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Lived Experiences of Belonging to Multiple Nationalities

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BELONGING TO
MULTIPLE NATIONALITIES

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Annette Susanne Peters

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Applied Psychological Counselor Education
Counseling Psychology

August 2015

This Dissertation by: Annette Susanne Peters

Entitled: *Lived Experiences of Belonging to Multiple Nationalities*

Has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in Department of Applied Psychology and
Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals who identify with multiple nationalities. As this world becomes increasingly global and more and more individuals migrate, it is becoming increasingly common for individuals to identify with more than one nationality. This is an important area for counseling psychologists and mental health professionals to be aware of in order to gain an understanding of those who identify with multiple nationalities, which will be helpful in providing more effective treatment. A phenomenological research design was utilized in this study. Ten participants (age range = 25 to 46, $\bar{x} = 30.1$) were recruited who identified with more than one nationality and interviewed. Saturation was reached after seven participants, with three additional participants already recruited completing interviews to strengthen the findings. Several themes emerged that described participants' experiences belonging to multiple nationalities in the context of intersectionality including: (a) process of identifying with multiple nationalities; (b) intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities; (c) reactions of others; (d) cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity; (e) similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities; (f) feeling connected or disconnected through language; (g) where is home, and do I belong?; (h)

professional identities; and (i) importance of food. Participants provided recommendations for mental health professionals and counseling psychologists when working with individuals who identify with multiple nationalities. Theoretical and research implications are discussed. Clinical implications are also provided and include information to help counseling psychologists better understand what it is like to identify with multiple nationalities, such as the advantages (e.g., cultural intelligence) and difficulties experienced (e.g., reactions of others).

Keywords: Identity, intersectionality, phenomenology, nationality

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

In the field of counseling psychology, there has been an emphasis on the importance of striving towards becoming a multicultural competent psychologist and a social advocate. This is important as our world becomes increasingly global and we encounter clients with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. As the American Psychological Association (APA) Multicultural Guidelines (2003) indicate, it is important that we develop an awareness of multicultural sensitivity and build knowledge and understanding about individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. It is our role to provide culturally responsive counseling. Through this phenomenological study, I explored the lived experiences of individuals who identify with more than one nationality. Nationality is an important concept to consider as international boundaries soften, resulting in a growing number of international students being educated in the United States (U.S.) and mental health professionals being more likely to provide services in the U.S. and abroad (Platt & Laszloffy, 2013). As the mental health field grows more international and global, it is vital to consider nationality, in particular national identity, and international issues. When utilizing a global perspective, it requires us to look “beyond the geographic boundaries of one’s country” (Chin & Trimble, 2014, p.18). This is particularly important as estimates gather that 65 to 75% of world’s psychologists live outside the U.S. (Stevens & Wedding, 2004).

As people are more likely to move around and connect virtually in an increasingly interconnected world, it is not surprising that more and more individuals identify with multiple nationalities. It is important therefore to explore these lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality and understand how they make sense of themselves. In order to make a contribution to the literature and our field, I gained a more thorough understanding of individuals identifying with more than one nationality who are currently living in North America and Europe. Furthermore, I gained insight on issues that will be important for counseling psychologists to address in counseling, based on what appears salient for individuals in these circumstances. In this globalized time period we currently live in, better transportation and communication networks have made it easier for people to cross national borders, making it crucial for counseling psychologists to better understand national identity and how a person's national identity influences their beliefs and behaviors as well as their presenting issues.

This chapter provides an overview of the background and context for the current study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions. Furthermore, I will discuss the research approach, assumptions, rationale, and significance of the current study.

Background and Context

Our world is becoming increasingly global, resulting in individuals being exposed to various cultures and nationalities around the world because geographic and national boundaries are no longer a restriction (Casas, Park, & Cho, 2010). Due to this change, there is an increase in international and multicultural interactions either by traveling, migration, birth, and/or work. For this reason, it is not uncommon for individuals to

identify with more than one nationality. In the field of psychology, especially in counseling psychology, there has been a huge push to become multiculturally competent psychologists and social advocates. Importantly, McGoldrick, Giordano, and Garcia-Preto (2005) discussed how becoming culturally competent requires us to question the dominant values and to investigate the complex nature of cultural identity.

Identity is never final; it continues to develop throughout our lives and is subject to change and transformation. Identity encompasses a sense of one's goals, beliefs, values, and life roles (Erikson, 1950; Marcia, 1987). The development of identity or sense of self, according to Erikson (1980), is most prominent during adolescence, while maintenance and revision occurs throughout the remaining adult life. The development of a person's identity is a dynamic process that calls for continual assessment and exploration of one's sense of self. It is "making commitments to an integrated set of identity elements" (Dillon, Worthington & Moradi, 2011, p. 650). During adolescence, integration stage takes place in which the ego identity considers the accrued experiences and compiles them together to make sense of the self (Erikson, 1980). This period can bring about role confusion when the individual struggles to settle with an occupational identity. Changing environments and developmental changes also influence identity.

A person has multiple senses of self that are composed of various salient identities such as one's cultural, national, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and spiritual identities. It is important to consider how these various identities interact to impact an individual's sense of self, especially because each identity does not take into account the whole person. For this reason, intersectionality theory takes into account the simultaneously interacting effects of all the salient identities with which a person

identifies (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011). In general, it seems ineffective to only study one aspect of identity, such as gender, when through intersectionality and multicultural research, we have seen the importance of looking at various components of a person's sense of self (Davis, 2008). Each person concurrently belongs to multiple social categories, and each of these categories is essential.

Intersectionality is an important concept that deepens understanding of humans by providing a richer description of how people make sense of the various identities to which they belong. Using it in our research can help us establish deeper meanings that can be used to advocate for legislative changes in order to fight the oppression with which many diverse groups of people struggle every single day. With this concept, researchers look at the whole person and strive to understand how that person makes sense of him or herself within the intersecting identities. It is an attempt to understand the various dimensions that are part of the individual. Intersectionality can play an important role in psychotherapy by assisting psychologists in striving towards multicultural competence and social justice.

Intersectionality theory arose out of the multiculturalism movement. Researchers using this approach recognize the diversity of cultures and spoke out against the oppression of minorities. Intersectionality and intersectional analysis can play a fundamental role in studying social phenomena. Those who use an intersectional lens strive to make a difference for those who are underprivileged and take into consideration slavery, human trafficking, and equal rights movements an important consideration in the field of psychology as we address these social inequalities (Calasanti, & Slevin, 2001; Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Leidner, Tropp, & Lickel, 2013; Sawyer,

Salter, & Thoroughgood, 2013). Furthermore, intersectionality researchers conduct new studies as well as reexamine existing theories for biases and assumptions made, especially work based on specific marginalized groups. It is important to reexamine theories, especially if they are based primarily on a white male perspective, to investigate whether they are fitting for other diverse populations. Intersectionality is a quest to understand how multiple identities operate in conjunction with each other (Sawyer, Salter, & Thoroughgood, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

There is a dearth of research on the process of lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality. In an increasingly global world, with an increase in individuals who are exposed to and identify with multiple nationalities, it is necessary that we gain a better understanding of this process in order to provide effective counseling services. Furthermore, in the field of psychology, a huge call has been made to strive towards becoming a multicultural competent psychologist. In order to accomplish this goal, we need to continue to gather information so that we can understand what it is like to identify with multiple nationalities in the context of other salient identities and what benefits and challenges individuals encounter. The findings aim to inform psychologists' work in session by making them aware of these additional identity layers so that they can provide more adequate support and develop increased empathy. Lastly, this research study is designed to draw from a global sample in an effort to contribute to the literature with an international sample, which is being called for in the field of psychology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001; Sparrow & Davis, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals who identify with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality. The overall goal was to capture the essence of how these individuals make sense of themselves.

Primary Research Questions

- Q1 What are the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality?
 - Q1a How have individuals made sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality?
 - Q1b What has facilitated or hindered the individual's identity development?

Research Approach

The methodology that I employed is phenomenology. The focus of a phenomenological study is on the essence of an experience or phenomenon. There is an emphasis on the descriptions of the participants' experiences and how they experienced what they experienced (Patton, 1990). There is also an underlying assumption that the researcher has a personal interest in what she seeks to know, creating an intimate connection with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The primary source of data collection was two to three semi-structured interviews via Skype™. I also utilized photo elicitation technique, in which participants took or chose photos that represent their lived experiences of belonging to more than one nationality. Lastly, visual elicitation was utilized, in which the participants choose items such as poems, journals, drawings, or artifacts that helped them express how they experienced the phenomenon.

Assumptions

Based on my personal experience of identifying with more than one nationality, it is important that I address several assumptions that guided the current study. The first assumption was that participants would be willing to partake in this study and feel open and comfortable in sharing their experiences and impressions with me. Second, I assumed participants would be able to reflect upon the process in order to describe how they have experienced this phenomenon. Third, I assumed that participants encountered challenges in making sense of their various identities, as well as situations that helped facilitate the process. Next, I assumed that participants would share some similar experiences as well as experiences unique to the person and thus there would be findings that would not reach saturation. Last, I assumed that I would contribute a holistic picture of this phenomenon that could enrich our current understanding and inform our counseling to increase our multicultural competence.

Rationale and Significance

As psychologists, we have the ethical responsibility to consider cultural values, mores, history, and policies of societies and countries when we engage in interpretation or draw generalizations about our research results, in particular when we make recommending guidelines for global considerations (APA, 2003; Berry, 2013; Bernal, Jimenez-Chafey & Domenech, 2009; Dadlani, Overtree, & Perry-Jenkins, 2012). To do so, Berry (2013) proposes that we consider taking an emic/etic approach, meaning looking at the phenomenon through the eyes of people in a particular culture, while utilizing a framework derived outside the culture and attempting to match it to the emic view. Thus, by combining both viewpoints, we are able to strive towards cross-culturally

valid findings, allowing us to better understand humans and human behavior in a global context. Additionally, for the past decade, researchers have been investigating the process of how individuals identify with their various cultures, yet researchers exploring individuals identifying with more than one nationality is scarce. At this moment, research is often one-dimensional and researchers tend to only consider one aspect of a person (e.g., gender, race, sexuality). However, it is important that we gain a better understanding of this complex process in order to provide better psychological services for individuals and continue our development of becoming multicultural competent. Within intersectionality, more and more researchers are looking at the person holistically. This is crucial, as psychologists are encountering an increasing number of diverse clients who identify with various nationalities. Naturally, it is important as we learn more about the process of identifying with more than one nationality that we consider the cultural factors at play, as Tharp (1991) emphasized, “treatment is more effective when compatible with client culture patterns” (p.802). This is an area that Bernal, Jiménez-Chafey, and Domenech Rodríguez (2009) discuss when exploring interventions cross-culturally and how to best approach adapting psychological treatment approaches.

Furthermore, it is important for psychologists to understand that individuals who belong to minority groups often experience discrimination and oppression, especially when they identify with multiple minority groups or belong to a majority and minority group. This complex social process is important for us to better understand so that we can provide better support to clients and fulfill our roles as social advocates. Additionally, it is helpful to gain a deeper look at how individuals handle contradictory belief systems that stem from the various nationalities or other salient identity groups.

Even though there is an awareness of the multiple identities people have, the way society discusses identity is limited and categorical. This forces individuals to pick one identity or the other, leading others to identify them by a single aspect. This practice of placing people in a box is illustrated by the U.S. Census Bureau which did not allow individuals to select more than one race and ethnicity until about 10 years ago (Josselson & Harway, 2012). Another dimension is added with the increase in migration, mobility, and virtual connections that brings individuals in contact with different collective identities. In these incidents, individuals may absorb a part of the newly encountered culture and attempt to integrate it with the present self. Thus, identities are continuously changing through our surroundings and development. Understanding more about how this works will allow us to provide more holistic psychological services.

By enhancing our awareness of how to become more multiculturally competent psychologists, we can more fully enact our roles as social advocates. We can strive toward social justice by identifying why individuals receive inadequate services and how to solve this problem. For this reason, it is crucial to explore the lived experiences of individuals who identify with more than one nationality as a beginning step in learning how this process is experienced.

Definitions of Key Terms

Cultural identity is adopting the cultural worldview and behavioral practices that unite individuals within a community (Keith, 2011). A person can have multiple cultural identities through birth or migrating “from one nation state or culture to another whether for temporary residence or permanent or for economic, political or educational purposes” (Bhugra, 2005, p. 84).

Culture in the context of this study refers to behavioral practices that unite individuals within a community and a shared history (Keith, 2011).

Ethnic identity refers to shared values and customs that have evolved over centuries, as well as cultural or physical criteria that sets the groups apart (Bhugra, 2005; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005).

Gender identity encompasses the sense of belonging, attitudes, and values associated with the gender with which an individual identifies (Barber, 2009)

Identity development is the process by which individuals attempt to make sense of the various salient identities to which they belong and that fit with their worldviews and belief systems while considering the influence of political access, equality, and justice (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011). Furthermore, it is a process of continually assessing and exploring one's identity and making a commitment to particular sets of identity elements (Marcia, 1987; Dillon, et al., 2011).

Identity/Sense of Self has been used interchangeably and refers to how a person sees herself or himself in the context of one's goals, beliefs, values, and life roles (Erikson, 1950, 1980; Marcia, 1987).

Intersectionality is taking into account simultaneously the interacting effects of gender, race, ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, religion and spirituality while considering how these components influence political access, equality, and justice (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011).

National identity is a combination of a person's birth, ancestry, accent, and residence (Hadley, 2004). Multiple national identities can emerge when a person is born

to parents who each identify with or belong to a different nationality and/or through immigration.

Phenotype is a person's observable physical characteristics based on the interaction between genotype and environment.

Racial identity refers to identification with one's considered racial group(s). It is thus a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that the individual shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group (Bhugra, 2005).

Religious identity describes a person's commitment to a set of religious beliefs and/or practices (Griffith & Griggs, 2001).

Sexual identity embodies an individual's sexual needs, sexual orientation, sexual values, modes of sexual expression, and preferred characteristics of sexual partners (Dillon, et al., 2011).

Spiritual identity is the process of gaining a deeper understanding about ourselves and how we explain the meaning and purpose of our existence as well as when things do not seem to work out (Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, 2011).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a better understanding of the various aspects involved in identifying with more than one nationality in the context of identity and intersectionality theory. Therefore, an overview of the history of identity development, cultural, national, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and spiritual identity will be reviewed. Furthermore, acculturation, intersectionality theory, language, and multicultural counseling competence will be discussed.

History of Sense of Self and Identity

Humans' concern with the question, "Who am I?" is not new. Forming a sense of self or identity is important for our psychological well-being. The concept of *identity* or *persona* has been around since Greco-Roman times. However, the ways we talk, write, and think about ourselves vary historically and culturally (Burkitt, 2011). This seems to imply that human identity changes over time and between places and that it is constructed within interpersonal exchanges (Bamberg, De Fina, & Schifffrin, 2011). Burkitt (2011) argued that the contemporary West, beginning with Greco-Roman society and culture, has inherited cultural traditions, which focus on a person's public persona, such as rank, status, class, or reputation. With the public persona also comes the belief that we can be identified as something uniquely personal. This internal self can be accessed only by us and is seen by others only when we choose to reveal it to them (Burkitt, 2011).

The development of identity has been traced through various time periods, including Anglo-Saxon tradition in Britain as well as the Christian tradition that spread through Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. Baumeister (1987) traced the Western history of the self, from England in the 11th century through the influence of Puritanism in 16th century Europe, by tracing an individual's relationship to God. Furthermore, he focused on the split between society and the individual during the influence of Romanticism in the 18th century. During this time period, Jean-Jaques Rousseau wrote that human nature is inherently good and that society had the potential to corrupt this inherent goodness (Taylor, 1989). The split between the individual and society is evident in the art from that time period, which reflected the expression of individuality. Another perspective is Danziger's (1997) focus on the role of the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th century, alongside the work of John Locke and Adam Smith, as fundamental to the creation of the modern sense of self.

Stoicism

Stoicism, a philosophy that originated during the Greco-Roman period, is the basis for the modern sense of self (Burkitt, 2011). Stoicism was founded by the Hellenized Phoenician Zeno and focused on the Logos (*word* or *reason*), used to explain the chasm between God and man (Fischel & Berman, 2007). Stoicism has been reinterpreted throughout various historical time periods. One example is Western Europe in the 16th century, when staged drama became popular. Erasmus, a humanist, reinterpreted Stoicism and wrote popular staged dramas. During these dramas, the idea that the image we present to others is not necessarily the image we hold of our own self emerged. During the Greco-Roman period, the development of the self was complicated

by power imbalances, making it more difficult for some groups, such as women and slaves, to form notions of the self. These power imbalances still exist, making the formation of an integrative identity difficult for those in positions of low power.

Persona

Marcel Mauss's (1985) famous essay on the notion of the *person* or *persona* illustrated that the word came from ancient Latin culture. Similar words and concepts of person or persona had existed in tribal societies but had referred to masks worn in public ceremonies that indicated an individual's title, rank, or ancestry. In ancient Roman times, persona kept this original meaning but also was used in laws to establish the rights of the freeborn as citizens with the ownership of their own person. This dual meaning still applies today with persona referring to an artificial character, "the mask and role of comedy and tragedy, of trickery and hypocrisy", and also to the true nature of an individual (Mauss, 1985, p. 17). Stoic philosophers of the Roman Empire viewed the person as not only the subject of law but also as having moral conscience and free will. These philosophers, such as Seneca, Epictetus, and Aurelius, believed that individuals could improve themselves through examining their habits and routines (Burkitt, 2011). There is debate in the literature about whether the sense of self originated during Stoicism, as the emphasis of the philosophers was self-care. By dieting and exercising, one could improve her or his character. Some, such as Michel Foucault (1988), argued that self-care is not a move towards the analysis of the self, which is the Western culture notion of identity.

“Know thyself”

The debate of when the notion of identity or self as an internal concept originated is still ongoing. Christopher Gill (2008) argued that until 200 CE, the self was seen as an “objective-participant” rather than “subjective-individualist.” This means the role of the self was seen in terms of one’s role in public life rather than a reflection of one’s inner world of thoughts and feelings. Richard Sorabji (2006), on the other hand, argued that the ancient Greeks had an understanding of the self from both positions. Socrates’ notion of “know thyself” reflects this idea of self-awareness. Sorabji’s argument is that in order to build a persona, the person would have to be capable of reflecting on his choices and actions. Despite the debate of the exact starting point, most scholars have agreed that during the Hellenistic period, especially the Roman Empire, some of the foundations were laid for the modern concept of self/identity as an internal private idea.

Identity in Context

Through the development of the self/identity, an exploration of cultural identity or sense of cultural self emerged. Our perception of others and ourselves is affected by group affiliations (Stevenson, 2010). Depending on a person’s culture, the degree of independent and interdependent affiliation varies. Tajfel (1981) developed a social identity theory, which states that individuals seek to place themselves within social groups that are attractive to them and seek out other members of the same group. The way we form a sense of who we are is complex, especially as we live in an interconnected world. From this view, self or identity “is the sense of who one is as a social being and is a dynamic product of interaction with significant others” (Greil & Davidman, 2007, p. 549). The term *self* was first developed by William James (1890)

and elaborated on by Charles Cooley (1902) and George Mead (1934). James (1890) discussed how individuals have multiple “Me’s” and many social selves. This introduces the idea that people consist of multiple identities or selves of which they are trying to make sense. During this critical time period, Mary Whiton Calkins (1916) highlighted the various perspectives psychologists were taking on the self. She demonstrated the various approaches being taken and how psychologists were trying to make sense of the concept of self/identity. Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) built on the notion James laid out and discussed how interactions with significant others were the primary way that a person’s self or identity emerged. This process of figuring out one’s multiple selves within the context of interacting with others was discussed by Eric Erikson (1968), who conceptualized the development of identity through his lifespan developmental stage theory in which adolescence was seen as the time period for an individual to form a sense of self and adulthood for continuous evaluation of the self. His psychosocial theory accounts for both psychological and social factors in negotiating an identity.

It is important to consider the psychological and social factors involved in forming a sense of self. James Côté identified three factions in his Personality and Social Structure Perspective (PSSP) model: personality, interaction, and social structure (Côté & Levine, 2008). Personality refers to an individual’s identity formation, which affects self-perception and cognitive structure. Interaction represents the patterns of behaviors between the individual and other persons such as family and community. Social structure is the prescribed roles that are available to the individual, as well as political, social, and economic conditions in one’s society. Côté believed that in order to have successful identity formation, it would be advantageous for a person to possess several elements of

identity capital: financial, academic, human, social, linguistic, and cultural resources (Keith, 2011). There are other theories that are based on the belief that membership in a cultural group or groups will influence how individuals define themselves. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994) both suggest that individuals will model their social beliefs and behaviors on those they perceive to be the prototypes of their groups. These theories highlight the importance of the social context in which a person finds herself or himself.

The importance of cultural context is integral in helping individuals balance individuality with their roles in their cultural contexts. Culture provides a person with a range of social roles, as well as the means to resolve the crisis of different stages of development. In order to better understand identity, it is important to consider the developmental period in which individuals begin to identify who they are, the role that social context plays in a person's development, and salient identities that contribute in the overall formation of a sense of self.

Identity Development

The emerging identity bridges the stages of childhood when the bodily self and the parental images are given their cultural connotations; and it bridges the stage of young adulthood, when a variety of social roles become available and, in fact, increasingly coercive. (Erikson, 1963, p. 235)

Erikson believed that identity development is most prominent during adolescence and identity maintenance and revision are important developmental tasks during adulthood. He noticed that during adolescence, an integration stage takes place, in which the ego identity considers the accrued experiences and compiles them together to make sense of the self (Erikson, 1980). During this period, role confusion can occur as the individual is trying to make sense of her-/himself. Identity is never final and continues to develop

throughout our lifespan. Both normative developmental changes and our changing environment influence our identity, which is subject to change and transformation.

The role of cultural differences in the process of identity formation is not addressed in Erikson's model, even though he did recognize the influence of culture in his later works (Portes, Dunham, & Castillo, 2000). Erikson did address social influences. When our self-perception and interpersonal feedback are incongruent, we either change our social situation to produce congruence (assimilation), or we change our own sense of self and thus go through a comprehensive change (accommodation). As we continue to evolve and develop, we strive towards a balance between assimilation and accommodation so that our sense of self can develop to be mature, flexible, and coherent. Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, and Beyers (2006) proposed a four-dimensional model that consists of exploration in breadth, commitment making, exploration in depth, and identification with commitment. These dimensions characterize the development of the sense of self in general, with the caveat that individuals are unique. Thus the extent to which these process influence and impact each other across time, as well as how they are utilized, may vary. As one progresses in maintaining and adapting one's sense of self, one strives towards finding environmental mastery, meaning achieving a good fit between the environment and how one relates to one's surroundings. Various factors in addition to our environment impact our identity, including our personality. "The term 'identity' expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (Erikson, 1980, p. 109).

Ecological Perspective

In order to understand a person's sense of self and her or his development, we also need to consider the meaning of behavior within multiple, interdependent contexts, such as through Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective or bioecological model of development. Through this model Bronfenbrenner examines the interaction between biology and environment and how this can contribute to individuals developing differently from culture to culture and neighborhood to neighborhood. According to Bronfenbrenner, an individual is integrated in a series of environmental systems that interact with one another, which impact the individual's development.

The first level of examination occurs at the self-system, which includes an analysis of how various contributing factors to an individual's biology and cognition impact the individual's sense of self. In relation to the self-system are systemic factors that involve the individual's interactions with the social and personal ecologies (Coleman, 1995). One of the most immediate influences is the microsystem, including those in immediate social contact such as family, school, and neighborhoods. The next level, mesosystem, comprises reciprocal relationships between microsystem settings. For example, social interactions in one's school may influence familial interaction, which both influence the formation of a person's sense of self (Coleman, Norton, Miranda, & McCubbin, 2003). The third level, the exosystem, is the combination of several mesosystems, such as the state, country, or school district. The exosystem has a direct impact on the individuals even if they do not play a direct role in it (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). The final level is the macrosystem, which builds upon several exosystems. It includes broad ideological patterns of culture and is comprised of sociopolitical history,

economics, and social and political systems of thought (Coleman et al., 2003). This model takes into account peoples “perceptions of themselves as group members, as well as their experiences of how others within their microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems understand them” (Coleman et al., 2003, p. 40). Additionally, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) stated that it is important for individuals to consider the relationships among the person, the context, the time dimension, and the processes through which a person interacts with the environment. Having this holistic view will help psychologists better understand an individual and thus be better able to listen to her or his identity process.

Through this model, identity development can be seen as having internal and external qualities involving “a sense of one’s self as a member of a social group” (Coleman et al., 2003, p. 41). The more complex the various systems are, the more complexly the individual develops and the more challenging it can be for an individual to discover her or his sense of self. It is important to keep in mind these various contextual factors that impact the process of identity development during the following discussion of salient identities.

Sense of Self/Identity

As mentioned, people have multiple senses of self that continually change and evolve. Important to note when discussing identity is the distinction between content and process of salient identities. Phinney (1993) makes a distinction between the two within her model of ethnic identity, but the same constructs can be applied for other identities. Content refers to the attitude towards the group, as well as the behaviors that an individual practices. Process, on the other hand, is how a person comes to make sense of

the implications of his or her salient identity. The current study focuses on the process of identity development; however, literature on both content and process will be discussed.

There are some identities that appear to be very salient for individuals, especially when they identify with more than one nationality. Therefore, some of these salient identities are discussed in more detail below. Due to the infinite groups with which we may identify, we are composed of an infinite number of identities, and thus the few specific identity categories discussed do not reflect all identities with which a person may identify. I chose to discuss the identities that appeared most salient during the pilot study I conducted (Peters, 2012), as well as the ones mentioned most frequently in the literature.

Cultural Sense of Self/Identity

Cultural identity is adopting the cultural worldview and behavioral practices that unite individuals within a community (Keith, 2011). This includes our conception of human nature, the relationship between individual and society, and moral and religious values. These beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation through everyday occurrences such as work, food, rites of passages, and childbearing. Cultural identity encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices (Keith, 2011). It can also be described as “consciousness development, the generation of more complex cognitions and behaviors as one comes to see oneself in context” (Ivey, 1995, p. 58). This description refers to how we continue to develop and change during the various life stages we encounter (Cardona et al., 2004). It also refers to how we are impacted by our families and social context. This could include how our families have immigrated to a new country and whether they speak favorably or with shame about the immigration (Ivey,

1995). These dynamics in turn influence our consciousness development and our immediate social system (Cardona et al., 2004).

In our interconnected world, it is not uncommon for individuals to internalize more than one nationality (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). In the United States alone, about 13% of the population resided in a different country before immigrating to the United States, and about 85% of these individuals speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census, 2010). The internalization of multiple nationalities, speaking more than one language, living in a multicultural community, and cross-cultural marriages all can lead to the development of a multicultural identity. A multicultural identity can provide a sense of uniqueness and a rich and varied sense of community and history. It can also lead to confusion, value clashes, and contradictory belief systems. A multicultural identity is based on a strong sense of personal identity, emotional stability, and ability to self-reflect and empathize with others (Keith, 2011). Keith (2011) suggested that forming a multicultural identity gives individuals the potential to enhance their lives because it creates a sense of self-efficacy in addition to a sense of identification with one's heritage.

The formation of an identity is complex, and forming a multicultural or cultural sense of self can be even more complex. For some people, ethnic and racial senses of self are encompassed by cultural identity. Ethnicity refers to shared values and customs that have evolved over centuries (McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005). "Ethnicity is a continuous evolution," and through this nonstop evolution, we form our continually changing cultural identities (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008; McGoldrick et al., 2005). Racial identity, on the other hand, refers to the identification with one's

considered racial group(s). As mentioned earlier, in Greco-Roman times, certain groups of people who were not in power (e.g., women, slaves) had a disadvantage in being able to discover a sense of self. This concept still rings true today. Individuals belonging to minority cultures can have a harder time integrating the different cultures to which they belong due to societal pressures to fit in. Cultural identity encompasses many other salient identities, including national, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, and spiritual.

National Sense of Self/Identity

National identity is a combination of a person's birth, ancestry, accent, and residence (Hadley, 2004). Nationalism is a fairly modern phenomenon developed in the late 18th century in Europe and North America (Hadley, 2004). It has been theorized that nationalism as a political ideology started with the French Revolution, while nationalism as a cultural identity is associated with modern society, even though the terms *nation*, *partie* (French), and *Vaterland* (German) had been established prior (Hadley, 2004). In a sense, then, national identity can exist only if the members of the nation see themselves as forming a nation and sharing an identity (National Identity, 2000). National identity is often taken for granted, as most people do not have reason to question themselves about their national identity; however, when other individuals reject one's claim of national identity, it can lead to social exclusion (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2010). Interestingly, not all national identities function within a nation, and not all nations are "proto-national." Thus some people form counter-identities, with the aim of distinguishing themselves from foreigners by attaching to village, county, province, nation, and so forth (Hadley, 2004). The Netherlands and Great Britain, two isolated countries in the North Atlantic that are considered Protestant states, developed strong national identities, which they

formed during the 17th and 18th centuries, respectively. Their sense of nationalism was deeply integrated with their identification with religion, wealth, and political revolt. Nationality is a complex phenomenon that varies in terms of formation by time and place. Factors that influence the formation of nationality are religion, language, and local political structures (Hadley, 2004).

According to Masella's (2013) research, individuals in larger/privileged groups and those with higher incomes tend to have weaker feelings of nationality. For national minority group members, the sense of nationality depends on the ethnic makeup of the country. Masella found that national minorities in less diverse countries had higher feelings of nationality than national majorities did, and the reverse was true for more ethnically diverse countries. Thus the strength and sense of nationality can be influenced by various factors. For example, research suggests that national minorities who face discrimination experience less cultural integration and national identity, while national minorities who feel they are treated fairly more strongly identify with the nationality they are residing in (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier & Zenou, 2008; Georgiadis & Manning, 2009). Having a fair environment thus can enhance a shared feeling of culture and identity, which builds a stronger foundation for more pro-social behaviors (Georgiadis & Manning, 2009). An example was found in Germany. After Germany introduced the element of birthright citizenship, level of integration of immigrants, as measured by engaging in social contact with Germans and using the German language, increased (Masella, 2013).

When national identity is seen more in civic terms, the nation can integrate new members from various cultural or ethnic backgrounds; in a sense, people can choose their

nationality. However, when membership criteria are ethnic, exclusion occurs, and the privilege of birth becomes important. National identity cannot be looked at solely in terms of ethnic, cultural, political, or territorial identities (National Identity, 2000), even though these factors are influential. In the United States, Citrin, Wong, and Duff (2001) found that most Whites primarily identified as American, while those seen as non-White typically reported being American and some other identity. Furthermore, individuals who spoke a different language at home or were not U.S. citizens were most likely to not believe being an American was important, while those considered the majority believed being American was important to their sense of self (Schildkraut, 2011). In order for one to have a strong national identity, narratives that show a shared meaning or identity must be constructed through stories, images, symbols, and rituals (Barker, 2004).

Integration policymakers are looking at what a shared national identity would look like in the context of our global world and the migration of many people (Korteweg & Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Wimmer, 2008). These policymakers try to accept diversity while also wanting people to “fit-in.” Many times, national minorities are encouraged to assimilate, to cross boundaries into what is considered the national majority (Wimmer, 2008). As Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos (2013) put it, “Integration policies attempt to constitute immigrants as subjects who are capable of supporting the continued viability of the national society within which they live” (p. 115).

In the field of psychology, nationality has been largely neglected, potentially due to the field being dominated by the U.S. (Platt & Laszloffy, 2013). “Given the power and privilege that the United States has in relation to other nations, it can be difficult for those who are from the United States to recognize how their nationality shapes their values,

beliefs, and behaviors and to recognize the privilege and ensuing benefits that their nationality affords them” (Platt & Laszloffy, 2013, p. 442). It is vital for our field to explore nationality as a dimension of diversity as we are more likely to be interacting on a global scale and failing to acknowledge nationality could result in the devaluation of other nationalities and thus to people of varying cultural backgrounds (Platt & Laszloffy, 2013). The American Psychological Association (APA) is currently exploring factors to promote global and diversity perspectives in U.S. psychology through drafting guidelines (APA, 2015 Draft of Guidelines), which acknowledges nationality as a dimension of diversity.

