Jacobs, J. H. (1992). Identity development in Biracial Children. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in American* (pp. 190-206). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Jones, N.A., & Smith, A.S. (2001). *The two or more races population: 2000.* Washington, DC: US Department of Commerce.

Kamehameha Schools. (2003). *Kamehameha schools admissions office.* Retrieved April 9, 2003, from http://www.ksbe.edu/services/admissions/mainpage.html

Kich, G.T. (1992). The development process of assering a biracial bicultural identity. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in American* (pp. 304-317). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kimoto, D. M. (2000). Being hapa: The choice for cultural empowerment. In A. Gonzalez & M. Houston & V. Chen (Eds.), *Our voices: Essays in culture, ethnicity, and communication* (pp. 184-189). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company

Lindloff, T. R. (1995). *Qualitative communication research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (1999). Cultural patterns and communication: Foundations. In *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Mahtani, M., & Moreno, A. (2001). Same difference: Towards a more unified discourse in mixed race theory. In D. Parker & M. Song (Eds.), *Rethinking mixed race* (pp. 65-75). Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press.

McKinnon, J. (2001) *The Black population 2000: Census 2000 brief.* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Miller, R. L. (1992). The human ecology of multiracial identity. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in America* (pp. 24-36). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Minato, R., & Bustillo-Hutchins, M. R. (2002). *Korean Americans.* Retrieved April 29, 2002, from http://www.capaa.wa.gov/koreanamericans.html.

Mish, F. C., Morse, J. M., Gilman, E. W., Novak, M. L., Copeland, R. D., Lowe, J. G. et al (1999). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary* (10th ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

Nakashima, C. L. (1992). An invisible monster: The creation and denial of mixed-race people in American. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in American* (pp. 162-178). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Nash, P. (1992). Multicultural identity and the death of stereotypes. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in American* (pp. 330-332). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of Research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108,* 499-514.

Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 7,* 499-514.

Ponterotto, J. G., & Casas, J. M. (1991). Racial/ethnic minority populations: definition and descriptive profiles. In *Handbook of racial/ethnic minority counseling research* (pp. 9-20). Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.

Ponterotto, J. G., & Pedersen, P. B. (1993). Minority identity development. In J. G. Ponterotto & P. B. Pedersen (Eds.), *Preventing prejudice* (pp. 39-62). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Oka, J. M. (1994). *Self-concept and parental values: Influences on the ethnic identity development of biracial children.* Unpublished master's thesis, San Jose State University, California.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formations in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Rooks, C. T. (2001). Alaska's multiracial Asian American families: Not just at the margins. In T. Williams-Leon & C. L. Nakashima (Eds.), *The sum of our parts: Mixed-heritage Asian Americans* (pp. 71-79). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Root, M. P. P. (1990). Resolving "other" status: Identity development of biracial individuals. In L. S. Brown & M. P. P. Root (Eds.), *Diversity and complexity in feminist therapy* (pp. 185-205). New York: The Haworth Press.

Root, M. P. P. (1992a). Back to the drawing board: Methodological issues in research on multiracial people. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in America* (pp. 181-189). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Root, M. P. P. (1992b). Within, between, and beyond race. In Root, M.P.P. (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in America* (pp. 3-11). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Root, M. P. P. (1997). Multiracial Asians: models of ethnic identity. *Amerasia Journal, 23,* 29-41.

Root, M. P. P. (2001a). Factors influencing the variation in racial and ethnic identity of mixed-heritage persons of Asian ancestry. In T. Williams-Leon & C. L. Nakashima (Eds.), *The sum of our parts: Mixed-heritage Asian Americans* (pp. 61-70). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Root, M. P. P (2001b). *Love's revolution: Interracial marriages.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (1998). *Learning in the field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Spickard, P. R. (1997). What must I be: Asian Americans and the question of multiethnic identity. *Amerasian Journal, 23*, 43-60.

Spencer, M. S., Icard, L. D., Harachi, T. W., Catalano, R. F., & Oxford, M. (2000). Ethnic identity among monoracial and multiracial early adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 20,4*, 365-387.

Stephan, C. W. (1992). Mixed-heritage individuals: Ethnic identity and trait characteristics. In M. P. P Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in America* (pp. 50-63). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Valverde, K. C. (1992). From dust to gold: The Vietnamese Amerasian experience. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in America* (pp. 144-161). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Valverde, K. L. C. (2001). Doing the mixed-race dance: Negotiating social spaces within the multiracial Vietnamese American class typology. In T. Williams-Leon & C. L. Nakashima (Eds.), *The sum of our parts: Mixed-heritage Asian Americans* (pp. 131-144). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Van Tuyl, L.Y. (2001). The racial politics of being Dogla and of "Asian" descent in suriname. In T. Williams-Leon & C. L. Nakashima (Eds.), *The sum of our parts: Mixed-heritage Asian Americans* (pp. 217-230). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Weider, D. L., & Pratt, S. (1990). On being a recognizable Indian among Indians. In D. Carbaugh (Ed.), *Cultural communication and intercultural contact* (pp. 45-64). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Williams, T. K. (1997). Race-ing and being raced: The critical interrogation of passing. *Amerasia Journal, 23*, 61-65.

Williams, T. K. (1992). Prism lives: Identity of binational Amerasians. In M. P. P. Root (Ed.), *Racially mixed people in America* (pp. 280-303). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Willians-Leon, T. (2001). The convergence of passing zones: Multiracial gays, lesbians, and bisexuals of Asian descent. In T. Williams-Leon & C. L. Nakashima (Eds.), *The sum of our parts: Mixed-heritage Asian Americans* (pp. 145-162). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Yeh, C. J., & Huang, K. (1996). The collectivistic nature of ethnic identity development among Asian-American college students. *Adolescence, 31*, 645-661.

Zack, N. (2001). Different forms of mixed race: Microdiversity and destabilization. In C. Stokes, T. Melendez, & G. Rhodes-Reed (Eds.), *Race in 21st century America* (pp.49-58). East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan University Press.

Zack, N. (1995). Life after race. In N. Zack (Ed.), *American mixed race* (pp. 297-307). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.