Racial Sense of Self/Identity

Racial identity and race are often used interchangeably even though racial identity is the overall salience that a person places on self-identification with a specific racial group (Harpalani, 2008). Racial identity is the degree to which an individual ascribes importance to self-identification with a particular racial group or to particular group membership (Harpalani, 2008). Race is a socially constructed phenomenon that varies from region to region (Jefferson, 2011). Jefferson (2011) noted some encounters with individuals who had immigrated to the United States whose race changed merely from moving even though they still looked the same and had the same genes. Their race simply changed because the cultural categories had changed. Skin color, a feature often used to identify race, is subject to relatively rapid evolutionary change, and from a biological view, it does not indicate race (Jefferson, 2011). For this reason, many researchers have written about the myth of race, as humans are all from the same race with some variations among them due to evolutionary adaptations. Considering race a

myth has been controversial as society continues to classify individuals according to skin color and other physical features in particular in the U.S. Even though from a biological viewpoint, race does not exist among humans, it nevertheless exists in a socially constructed manner.

The concept of race became prominent during slavery in the Americas even though it originated in Europe (Jefferson, 2011). During this time period, people were purposefully discriminated against for their skin color and not for belonging to a specific village that had been captured during war. With the start of discrimination against Blacks came the beginning of discrimination primarily based on skin color against other racial groups, such as American Indians and Asians. Discrimination based on race added a new dimension to the development of self. During Blacks' fight for equality in the civil rights movement, their identification with their racial and cultural group became important in forming a healthy sense of self. They also faced challenges in being true to themselves while fitting into society. Hall (1987) discussed the complexity of the Black identity: "The fact is 'black' has never been just there either. It has always been an unstable identity, psychically, culturally and politically. It, too, is a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found" (p. 45).

An additional challenge exists for those who are multiracial in forming a racial identity and being accepted in society. Society has created a hierarchy of races, where some are considered to be better than others; thus white privilege is still very prevalent today. In Iwasaki and Byrd (2010) study of Urban American Indians who have mixed ancestries and mental health care, many of the mixed-race Native American participants reported being pressured to identify with the race that was not Native American. A man

from Cherokee and Black ancestries described this well: “‘One [black] lady came up to me and said, why do you not forget about being Native American and call yourself black so that you do not have anything to worry about’” (Iwasaki & Byrd, 2010, p. 105). This example illustrates how difficult it is for Native Americans to identify with their heritage and race, as well as with the other racial and cultures to which they belong. Identifying with one’s cultural heritage and one’s racial group can be a challenging process. Despite this challenge, forming a multicultural identity that encompasses one’s race can lead to a positive, strong identity. Due to the definitions of race and descriptions of race varying across nations, the concept of phenotype was used for the study itself. Phenotype is a person’s observable physical characteristics based on the interaction between genotype and environment. However, the review of literature will continue to use the concept of race and racial identity from a U.S. centric point of view, as it is an important dimension of diversity explored in the literature. Therefore the term race will be used throughout this chapter, while phenotype will be used for sections pertaining to the current research study.

Ethnic Sense of Self/Identity

Ethnicity and race are often used interchangeably in public discourse and in scholarly literature. This may be in part because ethnicity has a more positive connotation than race, which is a politically charged construct, especially in the United States (Coleman, 2008). Despite the commonality of using these two constructs interchangeably, they are distinct constructs. “Ethnicity is informed by an individual’s race but represents a specific aspect of his or her cultural experience” (Coleman, 2008, p. 1137). Race, on the other hand, refers to a limited number of social groups (e.g., Asian,

Black, White), while ethnicity represents both specific and unique groups (e.g., Irish, Japanese, Hispanic, Basque, Roma) that are based on historical context and culture of a people. Ethnicity encompasses a group's commonality of ancestry and history, through which shared values and customs evolve (McGoldrick et al., 2005), including similar physical characteristics (Coleman, 2008). As ethnicity is a social construct, the way society defines it can change (Ethnicity, 2009, p. 186).

Oftentimes, discussions of ethnicity focus on nondominant groups, with an emphasis on deficits. For this reason, it is important to emphasize that ethnicity pertains to everyone because "everyone has a cultural background that influences his or her values and behaviors" (McGoldrick et al., 2005, p. 2). Typically, values stemming from a few European groups are viewed as the norm, while everything else is considered ethnic. This view marginalizes ethnic minorities' values. Furthermore, ethnicity can change as well as be informed by geographic areas. Thus an individual may be classified as Black in the United States due to her or his association with certain social, political, and economic experiences, in addition to similar physical characteristics (Coleman, 2008). This same individual could be ethnically classified as Jamaican because of shared historical, national, social, political, and cultural heritage with those from Jamaica (Coleman, 2008). Psychologists assume that ethnicity influences how individuals view and understand themselves and those around them. Therefore, ethnicity is believed by psychologists to impact and shape a person's psychological well-being (Coleman, 2008). Due to its impact on a person's psychological well-being, it is an important variable to consider when discussing cross-cultural or multicultural counseling.

The term ethnicity broadly refers to the social group category, but ethnic identity refers to people's sense of belongingness or connection to their ethnic groups. Thus, some individuals may hold stronger ethnic identities than others. One factor that can impact the strength of ethnic identity is context. The social status of a person's ethnicity may change drastically when the person is residing outside of the home culture or nation. For example, in the United States, some ethnic groups are valued less than others (McGoldrick et al., 2005). This naturally can influence the strength of the person's ethnic identity and can even evoke negative feelings towards one's ethnic group. Researchers have found that individuals reporting greater ethnic identity tended to use coping strategies associated with higher self-esteem in order to battle discrimination (Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008).

Our relationship to our cultural heritage will influence our well-being, as will our sense of our relationship to the dominant culture. People's sense of their ethnicity is affected by their relationship (unaware, negative, proud, appreciative) to the groups they come from, and their relationship (a sense of belonging, feeling like an outsider, or feeling inferior) to the dominant culture. (McGoldrick et al., 2005, p. 8)

This quote indicates it is important for psychologists to consider the complexity of individuals' ethnic identities. Maria Root (1994) developed a "Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage," in which she emphasized that people do not need to justify their ethnic legitimacy, that they can identify themselves differently than strangers expect them to, and that they can change their identity multiple times over their lifetime.

Connecting to one's ethnic roots is complex, especially when individuals have left their cultures of origin. People must find new ways to relate to their cultures of origin after they leave, especially when these cultures of origin were war torn or oppressive. Thus, immigrants who are unable to return are faced with additional challenges in

developing their ethnic identities. Stuart Hall (1987) discussed a dilemma that every immigrant faces, which is captured in two questions: “Why are you here?” and “When are you going back home?” Through being asked these questions, immigrants realize that “there is no ‘home’ to go back to” (Hall, 1987, p. 44). For the first question, there is no simple answer, and thus immigration brings with it a complex journey of looking deep into oneself. Hall wrote from his experience of immigration:

“Who I am—the ‘real’ me—formed in relation to a whole set of other narratives. I was aware of the fact that identity is an invention from the very beginning, long before I understood any of this theoretically” (p. 44). Individuals who immigrate may also form an ethnic identity faster than those who reside in the home country. Thus, salience of ethnicity may also vary according to nativity (Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, & Guimond, 2009).

Gender Sense of Self/Identity

Gender can be defined “as culturally constructed beliefs and attitudes about the traits and behaviors of females and males” (Worell & Remer, 2003, p. 10). Many gender beliefs may not necessarily be “true,” but because they reflect the dominant cultural norms, it can be difficult for individuals to challenge them (Worell & Remer, 2003). In the United States, gender is classified into two groups, placing the implication that gender categories are always the same and understood everywhere in the same manner, thus this excludes the possible of multiple genders or even having a temporary gender category. Gendered beliefs and practices vary across cultures and time, as well as across groups in society (Worell & Remer, 2003). For example, the ideas of womanhood and femininity may vastly differ for a Latina woman and for an Asian woman who both reside in the

United States. The social construction of gender and its intersection with other social status identities create a gendered sense of self related to how to behave as a male or female. Thus the cognition of being a woman shapes my current and future activities, just as the cognition of being European or African American would create an alternative image. These expectations based on gender result in self-fulfilling prophecies as people interact with others using behaviors expected of their gender.

As a result of these gender expectations, society has formed gender roles. Gender roles are culturally approved behaviors that are regarded as desirable for a particular gender in a particular culture (Worell & Remer, 2003). These gender conceptions define what we deem as appropriate not only for ourselves but also for other women and men in a variety of situations. A large number of variables influence gender roles, including context of various subcultures and historical time frames (Worell & Remer, 2003). Gender awareness typically occurs around the age of 2, and gender constancy occurs by age 6, allowing gender to be a significant part of our sense of self (Barber, 2009; Egan & Perry, 2001). It seems likely that during childhood, people ask themselves how well they fit in with their gender category. When discussing gender roles, it is important to consider traditional gender roles and emerging flexible gender roles, as well as gender-flexible individuals. Some evidence suggests that traditional gender roles have become more relaxed in the United States and other countries around the world over the past 30 years (Sidhu, 2000; Worrell & Remer, 2003).

Overall, gender identity encompasses the sense of belonging, attitudes, and values associated with the gender with which an individual identifies (Barber, 2009). It differs from sex, which is determined through physiological characteristics, and from gender,

which is socially determined (Barber, 2009). Gender identity refers to how strongly a person identifies with the roles, attitudes, and values that most people associate with that particular gender. Spence (1993) developed a multidimensional view of gender identity, on which Egan and Perry (2001) elaborated, identifying four factors. These factors are “knowledge of membership in a gender category, feelings of compatibility with gender, feelings of pressure to act in accordance with the gender’s roles, and ingroup bias toward the gender” (Barber, 2009, p. 428). During adolescence, individuals are faced with questions regarding the extent to which they align with gender stereotypic behaviors. In order to have a strong gender identity, one does not necessarily have to engage in sex-stereotypical behaviors. Rather, individuals have strong gender identities when they are confident in who they are and have social support for who they consider themselves to be.

The development of gender identity is influenced by the context and can vary from culture to culture and across groups. For example, researchers in the United States have shown that for African American children and adolescents, negative stereotypes associated with a Black boy or girl place these adolescents at a disadvantage in forming a strong gender identity. This is because most of the time, the stereotype of the perfect boy or girl includes being European American (Barber, 2009). It is vital that individuals in society combat these stereotypes in a prosocial manner to provide individuals the chance of forming healthy senses of self.

Sexual Sense of Self/Identity

Sexual identity is often used interchangeably to refer to sexual orientation or gender identity (Hovey, 2007). Sexual identity and gender identity have been confused

in part because sexual practices were related to a person's gender. Thus, females are encouraged to act in the appropriate manner assigned to females and display a heterosexual attraction to men and vice versa (Hovey, 2007). However, in this context, sexual identity encompasses more than just sexual orientation and is differentiated from gender identity. Sexual identity embodies an individual's sexual needs, sexual orientation, sexual values, modes of sexual expression, and preferred characteristics of sexual partners (Dillon, et al., 2011).

Several laws have been put in place that discriminate against individuals on basis of sexual identity. Sodomy, sex other than heterosexual coitus in the missionary position, is illegal in many states. These sodomy laws are primarily enforced against homosexuals. In *Lawrence vs. Texas* (2003), the court determined that it was illegal to specify a certain group of individuals from engaging in sodomy (Hovey, 2007). Nevertheless, many current laws and regulations both at the government level and company levels discriminate against those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. These forms of discriminations are being challenged and some changes have been implemented that are moving towards equal treatment.

Many issues faced when identifying with the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) communities involve domestic partnership rights, parental rights, access to quality care, work-related discrimination, and LGB-related violence (Wilton, 2010). In regards to these barriers, the field of psychology and psychiatry contributed in a pro-social manner through the removal of the diagnosis of homosexuality as a mental health disorder from the DSM by the American psychiatric Association (APA) 40 years ago. Nevertheless, the discrimination that still exists places an important assumption on the discussion of the

development of sexual identity, which is a person recognizing whether they belong to a privileged dominant group (heterosexual) or a marginalized, minority group (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual) (Dillon et al., 2011).

Religious Sense of Self/Identity

Religion is intimately bound up with a person's sense of self. Some have argued that religious identity is primarily concerned with identity confusion and lack of concern with religion (Watson, Morris, Hood, Milliron, & Stutz, 1998), while others have noted its importance in providing a space of belonging (Durkheim, 1966). Religious identity is a person's commitment to a set of religious beliefs and/or practices (Griffith & Griggs, 2001). Religious identity is relatively stable across high school years, even when religious participation declines (Lopez, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2011). On the other hand, Stryker and Serpe (1982) conducted an experiment on adults' religious behavior and identity and found that salience of religious identity predicts level of involvement in religious organizations. This suggests that religious identity may be more strongly related to religious involvement in adulthood than during adolescence.

Some research suggests that African American and Latino youths have higher levels of religiosity than those from European backgrounds (Lopez et al., 2011; Wallace, Forman, Caldwell, & Willis, 2003). It has also been suggested that religious identity is strong for first and second generation adolescent immigrants, which could be related to the social, financial, and emotional support that religious involvement provides (Hirschman, 2004). Religious values, tied in with the religious identity, have the potential to influence how one views mental health, gender roles, gender identity, and

ethnic diversity (Duriez & Hutsebaut, 2000; Peek, Lowe, & Williams 1991; Wilkinson, 2004).

In addition to ethnic differences in religious identity, there are also gender differences. Adult women have reported higher levels of religiosity, and adolescent girls have reported an increase in attendance at religious activities and beliefs when compared to adult males and adolescent boys, respectively (Lopez et al., 2011; McCullough, Tsang, & Brion, 2003). These gender differences were found among adolescent girls from European and Latin American backgrounds but not among girls from Asian backgrounds. Reasons for this apparent gender difference are unclear.

In a U.S. national survey, Denton, Pearce, and Smith (2008) noticed an overall decline in religiosity among adolescents, which could potentially be a precursor to the continuing decline of religiousness among future adult populations. Nonetheless, about 80 percent of the U. S. population currently believes in God (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008). Importantly, some individuals have a complex religious identity or multiple religious belongings, which is when an individual “adheres to, practices, believes in, or belongs to more than one religious tradition through inheritance and/or choice” (Suomala, 2012). This multiple religious identity is rising among the population, especially with the increase of interfaith marriages. There is a dearth in the literature on multiple religious identities, despite the increase in individuals identifying this way.

Spiritual Sense of Self/Identity

Spirituality or how our spirit develops as part of our sense of self is an intricate part of gaining a deeper understanding about ourselves in terms of how we explain the meaning and purpose of our existence as well as when things do not seem to work out

(Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, 2011). Research on the concept of spirituality, especially from a view outside of Western context or Judeo-Christian religious traditions, has been limited. Roehlkepartain et al. (2011) established the following components as important when defining spirituality:

(a) how persons explore the mysteries of the self and of the universe; (b) the capacity to apprehend beauty and benevolence; (c) the experiences of awe and wonder; (d) the inclination to seek community and connectedness; and (e) the capacity for persons to find joy, purpose, and hope in life. (p. 545)

These components have often been informed by religion, but religion and spirituality are not synonymous. Defining and differentiating spirituality from religion is still in the works. Historically, social scientists viewed spirituality as part of the religious experience. According to Wulff (1997), religion currently refers to institutional beliefs, rituals, and practices, of which spirituality may be one aspect, while spirituality focuses more on the experiential or subjective phenomenon, which may or may not include religion. Thus an individual can be spiritual with or without explicit religious beliefs, practices, or community (Roehlkepartain et al., 2011). Due to the distinction between religion and spirituality, it is important to discuss both concepts, as they are important components in the development of individuals.

Roehlkepartain et al., (2011) more specifically defined spirituality as a “*constant, ongoing, and dynamic interplay between one’s inward journey and one’s outward journey*” (italics in original). This in essence refers to us looking inward and outward in order to connect to the world as well as experience growth and learning. Since identity development and formation are impacted by context, the various dimensions discussed earlier in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system also impact spiritual growth. Therefore, either actively or passively, people are shaped by and shape the people and places around

them. Oftentimes, people closest to people have the greatest impact on their spiritual development. Schwartz, Bukowski, and Aoki (2006) found that friends and mentors who model and share their spirituality strengthen the impacted person's spiritual commitment.

Mattis, Ahluwalia, Cowie, and Kirkland-Harris, (2006) found that in many cultures (e.g, Haitian, Indian, African), religion and spirituality are interwoven with each other and within the whole culture. Thus the distinction described earlier between spirituality and religion may not apply, complicating the process of studying spirituality in addition to religion. Despite the complications between comparing and contrasting religion and spirituality, research suggests that both are integral parts in identity development. Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, and Colwell (2006) found that spirituality helps nurture a connection with either a higher power, community, or some other values or aspects of the self. Spirituality also appears to foster meaning making and can highlight positive traits such as compassion. Importantly, Poll and Smith (2003) and MacDonald (2011) found that spiritual experiences are more likely to foster spiritual identity when the experiences are viewed as being of a spiritual nature rather than as reflecting a problem in functioning. Thus, several factors, including cultural variables, are involved in how spirituality influences and shapes the sense of self.

Sense of Self

The idea of sense of self has been around for hundreds of years. The concept of distinct salient identities such as cultural, national, ethnic, gender, religious, and spiritual identity has been more recent and aligns with societies' views of these concepts. Understanding, "Who am I?" is important, as it relates to a person's psychological well-being. Confusion leads people to explore and examine what they have learned about

themselves and how this learning fits with the groups with which they identify. It encourages people to reexamine previous notions they have had about why they identify with some aspects from one culture and other aspects from other cultures. Most importantly, people can have more than one identity. Identifying with more than one sense of self does not necessarily mean that one is denying who one is. Rather, it may be an adaptive way to reconcile significant differences between the multiple cultures to which one belongs. Unresolved differences, lack of support, and societies' stigmas can be part of the reason that individuals are unable to find their sense of self. These problems in discovering an identity lead to psychological difficulties.

Acculturation

Several theories have been proposed to help explain the process of identity development in the realm of culture. One such model is acculturation: "Acculturation is a process, not an isolated event" that impacts the development of identity (Thurnwald, 1932, p. 557). Individuals can belong to more than one culture through various means such as birth and migration (Bhugra, 2005). When individuals migrate from one nation to another or from one culture to another, whether temporarily or permanently and whether for economic, political, or educational purposes, it is very likely that their cultural and ethnic identities will change (Bhugra, 2005). When people migrate, they most often take with them their beliefs or idioms, no matter what their reason for migration. These beliefs influence their distress and the idioms phrase how they express their symptoms, as well as how they ask for help.

Important to note in this process is that acculturation changes the construction of identity, indicating that identity is fluid. More specifically, cultural identity is fluid and is

influenced by a number of factors that are important for counselors to be aware of (Bhugra, 2005). Originally, acculturation was conceptualized as a uni-dimensional process in which individuals gave up or relinquished aspects of their heritage culture while at the same time acquiring aspects of the new or dominant culture (Gordon, 1964). This view has been criticized because it assumes that acculturation occurs only for individuals arriving newly to a different society and that it occurs in isolation of the dominant society's influence (Rivera, 2010). It also fails to consider different strategies individuals use to negotiate the new culture, such as becoming bicultural or multicultural (Rivera, 2010).

When individuals come in contact with another culture, two things can happen: They can give up some aspects of their own identity to integrate parts of the new culture, or they can reject the new majority culture and alienate themselves (Bhugra, 2005). Acculturation is finding a balance between integrating some aspects of the new culture to fit in comfortably and keeping important parts of the heritage culture. This process is also influenced by whether the individual comes from a collective culture moving to an individualistic society or vice versa. Berry (1994) discussed how humans adapt culturally and biologically to their ecological context and how individual psychological characteristics develop as a result of these factors. Furthermore, cultural values can impact the development of psychiatric disorders. Maercker (2001) conducted a study in the UK and found that 15% to 53% of cross-cultural variance in psychiatric morbidity may be explained by cultural values. Distress and illness can be especially prevalent when transitioning between collectivistic and individualistic societies. This has also been

found for those who live in dissonant religious neighborhoods. Support from one's cultural groups appears to be vital for well-being and feeling accepted (Maercker, 2001).

Over the past few decades, researchers have often examined acculturation through a fourfold model such as Berry's (1970) model of acculturation. Researchers since have also proposed other fourfold models using various terminology (Rivera, 2010). Berry's model describes the acculturation process as follows: Individuals engage in new environments and are faced with the two issues of holding on to their heritage and deciding how much to integrate or become involved with the new culture/society. Berry proposed that individuals have four possible acculturation strategies: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. During assimilation, the individual interacts and embraces the new society and adapts to the values and behaviors of that culture while rejecting the values and behaviors of the heritage culture. During separation, the individual attempts to maintain the heritage culture and avoid contact with the new society. Marginalization occurs when the individual has little desire to engage with the new society or the heritage society. Last, during integration, the individual simultaneously maintains the heritage culture while also interacting and adapting to the new culture, which often is referred to as biculturalism or multiculturalism. Some research suggests that the integration strategy is the most favored approach, as it is the strategy that is the most effective in achieving positive outcomes as related to higher levels of functioning (Berry, 2003; LaFramboise et al., 1993). One important suggestion made by researchers is the importance of examining public versus private strategies of acculturation. A study conducted in the Netherlands on Turkish immigrants showed that Turkish and Dutch cultures were equally favored by Turkish immigrants in the public

domain, supporting the integration strategy (Arends-Tóth, Van De Vijver, & Poortinga, 2006). However, in the private domain, maintenance of the Turkish culture was favored by Turkish immigrants, suggesting the separation strategy (Arens-Toth et al., 2006). This resulted in Rivera's (2010) proposal that domain specificity be included in assessing acculturation attitudes.

Concerns have been voiced by several researchers that the four-strategy model of acculturation is too limiting, and thus efforts have been made to expand Berry's model and in some cases, to completely revise it (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; Navas, et al., 2005; Rudmin, 2003). Rudmin's (2003) critique was that a greater focus on subcultures, dominant group attitudes, and acquisition of cultural skills should be incorporated with this paradigm. Additionally, measurements currently being used show that some respondents endorse two to four different types of acculturation, even though they are defined as mutually exclusive (Rudmin, 2003).

Overall, the acculturation model continues to present challenges to researchers working to fully understand an individual's life and sense of self. It is a helpful model in the sense that it explains some of the choices that an individual has to make, an important foundation. However, it does not help psychologists understand the process by which an individual makes choices or what the process of making the choice looks like. Furthermore, it does not always fully take into consideration the complicated dynamics of intersecting identities. In sum, this model is helpful in providing a base from which to work from, but it does not holistically capture the phenomenon of identity development. Therefore, it is important to consider an intersectionality approach when exploring the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one culture.

Intersectionality

A holistic theory/model that has been proposed is Intersectionality. The concept of intersectionality has been around for over 30 years and has been defined as the “idea that social identities such as race, class, and gender interact to form qualitatively different meanings and experiences” (Warner, 2008, p. 454). Crenshaw (1989) has been given credit for coining the term *intersectionality*, with the hope of addressing women of color that were falling between the cracks of feminist and antiracist discourse in the U.S. She argued it is vital that both gender and race be explored to determine how they interact and shape the multiple dimensions of Black women. The concept of intersectionality has also been referred to as multiple discrimination, interferences, shared differences, and interlocking oppressions (Oleksy, 2011). Intersectionality theories arose through the multiculturalism movement, which focuses on recognizing the diversity of cultures and speaking out against the oppression of minorities. Thus, it is a theory, methodology, and/or social practice that emphasizes these various overlapping identities that impact each other in each individual (Shields, 2008).

This theory captures the essence of identity development and its complexities in a more holistic manner than do acculturation or the cultural models alone. Acculturation and the various cultural models offer insight into the process of identity development and highlight some of the difficulties that can arise as people navigate through the vast territories of who they are. What they fail to account for is the intersection of various identities that people have. Intersectionality contributes to the process of figuring out conflicting and differing identities. As a society, we tend to create categorical groups in which we place quite different individuals into the same group and in which each

individual can only belong to one group. This prevents individuals representing more than one group from expressing the frustrations and hardships experienced by belonging to multiple groups. For example, how does society view an older black female? Do people consider her struggles as due to her being an older adult, even though she is also Black and a female? Each characteristic as a separate entity can be understood on its own, but how do these three identities interact and influence her perception and life story?

An individual's sense of self is composed of multiple variables. Individuals explore who they are through these various groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation), as well as through the context (e.g., family, school, neighborhood) in which they find themselves, both at the individual and institutional levels (Hancock, 2007). Thus, a person has multiple identities or senses of self, which are all important. Due to the various groups to which individuals belong, the concept of intersectionality emerged, which takes into account interconnecting identities.

Overview

Observation activists and scholars have noted that different citizens succeed in various ways based on certain seemingly unalterable identities, most likely due to experiences related to “institutionalized discrimination, legalized marginalization, or sociopolitically sanctioned violence” (Hancock, 2007, p. 64). When examining the various groups, a disparity can be seen due to the static definitions of race, class, and gender categories. Thus, new conceptualizations of categories and their role in politics are important to consider, as well as people's definitions of their intersecting groups. Intersectionality thus suggests an interactive, mutually constitutive relationship among

intersecting categories and the way in which they shape political institutions, political actors, and the relationship between these institutions and actors (Hancock, 2007).

Intersectionality and intersectional analysis are a fundamental to gaining a complete understanding of social phenomena. A strong case for using intersectionality in research is that it allows researchers to focus on people who are members of multiple groups. One problem with current research is that it often “focus[es] on the experiences of the most privileged members of the subordinate groups,” oftentimes making Black women invisible (Crenshaw, 1993, p. 383; Hancock, 2007). Crenshaw (1989) described a court case based on gender and race discriminatory practice at General Motors (GM). Five black women were discriminated against, but the court overruled their case because the company hired black men and white women; thus, they faced intersectional invisibility because the laws addressed each one type of discrimination separately.

Intersectionality theorists have played a substantial role in facilitating progress in law and legislation (Oleksy, 2011; Crenshaw, 1989). For example, when Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos (2013) explored how religious, ethnic, and gender differences inform Dutch integration policies, they noted how considering only one of these variables as important for policies neglected or excluded other individuals who needed support and did not provide the necessary resources to address the problem. For example, viewing gender as the main contributing factor for why Muslim women have problems finding work, versus viewing gender, religion, and ethnicity as contributing factors, failed to address the various forms of discrimination they faced due to their religion and ethnicity. This is similar to what Black women faced when trying to find work at GM. Furthermore, this view excluded Muslim men who were also struggling to find work and

even identified them as the problem for why women were struggling. By failing to consider the whole person, policies are made that do not address the full problem. In a sense, the success of intersectionality is measured in part by its impact on legislative changes, “requiring policy solutions that are attuned to the interactions of these categories” (Hancock, 2007, p. 65). These policy problems are more than the sum of exclusive parts; rather, the various policies interlock forming a prison of identities for the individual. A result of this prison is what may be referred to as double or triple jeopardy.

How Do We Study Intersectionality?

Using an intersectionality lens requires researchers to inquire about the interaction between the various groups. Rather than ask what it is like to be a male or female or to be Asian or Latina, the researcher asks what it is like to be an Asian female. Furthermore, individuals’ experiences must be understood in the context of the power relations that are embedded in their social identities (Ghavami & Peplau, 2013). Neglecting an individual’s surroundings is neglecting an essential part of an individual. Important to consider is that groups seen at the bottom of the hierarchy compete rather than cooperate in order to gain the attention and political support of dominant groups, causing the overall system of stratification to remain unchanged (Hancock, 2007).

Studying these intersecting identities can be complicated due to several reasons, such as having access to discrimination data, finding individuals with invisible identities, and working with stigmatizing identities (Sawyer et al., 2013). In addition to these complications, the concept of intersectionality is ambiguous and open-ended, which

ensures a continuous exploration of what intersectionality is and how it works and is most likely a large reason for its success as an emergent theory (Davis, 2008).

Even though research focusing on studying singular identities can be useful when attempting to understand the unique experiences of members of individual groups; taking into consideration the multiple identities of an individual will allow psychologists to gather a more holistic perspective (Sawyer, et al., 2013). When considering multiple identities, it is important not to make an additive assumption, as that fails to capture the interactions between the various identities (Hancock, 2007). Rather it is important to explore what the various identities mean as a whole. Having a holistic view can help us study social phenomena in more depth and better understand differential effects on work-related variables.

Ghavami and Peplau (2013) compared perceived cultural stereotypes of diverse groups through the intersecting identities of gender and ethnicity. They noted that most stereotype research focuses on a single social identity such as ethnicity or gender. However, all individuals belong to both a gender and ethnic group, and the intersection of both these identities influences how we think about people. It is important to consider the impact of stereotypes in this context. Otherwise, we are left with a simplistic and incomplete picture of cultural stereotypes. In this study, they found that gender-by-ethnic stereotypes contained unique elements “that could not be obtained by simply adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes” (p. 123). Instead, each gender and ethnic combination provided distinctive experiences not captured by the original identities that went into them.

Using an intersectionality lens “encourages complexity, stimulates creativity, and avoids premature closure, tantalizing feminist scholars to raise new questions and explore uncharted territory” (Davis, 2008, p. 79). Intersectionality advocates strive to make a difference for those who are underprivileged and consider slavery, human trafficking, and equal rights movements. They also challenge researchers to conduct new studies as well as reexamine existing theories for biases and assumptions, especially concerning work based on specific marginalized groups. It is important to reexamine theories that are primarily based on a white male perspective to investigate whether they are fitting for other diverse populations. Intersectionality has gained a lot of favor in feminist research especially with women of color, as it addresses differences among women. Thus, a different way of exploring the complexity of who we are has emerged. Intersectionality is not unique in its attention to application but differs in how it conceptualizes the relationship between various categories.

Intersectionality and Critical Race Feminism theory. To guide the methodology, I will be utilizing Critical Race Feminism theory (CRF). CRF aligns with intersectionality by highlighting the concept of double and triple jeopardy, promoting prosocial change and social advocacy. Stemming from Critical Theory (CT), CRF has its roots in the movement of opposing the dominant social order of society. Arising as a form of oppositional scholarship, CRF theorists challenge “the experiences of white males as the normative standard” and thus grounds its conceptual framework “in the experiences of people of color” (Thomas, 2009, p. 55). Racism has been embedded in the U.S. legal system, as well as in the way people think about racial categories and privileges (Harris, 1993). Those supporting the CRT movement are interested in

transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). They question the foundation of liberal order. Important to this theory is researcher's attempt to try to understand the social situation and attempt to change it. This theory allows the injustice that multicultural and multiracial individuals face to emerge. It is an ongoing process of challenging traditional research paradigms in order to voice the oppression faced by many individuals.

CRF lends itself to incorporating intersectionality, as it is important to explore the interlocking relationships between various salient identities such as race, gender, and class. With this approach, there is a call to be an activist researcher with a social justice agenda (Few, 2007). One of the foremothers, Matsuda described the “multiple consciousness” that women of color may feel as “an awareness of simultaneously facing oppression as a result of both their race/ethnicity and gender” (as quoted in Wing & Smith, 2006, p. 747). Wing (2000) elaborated on this, explaining that women of color may consciously or unconsciously face multiple and simultaneous discrimination, based not only on race/ethnicity and gender but also on other identities such as religion, class, nationality, language, age, and marital status. According to Hua (2003), CRF researchers hope to reclaim feminism by discussing and voicing racism, colonialism, and neocolonialism. To do so, the history of slavery, genocide, sexism, homophobia has to be explored in order to realize how people have been subjugated. The goal of using a CRF lens in designing the study's methodology and analyzing data aligns with the concept of intersectionality, which also takes into account excluded groups and findings ways to promote prosocial change.

Intersectionality and Psychotherapy

Our world is increasingly becoming more complex and globalized, resulting in many people holding distinct and often conflicting psychosocial identities in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality (Josselson & Harway, 2012). Different contexts, including familial and communal, can create situations where congruence and salience among these multiple identities can be challenging (McCubbin, 2009). Identities continue to develop and change throughout life, and stressors associated with oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma can make navigating one's sense of self very challenging, even for resilient individuals. Thus, the exploration of intersectionality is vital for finding coping strategies and self-care strategies, for helping individuals navigate this vast territory, and for better understanding how people navigate the complexity of their multiple selves. A deeper understanding of individuals' experiences can help psychotherapists be more multiculturally sensitive and supportive. Considering the complexities faced by individuals can ensure a more holistic treatment of the individual. It also calls on psychotherapists to enact their roles as social advocates.

People's identity reflects social and historical periods, meaning individuals are not able to simply choose and declare the meanings of their identities and have others accept them. Identities are fluid and context specific (Josselson & Harway, 2012). With many dimensions at play, it seems like we have gaps in our understandings when we see each part of a person's self as separate. Even in classes addressing diversity and how to become a multiculturally competent psychotherapist, it is typical for professors and readings discuss each diverse group separately, with specific characteristics to describe each group. This then may lead to multicultural counseling based on stereotypes, which

does not benefit the client or psychotherapist, as it fails to account for the uniqueness of the individual.

Using intersectionality, whether as a theory, research model, or social paradigm, allows us to consider people who face multiple levels of discrimination. The concept of double and even triple jeopardy has been around for years, but now psychologists are focusing more on how numerous and, at times, conflicting selves impact people's overall essence. This allows psychologists to begin the journey of trying to understand. A client is composed of more than one cultural model. Clients' identities are influenced by gender, religion, ethnicity, and worldview to name just some possibilities. Having a more broad and encompassing perspective allows psychologists to better understand the frustrations and confusions clients face as they try to make sense of multiple identities. Psychologists can empathize with clients' struggles to find a balance between their multiple and often conflicting selves while considering pressures from society to conform.

The Power of Language and Communication

As we consider the multiple intersecting identities that an individual has, it is important to consider the role of language. Language can have a powerful influence on an individual, family, and society. Twenty-one percent of the U.S. population speak a language other than English at home in the United States; with Spanish being the most common language, even though more than 300 languages are represented (Ryan, 2013). In psychotherapy, language is the primary mode of communication and with that it is essential that the client is able to verbalize her or his thoughts and feelings to the therapist and that the therapist is able to understand this. This expectation is hard to fulfill when

the client's first language is not the therapist's main language. Thus, in essence, language is a huge proponent in whether someone will receive services or not (Sue & Sue, 2008). Furthermore, miscommunication goes far beyond simple misunderstandings, rather cultural components play a huge role in expressing oneself. The way people share their stories is influenced by their worldviews and values. The way someone interprets the story is also influenced by her or his worldviews. Therefore, in counseling, psychologists' interpretations are influenced by their macrosystem and their cultural experiences. With this in mind, several studies about racial microaggressions have indicated that language and communication can be used as a form of microaggression against those whose primary language is not English (Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007). In addition to microaggression, languages have been given a hierarchical position. For example in the U.S., languages other than English are seen as inferior. Not only are they seen as inferior, they are also ranked, with Spanish typically being seen as more derogatory than Western European languages (Urciuli, 1996; Torres-Rivera, West-Olatunji, Conwill, Garrett, & Phan, 2008). As an example, Torres-Rivera et al. (2008) provides the example of how those speaking English with an accent, mistakes, and/or incorrect grammar are seen as ignorant and those speaking English as a second language often are seen as using "broken English" or mixed English with heavy accents. Thus, this definition and negativity is placed upon a majority of non-white minority groups such as African Americans speaking a form of nonstandard English, low SES Asian Americans, as well as bilingual Native Americans (Torres-Rivera, et al., 2008). In Britain, research also suggests a negative attitude towards other languages, even though over 300 different

languages are spoken by schoolchildren (Burck, 2004). This demonstrates how those holding the political power can influence how spoken and written language is interpreted.

An important aspect in understanding those who are multilingual is considering the creativity and adaptability that individuals are able to switch back and forth between multiple languages and using code-switching to communicate. Appreciating this phenomenon can help in overcoming negative stigmas associated with “broken” English or those who are linguistically diverse (Torres-Rivera, et al., 2008). Another important consideration is that even when individuals are fluent in their second or third language that their thinking may still be in the form of their primary language. For example, in many Asian languages high context is emphasized, nonverbal communication. For this reason, having a basic understanding of the language dynamics can enable psychologists to better understand the language structure, syntax, and communication styles in order to better and more efficiently apply interventions. Another example, even though there are over 150 Native American languages that are spoken, many have the same underlying interconnectedness, the belief that everything is alive and has a purpose. Understanding this principle, can help psychologists better understand their clients (Garrett, 1998; Torres-Rivera, et al., 2008).

Language is a powerful source of communication. It can also serve as a barrier for those individuals whose main language is not that of the dominant culture. In my pilot study (Peters, 2012) many of the participants were multilingual with different degrees of proficiencies in English (moderate to fluent). They discussed how language served as a barrier in forming friendships and building a support network. One of the participants, Kyle, stated, “Language barriers... make hard to make friends or get in this

culture or whole society.” A different participant had a completely different experience with language and shared how speaking British English helped her make friends, “having that accent made it easier” because people “like hearing my accent.”

Multicultural Counseling Competence and Social Justice

In the field of psychology, especially in counseling psychology, there has been a huge push to strive towards being a multiculturally competent psychologist and a social advocate. “Developing cultural competence requires us to question the dominant values and explore the complexities of cultural identity” (McGoldrick et al., 2005, p. 6). At the Vail APA Conference in 1973, a discussion ensued that it is vital for our profession to provide professional services to culturally diverse individuals and that we are competent when working with individuals who are culturally different from us (Ridley & Kleiner, 2003). Since the Vail Conference, the American Psychological Association (APA) passed and endorsed the multicultural guidelines (2003). These guidelines express: “Psychologists are encouraged to recognize that, as cultural beings, they may hold attitudes and beliefs that can detrimentally influence their perceptions of and interactions with individuals who are ethnically and racially different from themselves” (APA, 2003, p. 382). Thus, cultural competence highlights psychologists’ awareness of how clients may be different, which is an important component of professional behavior so that we may be knowledgeable and sensitive to cultural issues (Vasquez, 2010).

Tseng and Streltzer (2004) define cultural competence in obtaining three qualities: cultural sensitivity, an awareness and appreciation of human cultural diversity; cultural knowledge, having a factual understanding of human cultural diversity; and cultural empathy, which is the ability to connect emotionally with the client’s cultural

perspective. According to Tseng and Streltzer (2004), psychologists are better able to provide cultural guidance by considering the extent that the client's problems are related to cultural factors and experiences. This is salient in providing services in a multicultural competent manner. Raising awareness and further understanding this process is of the utmost essence especially in the face of microaggression. Microaggression refers to "power dynamics in interactions in cross-cultural encounters that convey attitudes of dominance superiority and denigration" with the message that the person with privilege is better than the person of perceived lesser status (Vasquez, p. 133, 2010). Oftentimes, microaggressions are enacted by individuals with egalitarian beliefs, who are not aware of their negative attitudes and stereotypes about people who are different from them (Fouad & Arredondo, 2007). Since the nature of therapy brings with it a power difference, it is vital for practitioners to understand and remember the power they hold in order to not abuse it.

An important strategy when working with individuals who are culturally different is to identify strengths and resilience of the client—"The more we understand about those with whom we work, including understanding their worldview and perspective, the more likely we are to promote a psychotherapeutic alliance" (Vasquez, p. 138, 2010). This is why we are encouraged to learn about other cultures, to take a moment to consider other worldviews of individuals, and how the person has been shaped and influenced by their cultural upbringing. This of course requires the psychologists to be aware of her or his own worldview's in order to know her or his position especially when working with client's who are experiencing oppression and discrimination, so that we may not also unconsciously and automatically judge the client negatively and in a pathological manner

(Vasquez, 2010). For this reason, it is important to consider the intersection of salient identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religious/spiritual orientation, education, and socioeconomic status, and how they can enhance or detract from one's sense of self, especially when an individual belongs to a privileged and oppressed group simultaneously (Green, 2007, keynote speaker cited in Vasquez, 2010).

By enhancing our awareness of how to become more multiculturally competent psychologists we can enact our roles as social advocates. In her presidential address, Vasquez (2012a) stated “working for social justice, is, after all, part of APA’s mission and vision” (p. 30). We can identify why and how to solve the problems of individuals receiving inadequate services, which in some cases could be due to the lack of bilingual therapists, stereotyping of ethnic clients, discrimination, lack of knowledge about client’s culture and lifestyle, as well as a bias towards Western, non-Hispanic White counseling orientations (Casas, Park, & Cho, 2010). Striving towards social justice, which Vasquez (2012b) defines as fairness with behaving in an impartial manner in an effort to treat others equally, is an important goal to have as a psychologist. Therefore, it is important as psychologists to continually work towards multiculturally competence and fulfilling the role of social advocate.

Literature Summary and Conclusions

Identity is a complex phenomenon that is impacted by social context and various salient identities. This process can be made even more challenging when individuals identify with more than one culture, as they encounter contradictory worldviews, belief systems, and messages from society. For this reason, it is important that psychologists

gain a better understanding of this process so they can provide appropriate psychological services.

The concept of identity or sense of self can be traced back to Greco-Roman times. The way it is used today can be traced to the work of William James and Erik Erikson. As James (1961) wrote, individuals have multiple social selves. Some of these multiple selves consist of a cultural, national, racial, ethnic, gender, religious, and spiritual selves. According to Erikson's developmental model, identity becomes salient during adolescence, but it is a lifelong journey. For this reason, it is crucial that psychologists gain a more comprehensive understanding this process. How do individuals make sense of their multiple identities, especially when they identify with more than one nationality?

The theory of acculturation was explored. Acculturation brings insight into what decisions individuals have in terms of accepting, rejecting or merging the various cultural components that surround them. The acculturation theory does not provide insight into how this decision-making process is done. One theory that is helpful for studying the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality is intersectionality. Intersectionality theory involves looking at how people's various salient identities interact and how people make sense of multiple identities. Intersectionality deepens our understanding of humans by providing a richer understanding of how people make sense of the various identities to which they belong. It simultaneously accounts for the interacting effects of gender race, ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, and religion/belief system and how these components influence political access, equality, and justice (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011). Thus, it is a theory, methodology, and/or social practice that emphasize these

various identities that overlap and impact each other in each individual. Addressing these concerns and trying to understand is part of gaining multicultural competence and providing data to support positive social change. Overall, using an intersectionality lens, I am attempting to understand the other person's worldview.

Another important dimension to consider is the power of language and communication. Language can impact the process of identity development in individuals identifying with more than one nationality, either through facilitation or acting as a barrier. It also plays a critical role in whether someone will receive services (Sue & Sue, 2008). Miscommunications can also occur beyond simple misunderstandings. Cultural components play a huge role in expressing oneself; the way people share their stories and interpret stories is influenced by their worldviews and values. Thus, communication is different across the world, and a person must understand this in order to successfully navigate this world.

Studying identity in the context of nationality is important to psychologists' goals of multicultural competence and social advocacy. Gathering a deeper understanding of what individuals go through and how this process takes place will allow us to provide better support in counseling as well as advocate on individuals' behalves when necessary. Every one goes through the process of identity development, which involves making sense of multiple salient identities. Additional salient identities, such as identifying with more than one nationality, can make this process more complex. For this reason, it is a research topic that is worthy of investigation.

Summary

Studying the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality can help psychologists better understand what this process is like and how to address it in counseling. There are models that delineate how multicultural individuals make sense of a part of themselves, such as the theory of acculturation, which provides options that individuals have, but does not provide an understanding behind these options and decisions being made. Filling in these missing puzzle pieces is the goal of the current study.

Identity development is a lifelong journey that is impacted by context, society, and the individual. It is a process people do not necessarily think about, and having individuals take a moment to reflect on it could provide insight that could help psychologists' provide better services. Furthermore, gaining the perspectives of a variety of individuals living in different dominant western nationalities will allow us different perspectives on how this process works across westernized nations.

Even though each individual has a unique experience and different circumstances that led to the identification of multiple nationalities, I believe that a shared story will emerge in addition to unique elements. These stories can influence future research projects and impact counseling processes. In our increasingly global world, more and more individuals are moving and being exposed to new nationalities. It is no surprise then that it is important to study this phenomenon so that we can address the needs of these individuals.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter restates the research questions, identifies my stance as a researcher, and discusses the underlying principles for the theoretical framework, methodology, data collection methods, and analysis. In addition to this, issues related to rigor and trustworthiness are discussed, as well as ethical considerations for the current study.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals who identify with more than one nationality.

The primary research question guiding the current study was:

- Q1 What are the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality?
 - Q1a How have individuals made sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality?
 - Q1b What has facilitated or hindered the individual's identity development?

Methodology

Research Model and Paradigm

I believe the best way to address the research question was through using a qualitative research paradigm. Having a qualitative paradigm allowed me to explore the process of one's sense of self in the context of nationality as it naturally occurs (Polkinghorne, 2005). Four elements are considered during this research process: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods, which according to

Crotty (1998) guide the ontology, philosophy, process, and procedures of a study. Figure 1 shows the four elements in the current study, which have been adapted from Crotty.

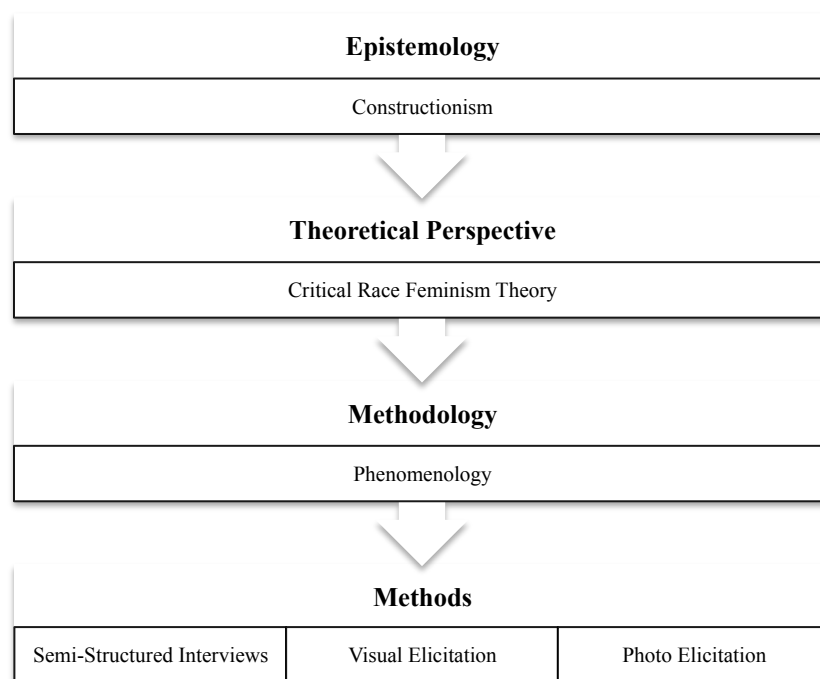


Figure 1. Elements of Research (adapted from Crotty, 1998)

Epistemology

Epistemology is the relationship between what is being researched and the researcher (Creswell, 2007), as well as a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Constructionism is the epistemology I used in this study to understand and explain how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). Constructionists make the assumption that there is no objective truth waiting to be discovered; rather, truth or meaning comes into existence in and out of our interactions with the world. Thus, truth is constructed (Crotty, 1998). Through this study I investigated the phenomenon of how

individuals who identified with more than one nationality make sense of themselves in the context of intersectionality. It is assumed that participants would construct meaning and experience, make sense of themselves differently, and through this provide multiple truths or realities of the same phenomenon. A basic tenet is that knowledge and reality are built on human interaction and experiences within a social context. Thus, it is important to explore not only how individuals engage and make sense of their world, but also how history and social context guide these understandings. Each participant's construction of reality, or the way she/he make sense of the world, is important as well as "valid and worthy of respect as any other" (Crotty, 1998, p.58) and can help us to better understand the process of identity development when identifying with more than one nationality.

Theoretical Perspective

A theoretical perspective is the manner in which humans approach understanding and explaining society and the world, which, as researchers, guides the study's methodology (Crotty, 1998). A theoretical framework serves as a structure or scaffold for the research study (Merriam, 1998). To guide this dissertation, I utilized Critical Race Feminism Theory (CRF), which has its roots in Critical Theory (CT).

Critical theorists aim to challenge and destabilize established knowledge and to raise consciousness of social conditions. As a critical researcher, I consider the moral and ethical issues within the context of my work. It is important to examine the "historical problems of domination, alienation, social struggles, and how social inequalities arising from racism and other forms of oppression continue to privilege certain groups and disadvantage others" (Thomas, 2009, p. 54). CT, furthermore, is

concerned with the empowerment of human beings to surpass the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender (Fay, 1987). In order to do so, I as a researcher need to acknowledge my own power and use the theory to illuminate social action (Madison, 2005). The end goal of research is to focus on transforming underlying orders of social and systemic relations that compose society (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

According to CT, “critical forms of research call current ideology into question, and initiate action, in the cause of social justice” (Crotty, 1998, p. 157). I identify with this theory of methodology and its goals—freedom and equity for society and the agenda of social justice. Throughout previous and current research, as well as my own personal experience, I have become aware of barriers that multicultural individuals face: a pressure to choose only one culture, nationality, and/or race and the constant message that it is impossible to belong to more than one nationality. CT challenges these beliefs “to discard false consciousness, open themselves to new ways of understanding, and take effective action for change” (Crotty, 1998, p. 157).

Using a CRF lens, the researcher uses an intersectionality lens and tries to understand the person in context of the influence of political access, equality, and justice (Dua, 1999). Furthermore, a CRF lens lends itself to being an activist researcher with a social justice agenda (Few, 2007). The contemporary movement of CRF, according to Hua (2003), permits researchers to move beyond the black-white perspective and encompass not only black feminists but also other feminists of color, mixed-race, and even white feminists who engage in CR analyses. CRF theorists call for researchers to advocate for the perspective of historically excluded groups. This creates opportunities for producing new knowledge and change (Cahill, 2007; Thomas, 2009).

Researcher's Stance

Description of the researcher. My personal interest in this topic stems from my background and experiences growing up. I am a 27-year-old German female, graduate student working towards a doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology. I completed my Bachelor of Psychology in Texas and then moved to Colorado to pursue my doctorate degree. My high school years were spent in Switzerland at an international high school, which had students representing countries from all over the world including Hungary, India, Thailand, Israel, Russia, Brazil, and Canada. Having the opportunity to interact with students from so many different places in the world is one of the reasons I became interested in studying identity development in individuals identifying with multiple nationalities. As I was growing up, my family and I would move every four to six years to a different country due to my father's career. I have had the privilege to live in and learn about a variety of cultures including my primary German culture as well as the Dutch, Swiss, and U.S. culture. Moving around has been a great experience as it gave me the opportunity to learn about various nationalities, experience a variety of foods, and meet wonderful people. It was also challenging because it required me to figure out how to adapt to each place without losing my sense of self. My experiences have largely influenced the reason I want to study the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality.

I have had the opportunity to conduct research in the area of identity development in individuals belonging to more than one nationality throughout my graduate studies. During this process I learned that many of the individuals had similar experiences to mine, primarily in trying to fit in to the dominant nation while still being themselves.

Many of them also had different experiences than mine, especially those individuals who identified with a minority group in terms of race, ethnicity, and religion. Being European has eased my transition from country to country, which all share White privilege. Thus, unless individuals know I am a foreigner, my life was made easier by my phenotype—i.e., looking like I fit in. This starkly contrasted from several of the pilot study participant's experiences whom were constantly reminded by society that they are foreigners and are not wanted. Our experiences became similar, especially in terms of travel, when identification such as showing a passport made it clear that we were not from the U.S. Having had the benefit of seeing how people are treated from both sides, belonging to the privileged and unprivileged side, has allowed me a unique perspective into discrimination and oppression, which has amplified my passion for social justice.

Throughout my work, I have found it important to write about and discuss my experiences in terms of identifying with more than one nationality in order to ensure that my experiences are kept apart from the participants' experiences. My experiences have impacted my research interests as well as influenced the questions I asked participants. My curiosity allowed me the patience to listen to the responses and experiences from my participant's point of view. Thus, I expected to hear experiences that are different from mine as well as experiences that are similar. I was intrigued and excited to be able to hear from other individuals about what their process has been like so far in making sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality. It was important for me throughout the current study to constantly stop and check in with myself to see how these narratives are shaping me as well as making sure that my biases and judgments did not contaminate the data.

Choice of research topic. The primary reason for choosing this topic for my dissertation is because I agree with a recent call in our field for an emphasis on social justice oriented research as well as for more global research. I believe it is crucial as a future counseling psychologist to strive towards fulfilling our role as advocates for those who experience oppression, discrimination, and other social barriers. The importance of exploring the process of identity development in individuals identifying with more than one nationality will provide counseling psychologists with a better understanding and awareness of what this process is like when working with individuals from various backgrounds. It is a complicated process that can impact mental health. It is important, as recent researchers have called for, to conduct more global/international research (Arnett, 2008; Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2011; Forrest, 2010). Therefore, I recruited participants living in primarily westernized nations, North America and Europe, in hopes to gather a more holistic picture. Setting this limit provided a shared essence that brought a more in-depth understanding of experiences individuals' faced that may have differed if they had been living in other regions of the world. Having participants share at least one identity with a western and individualistic nation resulted in a common starting point that enhanced the credibility of the study. One participant included resided in the Middle East, but identified with a westernized nation. Reasons for her inclusion will be discussed. Expanding this research interest into other countries around the world will be something that future researchers can do with this study serving as a platform. I thus hope to contribute to the literature by including participants living in North America, Europe, and the Middle East, from a variety of cultural groups.

Methodology

Crotty (1998) compares research methodology to a strategy or plan of action that helps navigate the choices we make and the methods we use to reach the desired outcome. The methodology I employed is phenomenology. During a “phenomenological investigation the researcher has a personal interest in whatever she or he seeks to know; the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59). The focus of a phenomenological study is on the essence or structure of an experience or phenomenon. In this approach, the researcher strives to set aside prejudgment in regards to the phenomena under investigation (Moustakas, 1994). According to Patton (1990), the assumption is that there is an essence or essences to shared experience, and these essences are the core meanings that are mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. Thus, there is a focus on descriptions of the participants’ experiences and how they experienced what they experienced (Patton, 1990). In this study, I investigated the shared essence of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality.

Research Methods

For the research to be conducted Institutional Review Board’s (IRB) approval was gained. The methods for data collection and procedures for data analysis are outlined in Figure 2.

Outline of Research Study
Gained IRB approval (see Appendix A)
Sent letter via email to potential participants (see Appendix B)
Screened interested participants (see Appendix C) to ensure they fit the requirements of the research study. Documented individuals who responded and reasoning for inclusion or exclusion in study.
Sent email to participants to set a date and time for an interview via Skype TM .
Sent Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D) and participant demographic information sheet (see Appendix E) prior to interview. In that email I provided information about the photo elicitation and visual elicitation and how these methods would be used. Shared with participants that they should choose pictures and mementos that have meaning of belonging to more than one nationality. Explain what a memento/artifact is.
Before interview began I reviewed Informed Consent and expectations of research participants.
Answered any questions participants had.
Began interview process.
At the end of first interview reminded participants about photo elicitation and visual elicitation and the purpose of each for the second and/or third interview. Participants were asked to share their pictures via email, dropbox, or Skype TM .
Emailed participants to set date and time for second interview. Emailed transcription of first interview.
Began interview process.
Emailed those participants who did not have either their photo or visual elicitation materials during the second interview to set date and time for a third interview.
Emailed second transcript.
Began Interview.
End of interview answered questions from participants. Inquired if participants would be open to providing feedback on themes found, either through Skype TM or email.
Emailed third transcript.
Sent email inquiring about member check and individual's availability to either talk or email feedback and reactions.
Member check.

Figure 2. Outline of Research Study.

IRB approval. After approval of my research proposal from my dissertation committee, the necessary paperwork was submitted as an application for the university's

Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB ensured that my study meets the ethical requirements expected at our setting (see Appendix A).

Informed consent. Prior to beginning the interview questions and audio recording, I reviewed informed consent with each participant and obtained her or his written or electronic consent. The informed consent (see Appendix D) includes the researcher's and advisor's contact information, a description of the study, information that the participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without a penalty, steps taken to ensure confidentiality, potential risks and benefits, and a notification that I may contact them after the interview for a follow-up interview and/or member check. Furthermore, an explanation of how photo and visual elicitation would be used in the study was reviewed to set expectations. Additionally, limits to confidentiality in using SkypeTM and email in regards to interviewing, sending transcripts and pictures was emphasized to ensure that participants were comfortable. When the participant understood and agreed to continue to participate in this current study, she or he electronically or physically signed the form and emailed it to me.

Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym, which was used when transcribing, during peer check, and in the final report. Participants were asked to complete a demographic form (Appendix E) before the interview. The demographic information has been used in the final report with careful attention that the information provided would not identify the participant.

Research participants. Criterion sampling was used as recommended by Creswell (2007) when choosing research participants for a phenomenological paradigm. Criterion sampling ensures that all the participants have experienced the phenomenon,

which is essential to the phenomenological paradigm that the participants have lived experience rather than secondhand experience of the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2007). Criterion sampling is utilized by identifying specific criteria that participants must meet before they can partake in the study. Screening questions are found in Appendix C.

Participants were 10 individuals who identified with more than one nationality. Sample size was influenced by when saturation was reached at seven participants. Three more individuals already recruited were interviewed to continue gathering information on unique experiences as well as to verify the information gathered from the first seven participants. For the current study, saturation was “defined as ‘data adequacy’ and operationalized as collecting data until no new information is obtained” (Morse, 1995, p. 147). Ten individuals, falls in the guideline set by Polkinghorne (2005) who promotes a range of five to 25 participants. Participants were contacted via email, which was the main mode of communication in addition to SkypeTM. In order for a participant to qualify she/he had to identify with more than one nationality either through birth or various forms of migration. Participants’ ages ranged from 24 to 46 years of age. Participant’s were purposely chosen to be at least 24 years of age or older due to the following reasons with the caveat that identity is fluid and continues to change throughout a person’s life: (a) Individuals would have gone through Erikson’s stage of identity versus role confusion, (b) mid-twenties has been identified as the age where society sees individuals as early adults and expects mature adult-like behaviors (Winefield & Harvey, 1996), and (c) from my previous research studies, individuals in this age range were more easily able to reflect on their identity development process

versus those individuals in their early twenties. Participants were screened to ensure that they understood and spoke English at a sufficient level in order to participate, which accounted for problems that could arise due to issues with translation and transcription. Furthermore, participants were required to have access to a computer with Skype™. Skype™ offers free services that allow individuals to call, see, message, and share information with other people around the world as long as they have a device with Internet connection. Skype™ has the benefit of telephone interviewing that have been used in previous research studies with the addition of being able to add the visual dimension that makes using Skype™ resemble more the face-to-face dynamics of traditional interviewing (Hanna, 2012).

Recruitment. In order to recruit participants I contacted several places in North America and Europe, requesting for them to send my recruitment letter to their members including: the African Community Center (Denver, CO); the Center for Multicultural Affairs at Colorado University (Boulder, CO); Central European University (Budapest, Hungary); Insead (Fontainebleau, France); the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (Ontario, Canada); the London Korean Cultural Center (London, United Kingdom); the Romanian Cultural Center (London, United Kingdom); Student Diversity Programs and Services at Colorado State University (Ft. Collins, CO); and Zurich International High School (Adliswil, Switzerland). Furthermore, I utilized snowball sampling method in order to obtain information rich cases. Snowball sampling may not lead to a representative selection of any one specific population, but it can include representatives of a variety of populations (Handcock & Gile, 2011). Interested participants were asked to email me if they are interested in participating. I kept a participant journal as part of

my audit trail in which I documented known demographics of individuals who were interested in participating in the study and my decision making process of why or why not they were included. Twenty individuals contacted me with initial interest in participating. Ten of these twenty individuals participated. Reasons for exclusion for seven of the individuals were that the individual did not meet the inclusion requirement such as not identifying with more than one nationality, not feeling able to complete the interview in English, or not being at least 24 years of age or older. For three of the individuals they withdrew due to not being able to commit to more than one interview. One of the three individuals completed part of interview one but was unable to set another time to finish the interview and complete the visual and photo elicitation. Therefore his information was not included. Another one of the 10 participants did not meet the original criteria of currently living in North America or Europe, due to a miscommunication during the screening process. This participant had for many years lived in the U.S., which would have met the requirements. Because I did not realize my mistake initially, interviews had already started with my false assumption that she was visiting Israel at the time rather than residing there. Part of qualitative research is honoring the participants' time commitment and experience. After the realization of my mistake, I decided to keep her as one of the participants for the following reasons: (a) her information and experiences related to other participants experiences and (b) the restriction of North America and Europe had been established for participants to have a shared common ground in relating to or having experience with a westernized nation, which participant had.

Setting. All interviews took place via Skype™. Participants were able to choose their location to conduct their Skype™ interview, while my location was in a small private office at home.

Data collection. Data collection consisted of two to three 60 to 90 minute semi-structured interviews, demographic information, and some field notes. Time between interviews ranged from one to four weeks. Rapport between the researcher and participants was established, which is important for conducting in-depth qualitative interviews in order to provide the best understanding of the phenomena being studied. Moustakas (1994) recommends that interviews be interactive, informal, and consist of open-ended comments and questions in order to obtain evidence of the lived experience. In semi-structured interviews the questions are a mixture between more and less structured questions with the flexibility for the researcher to ask questions in a different order as well as use different wordings to “respond to the situation at hand” and the emerging worldview of the participant (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Appendix F contains the interview guide that was used for the first interview. Follow-up interview questions were based on participant’s responses and were aimed at gaining clarification or more depth.

To enhance the data gathered, I utilized a photo elicitation technique. Photo elicitation is incorporating pictures into the interview process (Harper, 2002). Images are able to “evoke deeper elements of human consciousness” than words alone (Harper, 2002, p. 13). In order to incorporate photo elicitation, participants were asked to take photos or choose photos they already owned that represent their identity development. Participants compiled between four to 10 pictures and shared them prior to the interview via email or Skype™. The photo elicitation was introduced during informed consent to

ensure that participants knew what to expect. Participants were asked to choose photos that were meaningful to them in regards to belonging to more than one nationality. At the end of the first interview, the photo elicitation was reintroduced and an opportunity for questions regarding photo elicitation was offered. The description provided about the photo elicitation included discussing the purpose of including pictures, the importance of feeling comfortable sharing the pictures as a copy will be provided to the researcher, and that participants will receive an opportunity to indicate if there are pictures that they are uncomfortable having published. The photos were emailed or shared through SkypeTM and discussed in the second or third interview about what the pictures represent and mean to the individual. Photos included pictures of the participants themselves, friends and family, landscapes, and objects. For publication purposes, faces have been blurred to maintain participants confidentiality. In addition to photo elicitation, I also incorporated visual elicitation.

Visual elicitation allowed participants to choose one to two objects such as a poem, journal, drawing, or an artifact that helps the person further express what the process of integration has been like for them. Visual elicitation was a useful tool to symbolize or represent the integration process, which may be difficult to express in words (Johnson & Weller, 2002). Participants were asked to take a picture of their mementos and email it for data analysis purposes. I did not keep or have access to the mementos, only via picture. If a participant was unable to actually have the memento with her/him for the interview, she/he were able to describe the object or find a picture that represents the memento. Individuals chose one to four mementos to share ranging from choosing a picture of a car to jewelry to a name change document. Visual elicitation was introduced

during informed consent. I reviewed how the memento would be incorporated into the interview, that I would request a picture of the memento, and that I would ask them questions about how this memento holds meaning for them in terms of their identification with more than one nationality. The visual elicitation was integrated either in the second or third interview depending on when the participant had chosen their memento.

All interviews were digitally recorded on an audio recorder, as well as on my personal laptop, which is password-protected. The audio recordings were stored on a password-protected computer and deleted once transcriptions had been completed. I completed transcriptions for all interviews. Paper versions of notes, demographic information, and signed consent forms have been stored in a locked filing cabinet at my home, and printed copies of consent forms are kept with my advisor on campus for three years as required by IRB. Nine of the 10 participants signed the informed consent electronically, and are therefore stored electronically on my personal password-protected laptop.

After transcriptions were completed for each interview, they were sent via email to the participant with the request to review the transcript for accuracy and opportunity to add additional information. Participants were informed prior about the limits of confidentiality related to using email or sharing files via SkypeTM (e.g., hackers having the potential to access their data). Emailing transcripts was one part of member checking. Participants responded to the transcripts having either skimmed or completely read the transcripts and making subtle changes such as misspellings of locations or words spoken in a different language.

Data analysis. According to Patton (2002), data analysis is the process by which the researchers “recognize patterns in qualitative data and turn those patterns into meaningful categories and themes” (p. 463). An important step in phenomenological analysis is to take part in setting aside judgment also referred as ‘Epoche’ or bracketing (Moustakas, 1994). It is important for the researcher to be aware of her or his own biases because she or he is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Biases can impact and influence the process of data collection and analysis. For many years, phenomenological researchers have attempted to bracket their experience, in which they set aside their own assumptions and pre-understandings of the phenomenon prior to data collection. This is done in order that the phenomena can be revisited in a fresh, naïve, and open manner (Moustakas, 1994). However, in recent years, bridling has come about, which acknowledges that it is impossible to truly set aside one’s biases (Dahlberg, 2006). The metaphor bridling describes it is impossible to cut off our assumptions and beliefs, but during our research process we can “slacken” our beliefs in order to allow more room for new understandings and meanings to emerge from the phenomena being studied (Merleau-Ponty, 1995).

In order for me to bridle my bias, I have shared my personal background in how I have come to be interested in this research area as well as what my experience with the phenomenon has been. Furthermore, throughout this research study I kept a reflexive journal and notes when I believed that my assumptions and belief systems were impacting data collection and analysis. The reflexivity journal and notes allowed space for me to share how the study has impacted me and growth that I encountered in this process.

Data analysis followed the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model by Moustakas (1994) in which analysis occurs in several phases over the course of the study. The first phase includes identifying my personal experience, which Moustakas refers to as bracketing or *Epoche*, which I have replaced with the concept of bridling for the reasons stated above. The first phase is also the time to collect data. The second phase is a content analysis and the final stage of analyses is thematic. In the first stage, I described my experience of the phenomena, bridling, so that I can focus as much as possible on the participants in the study. Then, I developed a list of significant statements about participants' experiences of the topic; I listed these statements (horizontalization of the data) and treat all statements equally. In this process, I attempted to develop a nonrepetitive list. Significant statements were grouped into larger units of information, or "meaning units." A description was written about what participants experienced, textural description of the experience, including verbatim examples. After this happens, I wrote a description of how the experience happened, structural description, and reflected on the context in which the phenomena occurred. Lastly, I wrote a holistic description of the phenomenon incorporating composite textural and structural descriptions. This is an attempt to capture the essence of the experience.

Trustworthiness

In order to establish trustworthiness, the degree to which the research findings can be believed and how worthwhile they are to explain the phenomenon being examined, and to establish the criteria for rigorous qualitative research, the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability must be met (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam (1998) also recommends careful attention to a study's conceptualization, data

collection, analysis, and interpretation throughout the entire process and how these four components are being met.

Credibility. Credibility addresses the fit between the participant's view of their life and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I strived to establish credibility by including thick descriptions, researcher reflexivity, member check, and triangulation.

Thick descriptions according to Morrow (2005) involve detailed, rich descriptions of both the participants' experiences of the phenomena as well as the context in which those experiences occurred. Providing concrete descriptions and details is the foundation for qualitative research as it helps readers to understand the phenomenon and to draw their own interpretations about the importance and implications (Patton, 1990).

Additionally, explaining how I assessed the data such as data saturation is important in capturing the richness of the information shared. Researcher reflexivity is highlighting the process of the researcher monitoring her or his own bias (Morrow, 2005). Reflexivity refers to investigators' ability to articulate their cultural worldview, understand their salience to participants, and consider their impact during each stage of the research process and its outcomes (Lyons & Bike, 2010, p. 419). Subjectivity is the recognition that researchers' worldviews influence the questions they ask as well as how data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Thus, in order to monitor my bias, I wrote my researcher's stance and also kept a reflexive journal throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Member check is when I took the data collected from participants and tentative interpretations of data back to the participants and inquire whether these interpretations are accurate. Member check occurred at various points in

time such as sharing transcripts, reviewing preliminary analysis during the second and third interview, as well as sharing initial findings with participants. Each participant had the opportunity to respond to the findings. One participant in the final stage of member checking was unreachable due to her email being inactive. She had responded until that point with agreement of initial findings and when contact was able to be made several months later, she was able to review the final findings. During the member check, some participants decided that they would prefer certain pictures to not be included and certain locations previously mentioned not be named in order to better maintain their confidentiality. Lastly, triangulation is using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm emerging findings. I utilized multiple sources of data including semi-structured interviews, photo elicitation, and visual elicitation, as well as my notes. Furthermore, members reviewing the data and consulting with my research advisor allows for multiple perspectives to be considered, which also established triangulation.

Dependability. Dependability is the process of the inquiry and the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that it is logical, traceable, and documented. I am responsible for describing how changes affected the way the research was approached as well as describe the context in which the study occurred (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I strove to establish dependability through an audit trail, triangulation, peer check, and including thick descriptions.

An audit trail “is a detailed chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes, categories, or models; and analytic memos” (Morrow, 2005, p. 252). I kept careful documentation of my

research process throughout the study. I utilized triangulation as mentioned earlier through using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, and multiple methods to confirm emerging findings. Peer check is when colleagues review the data and analysis proposing alternative interpretations to those of the investigator as well as making recommendations to enhance critical discussions. Peer check took place by giving one colleague the transcripts, photos and themes found. The colleague was a doctoral level student in the Applied Psychology and Counselor Education Department at the same institution as the investigator who had successfully completed multiple qualitative methodology classes. The colleague read through the transcripts and came up with his own themes and then compared them to the themes that I found. After this was completed, my colleague and I discussed the results and what changes, if any, should be made. Thick descriptions of both the participants' experiences of the phenomena as well as the context in which those experiences occurred are provided.

Conformability. Conformability is the process that provides support or establishes the certainty or validity. It allows for replication to occur. In order to meet the standards of conformability, I utilized peer check, audit trail, and provided thick descriptions. The process of peer check is described above, in which my colleague reviewed the data and analysis, proposing alternative interpretations and making recommendations to enhance critical discussions. The audit trail is composed of a thorough documentation of the study process including notes taken, transcripts, my reflexivity journal, and so forth. Lastly, providing thick descriptions was done through providing detailed information and verbatim examples so that others can have a more holistic understanding of the findings.

Transferability. Transferability is established when the researcher provides sufficient information on the case(s) studied so that the reader can establish a degree of similarity between cases studied and have the possibility for naturalistic generalizability to occur, meaning being able to transfer the findings to her or his own context (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). I provided thick descriptions in order for transferability to occur. By providing rich descriptions and verbatim examples, readers can draw their own interpretations about the importance and implications of the phenomenon (Patton, 1990).

Ethical Considerations

It is important to consider ethical dilemmas that may have arisen in the course of the research study. It is crucial to recognize the power imbalance that may be created between the participants and myself. It was therefore essential to review the informed consent form with participants and emphasize that they may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Furthermore, participation was voluntary and no deception was included in this research study, meaning that participants had a general idea of the content of the research study. Additionally, efforts to establish more balance in the research relationship was made by allowing participants to choose their location of the interview, read the transcripts and findings, as well as choose their pseudonym.

Counseling. As participants were recruited from North America, Europe, and the Middle East, a referral list for mental health services was not made ahead of time. Participants were offered information about mental health services in the unlikely event that the interview provoked feelings of discomfort or distress requiring mental health services, but no participants requested this information.

Even though the nature of this research study is not sensitive in nature, interviews can be very personal (Moustakas, 1994). It is therefore important to be cognizant of how the participants are doing throughout the study and to discontinue interviews if the participant becomes too distressed. Additionally, as I am trained to become a counseling psychologist, it was important for me to remain in the role of a researcher and not to switch into the role of counseling. Furthermore, being cognizant of the participant's time commitment is essential and thus during the interview process I checked in with participants to inquire whether the time commitment was possible and reasonable.

Confidentiality. Another important consideration is establishing confidentiality of participants. The ways I strove toward enhancing confidentiality was by storing my audio recordings and other digital information on my password-protected laptop. Any documentation that I have that is not digital was kept in a locked filing cabinet. Next, I was conscientious of not using information in any written reports that could identify the participants. Additionally, participants were encouraged to review transcripts and interpretations in order to provide feedback. Even though not all feedback may be possible to include, the idea was to ensure that I captured the participants' beliefs and views as accurately as possible.

Use of Skype™ Technology. Skype™ was used to allow me to interview participants in regions where I do not reside. Skype™ has the same benefits as telephone interviewing with the added benefit that I can use the webcam to make the interview more similar to a face-to-face interview. Even though a visual recording is possible, I only recorded audio. A few problems arose with Skype™ such as having a phone call drop and having the Internet connection slowing down on a few occasions, making it

more difficult to hear and understand the other person. However, calling the participant back and having the participant review the transcript was done to minimize the loss of vital information,

All of these steps were taken in hopes to honor the participants' openness and willingness to share their experiences and perspectives, helping me gain a better understanding of the phenomena. Qualitative research is humanizing and puts people first (Kushner, 2000) and keeps ethics at its heart. Therefore, I did my best to uphold ethical principles throughout the study beginning with my proposal, data collection, analysis, and report writing.

Pilot Studies

I designed and conducted a pilot study (Peters, 2012) for the current study, which was phenomenological in nature, to explore the process of how self-identified multicultural college students at a university in the Rocky Mountain region integrated the different cultural groups they identified with. Cultural groups were defined for the study as participants identifying as belonging to more than one nationality or ethnic group. Ten participants completed 30 to 60 minute semi-structured interviews. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted. Data analyses followed the simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model by Moustakas (1994), which was utilized in the current study. Six themes emerged during analysis including language, race, religion, cultural appreciation, education, and dominant culture. Furthermore, barriers and factors that facilitate the integration process were identified.

I learned several things from conducting the first pilot study. First, it guided the literature review and which salient identities to explore in more detail. Second, it helped

me alter the language from *identity integration* to *identity development* as well as specifying more clearly the concept of *culture* and explore the concept of *nationality*. Next, it allowed me to adjust the interview questions that were not as helpful in eliciting responses that captured the phenomenon. I also learned that individuals were excited to receive the opportunity to talk about their experiences, something that they typically do not have the opportunity to do. It also revealed to me that this phenomenon is vital to be studied in more depth, as it is a complicated process that deeply impacts the individual.

From the first pilot study, a second pilot was developed and conducted (Peters & Lahman, 2013), a holistic case study exploring the identity formation of a multicultural, Saudi Arabian female attending college in the U.S., who participated in the first study. Observations, five in-depth interviews, and a participant photo journal were utilized to gather information over a span of six months. The six themes from the initial study were explored to see how they appeared in the participant's everyday life.

The second pilot study aided my decision to add multiple interviews. I found that the participant in the second study would bring up additional information that she thought of after our previous interview. I believed allowing for the participant to have time to ponder this topic would enhance the descriptions and details provided. Furthermore, I found that the participant enjoyed having another medium, such as photos, to share her process. For this reason, I decided to include photo and visual elicitation in hopes that this would aid participants in expressing themselves about their lived experiences.

The two pilot studies were helpful in forming this research for several reasons. They assisted me in choosing the age range for recruiting participants, refined and adapted the interview questions, and choose the theory that is most fitting for advocating

social justice. Furthermore, I learned more about the process of building rapport before beginning the interview, including making sure participants are comfortable. I also improved my interviewing skills and asking follow-up questions when relevant to ensure richer data. Having had a chance to conduct data analyses helped me improve my data analysis for the current study and improve organizing the process. Overall, I believe the prior research helped me improve the quality of the current study and better highlight the relevance of the topic being studied.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the qualitative research methodology including the research model and paradigm, such as the epistemology and theoretical underpinning that shaped this study. I defined Critical Race Feminism Theory in more depth and how this theory influences the methodology, research methods, and procedures.

Additionally, I described the participants, setting, and methods for the current study. Participants were 10 individuals identifying with more than one nationality living in North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Semi-structured interviews, photo elicitation, and visual elicitation were utilized to gather data. I also kept a reflexivity journal as part of the bridling process. Next, I analyzed the data to find themes that help describe the essence of the phenomena.

Lastly, I described rigor and trustworthiness of this study as well as ethical considerations. I did my best to uphold the rigor of the study through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability by using multiple forms of data, including participants in verifying my results, and providing rich details. Furthermore, I attempted to provide a safe space for participants so they would feel

comfortable sharing their experiences with me to better capture the phenomena. The rights of the participants were reviewed at the beginning of the study to ensure the highest level of ethics.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe and analyze participants' experiences of identifying with more than one nationality in order to understand the essence of identifying with more than one nationality. The University of Northern Colorado Institutional Review Board approved the research procedure before the study proceeded. Unique experiences within individuals and shared themes between individuals are noted throughout the data analysis to increase the understanding of the phenomenon. The accounts of participants' stories and experiences described in this chapter are summarized from in-depth interviews. The accounts do not include assumptions made by me, the researcher. To describe the participants' experiences, some nonverbal observations are included to enrich the results. Direct quotes are provided to enrich the data as part of thick description and to make it possible for the reader to consider transferability.

As described in the methodology of Chapter III, multiple sources of data were used to help enhance trustworthiness in the analysis: demographic questionnaires, observational notes, and interview transcripts. In addition, all participants were provided the opportunity to be contacted again for member checks to ensure the accuracy of the data they had provided in the form of transcripts as well as the themes that emerged during analysis. Transcripts were emailed to all participants after each interview.

Participants were provided with emerging themes after all interviews were completed and given the opportunity to comment. All participants responded, with half stating they had skimmed the transcripts and themes with no changes requested. One participant asked that certain information or photos not to be used in order to maintain his confidentiality. Two participants corrected spellings of places or words, which had been spoken in a language other than English. Two participants expressed not having read their transcripts or themes. In addition, trustworthiness during the analysis process was also enhanced through peer check in which a fellow counseling psychology doctoral candidate with training in qualitative research came up with his own themes, which were then compared to the researcher's themes. Discrepancies were discussed and modifications made to strengthen the emerging themes. The majority of themes aligned, such as the researcher coding "speaking the language," which the colleague coded as "the importance of language" that was ultimately renamed to "feeling connected or disconnected through multiple languages." The researcher and colleague also organized some themes and subthemes differently. Discussion centered on naming themes, organization, and important descriptions needed for each theme. No major discrepancies were found in regards to content. A consensus was established, which is reflected in the following sections of this chapter.

Ten individuals (age range = 24 to 46, $\bar{x} = 30.1$) partook in the study and were interviewed two to three times each. Demographic information such as nationality, language, age, and country of residence were obtained and are displayed in Table 1. For the current study, saturation was reached for the main themes after the seventh person. Three more individuals already recruited were interviewed to continue gathering

information to verify the information gathered from the first seven participants. Inclusion criteria for the study were (a) identifying with more than one nationality, (b) speaking English, (c) being 24 years of age or older, and (d) residing in North America or Europe. One participant resided in the Middle East (i.e., Israel), and the reasons for including her are described in Chapter III. All interviews were conducted via SkypeTM. All participants spoke proficient English, and no interpreters were used in the study. The following section includes the description and the background information of each participant, such as where they are from, the nationalities with which they identify, and what languages they speak. All participants chose their own pseudonyms, which are used throughout this chapter in place of participants' real names. Furthermore, themes and considerations for mental health professionals are discussed.

Table 1

Participant Descriptions

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Nationality	Country of Residence	Language(s)	Parents' Nationality
Mari	26	Female	Finnish, American, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Finnish	Mother: Finnish Father: Japanese
Steve	32	Male	American, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Japanese	Mother: Japanese Father: American
Michael	32	Male	Catalonian, German, Spanish	Germany	Spanish, Catalán, German, English	Mother and Father: Spanish
Taina	24	Female	Puerto Rican, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Spanish, some Japanese	Mother: Japanese Father: Puerto Rican
Suhaili	35	Female	Spanish, Croatian, German	Germany	German, Spanish, Croatian, English	Mother: Croatian Father: Spanish
Shanti	46	Female	Mexican, Argentinian	U.S.A.	Spanish, English	Mother and Father: Mexican
Derek	26	Male	American, Canadian	U.S.A.	English	Mother: American Father: Canadian
Nina	26	Female	Dutch, Russian	Hungary	Russian, Dutch, English	Mother and Father: Russian
Maria	26	Female	Russian, Chilean	Hungary	Russian, Spanish, English	Mother: Russian Father: Russian and Chilean
Elinor	28	Female	American, Israeli	Israel	English, Hebrew	Mother and Father: American and Israeli

The following questions are addressed and answered in the following section:

- Q1 What are the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality?
- Q1a How have individuals made sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality?
- Q1b What has facilitated or hindered the individual's identity development?

Participant Descriptions

Ten participants participated in the study and are introduced before the emerging themes are discussed. Participants identified with a range of nationalities. *American* is used to refer to participants who identify with the U.S. nationality.

Mari

Mari is a 26-year-old female living in the southwest part of the U.S. who identifies as Finnish, American, and Japanese. She is fluent in Finnish and English. She appeared quiet, open, and friendly during our conversations as she spoke about her process of identifying with more than one nationality. Dressed casually and positioned comfortably in her living room, she spoke about her nationalities and her conflicting feelings regarding the nationalities with which she did, indeed, identify. She was born in Finland and moved to the U.S. with her parents at an early age. Her mother is Finnish, and her father is Japanese. During our first meeting, Mari spoke largely about how she identifies as Finnish, despite sharing that she looks Asian. Due to her phenotype, many people make the assumption that she would identify as Asian or, more specifically, as Japanese.

Every summer my mom and I would usually go back to Finland to visit my relatives. . . . I grew up speaking Finnish with my mom and with the Finnish community in our area, which was pretty small, but, you know, there were a few kids I would play with . . . so I always kind of identified as Finnish. . . . So, yeah,

then there is this other funny part that I look very Asian because my dad is Japanese, but I never identified quite as much with the Japanese culture. But, everyone assumes I identify as Asian. They never think I'm European.

Mari less frequently brought up her feelings and identification as an American, “whatever that was,” during the interview process. However, she did mention, “I feel definitely I’ve become more American, especially after high school,” resulting in her percentage being 70% American, 30% Finnish, and “a small sprinkling of Asian in there.” For the majority of the second and third interview, Mari discussed her connection to her Japanese nationality, even if she considers it at times to be surface-level. After our three interviews, Mari came to the decision that even if her Japanese identity was smaller than her Finnish and American identities, she wanted to make sure to include it. This is part of the reason she included more pictures about her Japanese nationality than her Finnish and American identities. Mari chose four pictures (see Appendix H) and two mementos to describe her journey of identifying with more than one nationality. The pictures show her as a young child spending time in Finland, picking berries and celebrating a Japanese holiday, *Hinamatsuri* (doll festival). Mari did not have direct access to her pictures, therefore, her mother chose and sent the pictures; to her for her to include in the study.

Steve

Steve is a 32-year-old male living in the western part of the U.S. at the time of our interview. He has lived in the U.S. for roughly 10 years, with a brief stay in China during that stretch. He came across as confident and engaged while sharing his story of coming to identify as Japanese and American. Having recently moved apartments, he was still in the midst of settling into his apartment. Sipping on a beverage, he began his story.

Steve's mother is Japanese, and his father is American. Steve explained his, at times, difficult journey of balancing his multiple nationalities and shifting feelings towards how strongly he identifies with each. Further confounding his process is his feeling of being a foreigner in Japan due to not having been born there, identifying with multiple nationalities, and not owning a Japanese passport. He grew up primarily in Japan, but his family moved frequently, leading to having no hometown in Japan.

I always remember having this duality [American and Japanese], I can't really remember any time where it's, you know, I had an "aha moment," but I think since the very beginning, I've always known that. I think since moving to the U.S. and, you know, going to school and working . . . you know, I identify much more with being American or from the U.S., but essentially it's always been since the beginning, half and half.

Steve, overall, expressed identifying as 70% American and 30% Japanese, even though he also mentioned that "I feel there's no real identity as being in the U.S." He is fluent in Japanese and English. Steve shared several pictures (see Appendix H) and two mementos, which he chose to chronologically depict where he has lived (e.g., Japan, U.S., and China) and the experiences he has created.

Michael

Michael is a 32-year-old male living in Germany and identifying as Catalán, Spanish, and German. He came across as positive and intrigued throughout the interview process. Resting his head against the couch in his apartment in Germany, he shared that he was born and raised in Spain, more specifically, the region of Catalonia. Thus, he grew up with traditions, language, and customs of Catalonia, while also being familiar with the Spanish equivalent through his parents, who identify as Spanish. "You know, in Catalonia, we also have this double nationality thing in terms of, for time being, lately I'm a Spaniard, but since I grew up in Catalonia, I speak Catalán." With his entire

schooling and social life being in Catalán, Michael described that from a young age, he felt “this kind of splitting my heart into Spaniards and Catalans because my family comes from inside of Spain, but I also grew up in Catalonia.”

Michael is fluent in Spanish, Catalán, German, and English. During the interview process, Michael’s wife had their second child, which brought up conflicting feelings and thoughts for Michael to decide where his family would reside in the future. When describing how strongly he identifies with each nationality, Michael broke it up as 10% Spanish, 50% Catalan, and 40% German.

Why do I say that I identify more with Catalán than Spanish? Well, I lived in Catalonia, I grew up there . . . this 10% is just a family thing, it’s influenced by my parents. . . . And this German thing is where I have felt more comfortable, where I have found myself . . . I feel like, ok, it’s me. I would live here forever, because I like the way Germans live. I also like all the experiences I have had in this place.

Michael expressed his changing feelings towards each nationality and his overall struggle in balancing each nationality, while at the same time feeling at home. Michael shared six pictures (see Appendix H) and one memento to capture his journey of identifying with more than one nationality and his continual struggle of balancing his family and his own needs. The pictures show his life in Catalonia and Germany, with several pictures depicting the central focus of Michael’s discussion, his family.

Taina

Taina is a 24-year-old female living in the southwestern part of the U.S. Her outgoing and energetic spirit was captured in the process of making sense of her multiple nationalities. She traveled to her field site for her graduate program during the interview process and often would be at a local coffee shop when sharing her story. Her thoughtful reflections about her process of identifying with more than one nationality were apparent

in her responses. Taina was born and raised in the U.S. and is fluent in English and Spanish in addition to being able to speak some Japanese. She shared that as an only child, she at times, wished for a brother or sister to have “someone else who looks like me.” Taina identifies with the Japanese and Puerto Rican nationalities, but shared that she has a “100% American lifestyle.” When asking more about the American side, she mentioned, “I guess I identify with the American nationality by default, but not because I chose to,” yet when further exploring, Taina expressed her belief that she doesn’t “really see America as a nationality, I see it as a place to live where different nationalities can go.” With that, the interview focused on Taina’s identification as Japanese and Puerto Rican, which is influenced by Taina’s mother being Japanese and her father being Puerto Rican. “I always say this: ‘I’m not 50% Japanese and 50% Puerto Rican, I’m 100% both!’ I know it doesn’t make sense genetically . . . but I really am a 100% both and feel 100% both when I’m in those cultures.” Taina chose four photos (see Appendix H) and one memento to capture her process of identifying with more than one nationality. The pictures capture Taina with her family in Japan and Puerto Rico, as well as her visiting a Buddhist temple.

Suhaili

Suhaili is a 35-year-old female living in Germany who identifies as Spanish, Croatian, and German. She was very open and engaged during the interview process. Her mother is Croatian, and her father is Spanish. Suhaili has resided in Germany for her entire life. “I have one brother who is two years younger; both of us grew up in a real mix of cultures and languages.” Suhaili shared that it is difficult for her to distinguish the different nationalities with which she identifies because she grew up with all three and

does not know any different. For this reason, some of the questions asked were challenging for her to answer. Suhaili speaks German, Spanish, Croatian, and English. She described her situation as unique, since many times the parents are either from the same country or at least reside in one of the countries they are from. She explained that even though her situation is special, it is all she knows. When discussing how strongly she identifies with each nationality, Suhaili broke it up as 50% Spanish, 30% Croatian, and 20% German.

I love my mother, she's the most important person in my life, and I really adore her and love her country. I like to travel to Croatia and really enjoy spending time with my family. Nevertheless, I feel a little more connected to Spain. Maybe it is because I grew up in a Spanish community and at home most of the time, we are speaking Spanish.

Since Suhaili's identification with multiple nationalities began at birth, we explored what it was that kept her identification going during her adulthood. She shared that she had never thought about it in that way, but shared that she "always felt good being the way I am and having the past I have." Suhaili shared eight pictures (see Appendix H) and two mementos capturing her journey of identifying with more than one nationality. The pictures capture her engaging in various activities such as dancing and celebrating various cultural events typical of all three nations such as Christmas. She also shared a picture of her family to demonstrate their influence on how she identifies.

Shanti

Shanti is a 46-year-old female living in the southeastern part of the U.S. She has a vibrant personality and enthusiastically shared her story of coming to identify with more than one nationality in addition to sharing her journey of how she adapts and learns from new cultures without losing herself. She eagerly shared her experiences while

sitting comfortably in her apartment. Shanti identifies as Mexican and Argentinian and is fluent in Spanish and English. She was born and raised in Mexico, and both her parents identify as Mexican. Job opportunities brought Shanti to move to Argentina and the U.S., where she currently lives.

Shanti initially had some difficulty adapting to Argentina due to the cultural differences, but realized that not everything was different between Argentina and Mexico and that some of the things she held most dear were in both countries. She expressed people's passion for life in both countries is what made it possible for her to identify with both: "We [Mexicans and Argentinians] are very, very passionate about our countries." Her passion for living was demonstrated throughout the interviews, especially when expressing what is important to her. "When you're asking what is important? That's important for me. You have an identity, you have an origin, and you have your roots. So you have to keep that. This is your origin, you cannot deny." Shanti has traveled to many places around the world and through this process, has come up with her own stages of how to settle into a new country. Shanti chose eight pictures (see Appendix H) and one memento to share her process of identifying with more than one nationality. The pictures capture her travels around the world, such as her visits to Africa and India, as well as places she has lived such as Argentina and Puerto Rico. The pictures also capture activities she feels passionate about such as her Bollywood dancing and canoeing.

Derek

Derek is a 26-year-old male living in the northeastern part of the U.S. He came across as reflective and transparent as he described his struggle balancing his two nationalities: Canadian and American. He was born and partially raised in Canada, with

his father identifying as Canadian, and mother as American. During his adolescent years, he moved back and forth between the U.S. and Canada. Completing his undergraduate studies and finding work in the U.S. has resulted in nine consecutive years of living in the U.S. Like many other individuals, Derek's sense of national identity has shifted. As a young child, Derek identified more strongly with the Canadian nationality, yet over time, it has weakened to barely feeling he has a sense of multiple nationalities. This shift is due to establishing his life in the U.S. and having a sense that he most likely will not move back to Canada.

I feel like it started to shift. For a long time I would kind of go back and forth when I would visit Canada. I might use my Canadian passport when I came in as kind of this point, "I'm returning home," but after being here for so long and marrying an American, I've kind of started to just give up on that side of myself.

Derek's struggle over his identification with his Canadian nationality was evident throughout the interviews. Derek expressed that it is difficult to express his Canadian sense of self in the U.S., even though when an opportunity arises, he embraces it. "If someone brings up Canada, I do instantly want to jump in say, 'Oh, I'm from Canada,' and it's also a way, you know, if I meet someone who has ties to Canada, to make kind of a connection." Along these lines, Derek also struggles with his national identities in the sense that he sees many similarities between the U.S. and Canada that at times make it harder to differentiate them. At the same time, there are differences on a more subtle level that, he expressed, have helped him gain a more open perspective to questioning things (e.g., values and beliefs) instead of just accepting them. Derek chose nine pictures (see Appendix H) and four mementos to capture his process of identifying with more than one nationality. He discussed his pictures with his wife, who reflected that it seemed he had captured other people more so than himself. Derek said that the people

around him capture him “because they do represent the biggest parts of who I am for the most part, and that’s definitely why I picked most of them.” Since they are important moments, there’s “a good chance that small expression of nationality would probably show up in them.” This fits with Derek’s notion that he does not see his multiple nationalities as separate, but as manifested in various parts of who he is.

Nina

Nina is a 26-year-old female living in Hungary and is fluent in Dutch, Russian, and English. She had a kind and warm presence as she shared her story of coming to identify as Dutch and Russian. Nina shared her process of trying to deny her Russian nationality to now trying to re-explore it and integrate it back into herself. Nina chose her pseudonym because the name Nina is common in both Dutch and Russian. Nina was born in Russia and lived there until age 7, at which time she and her mother moved to the Netherlands. Nina shared her conflicting feelings of identifying only with some aspects of being Dutch and Russian and, overall, rather wanting to identify as a global citizen.

I do feel Dutch in certain respects, like I identify with the Dutch liberal mindset . . . but for instance when it comes to national holidays I don’t really have that sense of national identity that other people might have. You see what I mean, so in certain aspects I identify with being Dutch, and other aspects I identify more with being Russian. . . . But it’s not like I can say I am fully Russian or Dutch, but if you ask me, I would probably say I’m more Dutch because I spent most of my life living there, but I’m much more interested in Russian history and culture and politics, also. So, I don’t know where that puts me in my national identity.

When reflecting back, Nina shared that she was unsure of her identity when she lived in Russia and reported, “As a child, I didn’t really have a sense of national identity, at least I don’t think you have that until you are aware of other identities that you can contrast it against. But when I came to the Netherlands, I became very mindful of the fact that I was Russian and not Dutch.” When discussing her percentage of how strongly

she feels, Nina shared that it would be 60% Dutch and 40% Russian, mostly because she had spent most of her life in the Netherlands and felt that “the Dutch identity has made a bigger impact on me than the Russian identity.” Nina is actively exploring her Russian nationality and even hopes “to maybe one day to live in Russia again.” Nina presented six photos (see Appendix H) and two mementos in chronological order of her journey of rejecting her Russian nationality to now re-exploring her Russian roots. Nina’s journey begins with a train ride from her hometown via Moscow to the Netherlands. During this journey at age 7, Nina became aware of her national identity and felt like she was different from the other Dutch children.

Maria

Maria is a 26-year-old female living in Hungary and is fluent in Russian, Spanish, and English. She appeared positive and curious throughout the interview process. She identifies as Russian and Chilean and is in the earlier stages of integrating these two nationalities. Maria’s mother is Russian, and her father identifies as Russian and Chilean. She sat comfortably in her apartment as she talked about the journey of learning that her grandfather was Chilean, leading her to apply for Chilean citizenship. She has visited Chile with her father and learned to speak Spanish in order to connect to her Chilean nationality. She will be traveling and living in Chile this upcoming year to learn more about the culture and the country while conducting her thesis research. Maria, at times, struggled to speak more about her process of identifying with more than one nationality, as she is more familiar with her Russian nationality. Regardless, she seemed to enjoy speaking about her experience. She described growing up in two different regions in

Russia, Kamchatka and Moscow, and even joked how being born in the USSR brings up a whole new notion of identifying with a country that “ceased to exist.”

At age 13, Maria went to visit Chile with her father and applied for citizenship. Receiving the passport served as a catalyst for Maria to start studying the language and connect with her Chilean relatives. Maria shared that if she had not received the Chilean passport, her identification with Chile might not have started. When asked how strongly she identifies with each country, Maria gave 70% to Russia and 30% to Chile. “I think the step of getting a passport, it really pushed me into the understanding that I really have family there, and it’s not only the paper, it’s something more.” Maria also spoke about how she identifies currently and the idea that this will most likely change.

So far, I’m still considering myself more Russian than Chilean. . . . I don’t see as both of them as 100 and 100, and they have to somehow fit into myself, because that’s not feasible. I really feel that it’s a continuum, and it differs because now I feel more Russian because I am more familiar with that.

Maria shared three pictures (see Appendix H) and one memento to capture her process of identifying with more than one nationality. Her pictures show her birthplace, Kamchatka, as well as meeting her Chilean family and learning Spanish.

Elinor

Elinor is a 28-year-old female living in Israel and is fluent in Hebrew and English. She came across as kind and energetic and identifies as both American and Israeli. She was born and raised in the U.S. but lived in Israel as a baby and frequently visited Israel starting in high school with her Jewish organization. “So, I identify with Israel and America, and I grew up in a youth group, it was actually called the Youth Movement . . . and it’s classified as a youth leadership movement and so, there’s a lot of focus on leadership and connection on Israel.” After completing high school and her

undergraduate studies, Elinor moved to Israel, where she has been living for the past six years. She has felt a connection to Israel from a young age, due to her parents strongly identifying with Israel, but it was not until middle school that it felt a part of her own identity. “It [Israel] was always on my radar and so, when I went to the youth movement, it was much more of my own identity and not my parents’ identity.” This differentiation between identifying with Israel as part of her family to having it feel like her own connection transpired in middle school and solidified in high school.

She has conflicting feelings regarding her identification as Israeli and American.

It would be more to the American. It would be, I think, 70% [American], 30% [Israeli]. It’s also very interesting ‘cause, like, I feel connected to Israel, but I don’t necessarily feel Israeli, if that makes sense, because the Israeli are very different, and I feel connected to the culture and living here, and my life is here, and the things that I’m connected here are exactly what I feel alienated from in the States, but it’s that conundrum, when I’m in the States, I don’t identify as American, when I’m in Israel, I identify as American.

In addition to location, what she is doing or in what activity she is engaging also influences how she identifies. For example, at work, Elinor described herself as feeling very American, even when her work is in Hebrew. Her method of working and her attitude at work is American. Elinor shared seven pictures (see Appendix G) and two mementos to capture her process of identifying as Israeli and American. The pictures capture scenic views from the U.S. and Israel as well as items she owns that display her dual national identity.

Emerging Themes

In the next section, themes that emerged across participants in this study are presented. To describe the phenomenon of what it is like to identify with multiple nationalities in the context of intersectionality, direct quotes and examples are provided.

Table 2

Emerging Themes

Main Themes	Subthemes	Underlying subtheme
Process of identifying with multiple nationalities	Migration Relationships	Being exposed Acceptance within one's national group by family Familial and romantic relationships supporting the maintenance of national identities
Intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities	Importance of documentation and legal status within a nationality Changing levels of connectedness to different multiple nationalities Intentionality of learning about and being involved with multiple nationalities	
Reactions of others Cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity		
Feeling connected or disconnected through language	I'm not a chameleon, but I fit in Feeling connected through language Feeling disconnected through language	
Where is home, and do I belong? Professional identities Importance of food		

Process of Identifying with Multiple Nationalities

How participants came to identify with multiple nationalities varied. For some, it was living in different countries; for others, it was that their parents identified with a nationality different than the country in which they were residing, growing up in a household that identified with multiple nationalities, or a combination of them all.

Migration. For some participants, moving to a new country opened the doors to identifying with multiple nationalities. This migration occurred as a child, such as for Nina who moved to the Netherlands at age 8, and for Mari, to the U.S. as a baby. For

others, it was a choice they made as an adult such as for employment opportunities, as was the case for Shanti, who moved to Argentina from Mexico, or Michael who moved to Germany. For others, moving to a nationality with which they already identified or which their parents came from, also served as a prompt to explore their multiple nationalities, such as Derek moving to the U.S. during high school or Steve moving to the U.S. for his undergraduate studies. Moving and living in the country helped strengthen the ties and feeling of connectedness to the nationality moved to and brought up a reexamination of other nationalities with which the participants identified. In all cases, participants' relationships, whether familial or romantic, played an important role in being exposed to multiple nationalities and/or in helping to maintain their multiple nationalities.

Relationships. Participants' interpersonal relationships, whether familial or romantic, were often the reason for them to be exposed to and for identifying with multiple nationalities. Relationships were important in the sense of having introduced them to varying nationalities, having supported them in their process in making sense of their nationalities, and helping them negotiate how their nationalities fit and might evolve in the future.

Being exposed. Mari was exposed to her Finnish and Japanese nationalities via her parents. Her mother's strong Finnish nationality and integration of Finnish traditions and celebrations resulted in Mari identifying strongly with the Finnish culture. Traveling to Finland with her mother regularly helped form Mari's sense of Finnish nationality. Having her father incorporate Japanese traditions such as celebrating *Hinamatsuri* (doll festival, see picture Appendix H) as a younger child and watching Japanese movies also

helped form Mari's Japanese nationality. Her parents' lack of identification as American resulted in Mari not identifying as American until she was an adolescent. Mari shared that her identification with her American nationality was a result of her family celebrating fewer Japanese traditions and visiting Finland less frequently. As Mari's parents brought in less influence from their own nationalities and Mari realized that it was fine for her to identify as American, she began to explore this part of her identity. "I guess for my parents as immigrants, not necessarily that they didn't want to be American, but that they held so strongly to their own identities, that I thought it was bad thing to be American." Realizing that her parents held on to their nationalities so strongly so as to not lose them completely helped Mari understand them better as well as embrace her own national identification. Thus, as Mari found a way to accept her life in the U.S. while remaining close to her parents, she was able to explore and shape her own identification with the nationalities to which she has been exposed.

Taina, like Mari, was introduced to her multiple nationalities via her parents. Her parents' strong national identity and emphasis on teaching her about the culture and customs had a strong influence on Taina identifying as Puerto Rican and Japanese. For the photo elicitation, Taina chose photos of her family, as they are the main reason she identifies with multiple nationalities (pictures in Appendix H). "The only picture I could find that could show my multi-nationality . . . was with just my parents and me." Suhaili has had a similar experience to those of Mari and Taina, being introduced to the various nationalities by her parents. Furthermore, like other participants, when discussing what else is important to her and how she makes sense of who she is, family was the key variable. She emphasized how each of her parents took time and made the effort to teach

her and her brother about their country of origin as well as expose and help them integrate into the German culture. Suhaili spoke fondly of her parents and the importance she places in maintaining ties with the nationalities that her parents are from. Suhaili, like Taina, shared a picture of her family to highlight her identification with multiple nationalities (see picture in Appendix H). She chose this picture because it is through her family that she identifies with more than one nationality. Also important to her identification process is that her family would combine various traditions to acknowledge all of the nationalities.

Suhaili has also been influenced by her fiancée, but expressed that despite her fiancée being very important to her, she chose to primarily focus on her own nationalities and not include the influence of his nationalities for the purpose of the interviews.

I didn't put, for example, pictures of my friends or my fiancée. I wanted to concentrate, because I told you he is half Dominican, half Spanish, so there's another culture coming into my life, but I thought it was better for your project to be in my family . . . what I identify with, what comes from my family. So, pictures are only belonging to me and my family, not my life with my fiancée.

Elinor, like Suhaili, has also been influenced by her fiancée; she became engaged during the interview process. Her fiancée is Australian, and both identify as Jewish. Having this common ground in the Jewish community and attending similar Jewish camps allowed them to have many shared feelings in terms of their nationalities. Elinor has been learning and visiting Australia, which has started the process to ponder her connection to this new nation.

Steve, similarly to others, expressed that his identification with the Japanese nationality and American nationality was a result of his parents' identification and because he had lived in each of the countries. Keeping traditions from each nationality

such as cooking Japanese and “western foods” is one way he honors each side of his family. Shanti also talked about the importance of her family. Her parents both identify as Mexican and thus she came to identify as Argentinian through her own moving around. Having a strong tie to Mexico, though was expressed as being the reason she has found ways to balance the importance of her home nationality with the acquired nationalities. Elinor was introduced to her nationalities, also, through her parents, who both identified as Israeli and American. Having this Israeli identity as part of her Jewish identity from a young age encouraged her desire to move to Israel. Now that she is living in Israel, her identity of what it means to be an Israeli has shifted.

Acceptance within one’s national group by family. Another key point that Mari discussed was that her family in Finland and Japan were very welcoming and accepting of her. She spoke fondly of her relatives greeting her warmly and including her in their everyday activities. She shared that despite the language barrier with her Japanese relatives, they nevertheless connected. This evoked a sense of belonging for Mari, “so, I do belong with these people, these are my people.” Feeling welcomed and accepted by her relatives in Japan and Finland was important in Mari re-exploring her Japanese nationality and for her to feel a strong tie to Finland.

Taina has had a similar experience to Mari, feeling accepted and welcomed by her family in Japan and Puerto Rico, which was essential in her identification process. When speaking about what is important to her, Taina shared, “The family is the epicenter of everything. So the value of respecting family and always being and supporting your family at all times, no matter what.” Taina emphasized that family was essential to her identification process and motivates her to learn more about each nationality to

strengthen her connection. Taina celebrates Christmas in Puerto Rico, an important tradition for her to attend. Feeling welcomed and accepted during these celebrations allowed Taina the opportunity to continue exploring her Puerto Rican roots. Taina had a similar experience when visiting family in Japan. Even if she isn't able to speak fluent Japanese, she enjoys communicating with her family and observing her grandmother, who teaches Taina how to make Japanese cuisine.

Shanti shared her experience of being able to observe the relationships of her friends, such as her best friend who identifies as Mexican and is married to someone who identifies as German, helped her in her process of feeling accepted. On her world journey visiting her friends with her niece, she found that all of her friends were in inter-cultural relationships. "So, it was a mix of cultures in every house we went, and the kids were also a mix because they had the culture of the mother, the culture of the father, as well as the culture of the country. So, totally a mix of everywhere." For Shanti, it was powerful seeing these relationships and seeing how they worked, the effort it took, and the possibility for them to be happy. She expressed that it was motivating to see that it is possible to form a strong relationship with someone who has a different national background.

Maria spoke that her family has been an important part of her identifying with more than one nationality. Discovering that she had family in Chile was exciting for her, especially as they were warm, welcoming, and accepting. Reconnecting and forming deeper bonds with her Chilean family is something that she hopes to work on. Feeling welcomed by her Chilean family, especially as they befriended her via social media, has

encouraged Maria to explore her identification more thoroughly and push herself to learn more about the culture and language.

Familial and romantic relationships supporting the maintenance of national identities. For some participants, familial and/or romantic relationships were emphasized as a strong source of support in maintaining their identification with multiple nationalities. For example, Steve found that his fiancée helped him form a stronger identity with his American side, while not losing his Japanese nationality. For Derek, marrying an American has further strengthened his American nationality. Being married to his wife and living in the U.S. has established a strong tie to the U.S., while making him concerned that his Canadian side is becoming less important. He expressed that he proposed to his wife in Canada on Canadian Day in order to keep his Canadian side alive and to let her know that even if his Canadian side is not as strong, it still is an important part of him. They married in the U.S., and one of the pictures shared (see Appendix H) was of him and his wife standing in front of the American flag at the courthouse, which to Derek, symbolized his growing American nationality. Derek expressed that his wife is very curious to learn about Canada, making it easier for him to explore this part of himself that he sometimes feels is lost.

While Derek has found a way to share his experiences with his wife by traveling to Canada, Nina talked about her difficulties in trying to convey her sense of nationality to her ex-boyfriend from the Netherlands. She described her difficulty in relating how Russia, to her, is also a part of herself and part of home. “It was very difficult to kind of transmit this feeling of home onto him, so that he also understands how it feels to be

there. It's so different even though they both are like home; I have completely different lives there and in the Netherlands.”

For some, holding on to family heirlooms was a way to keep a nationality alive, such as for Derek. One of Derek's mementos was a tool used to draw parallel lines (see picture in Appendix H). He discussed that this tool was passed down on his Canadian side of the family and is a reminder of a family story regarding Derek's great-grandfather.

So that is a tool for drawing parallel lines on a map, and it belonged to my great grandfather on my father's side, who was Canadian, and he was a riverboat captain in New Brunswick, and he was well known in the area for having saved dozens and dozens of people from drowning.

His aunt decided to give him this object, making him feel accepted and that despite living in the U.S., his Canadian relatives were thinking of him. Derek expressed that this parallel tool symbolizes her acceptance that despite him moving to the U.S. and creating his life there, she still accepts him as part of the family. Derek also owns heirlooms connected to his American family's side, but he does not display them. When considering this, he responded that it is not necessary to display them, nor does he have an innate guilt connected to his American nationality. He also feels it's harder to stay connected to his Canadian family due to distance and, therefore displaying this object helps him feel that he is staying in touch.

Nina felt very connected to her relatives, with whom she wanted to remain close, while at the same time she was negotiating her relationship with her Russian and Dutch nationalities. It was her tie to her Russian family that inspired Nina to re-explore her Russian sense of self as well as to introduce her Dutch nationality to her family. Nina

shared a picture during the photo elicitation that showed how she introduced her Dutch side to her family, an opportunity to:

Actually show them how we live, where we live, to actually make them experience how we live because, as I said, we went from this very tight connection, to seeing them intensely every day, to actually never seeing each other and only through writing and not even email because they were not computer-literate.

Nina noted that having a sense of two homes that are supported by her family is wonderful, but it is difficult for her to convey to other people, leading to the question of “how do you make people close to you . . . understand or feel what you’re doing, what your life is like in the other place?” The overall message that Nina seemed to share with her pictures was her strong tie to her family and the importance they play in her national identities.

Many participants expressed that having their romantic partner support their identification process with multiple nationalities was important as well as enjoying when their partner identified with a national identity different than they themselves did. Additionally, familial ties were essential in many cases, having been introduced to varying nationalities and being able to find a way to maintain them.

Importance of documentation and legal status within a nationality.

Participants identified that a catalyst in identifying with multiple nationalities was receiving documentation and legal status for the respective nationality. Some, like Derek and Maria, expressed receiving something concrete, like their Social Security card or passport, as instrumental in their process of identifying with multiple nationalities. As a child, Derek always knew that some of his family lived in the U.S., but not until he moved there from Canada and received his Social Security card indicating he was a

resident did it sink in that he was Canadian and American. Maria echoed this sentiment, explaining that having both passports was the catalyst for her feelings of identifying as Russian and Chilean, the reason she chose her passports as her memento (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Picture of passports.

Maria emphasized that the passports are very important to her; not the physical objects, but rather, the symbolism that these documents holds in terms of logistics and opportunities—the opportunities to be able to work in each country and to establish a life she chooses as well as to travel to other places and meet family. For Nina, it was the documentation that her name change was official (see Figure 4), meaning that in addition to being Russian, she was also Dutch. She expressed that having a Dutch name meant that she truly fit in as a Dutch person. It was more meaningful to her than having Dutch citizenship.

This document made it actually finally official. So this was an important moment of when I could actually say, “Now I’m really Dutch, and I don’t have my Russian last name anymore, so now I’m a truly Dutch person so to say.” I think actually that document represents quite well, like, the transition I went through, at least the first stage when I first tried to get rid of the Russian nationality and try to assume as much as I could my Dutch nationality.

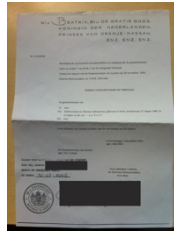


Figure 4. Picture of documentation for name change.

Nina shared that this document is also important to her because in Russia, the name change was not recognized. Therefore, whenever she travels, she has to bring this document in order to proceed.

I guess it represents me in the sense that it contains both my last names, and it's for me, kind of a reminder of this process I went through at that time and how much I wanted to be Dutch and not Russian . . . it kind of serves as a link between my two identities.

Just as documentation is helpful in becoming aware of nationalities, the lack of it can weaken the relationship. Steve expressed that not having a Japanese passport evokes the sense of being *gaijin* (foreigner) and has weakened his sense of belonging and identifying as Japanese.

Intentionality about Identifying with Multiple Nationalities

All participants were intentional about choosing to recognize their multiple nationalities. For some, it was a process of purposefully learning about their nationality or recognizing how strongly they related/connected to their multiple nationalities over time. Furthermore, for those participants who were introduced to their nationalities through family, they selected to keep identifying with those nationalities into adulthood. For example, Suhaili expressed that:

I'm old enough . . . when I was a kid, I couldn't choose if I want to go with my parents to vacation or not. And when I was living at home, I was more or less obligated to speak my parents' languages. This is not something you can choose. When you are 18 or 20, you leave your home because you go for studying, you can choose your own life, you can say, "Okay, this is my past, this is my family, and I love my family, but I would like to go another way." I never made this question for myself because I always felt good being the way I am and having the past I have.

Changing levels of connectedness to different multiple nationalities.

Participants experienced changes over time in how strongly they felt connected to their nationalities related to developmental changes, exposure to the nationalities, where they were residing, or ability to travel to the various nationalities. Common to participants' descriptions of their experiences coming to identify with multiple nationalities was a shared experience of changing levels of connections with each nationality and making an intentional choice to maintain their identification with multiple nationalities. Even if at the time the changes of how deeply connected they felt to a nation did not feel intentional, their following actions and choices were intentional. A few in-depth examples will be provided.

As a young child, Mari identified primarily with her Japanese and Finnish nationalities. As she became older, her American identity became stronger, and her Japanese identity faded to a point where she thought it was nonexistent. Through the photo and visual elicitation, Mari was able to speak about how connected she felt to each nation. She chose a necklace (see Figure 5) to represent her deep connection with the Finnish nationality. The necklace symbolized a historical connection, whereas the objects she chose to represent her Japanese nationality (see Figure 6) spoke to pop culture.



Figure 5. Picture of necklace.



Figure 6. Picture of Japanese characters.

Similar to Mari, Derek also noticed a shift in how strongly he identified as Canadian and American. Derek's story related to Mari's, as his sense of national identity has shifted over the years to a point that he at times wonders if his Canadian nationality is still there. A few critical pieces, such as the picture of Derek and his sister, seemed to evoke hope for him (see picture in Appendix H). "So, my sister is probably the person closest to me that I feel has a strong national identity, and it's kind of because of her that I think I will always have that stubbornness to identify at least partially as Canadian." His current identity as an American stems primarily from his professional career, his relationship with his wife, and other experiences he has created while living in the U.S.

Steve's sense of identifying as Japanese and American has shifted over the years, as well. He said that for most of his life, he identified his nationalities equally, but the more experiences he creates in the U.S., the stronger his American nationality becomes.

Elinor's identity shifts as she travels, sometimes identifying as American and other times, more strongly as Israeli. Michael reflected that his sense of national identification has changed, and he feels positive that it will continue to evolve as he gathers more life experiences. Suhaili expressed that because she grew up with all three nationalities, she feels confident she will always identify with all three, yet she has recognized that some of identities are stronger than others, something that may continue to change over time.

With changing levels of connectedness came the discussion that a national identity could be re-integrated. When reflecting back, Nina discussed how as a child, she actively tried to make her Russian nationality nonexistent: "I was trying to make it [Dutch identity] a 100%." Wanting to fit in, Nina felt that her Russian side needed to be extinguished. Thus, as a child she demanded her mom not speak Russian with her in public, and she wouldn't respond in Russian. Nina's memento of her grandmother's Russian shawl (see Figure 7) symbolizes her process of changing levels of connectedness with her Russian nationality.



Figure 7. Picture of shawl.

This shawl really signifies the second stage of the process, from going to absolutely not wanting to have anything to do with my Russian identity to, again, embracing this identity and making it a part of my life. And because I remember, also, the holiday we were visiting my grandma when she gave me my shawl, I

was also rediscovering Russian cartoons, Russian music. I wanted to buy Russian CDs of old Russian rock bands when we were going through the market, and I wanted to have more links to the Russian culture and, as I said, I also wanted to make it a part of my visible identity. And, I really liked these traditional Russian shawls, and I think with this shawl, I kind of have a connection with my grandmother on a more personal level and also to Russian culture and being Russian on a more abstract level.

Maria expressed her changing level of connectedness by stating that she would not have responded to my letter 10 years ago because at that time, even though she had learned about her Chilean roots, she had considered herself solely Russian. She expressed that her identification will most likely be different again in 10 years, evolving and constantly changing.

Intentionality of learning about and being involved with multiple

nationalities. Some participants discussed how they purposefully took time to learn about the nationalities with which they were less familiar in order to strengthen their connection with the nationality. For example, Maria spoke about how important it is for her to learn about the history of Chile and to speak Spanish in order to feel that she has the right to identify as Chilean. A picture of her and her friends standing in front of a Spanish educational center sponsored through the Spanish consulate (see picture in Appendix H) captures this phenomenon. “I think there are some points that you have to respect, you have to know the history . . . for me it’s disrespectful to kind of say that you are from that nationality . . . and not knowing the history or the language of that place or something like that.”

Elinor’s work experience at a place where she was the only American “helped me solidify and understand my relationship as an American.” Furthermore, traveling back to the U.S. to visit family and friends in addition to visiting her boyfriend’s family in

Australia all helped her evaluate and assess her different national identities and make an intentional choice that she identifies as American and Israeli. Michael discussed that his exposure as a child to the Catalanian and Spanish culture helped define and influence his identification with multiple nationalities.

Mari shared her journey in trying to make a decision of whether to identify as Japanese, with the considerations that her father was Japanese and her physical appearances matched the nationality. In high school, she actively explored the culture and styles related to the nationality.

I remember when I was in high school and I was going through my time of when I had a lot of Asian friends, “How Asian am I, do I feel Asian?” I remember I started looking at some Japanese pop stars and really follow the culture more, because I thought, um, I thought I should understand it better because people were assuming some things about me. I remember I picked some haircut that was so cool of some Japanese pop singer, and I went and got that haircut, and there was a lot of gel, and it was silly looking.

However, at that time in high school, Mari made the choice that she did not want to identify as Japanese. “I stopped trying to be Asian because there is no point of trying to be something you don’t feel strongly about.” However, as time passed and Mari feels less pressured by others, she is now intentionally reconsidering her identification with multiple nationalities—“Actually, I’m re-exploring my Japanese heritage a little bit.”

Reactions of Others

Participants described a range of reactions that others had when realizing or finding out that participants came from a background of multiple nationalities. These reactions came not only from individuals, but were also perceived by participants as being reactions based, in part, on the culture of the nation. Reactions of others were in the context of participant’s accent, physical appearance, and name, which were cues on

which others picked up. Reactions of others, at times, complicated how a participant felt about their multiple nationalities and could, at times, strengthen or weaken their connection.

For Steve, being labeled as *gaijin* (foreigner) by Japanese individuals complicated his feelings around his identification as Japanese, especially when in Japan. Steve explained that in Japanese culture, one is either Japanese or *gaijin*. Steve described that in Japanese culture, foreigners are seen as “big, blundering, and boisterous, and that type of view. And, I kind of see myself like that from my Japanese side.” Yet, when Steve thinks about himself in the context of his American nationality, this description does not fit. Mari noted that her family considers her as Japanese, but others in Japan do not. In the U.S., she is often identified as Japanese, but not Finnish. The experience of Mari highlighted that in the context of the U.S., people tend to notice and emphasize non-European identities such as Latino-American or Asian-American.

Taina described a similar experience, in which other individuals labeled her as Hispanic or even Mexican, but not American or Japanese. Suhaili’s experience also aligns with others. She is often labeled as the Spanish girl when in Germany or Croatia and as the German girl when visiting Spain. “It doesn’t matter what I do or what I say, most of the people always say the ‘Spanish girl’ to me.” Nina agreed with others, expressing that it was other people, at times, that made it challenging to identify with more than one nationality, especially when she is told by people in Russia, “Oh, you’re so Dutch. You’re not Russian at all, come on.”

Elinor’s identification as American and Israeli can, at times, be challenging due to context, particularly the difficulties she faces in Israel of not being accepted as Israeli.

This has led to Elinor identifying with her Israeli nationality, just not to the same extent as Israelis who are considered Israelis.

In the Israeli culture in and of itself, is very exclusive versus I would almost say the American culture is very inclusive, not as individuals, but as groups, right. . . . So, that cultural reaction from the other people has made it very difficult for me to feel I'm Israeli, when everyone is telling me suddenly you're not, suddenly I'm not Israeli.

For Derek, he noticed an internal pressure as a result of reactions by others that he perceived. "I probably would be identified by my friends and family as: 'Oh, you are living in the U.S. now,' and they would identify me as someone who left Canada and is American now." Considering the reactions of other people towards participants with invalidation was an extra layer that participants had to navigate in making sense of their multiple nationalities.

Cultural Intelligence—Openness, Appreciation, and Acceptance of Diversity

As participants shared their experiences in identifying with multiple nationalities, the theme of cultural intelligence emerged as being something that strengthened their identity with multiple nationalities. With this theme came the discussion of openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity. All 10 participants expressed that something they appreciate about identifying with multiple nationalities is feeling they have an open mind. This notion involved having a raised awareness that there are other cultures in the world with different belief systems and customs, along with a stronger patience and tolerance to learn from other people.

Participants addressed the idea of cultural intelligence—the ability to relate and work across cultures—in a variety of ways. Taina shared that identifying with more than

one nationality has allowed her the opportunity to develop and establish “so much cultural intelligence and being able to go to different countries and communicate, understand that we come from different cultures and be accepting and appreciating of other cultures as well.” Suhaili expressed similar thoughts in feeling more open and having a better understanding of how life may work for other families from various backgrounds.

Many participants thought that being more open-minded also made it easier to communicate with individuals from all over the world and gave them a sense of being a “global citizen.” As Mari expressed, “I never grew up with thinking that one world-view is just correct and that this is the only way that things are.” She spoke about realizing the world was a big place and that “it’s worth exploring these things and understanding where I come from, and get to know those cultures, and things like that.” Shanti noted how being exposed to different cultures and identifying with multiple nationalities has helped her to challenge her prejudices and assumptions.

So then, this is another thing I learned from when I was out of my country and my comfort zone, that I learned not to judge anyone by the way they look, it’s about what they have in their brains and in their heart, and the difference there is how a culture, in this case, my own culture limited me on going outside of my comfort zone to learn and meet different people.

Michael agreed with being more open-minded, something he hopes to pass on to his family, and said, “You just keep yourself open to many options to have new experiences.”

Elinor shared that she sees many advantages of identifying with more than one nationality and that it is a humbling experience.

One advantage is I feel much more worldly, and I also feel the process that took me to identify here and actually live here and get acclimated here is very

humbling . . . the tools that I have to solve problems and to think critically is much bigger toolbox, again because I have those two things to draw on.

Shanti agreed with Elinor, that identifying with more than one nationality has helped her evolve to have a more open and accepting worldview. Shanti, on numerous occasions, expressed her recognition that we are all humans, and we can find similarities among all of the differences: “I conclude that at the end, you can find people with very similar profile and background that you have. It’s not about the country you live in.” Nina also expressed the importance of connecting with others and putting nationality second. The idea of becoming a global citizen and the importance of treating people fairly and equally seemed a strong value carried and expressed by many of the participants. Shanti has developed an ability to view new things with an open attitude and expressed, “The cultures are everywhere, but if you don’t want to learn from them, then they are going to be there forever, and you are not going to grow inside.”

In Argentina, Shanti was introduced to the maté tea. The symbolism of this object encapsulates something that she appreciates and has taken with her as she travels the world—the idea that, regardless of who you are, you are welcome to share and drink from the same maté cup without judgment. Shanti shared a picture of a maté teacup with a metal-type straw, which is passed around from individual to individual to enjoy. This picture is not included due to Shanti and myself not having copyright to the picture.

It’s just to enjoy the time, and it doesn’t matter whether there’s some strangers in that meeting . . . they share the same maté with everyone. And so, it’s just like a moment where it doesn’t matter who you are, where you coming from, it doesn’t matter. It’s just a moment to enjoy the maté tea.

The symbolism of acceptance and offering friendship has had a profound impact on Shanti.

Suhaili shared that she loves and appreciates all the countries she is from and that she picks the parts that make sense to her and that she appreciates: “I pick a little bit of here and a little bit of there.” Michael also expressed a similar thought process of taking what he believes are the most positive aspects of each nationality with which he identifies and then integrating them to make sense for himself. The reference to picking and choosing whether consciously or unconsciously was very common throughout and expressed in one form or another by each participant.

**Similarities between Cultures,
Languages, Religions, and
Spiritualties across
Nationalities**

Participants discussed how overlapping cultures, languages, religion, spirituality, and in general, a consistency across nationalities helped them build a stronger connection to their nationalities. Suhaili emphasized the importance of shared values and beliefs between the different nations in easing the process of identifying with multiple nationalities. “Both countries are Catholic, so there is no difference in religion; both countries are in South Europe, so Mediterranean countries, so there are also a lot of things that are the same.” This was similar for Shanti, who noted that being Catholic made her transition and identification as Mexican and Argentinian easier in addition to speaking the language (i.e., Spanish). However, she noted the difficulties for people who may not identify as Catholic: “They say Mexicans are very, very religious persons, and if you don’t have the same religion, then they are going to reject you.” Derek also spoke about Canada and the U.S. having many cultural similarities, which adds to the ease of identifying with both nations, but also, at times, makes it difficult to differentiate them.

Elinor's Jewish identity ties her to her nationalities. She shared a picture of a menorah and backgammon game to highlight how her Jewish identity is a vital part of who she is. She does not relate to the religious part of being Jewish, but to the sense of community.

I was thinking, like, more when my two identities started, how did they form and how did they, how did I become to have such a strong identity with Israel, and it's really through one of the strongest, not the only, one of the strongest ways is through my Jewish identity. . . . I knew that my Jewish connection is really central to both identities, like, it directly answers what you requested of me.

The sense of community that Judaism brings is very important to her. "It is about community, whether it's a community in America or the community in Israel."

I'm not a chameleon, but I fit in. The idea of being able to adapt and fit in to the nationalities with which they identified was salient among participants' stories. Several participants discussed wanting to be adaptable and fit in, while also not losing their sense of self. Shanti expressed her ability to adapt to "any place, any culture" and even having her own process in place to help her settle in. This changed her life in the sense that she felt she could embrace more new opportunities and feel more open to learning from other cultures. Participants spoke about having a consistent core that helped ease the process of identifying with multiple nationalities. As Elinor expressed, it's a cultural adaptation that results in portraying herself differently in varying nations, but it does not change who she is. This matched most of the participants' experiences in that they perceived themselves to be the same regardless of their multiple national identities, but may adapt their actions or behaviors to the environment. Michael expressed this:

I still have the same values. I still have my preferences, my prejudices, um, inside I'm still the same person. It's all the interactions with the rest of society and my

surroundings that change. I still have my feelings. I'm the same. Basically, I'm the same core, but the only problem is the way the core plays the game changes a lot.

The way Michael notices he is different may have less to do with nationality and more to do with family roles. He shared that since he moved from Spain at a young age and spent most of his adult life in Germany, he has grown and changed; however, when he visits family in Spain, he notices he reverts back to how he was before moving. He shared that it is difficult because:

Along the years, you adopt a role in the family, and it's hard to change, and the picture they have of you is also very difficult to change. As a consequence, the way you act, the way you can live, or you can interact with these people has already been somehow predetermined.

Michael discussed how part of adapting is also being able to integrate the various nationalities. Despite not knowing where to live, he and his wife wanted to make sure that all the nationalities were present in their children's lives. He shared a picture of their car (see Figure 8), a Volkswagen with a Spanish license plate, to illustrate their adaptation. "I chose this one because it's a German car in Germany with Spanish license plate." The car is filled with Spanish and Catalán music, which Michael summed up as "a piece of Spain inside Germany." The car symbolizes how all three nationalities are important to him and all together create who he is.

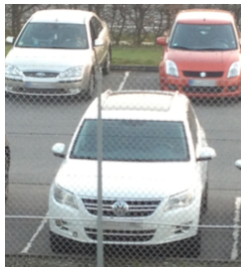


Figure 8. Picture of car.

Taina agreed with others, voicing the importance of being able to adapt to fit in. This fits her description of fully embracing her Puerto Rican side when in Puerto Rico and her Japanese side when in Japan. “When I’m in Puerto Rico, I want to be as immersed as possible.” This results in Taina not showing her Japanese side because “some of the cultural differences between the Japanese and Puerto Rico really stand out when we are with our family because everything is more exaggerated, and so I get along with that.” It’s not only about making the subtle alterations such as wearing bigger jewelry, but also about how she can adapt her behaviors, such as during social functions in Puerto Rico. “I’m not saying I should just be chameleon wherever I go and just assimilate with the culture, but, like, respecting the culture and being aware of it.” She clarified that she still wants to be herself, “but appreciating and respecting the customs that are there, and so in that way, you can feel comfortable, and you don’t make the other people that are there feel uncomfortable.”

Expressing her nationalities and being able to fully embrace each one is important in her integration process, something to which Suhaili related. Suhaili feels fully integrated with each of the nationalities with which she identifies and feels like herself, regardless of nationality, which was influenced by engaging in activities and feeling immersed in each culture, starting from birth. Suhaili explained that it was important to her family that she and her brother engage in both activities that helped them adapt to Germany and activities that would connect them with the countries from which her parents came, such as Flamenco (see picture in Appendix H). “As dancing is my passion, I feel good with Flamenco, I feel Spanish, I feel passion, I feel happy, it causes many emotions. It’s a strong dance; you really need strong character in the moment to express

what it means.” Suhaili expressed that, regardless of where in the world she finds herself, she carries with her the belief that one should behave well, be nice, and be respectful. “I am always the same person; doesn’t matter where I am.” For this reason, she shared that she sees herself as the same because she tries to abide by these principles. Shanti was aligned with Suhaili in acting and seeing herself the same. However, having moved around and lived in several places, she shared that part of her personality has changed:

Now I realize that I have to be more flexible, more open, more willing to learn from others, and then I’m not saying I’m changing my point of view, but I’m building on it. I’m expanding my vision, so I’m growing personally . . . of course, I’m a different person now.

Nina, unlike others, focused on how her wish to fit in to the Netherlands almost resulted in her losing her identity as Russian. Attending elementary school in the countryside as the only non-Dutch student resulted in Nina making every attempt possible to fit in. She remarked that she blended in fairly well, but her last name gave away that she was not Dutch: “It was the only thing that I thought people could pick on me because of what made me stand out because, yeah, it was basically because I wanted to fit in and not have any of these distinguishing features that people could use against me in some way.” Entering high school where other children with different national backgrounds attended, allowed Nina to reevaluate some of her feelings towards her Russian nationality. Nina’s process of being herself, while also adapting to each nationality has resulted in what she considered a hybrid self by taking the pieces she appreciates about each culture. She shared that it’s not even consciously picking and choosing: “It’s not like going to a supermarket, it’s more like it comes to you, you realize that you like something about the one and something you don’t like about it, and the same goes for the other one.” The influence of her nationalities have had her thinking

about what she would have been like if she wouldn't have identified with multiple nationalities.

Would I have been as liberal as I am if I would have stayed in Russia? Perhaps because I have started studying Russia, at a certain point, I could kind of juxtapose those two countries, and I could see, it enabled me to see what I appreciate in the Netherlands that I couldn't find in Russia. And as I went on and studied Russian politics and Russian history, that's also when I noticed how different I view things than perhaps people in Russia would. . . . I also noticed that, obviously, the level of welfare is much higher in the Netherlands than in Russia, for instance. I think that's also when I realized that there are inequalities and injustices in the world. And that also made me very interested in the human rights situation in Russia, how people live there, why there's so much poverty, for instance.

Nina emphasized, "There are different people in the world, and not everything can work according to your worldview that you should be aware that even after you're gone, the world will keep moving on, and you shouldn't live as if the world will come to an end when you will." Her values impact her actions in each country.

Elinor shared a few pictures that symbolized her search to combine both identities in one in order to fit in. A picture of Washington next to the Israeli flag (see Appendix H) captures this.

The Israeli flag has a lot of significance for me; it's really fun to have up. And Washington, I really like looking at as well, it makes it seem less far away and, again, less isolated, it's still there, it's still going to look the same.

She spoke that seeing both objects next to each other reminds her that her dual nationalities can coexist. Along with this notion that they can coexist, there is also the realization that each nationality has aspects she appreciates and feels distant from.

Figuring out a balance that makes sense for her is an ongoing quest, as it is important in her adaptation process. "I'm constantly challenging myself to understand where I'm

coming from and how I can push myself.” This notion of challenging herself was echoed by other participants—an ongoing quest to be oneself, while also being adaptable to fit in.

Derek expressed that he feels he is the same person, but in terms of what he says and thinks, he emphasizes certain aspects more such as, “What I am not, less of what I am. More of really about the negative connotations of being an American.” He does not have the same experience with his Canadian identity. Elinor sees her cultural adaption to each country like playing a game. “When I go to the U.S., it’s interesting . . . one is like my Americaness clicks on and, all of a sudden, I know how to play the American game, I know how to, I talk differently, I act differently.” As well, the way she portrays herself is different in each country. In order to get what she wants, she has noticed she acts differently, even though inside she feels the same. “In Israel, I would often play the cute, helpless card sort of thing, because that’s what people respond to, whereas in the States, I think I play the more direct, assertive card.”

Feeling Connected or Disconnected through Multiple Languages

The realm of communication was often brought up by participants, in particular language. Language played a determining factor in whether a participant felt connected or disconnected to the nationalities. Being able to speak the language of participants’ identified nationalities was an important key component of participants’ identity process and what it means to identify with a nationality.

Feeling connected through language. Maria emphasized that in her process of identifying as Chilean and Russian, it was vital for her to learn Spanish, especially as she has had less exposure to Chile. Learning the language was a key step for her to feel that she was allowed to call herself Chilean. Suhaili expressed that her Croatian nationality is

smaller than her Spanish nationality because she feels her Spanish is more fluent than her Croatian in addition to being more involved in Spanish activities. Michael described how his journey of learning German helped him feel connected and comfortable. He sees the importance of being multilingual and hopes to teach his children the same. Being able to communicate with others seems to invoke a sense of belonging, which appears important when a person identifies with a nationality. In addition to learning German culture, the German language seemed an important piece for Michael to pass on to his children in order to provide flexibility for his children in deciding what they want and open their minds to the endless possibilities.

Mari discussed the importance of how speaking the language helps her feel connected to her nationalities. Speaking fluent Finnish was an important reason that Mari felt very close to her Finnish nationality. It helped her be involved in the Finnish community, both in the U.S. as well as when visiting Finland. Without speaking the language, Mari pondered whether she would still have felt as strongly towards her Finnish nationality as she does. Along with others, Taina shared that her ability to communicate with people was important to her. Taina shared that in Japan, she communicates using the little Japanese she knows and the help of her mother translating in order to connect with her Japanese family. Derek also noted that by identifying as Canadian and American, he found it easy to transition between the two as both nations share a common language—English. He brought up that by not having an accent, he was less likely to be “pigeonholed” and could more easily blend in.

Feeling disconnected through language. Some participants talked about their realization that when they could speak one of their languages, such as a language that

they grew up with, or their language of origin, it had an impact on their identification with the nationality. In order for Nina to reconnect to her Russian nationality, she also began to study the language and culture. She noted it was when she realized that she could no longer speak with her family in Russia that she decided things needed to change. Not being able to speak the language paralleled her identifying less strongly with the Russian nationality. Elinor described how language helped her adapt, yet was a reminder that she was not considered Israeli by other Israelis. Individuals who are not Israeli often considered her Israeli or very well integrated because she is able to speak and interact in Hebrew. Despite speaking fluent Hebrew, Elinor has an accent that, at times, causes people speaking to her to shift to English and marks her as an outsider, an experience that she does not have in the U.S.

Even though I speak perfect Hebrew . . . the second they hear my accent, no matter how complicated a sentence I'm speaking, often they will switch to English, and whether they switch to English or not, that's a whole other story that we can talk about. They can already see I'm not Israeli; whereas in the States, there's no outside thing to define I'm not American.

Shanti had a similar experience to Elinor. Despite speaking fluent Spanish, this was still at times a barrier when she lived in Argentina. "Although we speak Spanish in Mexico and Argentina, we have different meanings of certain words that, for me, could be a nice word, but for them, the worst word in the world." She further encountered language difficulties while living in Puerto Rico as the Spanish there that she described has been heavily mixed with English in addition to having varying dialects. Thus, despite being fluent in the language of each nation in which Shanti has resided, she still encountered communication difficulties that were related to the actual language as well as the cultural way of communicating. Learning other ways of expressing herself such as

through body language, something that drew her to Bollywood dancing, allowed Shanti to overcome some of these hurdles.

Taina also brought up that despite being fluent in Spanish, she reported being more self-conscious in Puerto Rico, especially because she feels awkward when she cannot understand the other person or has to ask them to slow down. Higher expectations of herself, mixed in with feeling like she “looks Hispanic,” result in her feeling more self-conscious:

They expect that I’m following the conversation, because, you know, I look Hispanic. So they expect me to be able to speak it and understand it, but I’m very embarrassed, because I have to tell them, “I’m so sorry, can you repeat that?” or “Can you speak slower?” or something. That’s what I get embarrassed about.

Mari echoed other participants’ experiences, bringing up that not being able to speak Japanese led to a barrier in communication, and despite feeling close to her Japanese family, it made it more difficult.

Participants shared that the essence of language has had a strong impact on their identification with a nation. Being able to communicate with others as well as not being able to be differentiated from others based on language has had a powerful influence of feeling like they belong.

Where is Home, and Do I Belong?

Participants expressed feeling that there are many benefits in identifying with multiple nationalities; however, one salient drawback is not knowing where home is or whether they belong in the nation in which they reside. This leads participants to question their current decisions and creates wonder about the future.

Many participants expressed that the challenge of identifying with more than one nationality across the board is lacking a sense of home. Along this idea of not knowing

where home is, there is the sense of “do I belong?,” and feeling removed from family was discussed. Steve shared, “I guess the only disadvantage I would say is that my family isn’t here. So, having that real sense of belonging, you know, somewhere, it’s not something I really have.” Michael also shared his internal debate about not knowing where the best place would be for his family to live, balancing where he feels comfortable in comparison to his wife and children, “Where is the right place? Where do you imagine your life? It is the only drawback.” Fortunately, Michael shared that there is not much difficulty transferring back and forth between Spain and Germany, “In terms of the Spanish and Germans, with the EU, it makes it very easy, changing from one place to another.”

Elinor’s experience matches that of Steve and Michael, sharing:

I think it makes it harder for me, because I don’t feel at home . . . I don’t really identify with the general public in either places. . . . I also feel like I’m always going to be in the scenario of the grass is greener, because I know both lawns sort of thing, so that’s also very frustrating.

Elinor further highlights her struggle, wondering, “Whereas if I only knew one thing, maybe I wouldn’t be so torn between the two?” Talking to other people who have lived in different places resulted in Elinor hearing a common message of “feeling that you don’t belong here nor there, like I feel now, I’m stuck.” Nina also raised the question of, “Where do I live?”

I spent one semester at St. Petersburg, and I really enjoyed that. I think it was a very good experience, so I would like to do that for longer time. But for where would I like to end up living, I don’t know. But at this point, my ambition is to live in Russia and not so much in the Netherlands. I don’t really picture myself living there for the time being, maybe later.

Steve expressed that identifying with both nationalities and having lived in both countries has led to him feeling like a foreigner in both places. In Japan due to being labeled as *gaijin* and in the U.S. because:

I don't know the same TV shows the kids grew up with, if anyone talks about anything that was going on in the west, you know, during the kind of my younger years, I kind of have the Japanese version of that, you know, so TV shows, music, pop culture, so I guess in that regards, it always made me feel that I'm newer here, too.

Taina expressed that the disadvantages she notices and struggles with seem to feel “more on a psychological” level in the sense that she feels she can't really belong and because she wonders how others perceive her, “she's not truly Japanese because she's only half.”

Mari expressed similar confusion of not being sure whether she belongs. She highlighted that this was very salient during her high school years when she was constantly figuring out the idea of, “Where do I belong?” Michael voiced this concern as well when discussing living in Spain versus in Germany: “The problem is being in a place where you do not know if you belong completely.” Nina expressed that it was other people, at times, that made it challenging to identify with more than one nationality, especially when she is told from people in Russia, “Oh, you're so Dutch, you're not Russian at all, come on.” Nina described this sense that maybe neither country accepts her fully or that she, herself, just does not feel she belongs in either Russia or Netherlands. Mari spoke about how she forgot how her family used to celebrate Japanese holidays and incorporate them more into their day-to-day life. She shared that the less her family integrated these Japanese components, the less she felt she belonged to the Japanese culture.

Along the notion of “Do I belong?” Suahili expressed it as the question “How do you feel?” in relation to her nationality. It is a question she did not care for because she did not know how to answer it. She shared that she does not know how a German, Croatian, or Spanish person feels. “I can’t say what a real German feels because I don’t have this German background, but I can’t say I feel really Spanish because I never lived in Spain; same with Croatia.” She shared that it is not something that causes her to lose sleep, but something that regularly does cross her mind. Participants shared this general uncertainty of where their home is and their ambivalence about whether they belong. It was agreed that this confusion was a challenge related to identifying with multiple nationalities.

Professional Identities

As participants discussed making sense of their multiple national identities, they also brought up the importance of their professional identities. Participants’ professional lives contributed to strengthening or fostering their multiple nationalities. As Michael expressed, it was his professional life, his career, that triggered the process of moving to Germany and identifying as German. Nina, on the other hand, identifies as a global citizen, matching her professional interests in pursuing her work to alleviate problems from a thematic global perspective that addresses concerns in multiple countries.

Derek was in agreement with Michael and Nina in that his professional identity was very salient. Derek is an entrepreneur who has started his own business with a close friend. Derek sees himself as creative, inventive, and insightful through his professional identity. Establishing his business in the U.S. has also helped Derek form a more positive view of what it means to be an American and has played a key role in identifying more

strongly with his American nationality, “Yes, I have this opportunity, and America is helping me do this thing.” As Derek continues to establish himself in the U.S., he has noticed that his American nationality is growing and his Canadian sense of nationality is becoming smaller. Thus, his professional life helps him feel closer to his American nationality and further away from his Canadian nationality. In a picture not included to maintain Derek’s confidentiality, Derek shows his work at a video-conference with his business partner and the creation they designed to demonstrate and advertise a new videogame.

That was a huge moment for that part of my identity that I think, again, cemented that thought, “Well, this is going pretty well, this feels like who I am,” and you know, it’s just another anchor, so now, I have business based in the U.S. with an American business partner, and now it’s just another thing that I have to sacrifice if I was to become Canadian again.

Maria’s professional identity was also very salient, which was strongly influenced by seeing her parents change their career at a later point in their life.

I was growing up with the idea “it’s never too late,” and this was more of, if I can say, for many Western people . . . it’s more of a natural idea, because people go, and people have gap years, they travel . . . at the age of 40 they can start another Masters. It’s really not the same in Russia or a lot of other post-communist/post-socialist countries because for many years, for many generations, there was sort of the path, and the path was very straightforward: School, studies, working, family, working, family, working, family, and then you retire.

Thus, being able to pursue her passions and try something different sets Maria apart from many other people she knew in Russia. Interestingly, her area of focus is also an opportunity to learn more about Chile as well as stay connected to Russia.

Maria spoke about the experiences she has created that have been instrumental in her process of making sense of herself. “I have had very different experiences and variety of experiences, work and studies, and it’s really constituting what I’m doing,” and

shaped who she is. She shared that she views that individuals have tasks in life to complete in order to help make the world better, and it is important to understand what your task is. She highlighted her belief as, “It’s a life path, life trail, that you go through, and there is no right way, it’s doing what is best in the moment.”

Elinor presented a book made by her colleagues at her previous employment, a university, because her professional identity or work experience has influenced her identification process. The book is one of the only things she has from that time period, “I love the book!” and it reminds her of working primarily with American students on a staff that was Israeli. Her work experience often evoked the feelings of “I’m American and I’m Israeli.” For students, she was a role model because she spoke Hebrew, was on an Israeli team, and was successfully living in Israel, something for which many of the students hoped. Interestingly, while students saw her as an American who successfully integrated, the staff saw her as Israeli. Even though this experience allowed her to see her dual nationalities, the exploration of her dual nationalities took place more intensely at a previous job where she worked in a similar program with high school students. She shared that it was during her first six months living in Israel that really brought the realization that “I got to be in both worlds simultaneously,” encouraging her to explore her sense of nationality. During this time period, she described having many Israeli friends who helped her with the process of obtaining an identity card, getting insurance, and all those other necessities. “I wasn’t in an American bubble with trying to figure it out with other Americans, so it kind of situated my identity into Israel, very Israeli, lots of Israeli friends.”

Importance of Food

Even though not all participants discussed food, four participants brought up the exposure to food as an important component in helping them identify with more than one nationality, such as Taina learning how to prepare Japanese cuisine by watching her grandmother or Mari eating Japanese cuisine growing up. Steve shared via one of the mementos the idea of how food was an indicator that he identifies with more than one nationality. The picture (see Figure 9) is of delicious Japanese food that he buys at a store selling Japanese products. “I think probably the biggest difference between what you see between something that I do versus what a normal American would do or someone who grew up here, is probably food.” Food brought comfort and seemed to indicate a piece of stability. As Steve shared, regardless of where he lives, he always makes the effort of finding Japanese food for him to prepare. Suhaili also emphasized the importance of food, as shown in her memento depicting Croatia (see Figure 10). The spices included in the picture are common to Croatian cooking. The green spice is *Vegeta*, similar to a vegetable broth and used in that manner, while the red paste is *Ajvar*, used similarly like ketchup. Several times she referenced that her cooking reflects her exposure and immersion with the cultures in which she grew up. Cooking and baking foods that might not be found in Germany is one way others can identify that she is influenced by other nationalities. Being exposed and immersed in the nationalities with which participants identified, such as through food common to the nation, was instrumental in participants identifying with multiple nationalities.



Figure 9. Picture of Japanese food.



Figure 10. Picture of Croatian spices.

Recommendations for Mental Health Professionals

One purpose of the present study was to obtain recommendations for mental health professionals when working with individuals who identify with multiple nationalities. Each participant was asked to make recommendations for mental health professionals based on what they thought would be relevant when considering someone who identifies with more than one nationality. A few insights, either through personal experience or through people they knew, were shared.

Mari noted that she would find it helpful if the psychologist or counselor would have some familiarity with different cultural backgrounds and be familiar with the concept that certain issues may be more salient, depending on where a person is from.

Furthermore, she identified that having a sense that the person in front of you has an understanding of what it might be like to be pulled back and forth between the two nationalities was vital. Steve, Taina, and Derek echoed the ideas expressed by Mari. Steve added that, for him, it would be important for the person to have at least some experience of having left a country and having a more open worldview, “That understanding of experiences and how they are very different.” Taina agreed, noting that seeing some similarity between herself and the counselor would be nice, not that the “counselor has to be multicultural to know what I’m going through, but just to see that they also have some awareness, they traveled, they know what other cultures are and things like that would be nice to know.”

Michael noted that being aware that regardless of what nationality is being discussed, the core of the person is more or less the same, but how the person behaves or acts may change because of the influence of the nationality, “that will be something useful for a counseling psychologist to take into consideration. Maybe this person, if you talk about the other nationality, it could be completely different. This behavior, this, I wouldn’t say preference, this external interaction might change.”

Taina expressed that she would have appreciated more support during high school and for her guidance counselor to have more multicultural training. She noted taking the SAT and not having the option to identify herself accurately with which she was told, “Choose the Hispanic because they do worse at the pre-SAT, and if you do well, you will get recognized because you have a higher score than most Hispanic students.” Taina expressed that her recommendation would be for high schools to provide more services for children like her who grew up with multiple nationalities. She enjoyed that in college

there were support groups available, counseling services, and cultural centers. Taina noted that she feels more comfortable speaking English:

But if the counselor or psychologists knows more than one language, that would definitely help because there are people who were born outside the country, so their first language is, like, Spanish or something like that, that would be great. I think that would help a lot.

Nina, like Taina, would also have appreciated more support, especially when she moved to the Netherlands, in order to address her feelings of wanting to belong and understanding that her culture of origin is not inferior. Nina expressed that hearing the message that, “You can have both and that you don’t necessarily have to choose one or the other at the expense of one of them” would have allowed her to maintain her Russian nationality.

Nina further elaborated that she would have found it helpful to work with someone regarding wanting to rid herself of her Russian nationality while maintaining her ties with her family.

And for me, it was very difficult of how I could become completely be Dutch, as I wanted at that stage and kind of get rid of that Russian part, but still have a place for my relatives, who I still obviously loved, and I didn’t want to get rid of them. I just wanted to get rid of the Russian nationality or being perceived as Russian. So, how I could do that while at the same time not hurting them or having good relationships with them? So, I think that’s something to know or bear in mind, perhaps, when you’re dealing with children or teenagers as a counselor. . . . For me, it was kind of difficult to reconcile my two identities because I still had roots with Russia, it’s not something that I could get rid of entirely at that point, which at this point, I don’t want anymore, but, like, speaking from the perspective of a child.

Suhaili shared an experience she had with a friend to address the question of what might be helpful for mental health professionals to know.

I have a friend, she is Croatian, she came to Germany during the war, and her husband, her ex-husband, is German. When they separated, she was really down for a long time, and a lot of people said, “Go to a *Psychologe* (psychologist), it

probably will help you.” She went there one time, and then she came back and said, “I’m not going anymore,” and I said, “Why?” “They don’t understand my background, they don’t understand the way I feel as a Croatian, they are German, and they have their way to think, and they don’t understand me.”

Suhaili reflected that she was unsure whether it was the background or the person, but regardless of that, her Croatian friend did not feel understood and felt it was due to the cultural divide. When considering what she would need, she shared similar thoughts as many others had that it would depend on what she was struggling with and “see if my background can help me or probably my background is the problem, it depends, I don’t know.”

As Shanti expressed, what a person needed would depend on how she or he feels about their multiple nationalities and how they are being impacted. She expressed that, for example, for her sister, it would not matter addressing her multiple nationalities, “She is doing perfectly ok in the U.S.; sometimes she comes back to Mexico, but she is not like me that I have very, very strong ties to Mexico.” Yet if Shanti would attend counseling, she shared that she would want to explore how she is making sense of herself, how to make sure she does not lose her multiple nationalities, and explore “how am I handling the transition, and is it affecting my self-esteem or my beliefs. This is really important.”

Elinor was able to share a whole new perspective on this topic as she openly shared that as part of her job working at a university in Israel, she was required to attend weekly counseling sessions for several months. She shared that she enjoyed this experience, especially as the mental health provider used a framework that addressed her identification with multiple nationalities as well as her having moved from a very different country.

The counselor I met with specialized in working with students who were studying abroad. So, she very much understood all the things that we've been talking about, that dichotomy of being neither here or there. And also, how that affects somebody, I'm going to use the wrong term, but the psyche, or sense of self, their emotional well-being and how all the things that we know, like keeping someone stable and predictable, and a sense of belonging, etc. have effects on you, even if you don't feel the effects, and what I'm articulating isn't something I said to her, but when I would say things that were frustrating or difficult for me, she would reflect back within that framework. So, she would say maybe . . . essentially "maybe it's because you're in this environment that you're reacting this way. What if you were in a different environment, and not a cultural environment, but away from your family, let's say, or not with your best friend, whatever the situation is." And, that understanding is something I didn't have of myself, but she had as a background and was able to bring into the conversation. So, that was very important because I don't know. . . . but that's how it feels, that lack of roots is going to affect everything in my emotional well-being even if I don't know it. So, for the counselor to have the perspective and to bring it to the conversation, that would be very important.

Elinor shared that she used this framework in her various jobs, especially as she often worked with individuals who just recently moved to Israel. The various suggestions and ideas based on friends and personal experience emphasize working with someone who has an open view and is able to use a framework that considers the person's multiple nationalities and how the nationalities may impact that person's actions.

Summary

In this chapter, emerging themes were presented and described to share participants' experiences of identifying with more than one nationality. Participants' narratives were rich in description and provided meaningful data that allowed for the sharing of a thick description of themes. Emerging themes included: (a) process of identifying with multiple nationalities; (b) intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities; (c) reactions of others; (d) cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity; (e) similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities; (f) feeling connected or disconnected through language;

(g) where is home, and do I belong?; (h) professional identities; and (i) importance of food. Advice for counseling psychologists from participants was also provided for mental health professionals to consider in their treatment consideration when working with individuals identifying with more than one nationality. Participants highlighted the importance of the clinician being open and understanding of other cultures. Some expressed a preference in the clinician having travelled or having had exposure to other nationalities and cultures in order to better relate to them.

While shared themes emerged for participants, it is important to consider the constructive theoretical frameworks of this study and the nature of qualitative research, which recognizes that participants do not have the same experience. Each story provides a unique snapshot of life experiences; thus, it is recognizing the shared phenomenon across participants in the context of their own unique life experiences.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Study

In the field of counseling psychology, becoming a multiculturally competent psychologist and a social advocate is emphasized. This aspiration is important as our world continues to become more global, increasing our encounters with clients of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. There are an estimated 214 million international and 381 million internal migrants ages 15 and up (Esipova, Pugliese, & Ray, 2013). As the world becomes more globalized, national boundaries soften, providing more opportunities for movement between nations. With this ability to move and recognizing that there are restrictions, individuals are exposed to different nationalities, which increase the likelihood that they will identify with multiple nationalities. For this reason, participants' stories of making sense of their multiple nationalities was explored.

Emerging themes and unique experiences in participants' experiences were discussed in the previous chapter. This study was guided by the collection of qualitative data and utilizing phenomenology as the framework. The findings of this study were the result of thorough data analysis, collected through interviews conducted via SkypeTM, reviews of transcripts, and member checking. Ten participants identifying with a variety of nationalities were interviewed. Through their shared experiences, I was able to gain a

better understanding of how participants created meaning from identifying with multiple nationalities.

Given the scarcity of literature focused on individuals identifying with multiple nationalities, I shared participants' experiences to gain a better understanding of how participants created meaning from identifying with multiple nationalities. In this chapter, research questions and purpose of the study are reviewed, and a summary of the findings, limitations of the study, clinical implications and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Summary of Findings and Relationship with Current Literature

To help accomplish the goal of gaining a better understanding of individuals identifying with multiple nationalities, the following research questions were developed:

- Q1 What are the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality?
 - Q1a How have individuals made sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality?
 - Q1b What has facilitated or hindered the individual's identity development?

The shared experiences of the participants in this study were reflected in the emerging themes and helped describe the phenomenon of participants identifying with multiple nationalities. The experiences reported by participants included:

- Process of identifying with multiple nationalities.
- Intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities.
- Reactions of others.
- Cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity.

- Similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities.
- Feeling connected or disconnected through language.
- Where is home, and do I belong?
- Professional identities.
- Importance of food.

Research Question 1

Q1 What are the lived experiences of individuals identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality?

Participants' experiences of identifying with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality are rich and varied. All 10 participants were introduced in Chapter IV. Participants identified with a range of nationalities and had diverse backgrounds. The experiences, while unique, also had many commonalities that were found in the nine emerging themes introduced in the previous chapter, which include: (a) process of identifying with multiple nationalities; (b) intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities; (c) reactions of others; (d) cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity; (e) similarities between cultures, language, religions and spiritualities across nationalities; (f) feeling connected or disconnected through language; (g) where is home, and do I belong?; (h) professional identities; and (i) importance of food. The concept of intersectionality was present in participants' stories and the emerging themes, but appeared differently than operationally defined in Chapter I. How intersectionality emerged will be explored with the following discussion of how each theme related to the research question.

Intersectionality. Intersectionality is simultaneously taking into account the interacting effects of gender, race, ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, and spirituality while considering how these components influence political access, equality, and justice (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011). The purpose of using an intersectionality framework is that it allows for a richer understanding of how people make sense of the various identities to which they belong. It is an attempt to look at the whole person and to strive to understand how the person makes sense of her/himself. Participants' lived experiences encapsulated other salient identities in addition to their nationalities (such as the influence of gender, religion and spirituality) in addition to other identities not included in the definition such as phenotype, family, professional identities, and language. Most often, research has focused on the interacting effects of gender, race, ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, and religion/belief system (Cole, Piercy, Wolfe, & West, 2014; Hancock, 2007; Maciel & Knudson-Martin, 2014; Oleksy, 2011). Some of these salient identity layers may not have emerged in this study due to their not being prominent for participants, such as identifying with the norm in regards to sexual orientation, being temporarily able-bodied, and having political access. It was surprising that gender was not discussed in depth or brought up as being important when considering the intersectionality of gender and nationality, even when prompted. Derek was the only participant who discussed gender, noting that being male allowed him certain privileges that made his navigation between Canada and the U.S. easier. Religion was identified as an important intersecting identity such as for Shanti and Suhaili, both for whom it was a common denominator between their various nationalities. Spirituality was essential for Taina, who discussed in depth

her Buddhist practice and how it not only grounds her, but also helps her make sense of herself. Even if some of the expected intersecting areas did not emerge in as much depth or at all, participants did discuss other identities they found important in conjunction to their multiple nationalities not typical in the intersectionality literature, such as their professional identities. The way participants viewed themselves in their professional lives and career aspirations was a commonality that individuals found important in making sense of who they are, especially as it introduced them to new nationalities as well as helping them make sense of their multiple nationalities.

Furthermore, participants frequently explored themselves in relation to others and familial and romantic relationships and how this interacted with their multiple nationalities. Thus, seeing themselves in light of others was an important part of who they saw themselves as and is further explored in the theme *process of identifying with multiple nationalities*. The intersectionality between nationality and relationships would be an interesting and important avenue to explore in future research. In addition to professional identities and relationships, phenotype emerged. Several participants, including Mari, Steve, Taina, and Suhaili, discussed phenotype in regards to how others respond to them based on physical appearances. This was important to consider as it often confounded their understanding of their multiple nationalities. Derek, on the other hand, noted that due to his phenotype, it was easier for him to navigate between his two nationalities, similarly to how having the same language in each of his nationalities made the transition easier. Lastly, language played an important role in how participants viewed themselves. Speaking the language strengthened their connection to their nationalities, even though at times it could serve almost as a barrier. Each of these

unique intersecting areas is further explored in the themes section. Table 3 highlights which unique identity areas intersected with participants' multiple nationalities.

Table 3

Unique Intersecting Identities

Participant	Professional Identity	Family and Romantic Relationships	Phenotype	Language
Mari	X	X	X	X
Steve	X	X	X	X
Michael	X	X		X
Taina	X	X	X	X
Suhaili	X	X	X	X
Shanti	X	X		X
Derek	X	X	X	X
Nina	X	X		X
Maria	X	X		X
Elinor	X	X		X

As Sawyer et al. (2013) addresses, studying intersecting identities can be complicated due to several reasons, such as finding individuals with invisible identities and working with stigmatizing identities. Additionally, the concept of intersectionality is ambiguous and open-ended, which on one hand ensures a continuous exploration of what intersectionality is, while on the other hand, adds a challenge to exploring it (Davis, 2008). The ambiguity, according to Davis (2008), allows room for continual exploration

in creative new ways that stimulate researchers to view the problem at hand from multiple perspectives.

Considering a person's intersecting identities is something important to study, especially for counseling psychologists and mental health professionals, as it can assist us in our everlasting quest towards further multicultural competence and social justice. Intersectionality researchers strive to provide data to support positive social change and make an attempt to understand participants from their worldviews (Shields, 2008; Walker, 2003). Even though an awareness that multiple identities can interact in unique ways does not guarantee that we understand the process, it does facilitate the discussion for us to be attuned to the complexities of individuals. For mental health professionals, it prompts us to take a step back and listen to our clients' stories, with all selves included. Thus, even though the intersectionality of individuals was not captured as expected, which will be addressed further in the limitations section, some of the salient identities of participants emerged and were explored in their stories.

Process of identifying with multiple nationalities. Important to participants' stories about identifying with multiple nationalities was their experience of coming to identify with multiple nationalities. For some participants, it was through migration; for others, it was their familial upbringing; and for some, it was a combination. Furthermore, relationships, either familial or romantic, served as important source of support in maintaining the multiple nationalities. Lastly, documentation and legal status for several participants served as a catalyst to pursue multiple nationalities. The ways in which participants came to identify with their multiple nationalities is consistent with research, which notes that it is not uncommon for individuals to internalize more than one

nationality through either living in a multicultural community or cross-cultural marriages, or through internalization of multiple nationalities through immigration (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). In the U.S. alone, about 13% of the population resided in a different country before immigrating to the U.S., and about 85% of these individuals speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census, 2010).

Migration for some participants occurred as a child. In Nina's case, she moved to the Netherlands at age 8, while Mari moved to the U.S. as a baby. Other participants migrated when they were adults for employment opportunities. This was the case for Shanti, who moved to Argentina from Mexico for a job, and for Michael, who moved to Germany to pursue his career interests. Some participants migrated to a nation with which they had already started to identify due to their parents being of that nationality, such as Derek (moving to the U.S. during high school), Steve (moving to the U.S. for his undergraduate studies), and Elinor (moving to Israel after having visited several times). In addition to migration, participants' relationships, whether familial or romantic, served an important role in being exposed to multiple nationalities, feeling accepted in a nationality, and/or in helping maintain their multiple nationalities.

Mari, Steve, Taina, Suhaili, Derek, and Maria each were exposed to their multiple nationalities via their parents. In their cases, their parents came from differing national backgrounds, such as Mari whose father was from Japan and mother from Finland. While Michael was introduced through his parents to the Catalán and Spanish nationality, it was through his career pursuits and migration that he came to also identify as German. Shanti, unlike others, had parents of a similar national background—Mexican. Shanti exposed herself to a new nationality through moving to Argentina.

Participants were also influenced by other relationships, such as romantic partners, to new nationalities or ways to foster their current national identities. This was the case for Suhaili who was influenced by her fiancée's multiple nationality. Due to both of them sharing the Spanish nationality, she was able to deepen her connection with the Spanish nationality. Elinor, like Suhaili, was also influenced by her fiancée. Her fiancée is Australian, and both identify as Jewish. Having both this common ground in the Jewish community as well as attending similar Jewish summer camps allowed them to have many shared feelings in terms of identifying with the Israeli nationality. Elinor has been learning about and visiting Australia, which has started the process to ponder her connection to this new nation. For Michael, having his wife also identify as Spanish and Catalán supports him in exploring these nationalities, while having different degrees of connectedness with the German nationality adds a challenge. Steve and Derek each shared that their romantic partners have encouraged them in exploring their multiple nationalities, even if they do not identify the same way.

Several participants spoke about how receiving documentation and legal status for the respective nationalities was an important catalyst in their journey of identifying with multiple nationalities. Derek, Maria, and Nina expressed that receiving their social security card, passport, and name change, respectively, was instrumental in their process of identifying with multiple nationalities. Derek shared that receiving his social security card indicating he was a resident allowed the information that he was Canadian and American to "sink in." Maria echoed this sentiment, explaining that receiving the Chilean passport encouraged her to start learning about Chile and making plans to move there. For Nina, it was the documentation that her name change was official; having a

Dutch name meant that she truly fit in as a Dutch person. To her it was more meaningful than having Dutch citizenship. Just as documentation was helpful for participants in becoming aware of their multiple nationalities, the lack of it was identified as weakening the relationship, as was the case for Steve. Steve does not have a Japanese passport, strengthening the sense of being *gaijin* (foreigner).

Intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities. All participants intentionally chose to identify and maintain their multiple nationalities, even if this process did not always feel conscious. The connectedness with each nationality shifted over time for all participants. Some participants made intentional choices to become reacquainted with a nationality that felt more unfamiliar, as was the case for Nina and Maria. Other participants who were introduced to their nationalities through family selected to keep identifying with these nationalities into adulthood. Keith (2011) discussed how a multicultural identity, as is the case with internalizing multiple nationalities, could contribute to a sense of uniqueness as well as a rich and varied sense of community for individuals. This aligns with participants' experiences and helps explain in part the decision to maintain the identification with multiple nationalities. Furthermore, for those individuals who were exposed to their multiple nationalities through migration, Bhugra (2005) proposes that, whether migration is temporary or permanently and whether for economic, political, or educational purposes, it is very likely that the person's cultural and ethnic identities will change.

Participants experienced changes in how connected they felt to each nationality over time related to developmental changes, exposure to the nations where they were residing, or the ability to travel to the various nations. Participants made intentional

choices to maintain their identification with multiple nationalities, through taking active steps to learn the language, immerse and learn more about the culture, or travel to the nation. Even if, at the time, the changes in how deeply connected they felt to a nation did not feel intentional, their subsequent actions and choices were intentional.

As Mari became older, her American identity became stronger, and her Japanese identity faded to a point where she thought it was nonexistent. Mari at this point is re-exploring her Japanese nationality. Similar to Mari, Derek noticed a shift in how strongly he identifies as Canadian and American. Derek's story relates to Mari's because his sense of national identity has shifted over the years to him being concerned that his identification with the Canadian nationality might disappear. Steve's sense of identifying as Japanese and American has shifted over the years as well in that with the more experiences he creates in the U.S., the stronger his American identity becomes. Elinor's identity shifts as she travels, noting that when she is not in the U.S., she feels more strongly as an American. When she is in the U.S., she feels more strongly like an Israeli. Michael captured what many other participants expressed, in that his sense of national identification has changed and will continue to evolve as he gathers more life experiences. Suhaili, unlike others, felt more consistent with how she felt in regards to her connectedness to her three nationalities, but she agreed with others that some of the nationalities are stronger than others; something that will continue to change over time.

As participants took note of how their levels of connectedness with each nationality shifted over time, participants discussed how they intentionally have made strides to re-integrate certain nationalities into their lives. Nina went from actively trying to not be Russian, to now relearning the language and studying Russian culture. For

Maria, she is actively learning about Chile, including its language, history, and culture to foster her identify with the nationality. Participants also discussed how exposure is important to developing their connectedness with a nationality. For Elinor, her work experience in Israel helped her establish and solidify her “relationship as an American.” Michael, on the other hand, discussed how his exposure as a child to the Catalanian and Spanish cultures through his parents and environment helped define and influence his identification with multiple nationalities.

Reactions of others. Participants expressed that how others reactions to them had an impact on how they made sense of their multiple nationalities. For Steve, it made it harder at times to identify as Japanese because in Japan, he is labeled as *gaijin*. The reactions of others came not only from individuals, but also were perceived by participants as being reactions based in part upon the culture of the nation. These reactions at times complicated how a participant felt about their multiple nationalities and could strengthen or weaken their connections to a particular nation.

Mari noted that her family considers her to be Japanese, but others in Japan do not. In the U.S., she is often identified as Japanese, but not Finnish, receiving the label Asian American. Taina described a similar experience to Mari, one in which other people label her as Hispanic or even Mexican, rather than Puerto Rican, forgetting that she also identifies as American and Japanese. Mari’s and Taina’s experiences are consistent with research conducted in the U.S., where Citrin et al. (2001) found that most Whites primarily identified as American, while those seen as non-White typically reported being labeled as and labeling themselves as American along with some other identity. Suhaili had a similar experience in Europe, being labeled by others in a way that she can only be

from one nationality, instead of all three, such as being the Spanish girl when in Germany or Croatia and the German girl when visiting Spain. Nina experienced being told by people in Russia that she was Dutch and not Russian. Elinor had a similar experience to Nina's in that when in Israel, she is not considered Israeli by other Israelis. Derek, unlike other participants, shared that people don't label him, especially as he fits that norm of being a European American male, but that he feels an internal pressure of how others perceive him, especially when visiting Canada after having lived so long in the U.S. The reactions of other people towards participants often felt invalidating for the participant and served as an additional layer through which to navigate in making sense of themselves and their experiences.

Cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity.

Another experience for participants living within multiple nationalities is captured in the theme of cultural intelligence, the ability to relate and work across cultures in a variety of ways. For participants, cultural intelligence captured the idea of being open, appreciative, and accepting of diversity. All 10 participants expressed that having a raised awareness that there are other cultures in the world with different belief systems and customs has influenced how they have made sense of themselves and their own experiences. Cultural intelligence for participants has also fostered an increase in patience and tolerance in order to learn about other people's nationalities. This is consistent with what Keith (2011) suggested about individuals who form a multicultural identity through internalizing multiple nationalities, that there is the potential to enhance one's sense of self-efficacy in addition to strengthening a sense of identification with one's heritage.

Taina, Michael, Suhaili, Nina, and Mari each expressed that they grew up feeling more open-minded and aware that there are other nationalities and cultures than their own. Furthermore, they grew up considering that there are other beliefs and viewpoints, not instilling the sense that their particular worldview is correct. Shanti echoed these notions, expressing that identifying with multiple nationalities has helped her challenge her own prejudices and assumptions in addition to allowing her the opportunity to create a more open and accepting worldview. Elinor described the idea of identifying with multiple nationalities as humbling. Being more open also allowed participants to be more accepting.

Participants also discussed how they are able to pick and choose the parts that they appreciate about each nationality and combine that with parts that they appreciate from a different nationality. Suhaili and Michael noted they have done this for themselves. Taking parts of the varying nationalities and integrating them for their own lives was a very common experience that participants discussed and that fostered their intentionality of choosing to identify with multiple nationalities.

Similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities. Participants' experiences living with multiple nationalities was impacted at times, by having consistency between the different nationalities, whether in the form of culture, language, or religion. Suhaili noted that, consistent across the three nationalities with which she identifies, is being Catholic. For two of the nationalities, they share a Mediterranean culture. Shanti also noted the fact that both Mexico and Argentina are Catholic made it easier for her to transition between the two as well as that both countries have the same language, even with some differences. Derek also discussed how cultural

similarities between Canada and the U.S. made it easy for him to identify with both, but also made it difficult to differentiate them. Elinor found that her Jewish culture connected her to both of her nationalities, especially as she had a Jewish community both in Israel and in the U.S.

Along with the idea of consistency between the various nationalities, participants also discussed their experience of internal consistency, meaning that they felt they could adapt and fit in with the various nationalities while still feeling that they were the same person. This aligns with previous research that explored how a person has multiple senses of self that are composed of various salient identities such as one's cultural, national, religious, and spiritual identities (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011). All of these various identities interact to impact an individual's sense of self, making sense that participants would consider these components across all their nationalities. For Taina, her spiritual sense of self helps her feel connected to her multiple nationalities, as her spirituality helps her feel grounded and connected. For this reason, intersectionality theory takes into account the simultaneously interacting effects of all the salient identities with which a person identifies in order to understand the person as a whole (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011).

Shanti created a process for herself to help her settle into new places without losing the sense of who she is. Elinor explained it as being culturally adaptive, which may result in her portraying herself differently, but not changing who she is or how she sees herself. This matched most of the participants' experiences including Shanti, Michael, Taina, Suhaili, Derek, Nina, and Maria. Thus, they perceived themselves to be the same, regardless of their multiple national identities, but might adapt their actions or

behaviors to the environment. With keeping a consistent core, Michael shared that for him it was important to be able to integrate his various nationalities in order to have all of them represented. Taina noted that when she visits Puerto Rico or Japan, she embraces that nation's culture completely in order to fit in, but again she feels that she is the same person. For her, fitting in results in subtle alterations such as wearing bigger jewelry or changing how she speaks to someone considered to be an elder. Just as Michael found it helpful to integrate his various nationalities, Suhaili felt that she has been able to integrate the different nationalities with which she identifies, expressing that being engaged with activities such as dances or speaking the language is useful to help her stay connected with each nationality—"I am always the same person, doesn't matter where I am."

Nina discussed her experience of trying to reintegrate her Russian nationality into her life as she actively tried to fit in as Dutch, resulting in her losing and pushing away the Russian nationality. She now is looking at balancing how she can be both, noting that the description of a global citizen was most fitting. Elinor noted that it's helpful at times to remind herself that it is possible to identify with multiple nationalities and that there are parts to each she appreciates as well as from which she feels distant in each nationality. Derek explored that he feels he is the same person regardless of where he is, but that he does notice a change in what he talks about related to emphasizing his Canadian nationality due to worrying that he might be losing this part of himself.

Feeling connected or disconnected through language. Language was an important source that participants discussed in their lived experiences of identifying with multiple nationalities as it could serve as a way to feel connected or disconnected to a

particular nationality. Language is a powerful source of communication and has an impact on the individual, familial, and societal levels. Consistent with participants' experiences, language can serve as a barrier for those whose main language is not that of the dominant culture. Torres-Rivera et al. (2008) conducted research in the U.S. that found that for those individuals who spoke English with an accent, mistakes, and/or incorrect grammar, they were perceived as ignorant. These findings were consistent in Britain, where Burck (2004) also found negative attitudes towards other languages. Participants having both positive and negative experiences also aligned with my pilot study (Peters, 2012) where language was seen to serve as a barrier or facilitator in establishing friendships and building a support network.

Maria learned Spanish in order to help her connect more with her Chilean nationality. Suhaili reflected that she identifies less strongly with her Croatian nationality as compared to her Spanish nationality because she is more fluent in Spanish. Michael, Mari, and Taina had similar experiences of feeling connected through speaking the respected language, while not being able to speak it served as a barrier. For example, Taina speaks only a little Japanese, which is part of the reason that she feels less close to her Japanese nationality. Derek noted that the two nationalities he identifies with share the same language (i.e., English). In addition to this, he does not have an accent, making it easier to blend in. Shanti also easily moved between Mexico and Argentina because of both having the same language, even though it took time to navigate through and figure out cultural differences in the language.

Nina is actively learning Russian, and Elinor learned Hebrew in order for them to connect to their respective nationalities. Despite speaking fluent Hebrew, Elinor has an

accent, which marks her as an outsider. Participants' experiences with speaking or not speaking the language relevant to the nationality had an important impact in how they made sense of their experiences in regards to identifying with multiple nationalities.

Where is home, and do I belong? A difficulty that participants described in their stories of identifying with multiple nationalities was not knowing where home was or whether they belonged. Romano (2008) found that it was common for an individual to have a sense of unresolved sadness over leaving one's country of origin, even if one otherwise felt happy. Participants felt it was a difficult challenge in navigating where to live and whether to make it a permanent or temporary settlement, consistent with the literature (Molina, Estrada, & Burnett, 2004). Oftentimes, considerations of education for children, job opportunities, extended family, and immigration status are factors to consider. The challenge of creating a home for participants was also related to not knowing if the place they chose was in fact the best choice. As Elinor put it, in being exposed to multiple nationalities, you are in a constant state of "the grass is greener, because I know both lawns."

Several participants noted that being removed from family impacted their senses of belonging. Steve expressed that being removed from family was difficult. Michael echoed this sentiment in that he is torn about where to live—on one hand, enjoying living in Germany and connecting with his German nationality, while on the other hand, having his family all living in Spain. "Where is the right place? Where do you imagine your life?" Nina also raised the question of "Where do I live?" in addition to where to settle and what does that mean in the continuing maintenance of the various nationalities.

Participants' discussions of where to live and whether they belonged taps into Maslow's hierarchy of needs in which one's need for love and belongingness is essential for an individual to feel accepted (Maslow, 1987). The need to belong is an area that is important for people to address, once physiological and safety-security needs have been satisfied. The need to belong fits with attachment literature, which explores how humans across the world have an innate need to connect with other individuals and groups. The need to belong is adaptive as it creates an urge in individuals to form attachments to increase survival as well as to fulfill the desire to feel accepted (Ainsworth, 1989; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Feeling socially excluded, according to Baumeister and Leary, "may well be the most common and important cause of anxiety" (p. 506).

Taina raised a concern related to feeling that it's hard to feel she belongs as it is related to the reactions of others. Mari expressed similar confusion of not being sure where she belongs and feels most comfortable. Nina, like Taina, expressed that it was other people, at times, that made it challenging to identify with more than one nationality and feel like she belongs. Suhaili brought up the debate of whether she belongs in the context of not knowing how she feels as a German, Croatian, or Spanish person because she identifies with them all. Participants shared this general uncertainty of where their home is and their ambivalence about whether they belong where they are, something that is important in their lived experiences. This is a significant challenge related to identifying with multiple nationalities.

Professional identities. Participants' professional identities and experiences were frequently brought up as something that was important in their lived experiences and when considering themselves in the context of identifying with multiple nationalities.

Their professional lives were identified as an important source in their introduction to a new nationality or to help them create meaning of their multiple nationalities. For Michael, his career triggered the process of moving to Germany and identifying as German. Nina utilized her professional interest to help facilitate the sense of being a global citizen by pursuing work that focuses on alleviating problems from a thematic global perspective, which was inspired by her identifying with multiple nationalities.

Derek established his business in the U.S., which fostered his sense of what it means for him to be an American as well as helped him to shape a more positive view of the U.S. Maria's professional interests are not only allowing her to travel to Chile to learn more about the nationality, but also keeping her connected to Russia as her work is transferable. Elinor noted that her work experiences in Israel have allowed her to explore her multiple nationalities. Her interactions with colleagues and students have helped her realize that her nationalities can co-exist.

Importance of food. Even though not all participants discussed food, food was instrumental for those who did bring it up as a way that helped maintain their respective nationalities. Romano (2008) discussed how food in most cultures is an essential component of celebrations, ceremonies, and rituals. Food is an integral part of our everyday life, and therefore, it is not surprising that several participants discussed food and ways to maintain foods from the various nationalities with which they identify. Taina, Steve, and Mari each shared that learning how to prepare Japanese cuisine as well as eating Japanese food was something that tied them to this nationality. Steve expressed that he was being intentional about preparing Japanese cuisine and that he was maintaining this in his romantic relationship. Suhaili also emphasized the importance of

food and using spices common to the nationalities with which she identifies. Food was not only seen as a way to remind participants of their nationalities, but it also was used as a way to show others that they identify with multiple nationalities.

Research Question 1a

Q1a How have individuals made sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality?

Participants described several events in their stories that contributed to their process of making sense of themselves in the context of their multiple nationalities. The subthemes of relationships and importance of documentation and legal status within a nationality came to the forefront as well as the themes of intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities, reactions of others, cultural intelligence, professional identities, and food. These themes were explored in how they addressed participants' journeys of making sense of themselves in the context of their multiple nationalities.

Process of identifying with multiple nationalities. The subthemes of relationships and the importance of documentation and legal status within a nationality were important considerations that people discussed in their journeys of making sense of themselves. Participants discussed that familial and romantic relationships helped them explore their national identities as well as that of whom they saw themselves. Derek expressed that it was his relationship with his sister that helped him gain the understanding that he wants to maintain his multiple nationalities. Seeing her and how much she has embraced the American nationality reminds him how much he wants to maintain his Canadian nationality. "So my sister is probably the person closest to me that I feel has a strong national identity, and it's kind of because of her that I think I will always have that stubbornness to identify at least partially as Canadian." For Taina, her

relationship with her parents helped her make sense of who she is. As she noted when describing a picture she chose to share that represents her making sense of her multiple nationalities, it was the “only picture I could find that could show my multi-nationality, but honestly it was really hard to convey both cultures in one picture. So, the only way I could do that was with just my parents and me.” Other participants expressed similar sentiments to those of Taina, that it was their parents and other family members that highlighted their multiple nationalities.

Participants also explored who they are in the context of their nationalities in their romantic relationships, especially as many participants were in relationships with someone of a differing national background. For Elinor, it allowed her to better understand her identification with her American nationality, while for Suhaili, she explored her Spanish nationality more. Michael, on the other hand, discovered how comfort with a nation influenced his sense of identification with the German nationality, which was unlike the experience his wife had. Steve and Derek expressed feeling supported by their partners to explore and take time to make sense of their multiple nationalities.

Receiving documentation and legal status for countries with which participants identified was an important catalyst in allowing them to explore themselves within the context of their multiple nationalities. It provided a concrete opportunity to better understand the nationality and see how it fit within the context of themselves. One participant, Steve, noted that not having legal status served as a reminder of his multiple nationalities each time he visited Japan. Thus, documentation and legal status served as a

reminder for participants that encouraged the exploration of their multiple nationalities and how it made sense for them.

Intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities. All participants intentionally chose to maintain their multiple nationalities as part of their process of making sense of themselves. This process at times did not feel conscious, especially in regards to how strongly each participant felt with each nationality as it shifted over time. Yet in the journey of making sense of themselves, participants made intentional choices to become reacquainted with a nationality that seemed more distant, as was the case for Nina, Maria, and Mari. As participants played with the idea of how strongly connected they felt towards each nationality, it was one way to make greater sense of themselves. Mari shared that she experimented with how strongly she felt connected with the Japanese culture during high school only to realize that it felt forced, versus now when she re-explores her connection with the Japanese nationality, it feels more natural. It is also a time to determine how much it will mix in with her Finnish and American nationalities. Shanti expressed that as she has moved and lived in several different countries, she made an active choice to adapt to each place and to determine whether the place, culture, food, and people fit with how she saw herself, leading to the discovery that she has integrated the Argentinian nationality with her Mexican nationality. Identifying with multiple nationalities is something that defined all participants, and it seemed important for them to maintain throughout their lifespan. Participants such as Mari, Steve, Michael, Derek, Nina, and Maria each expressed how their connectedness with each nationality has shifted over time and will continue to do so as they navigate who they are and how each nationality fits with their self-perception.

Reactions of others. For participants, reactions from other people brought to the forefront that they identified with multiple nationalities. Similarly to receiving or not receiving documentation and legal status, it was a reminder for them of their multiple nationalities and how these nationalities fit with their own self-perceptions. Suhaili noted that other people's reactions helped her to see that she has fully integrated all of her nationalities and that she is not considered purely German, Spanish, or Croatian. Elinor expressed that the reactions of others highlighted cultural factors of the nation because other Israelis do not consider her Israeli, but American. Reactions of others, for Mari were not only what encouraged her to explore her Japanese nationality, but also brought to light the discussion that identifying with multiple nationalities is not discussed. Mari expressed having a conversation with a friend who also identifies with multiple nationalities, sharing that "no one talks about it, like 'Oh, you identify with multiple nationalities, nice to meet you,' whatever, like no one is 'Wow, how is that for you?'" The reactions and responses from others based on appearances, accents, and names are frequent reminders for participants that they identify with multiple nationalities and encourages them to explore who they are.

Cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity.

As participants took a step back to reflect on what they appreciate about their multiple nationalities, it was determined that it was the sense of cultural intelligence they had developed. Cultural intelligence was an important component in how participants viewed themselves and something integral to how they made sense of themselves. Participants expressed that in their journeys of making sense of themselves in the context of their multiple nationalities, they have gained the awareness that there are other cultures in the

world with different belief systems and customs. Seeing beyond their own experiences brought forth a sense of patience and tolerance to learn from other people. Nina discussed how it was important for her to consider issues in a global context because of her awareness of discrepancies experienced in the world. Mari had a similar sentiment as she voiced how, growing up, she was aware that there were many different ways to approach a situation, meaning that not only one worldview or approach was correct—“It’s worth exploring these things and understanding where I come from and get to know those cultures and things like that.”

Many participants thought that being more open-minded also made it easier to communicate with individuals from all over the world and gave them a sense of being a “global citizen,” which was an important part of who they saw themselves as in the context of their multiple nationalities. Shanti noted how being exposed to different cultures and identifying with multiple nationalities has helped her challenge her prejudices and assumptions, an integral part in her journey of making sense of herself. The maté tea to which Shanti was introduced in Argentina encapsulated the idea that regardless of who you are, you are welcome to share and drink from the same maté cup without judgment, a message that she integrated into her worldview. Taina, like others, explored that accepting and appreciating other cultures was fundamental in her process of making sense of herself. It was something that Suhaili, Michael, and Elinor also echoed in the process of identifying with multiple nationalities as an eye-opening and humbling experience.

Professional identities. All participants discussed the importance of their professional identities and career aspirations in helping them to better understand

themselves. Professional lives were heavily linked with participants' multiple nationalities and often served as an aid in trying to make sense of their multiple nationalities. As Derek shared, it was starting his own business in the U.S. that helped him to form a more positive sense of self through his American nationality as well as to feel more distanced from his Canadian nationality. Michael also shared how his career aspirations strengthened his ties to his identity with his German nationality. Nina echoed the sentiment, expressing how her studies empowered her sense of being a global citizen and considering problems thematically and globally, which was also true for Maria. Elinor discussed how her work provided a space for her to make sense of her multiple nationalities as well as receive opportunities to learn what it means for her to identify with the American and Israeli nationalities. Mari and Taina each expressed how they hoped to take their studies and apply them in global work. Professional identities and career aspirations were ways for participants to make sense of themselves and to feel connected with their multiple nationalities.

Importance of food. For those participants who discussed food, food was an important link in exploring an important aspect of one's sense of self. Eating food common to the nationality, in everyday life as well as for celebrations, was an important aspect for participants in better understanding themselves as well as in determining what is important for them in regards to making sense of their multiple nationalities. Suhaili expressed that the food she prepares and eats is an indication that she identifies with multiple nationalities. Steve echoed this, sharing that he goes out of this way to find stores selling Japanese products in order to maintain his Japanese nationality. Mari noted that growing up eating Japanese food had originally helped her to feel connected to the

Japanese culture, but as eating the food became less frequent in addition to celebrating fewer Japanese festivals, her connection faded. Taina echoed other participants' experiences, discovering that as she learns to prepare dishes common to her various nationalities, it strengthens who she sees herself as and helps her to make better sense of her multiple nationalities.

Research Question 1b

Q1b What has facilitated or hindered the individual's identity development?

When participants shared their stories, they noted several aspects that helped facilitate or hinder their journeys of making sense of themselves in the context of their multiple nationalities. Many participants brought up that the way they identify with their nationalities is evolving and changing and is reflected in how their nationalities had shifted over time. The following themes were important in understanding this process: (a) process of identifying with multiple nationalities; (b) reactions of others; (c) similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities; (d) feeling connected or disconnected through language; (e) Where is home, and do I belong?; (f) professional identities; and (g) importance of food.

Process of identifying with multiple nationalities. Participants shared that one aspect of what helped them in their experiences of identifying with multiple nationalities were their experiences through migration, relationships, and receiving legal documentation and status. These factors at times also contributed in being hindrances.

Moving and living in one particular country helped strengthen the ties and feelings of connectedness to that country and brought up a reexamination of other nationalities with which the participants identified. Thus, greater exposure to that

country allowed participants to explore how they felt about the nationality and whether to continue identifying with it. For example, Steve's moving to the U.S. facilitated his journey of discovering what it means for him to identify as American, while simultaneously reducing his connectedness to the Japanese nationality. The same occurred for Derek, strengthening his American nationality, but weakening his Canadian nationality. For Michael, like Nina, moving to a new country facilitated the process of identifying with a new nationality. For Nina, it resulted in almost losing her Russian nationality. Factors that resulted in the strengthening of one or more nationalities were those of exposure to the nationality through the language, culture, and experience of being there. As one nationality grew stronger, other nationalities would sometimes weaken as a result of trying to fit in (as was the case for Nina) or less exposure to the nationality (as was the case for Derek and his Canadian nationality). Suhaili noted that, due to war in Croatia, she was unable to visit Croatia for several years, which also contributed to a weakening identification with that nationality.

Relationships, familial and romantic, also served as an important facilitator. This is consistent with recent literature that notes that identity is an ongoing and fluid process maintained within relationships (Gergen, 2009; Maciel & Knudson-Martin, 2014). These relationships served as an introduction to the nationalities and/or as a source of support in maintaining them. For Mari, having her mother talk to her in Finnish and travel with her to Finland solidified a strong tie to her Finnish nationality. Elinor's fiancé also identifying with the Israeli nationality helped her to stay connected, just as Suhaili's fiancé helps her connect with her Spanish nationality. Derek noted that his wife identifying as an American allowed him to form a more positive identity with his

American nationality, while also supporting him in staying connected with his Canadian nationality. This situation was similar to Steve's, whose fiancé also helped him stay connected to his Japanese nationality even though she does not identify with it. For Shanti, her parents solidify her identification with her Mexican nationality, while her travels and friends maintain her identification with her Argentinian nationality.

Legal documentation and legal status also served as an important source in facilitating or hindering participants' development of multiple nationalities. Steve voiced that not having a Japanese passport results in him having to enter Japan as a foreigner and reinforces the sense that he is not Japanese. In contrast, Maria obtained her Chilean passport, which was the catalyst for her to explore her identification with Chile. Derek's receiving his Social Security card created the awareness that he is also American. Receiving something that signifies legal status helped participants to solidify their identification with multiple nationalities, while not having it could serve as a reminder that others may view them as not belonging.

Reactions of others. Participants' experiences of how others reacted to them most often served as a hindrance to their identity development in regards to their multiple nationalities. Reactions of others, whether on individual or societal levels, seemed to invalidate participants' experiences of identifying with multiple nationalities. For Steve, being considered *gaijin* made it harder at times to identify as Japanese, at least when in Japan. Nina had similar experiences in Russia where she is perceived to be Dutch, and only Dutch. Suhaili is also labeled as being of only one of her nationalities, sending an implied message that a person can only belong to one nationality. Mari, Taina, and Elinor had similar experiences of being labeled as and belonging to one and only one of

their nationalities. While the reactions of others tended to be one that invalidated their experiences, participants also received validation from family, friends, and romantic partners that supported their identification with multiple nationalities.

Similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities. In their stories, participants noted that having consistency between their nationalities, whether in the form of culture, language, religion, spirituality, or other factors, helped them in making sense of their multiple nationalities. Suhaili noted that Catholicism was something that her various nationalities shared, in addition to two of them sharing a similar Mediterranean culture. Suhaili expressed that even though the languages are different, there are some similarities in expressing oneself in German and Croatian. Derek expressed that having the same language and similar cultures helped him facilitate his identification with both the American and Canadian nationalities, though at times it also acted as a hindrance in that it is harder to establish the differences to help maintain the two. Shanti also explored that even though there are cultural differences in the language, having Spanish as the same language in Mexico and Argentina made her process easier as well. The cultural nuances though made it more challenging for her. She shared that expecting more cultural similarities was a hindrance, as it took her time to realize that even though there were some similarities, there were also important distinctions that she needed to acknowledge before being able to embrace the Argentinian nationality.

Feeling connected or disconnected through language. Language was an important factor that participants identified as facilitating or hindering their experiences of identifying with multiple nationalities. Language allowed the emergence of either

feeling connected or disconnected to a particular nationality. Maria learned Spanish to help facilitate her identification with her Chilean nationality, while Nina relearned Russian to reconnect to her Russian nationality. Elinor learned Hebrew, which facilitated her connectedness to her Israeli nationality, but also served as a hindrance due to having an accent, reinforcing that she is American. Mari noted that speaking Finnish helped her feel closer to her Finnish nationality, while not speaking Japanese made her feel removed from her Japanese nationality. Taina noted that even though speaking Spanish helps her feel connected, it also at times makes her feel disconnected when she has to ask others to slow down or repeat themselves. Being able to speak the language of participants' identified nationalities was an important key component of participants' identity process and what it means to identify with a nationality.

Where is home and do I belong? Participants expressed that not having a sense of home or knowing whether they belonged created a challenge and hindrance in their identification with multiple nationalities. Not knowing whether they chose the correct place to live or fearing that they might lose the identification with one of their nationalities was something that many participants discussed. Additionally, whether they were living close to family was a consideration, made even more difficult if extended families lived in different regions. Since family was often a source of support, it made sense for participants to consider their proximity to their families. Elinor highlighted that being uncertain about her residency would be a lifelong quest with pros and cons to each decision, something that Michael could echo.

Professional identities. Participants' professional identities and experiences were brought up frequently as something that were important in facilitating their multiple

nationalities, as at times it served as an introduction to a new nationality or a way to learn more about a nationality. For Nina and Maria, their academic pursuits allowed them to deepen their relationships with one of the nationalities with which they identified, Russia and Chile respectively. For Michael, it was a way to be introduced to a new nationality. Derek found his career aspirations as something that helped him to develop his sense of American nationality. On the flipside, as Derek feels more connected to his American nationality through his professional identity, he also feels further removed from his Canadian identity. Professional identity primarily served as a facilitating source. As Taina noted, she hopes to take her academic interests and use them in an opportunity to conduct research in Puerto Rico and Japan and to also feel more connected with each nationality. Elinor's professional interest allowed her the possibility to work in a setting that facilitated her exploration of identifying with multiple nationalities and create some meaning that they can co-exist. Professional identities and career aspirations were noted as something that seemed helpful in exploring participants' multiple nationalities.

Importance of food. Even though not all participants discussed food, for those who did, food was instrumental as a way to help facilitate their identification with multiple nationalities. Those who discussed food noted that it was a way to connect with that nationality and to create a sense of comfort, as was the case for Steve. Mari noted that her father cooking Japanese food was a way for her to learn about the nationality. As she re-explores the Japanese nationality, food is a contributing factor. Taina also expressed that learning how to prepare Japanese cuisine through her grandmother facilitated her identification with the Japanese nationality. Suhaili also discussed that using spices and herbs and preparing certain dishes common to her nationalities instilled

her sense of connectedness with all three of them. It is a sign for her that she identifies with more than one nationality and also sets her apart from others at times. As she noted, experiences with friends and co-workers over dinner highlights for her that certain ingredients, like garlic, can mark where a person comes from.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

To guide this dissertation, I utilized Critical Race Feminism Theory (CRF). As a critical researcher, I consider the moral and ethical issues within the context of my work by considering social struggles, social inequalities arising from oppression, and alienation (Thomas, 2009). It is also taking a step, through my research, to empower participants by facilitating a safe space for participants to share their experiences without placing constraints on them and, as a researcher, to acknowledge my own power. Throughout previous and current research as well as through my own personal experiences, I have become aware of difficulties faced by individuals who identify with multiple nationalities: a pressure to choose only one nationality and/or culture due to it being impossible to simultaneously belong to multiple groups.

Using a CRF lens, the researcher uses an intersectionality lens and tries to understand the person in context of the influence of political access, equality, and justice (Dua, 1999). Intersectionality is an important concept that deepens understanding of how people make sense of the various identities to which they belong. Furthermore, a CRF lens with consideration of intersectionality lends itself to being an activist researcher, which creates opportunities for producing new knowledge (Cahill, 2007; Few, 2007; Sawyer et al., 2013; Thomas, 2009).

Participants were offered the opportunity to share their stories from their own viewpoint and experiences. In the stories they shared, participants discussed reactions of others such as being labeled. For example, in Mari's story, others expected her to identify as Japanese but disregard her identification with the Finnish nationality. Or for Suhaili, being labeled as the "Spanish girl" when in Germany and Croatia, or the "German girl" when in Spain. The reactions of others were based on factors such as phenotype, language (e.g., accent), and other markers on which people picked up.

Participants also discussed an alignment with reactions of others, the idea of feeling accepted. Families would accept them as is, while concerns about how others outside the family viewed them was confusing. Taina noted this conflict of identifying with multiple nationalities in that others will view her as an outsider because of it, such as not being considered either "fully Puerto Rican or Japanese." Nina expressed something similar to that, such as when in Russia, others label her as Dutch and do not consider her to be Russian. These factors were important to consider as they impacted participants' meaning-making as well as their continuing process of identifying with multiple nationalities. These experiences align with CRF, which uncovers these environmental and social dynamics.

Important to this theory is the researcher's attempt to try to understand the social situation and attempt to promote change, such as exploring how mental health professionals can use this information in session. Being aware of how participants felt in regards to being labeled, especially if labeled as incomplete, is important to remember. It highlights the importance of asking clients about how they identify and describe themselves, instead of making assumptions and labeling them. It is also an important

reminder to remember and consider how one's sense of self can change; for example, Mari re-exploring her Japanese nationality. This means it is important to check in and not make the assumption that identities remain constant, but rather that one's sense of self is evolving and changing. With the guidance of this theory, participants' stories and experiences were able to be voiced so as to be shared with others and hopefully provide salient knowledge that can be used in future research and clinical practice.

Methodological or Research Implications

The methodology that I employed for this study was phenomenology. The focus of a phenomenological study is on the essence of an experience or phenomenon; in this case, the lived experiences of participants identifying with multiple nationalities. There is an emphasis on the descriptions of the participants' experiences and how they experienced what they experienced, which are highlighted in the participant descriptions and themes (Patton, 1990).

There is a dearth of literature exploring individuals who identify with multiple nationalities and a dearth of literature examining the factors that intersect with nationality (Platt & Laszloffy, 2013). As Platt and Laszloffy (2013) explored, the concepts of nationality and patriotism are important concepts and dimensions of diversity that are worthy of exploration. Most of the existing literature has focused on areas that are also important such as culture and ethnicity. However, they fail to address the complexity that arises when identifying with more than one nationality, which intersects with culture and ethnicity. The results of this study provide several implications that can be applied for future research. First, the nature of this research study included only participants who identified with multiple nationalities. It would be important to compare individuals who

intentionally decided to maintain their multiple nationalities with those who did not in order to better understand contributing factors.

At the core of cultural competence is an appreciation of intersectionality of various facets of identity, a worthy endeavor to explore further (Cole et al., 2014; Maciel & Knudson-Martin, 2014). Even though intersecting identities were explored, modification to the interview questions and setting the stage more for individuals to better understand what is being asked would allow more opportunities for individuals to discuss their experience in the context of intersectionality. From the findings gained, a questionnaire could be created to explore which factors seem to be important when a person makes sense of one self in the context of multiple nationalities. Utilizing a questionnaire would make it possible to obtain a larger sample and to determine if findings generalize. Additionally, some of the themes that emerged in this study, such as food, could be further explored since not all participants discussed it.

Longitudinal studies, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, would also add a more thorough understanding of the experiences that individuals have by better capturing the various dynamics that impact the changing levels of connectedness with multiple nationalities. As there is a dearth of literature in regards to individuals identifying with multiple nationalities, it may be prudent to design measurements that could be used in a longitudinal study. Lastly, considering the language in which interviews are conducted could also have a profound impact on the results. Allowing participants to speak the language of their choosing might add a richer layer of information about their experiences, especially as research on language supports the notion that the experience we create in one language feels different when conveyed in another. Overall, important

information can be obtained by continuing researching individuals identifying with multiple nationalities and how this could shape future research and clinical practice.

Clinical Implications

The purpose of this study was to raise awareness about the lived experiences of individuals who identify with multiple nationalities in order to inform psychologists' and other mental health clinicians' treatment of this population. The results of the study provide counseling psychologists with a better understanding of what it is like to identify with multiple nationalities, such as the advantages (e.g., cultural intelligence) and difficulties experienced (e.g., reactions of others).

One of the research questions of the study focused on how a counseling psychologist or mental health clinician could be helpful in working with someone with different multiple nationalities. Participants consistently reported that if receiving mental health services, they would consider it important for the clinician to have basic knowledge of the nationalities with which they identified in order to understand their perspectives. There was a preference for the clinician to have had worked with someone with the same nationality or had some exposure to it, but most importantly, participants expressed wanting someone with an open mind. That means the clinician did not need to identify with the same nationality or even with multiple nationalities but should be aware that other worldviews exist. This is consistent with the literature exploring cultural competence, which highlights the importance of the therapist taking an open, receptive, and respectfully curious stance (Cole et al., 2014). Elinor in particular noted that having a clinician work within the context and framework of her multiple nationalities was instrumental and powerful in her journey of making sense of her nationalities. Suhaili

shared an experience of a close friend who felt misunderstood by the clinician in terms of her national background. Thus, participants highlighted that further understanding clients' cultural contexts is an important part of being a multiculturally competent clinician.

In the U.S., Chang and Yoon (2011) explored ethnic minority clients' perceptions of working with a clinician from a different cultural background. Findings suggested that many of the participants in the sample felt that their clinicians would be unable to understand critical experiences related to their ethnic and cultural backgrounds and thus did not broach the subject. However, many felt that these differences were minimized when their clinicians expressed compassion and acceptance and appeared to be comfortable discussing cultural differences. This research supports the present research, in which participants expressed that having a clinician who is open to different worldviews and demonstrates a curiosity to learn can help participants and clients feel more comfortable.

Research also supports the importance of cultural competence. Cole et al. (2014) created the Multicultural Therapy Competency Inventory-Client Version (MTCI-CV), which looks into clients' perceptions of their therapists' cultural competence. They found that clients expressing satisfaction on the MTCI-CV had a positive correlation with goal attainment in therapy. Additionally, just as global demographic trends indicate an increase in clients from diverse backgrounds, they also show therapist diversity increasing. Niño, Kissil, and Davey (2015) explored the experiences of foreign-born therapists in order to gain a better understanding of what factors assist therapists in connecting across cultural differences. In their findings, they highlighted the importance

of human-to-human contact and emotional connection in navigating cultural differences, which is relevant for all clinicians to consider.

When considering working with individuals belonging to multiple nationalities, it is important to consider areas that were highlighted as strengths and challenges to help clients navigate through their process of identifying with multiple nationalities.

Participants discussed cultural intelligence as a strength that came from identifying with multiple nationalities. This area of strength could be beneficial to highlight in

counseling, especially when someone is navigating other areas that feel distressing such as where to live. An area participants identified as more challenging was how others

reacted to their phenotype, accents, names, and so on. This included experiences when individuals or society labeled them with identities that were not encompassing or fitting.

An example is Mari's story in which she is often identified as Asian or Japanese but disregarded as Finnish. Being labeled by others, whether implicitly or explicitly, could result in feeling excluded or different, which could lead to tension and confusion.

Furthermore, mislabeling or ignoring other important identities may lead to identity confusion, an important area for clinicians to tap into during the counseling process. This theme also highlights the importance of addressing and exploring cultural differences in the counseling room.

Participants also noted another area that may be beneficial to consider in the counseling process—the importance of food. Food was discussed as a way for participants to maintain their connection and identification with their various nationalities. Regardless of where he lived, Steve made the effort to locate stores selling Japanese products to help him remain connected to the Japanese nationality. Clinicians

could consider discussing food in treatment, especially if clients are having difficulty getting ingredients from their home countries to create dishes that remind them of home. As discussed earlier, in many cultures, food is an essential component of celebrations, ceremonies, and rituals (Romano, 2008). Due to food being an integral part of everyday life, it is important to not overlook how it can influence someone's overall sense of well-being. Clinicians should explore what factors can assist clients in feeling connected to their various nationalities with consideration of their current contexts.

Taina recommended that clinicians be aware of whether the client is multilingual and when possible, be able to discuss how this will impact treatment. She noted that for herself, language might not be as crucial, especially if she sought services in English, but she was aware that for those receiving treatment not in their first or main language, it would be challenging. The mental health profession has struggled to find multilingual clinicians. The importance of language can easily be overlooked or not considered (Softas-Nall, Cardona, & Barritt, 2015). As various studies have found, accounts expressed in the language in which the event occurred tend to be more elaborate (Softas-Nall et al., 2015; Torres-Rivera et al., 2008). In addition, researchers have found that in the U.S., those less proficient in English are less likely to seek mental health services (Bauer, Chen, & Alegría, 2010). Findings seem to indicate an interaction between language and other cultural factors in creating a barrier to mental health services, an important line of research to be continued. Mental health professionals should discuss language and cultural factors from clients' multiple nationalities when providing treatment. It is also important for clinicians to be aware of how they are utilizing language in session, as some research has found that "counselors frequently impose their

language style and preferred dynamic onto their clients” (Torres-Rivera et al., 2008, p. 11). Along these lines, it is important for mental health clinicians to be aware of the power differential that may result from working in the clinician’s primary language (Ali, 2004; Softas-Nall et al., 2015).

Participants identified various ways that they came to identify with multiple nationalities, migration being one. Many people move to different countries, and this is increasing for diverse reasons with varying social effects (Amrith, 2014). Clinicians need to understand that as migration continues to increase, they are more likely to encounter clients impacted by adjustment, such as struggling to fit in within the context of maintaining their previous nationalities. This was the case for Nina, who expressed this conflict of wanting to fit in with other children, yet also wanting to maintain her Russian nationality. Not understanding she could adapt and keep her Russian identity led her to actively try to rid herself of her Russian nationality, which resulted in much distress as she grew older.

Nina’s experience fits with research conducted on acculturation. According to acculturation theory, when individuals come in contact with another culture, two things can happen: (a) They can give up some aspects of their own identity to integrate parts of the new culture, or (b) they can reject the new majority culture and alienate themselves (Bhugra, 2005; Dein, & Bhui, 2013). Acculturation is finding a balance between integrating some aspects of the new culture to fit in comfortably and keeping important parts of the heritage culture. This fits with Nina’s current process of having moved away from relinquishing aspects of her heritage culture, while now balancing her heritage culture with acquiring aspects of the new or dominant culture (Bhugra, 2005; Dein &

Bhui, 2013; Gordon, 1964). Morawa and Erim (2014) studied Turkish clients who immigrated to Germany and found that helping the client become oriented to both the heritage and host cultures had a positive effect on mental health. Nina and other participants might have benefitted or would benefit from this focus if they sought services. Similar to Nina, Taina voiced that during high school, she felt pressured to identify primarily with one nationality based on ethnic status, rather than being allowed to express her multiple nationalities. Thus, clinicians must understand and normalize that migration and adjustment to a new nation, as well as how one is perceived based on these varying factors, can cause psychological distress. Additionally, they should also consider how belief systems impact mental health services. Researchers exploring barriers for Turkish immigrants compared to Turkish individuals residing in Germany found that differences in beliefs accounted for a significant portion of difficulties experienced in providing effective mental health services (Reich, Bockel, & Mewes, 2014).

Along expressing concerns about fitting in, participants also worried about whether they belonged. The questions, “Where is home, and do I belong?” tap into Maslow’s need for humans to belong (1987). Thus, failure to feel that one belongs could interfere with a person’s capacity to self-actualize (Maslow, 1987). Taormina and Gao (2013) created several scales that explored Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and determined which were met and how they impacted each other in a sample of Chinese individuals. In this study, the need of belongingness was influential as a prerequisite to achieving higher needs such as self-actualization. As the need of belongingness is essential in the self-actualization process, it will be important for clinicians to address this variable in session. Even though, there may not be an answer of how to self-actualize, providing support to

clients in feeling connected and instilling a sense of belongingness would help the client on her/his journey of self-actualization. The researchers found family emotional support was an important component of belongingness. Many participants expressed feeling accepted by family. Due to the importance of family acceptance, it may be beneficial to administer the survey to individuals identifying with multiple nationalities and determine how much this need has been fulfilled and assess the components that impact this need, (e.g., family emotional support, acceptance within a nation's culture). Feeling a lack of home and belongingness can impact a person's overall psychological well-being; therefore, it may be important for clinicians to assess social support and other factors important in facilitating one's sense of well-being. A clinician's ability to recognize this dilemma, which may last a lifetime, and validate it can be crucial to individuals' process of making sense of themselves and their environments. Recognition and normalization can be fundamental steps in the process. Although they may not take away the confusion of where home is, they may allow the client to process their experiences of being at home and not being at home.

Another important area to consider is participants' professional identities. Pursuits of career aspirations at times introduced participants to new nationalities or helped them make sense of their nationalities. Participants discussed not only how their professional identities helped them grow in their respected fields but also how their professional identities strengthened their cultural identities and solidified their connections to their nationalities. This supports the need for research exploring how professional identity affects personal identity development, including how the individual integrates the profession's knowledge, skills, and values with one's own unique identity

and core values (Holden et al., 2014; Thistlethwaite, 2014). Currently, researchers are exploring how professional identity and professionalism relate to a person's identity development (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012), fitting with Wilson et al.'s (2013) definition of professional identity: "the integration of personal values, morals, and attributes with the norms of the profession." Considering the importance of clients' professional identities during counseling is important, especially because similar to cultural intelligence, professional identity can serve as a protective factor and as a strength.

Participants in this study intentionally identified with multiple nationalities. Clinicians should be aware of factors that contribute to maintaining and adopting new nationalities for clients identifying with multiple nationalities. They should also understand factors affecting the choice to not integrate a nationality. This area was not explored in much depth in the current study, and future research on this would help mental health professionals understand how it could impact mental health.

These implications provide both considerations for mental health professionals and opportunities for future research to explore these areas in more depth. The findings of this study could inform multicultural competencies of counseling psychologists and mental health professionals. In particular, this study provided a view into the life of individuals identifying with multiple nationalities and factors that contribute to their process of making sense of themselves. Findings can be applied to psychological practice, such as therapy interventions and treatment focus. This research study provides areas to consider as counseling psychologists and mental health clinicians continue to explore and develop cultural competency and effective mental health services.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations are important to note. First, all interviews were conducted in English and despite all participants being fluent in English, not providing the opportunity for participants to choose the language of the interview may have taken away from participant meaning-making. Second, all interviews were conducted via SkypeTM, which despite providing an opportunity for me to interview participants all over the world, resulted in the inconvenience at times of not having a stable connection and, on two occasions, having the call drop. Even though interviews were continued, the disruption may have resulted in lost information. Also, by having the expectations that interviews would be conducted via SkypeTM, individuals who did not have the means or ability to access SkypeTM were excluded.

As part of qualitative research is to explore personal experiences and meanings, there is the recognition that results may not generalize to others of the same population (Creswell, 2007). This includes characteristics of participants such as variables of age, developmental life stage, as well as privileges, such as as migrations being voluntary—meaning participants were not refugees or undocumented immigrants. Other important factors to consider are that most participants did not have children. Having children, as was seen by Michael, brought up other factors to consider such as how one's multiple nationalities will impact the next generation. Most participants were young adults and thus life factors that may be most salient for them, may not translate to individuals at other developmental stages. Additionally, as the researcher, I developed the interview questions based on my perspective and worldview, which most likely differed in some ways when compared to participants' beliefs and perceptions of identifying with more

than one nationality. Interview questions were designed to be open-ended and conversational, with follow-up questions adjusted throughout the interview process to acknowledge participants' reactions and answers. For this reason, participants' exploration into certain areas may have looked different as well as their understanding of what was being asked. This, in combination with questions being asked in English, may have made it difficult for participants to articulate and share their experiences as a result of the interview design. Along these lines, the nature of the semi-structured interview format using open-ended questions allows participants to answer questions based on their thoughts, perspectives, and beliefs at a specific moment in time, making it difficult for researchers to duplicate the study in the future.

Further consideration to be noted is the construct of social desirability and how this may have impacted participants' self-reports. People have a natural tendency to answer in a manner that will make them appear more favorably to others. What this means will vary according to culture, country, and other environmental factors. One observation I made is the difficulty participants had in expressing the challenges they faced related to identifying with more than one nationality. Even though participants discussed struggles, they tended to arise as a side note. Additionally, some individuals may have chosen not to participate if they were facing difficulties in making sense of who they are in relation to their multiple nationalities so as not to be judged unfavorably by others. Social desirability can be influenced on both a conscious and unconscious level which may have played out differently for each participant in the study and, thus, shaped the answers to the questions more than their own unique experiences. In order to reduce the amount of social desirability, an attempt to establish and build rapport was

made by utilizing regular contact via email and SkypeTM. Additionally, utilizing open-ended questions allowed participants to choose where to direct their narratives. It is possible that participants still had concerns related to social desirability and therefore felt less comfortable discussing challenges of lived experiences in multiple nationalities.

Lastly, future research on this topic could further tap into the phenomenon of intersectionality. Asking more specific questions may have allowed participants the opportunity to discuss and explore their intersecting identities in greater detail and even considered intersecting identities not discussed such as gender.

Summary

Results of the study were discussed and future implications for research and clinical practice provided. This was a qualitative study utilizing a phenomenological framework and in-depth interviews to explore how individuals make sense of themselves when identifying with more than one nationality. Themes that emerged were discussed in relation to the individual and compared to other participants. Each research question was answered, with specific examples provided from participants' lived experiences. Lastly, implications for future research and clinical practice were explored so that the field of counseling psychology and the general population can benefit from the results and stories of the participants in this study. Being able to utilize the knowledge gained from this research is an important aim of conducting this study. As Mari noted, "I never grew up thinking that one worldview is just correct and that this is the only way that things are."

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 22, 2014

TO: Annette Peters, BA

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [502114-1] Exploring the intersectionality of individuals belonging to more than one nationality

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: January 22, 2014

EXPIRATION DATE: January 22, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 22, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSITY of NORTHERN COLORADO



Dear Interested Participant,

My name is Annette Peters and I am a doctoral student at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC), and am currently working on my dissertation. I am researching the lived experiences of individuals who identify with more than one nationality. To gather information, I would like to interview you to discuss your experience of making sense of belonging to more than one nationality in context of other salient identities (i.e., gender, race, sexual orientation). I would appreciate the opportunity to interview you two to three times. The first interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and the second and possibly third interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes. During the second interview I will ask you to share pictures and during the second interview one or two mementos (i.e., journal, poem, or a couple of significant object) that you are comfortable sharing via email or dropbox. The pictures and mementos will be used to enhance my understanding of your experience as well as provide you with another option of sharing your lived experiences. I will not take or keep your memento, instead I will ask you to take a picture of it and share that with me. The third interview, will be checking in with you about the themes I have found and if I am on the right track. I will conduct interviews over Skype™ from my office at home or meet you in person if that is feasible. You are able to choose a location for your side of the interview that feels comfortable and private. I will only be recording audio and not visual when conducting the interviews. As Skype™, dropbox, and email will be used as means of communication, it is important for you to know that the Internet is not secure. Please consider if you are comfortable with this design.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or if you would like to learn more, please contact me by email: pete7614@bears.unco.edu or by phone +1 (970) 573 8258. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Annette Peters, B.A.

APPENDIX C
WRITTEN SCREENING QUESTIONS

WRITTEN SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. Do you identify with more than one nationality? Please list the nationality you identify with? Identifying with more than one nationality can happen by being born into a multicultural family or migrating from one nation state or culture to another. For example, being born in France and identifying as French, but also having lived in the Netherlands for 5 or more years and identifying with the Dutch culture. If you have questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact me.
2. Are you 24 years of age or older?
3. Are you currently residing in North America or Europe?
4. Are you able to have access to SkypeTM to be interviewed?
5. Do you have time to participate in 2 – 3 interviews that will each last no more than 2 hours?

APPENDIX D

**CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
IN RESEARCH**

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



Project Title: Exploring the intersectionality of individuals belonging to more than one nationality

Researcher: Annette Peters, B.A.; Counseling Psychology

Phone number: 970.573.8258; **e-mail:** pete7614@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Lia Softas-Nall, Ph.D.; Counseling Psychology

Email: Basilia.Softas-Nall@unco.edu

The purpose of this study is to explore how you have made sense of yourself belonging to more than one nationality in context of your other salient identities (i.e., gender, race, sexual orientation). As a participant in this research study, you will be asked to fill out demographic questions and answer interview questions. The interviews will take place at arranged times that are convenient for both of us. I will ask you questions about the nationalities you identify with, how you make sense of yourself, and what has helped or hindered your process of making sense of yourself. Information will be gathered over two to three interviews conducted over Skype™ or in person with the first interview not taking more than 2 hours and the follow-up interviews not taking more than an hour. Only audio will be recorded for the purpose of transcribing the interviews. I will also ask you to share with me some items such as photos and mementos that are significant to you and that you are comfortable sharing via email, dropbox, or Skype™.

For the interview you will be asked to provide your gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and the languages you are fluent in. Your responses will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will examine individual responses. Results of the study will be presented in an anonymous way so that results cannot be linked back to the person completing this research study. The documents and information will be stored on computers at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) and on my private computer; passwords are required for both computers at UNC and my private computer to access the data. Only I will have access to the password. Some of the data will be stored on a personal USB flash drive that is protected by a password. If you feel that the necessary steps to protect your confidentiality are not taken, you can discontinue with the research study at any point. Furthermore, I am a mandated reporter and therefore have a legal obligation to report suspected mistreatment of children and serious threats against self or others. It is also possible that a court might order the release of data or a list of subjects. The data will be erased after three years following completion of the study.

Interviews will be transcribed either by myself, a graduate student in the field of counseling, and/or professional transcriptionist. I will contact you by email, Skype™, phone, or in person so that you have the opportunity to review, comment on, and edit the content that the researcher extracted from the interview to ensure accuracy. Furthermore, colleagues will review my findings to enhance trustworthiness.

Your contribution to this study will benefit individuals and families who identify with more than one nationality, as well as psychologists working with individuals, families, and couples who identify with more than one nationality.

Risks to you are minimal. The interview questions are not personal, but still may evoke memories and thoughts that are sensitive to you. The benefits to you include gaining insight about yourself.

If you wish to seek counseling after this interview, service providers can be provided to you upon request. If you reside in Colorado you can contact the UNC's Counseling Center by calling 970.251.2496 during office hours or 970.351.2245 after hours for Emergency Services and/or the Psychological Services Clinic by calling 970.351.1645.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Once you read the above disclosures and have had an opportunity to ask questions, please complete the demographic questions if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the demographic information and answering the interview questions you will give us permission for your participation. You acknowledge that all responses may be used in published materials pertaining to this specific study. You may keep this form for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

**PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC
INFORMATION SHEET**

Please fill out the following questionnaire prior to being interviewed. Thank you.

Age:

Gender:

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Transgender
- d. Other: _____

Current Marital Status:

- a. Single
- b. Engaged
- c. Married
- d. Living with partner
- e. Widowed
- f. Divorced
- g. Separated

What is your sexual orientation?

- a. Heterosexual
- b. Homosexual
- c. Bisexual
- d. Other: _____

In what country where you born?

In what country do you currently reside in and how long have you lived there?

In what other countries have you lived in and for how long?

What nationalities do you identify with?

What is your first language?

What other languages do you speak?

At what age did you learn to speak English?

How well do you speak English? (please circle)

Moderate Good Fluent

What religion do you identify with? (if applicable to you)

With what race(s) do you identify with?

With what ethnicities do you identify with?

What social class do you identify with? (please circle)

Upper Class Middle Class Lower Class

Thank you again. Please be assured that all of your responses will be confidential. They will not be shared with anybody else.

APPENDIX F
PROPOSED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Proposed Interview Guide

- (1) Tell me about your story of coming to identify with more than one nationality?
- (2) Would you say you have a sense of belonging to both nationalities or more to one than the other?
 - a. How has that happened for you?
 - b. How come this has happened for you?
 - c. How do you believe this has impacted you?
 - d. How would you describe the advantages or disadvantages are?
- (3) Apart from you belonging to more than one nationality, what other parts of you are important to you? (Clarification: Some people talk about their gender, ethnicity, or a variety of things; people talk about different things, what would be meaningful for you?)
- (4) Do you experience yourself differently and/or similarly in each of your nationalities and the way you see yourself?
 - a. How so?
 - b. What about that is meaningful for you and your life?
- (5) Tell me a little bit about your experience of putting together the different ways you are experiencing yourself?
- (6) I wonder what has helped you in trying to understand yourself? (Clarification: For some, other individuals could have been important or your sense of spirituality.)
- (7) I wonder if you have encountered obstacles or things that make it more difficult for you to identify with more than one nationality?
- (8) What else would you like me to know about living in more than one nationality that we haven't talked about?
- (9) As you know, I am studying to become a counseling psychologist, so if someone like you, belonging to more than one nationality seeks services with a professional like me, what is something you would like them to know to make them more helpful?

Visual Elicitation

- (1) Tell me about the process of how you chose this memento(s)?
- (2) Tell me about what this memento(s) is and what it means to you?
- (3) What helped you choose this object to share with me?
 - a. How does it represent you belonging to more than one nationality?
 - b. How does this capture other parts that are important to you? (Clarification: For some people, their memento(s) captures their religion, race, or other things; what does this memento(s) capture for you?)
- (4) How does it capture your process of belonging to more than one nationality?
- (5) What else would you like to share with me that we haven't talked about?

Photo Elicitation

- (1) What meaning does this picture hold for you and your process of belonging to more than one nationality (ask for each picture shared)?
- (2) How do these pictures overall capture your journey of making sense of yourself?
 - a. How do these pictures capture other parts that are important to you? (Clarification: For some people, their pictures capture their religion, race, or other things; what does this memorandum capture for you?)
- (3) Is there something that these pictures do not capture that was/is important to you making sense of yourself?
- (4) What else would you like to share that we haven't talked about?

APPENDIX G
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1

Participant Descriptions

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Nationality	Country of Residence	Language(s)	Parents' Nationality
Mari	26	Female	Finnish, American, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Finnish	Mother: Finnish Father: Japanese
Steve	32	Male	American, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Japanese	Mother: Japanese Father: American
Michael	32	Male	Catalonian, German, Spanish	Germany	Spanish, Catalán, German, English	Mother and Father: Spanish
Taina	24	Female	Puerto Rican, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Spanish, some Japanese	Mother: Japanese Father: Puerto Rican
Suhaili	35	Female	Spanish, Croatian, German	Germany	German, Spanish, Croatian, English	Mother: Croatian Father: Spanish
Shanti	46	Female	Mexican, Argentinian	U.S.A.	Spanish, English	Mother and Father: Mexican
Derek	26	Male	American, Canadian	U.S.A.	English	Mother: American Father: Canadian
Nina	26	Female	Dutch, Russian	Hungary	Russian, Dutch, English	Mother and Father: Russian
Maria	26	Female	Russian, Chilean	Hungary	Russian, Spanish, English	Mother: Russian Father: Russian and Chilean
Elinor	28	Female	American, Israeli	Israel	English, Hebrew	Mother and Father: American and Israeli

APPENDIX H

**PICTURES FROM PHOTO AND
VISUAL ELICITATION**

Mari's Photos:



Steve's Photos:



Michael's Photos:



Taina's Photos:

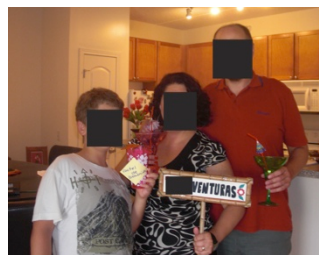


Suhaili's Photos:

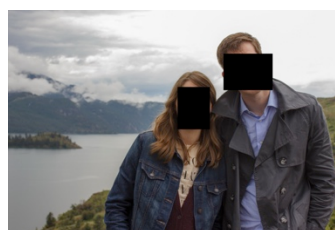




Shanti's Photos:

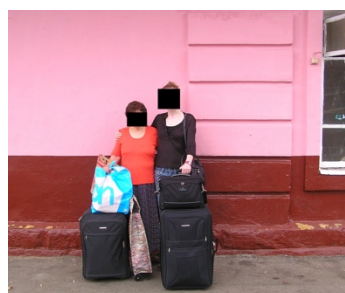
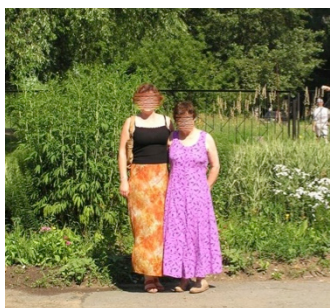


Derek's Photos:

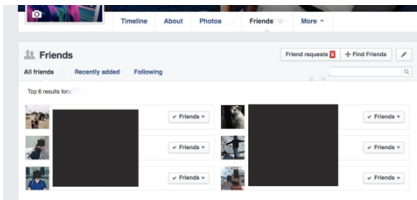




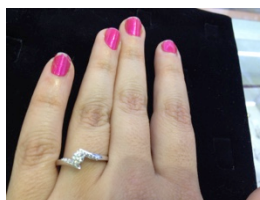
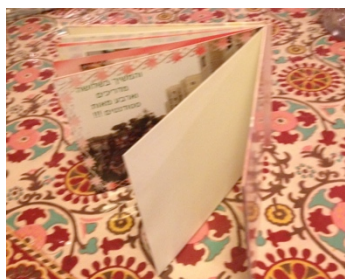
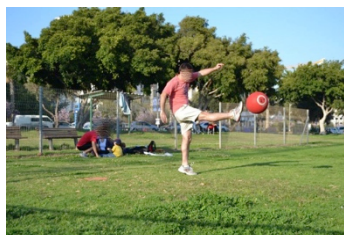
Nina's Photos:



Maria’s Photos:



Elinor's Photos:



APPENDIX I
MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION

MANUSCRIPT

Lived experiences of belonging to multiple nationalities

In this globalized time period, better transportation and communication networks have made it easier for people to cross national borders (Casas, Park, & Cho, 2010). This ability to move increases the likelihood people will identify with multiple nationalities. As the world becomes increasingly global and we encounter culturally diverse clients, we must understand each client's situation in order to provide culturally responsive counseling. For this reason, I explored participants' stories of making sense of their multiple nationalities.

Given the scarcity of literature on individuals identifying with multiple nationalities, I attempted to gain a better understanding of how a person's national identity influences beliefs, behaviors, and presenting issues related to mental health. Current psychologists are emphasizing the importance of becoming culturally competent psychologists and social advocates. Importantly, McGoldrick, Giordano, and Garcia-Preto (2005) discussed how becoming culturally competent requires us to question dominant values and investigate the complexity of cultural identity. Understanding these concepts would contribute to both international psychology and mental health services.

Identity continues to develop and change throughout life. Identity encompasses a sense of one's goals, beliefs, values, and life roles (Erikson, 1950; Marcia, 1987). The development of identity is dynamic and calls for continual assessment and exploration of one's sense of self. Changing environments and developmental changes can influence identity. A person has multiple senses of self that are composed of various salient identities such as one's cultural, national, ethnic, gender, religious, and spiritual

identities. According to intersectionality theory, it is important to consider how these various identities interact to impact one's sense of self, especially because each identity does not account for the whole person (Hancock, 2007; Oleksy, 2011). Intersectionality deepens understanding of humans by providing a rich, holistic description of how people make sense of their various identities. It is an attempt to understand the various dimensions of the individual. Psychologists must understand intersectionality to be culturally competent, social justice advocates.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals who identify with more than one nationality in the context of intersectionality. The overall goal was to capture the essence of how these individuals make sense of themselves.

Method

I employed phenomenological methodology to explore the essence of participants' experiences, and I used Critical Race Feminism theory to guide the methodology because it promotes prosocial change and social advocacy. I approached this study from a constructionist epistemology to allow participants to construct their own meaning and truths about the phenomenon.

Procedure

Participants

I used criterion sampling, as recommended by Creswell (2007) when choosing participants for a phenomenology. Criterion sampling is utilized by identifying specific criteria participants must meet. It ensures all participants have experienced the phenomenon, which is essential to the phenomenological paradigm that participants have

lived experience rather than secondhand experience of the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2007).

Participants were 10 individuals who identified with more than one nationality (see Table 1). In order to recruit participants, I contacted several places in North America and Europe, requesting them to send my recruitment letter to their members. Furthermore, I utilized snowball sampling in order to obtain information rich-cases. Participants were asked to email me if interested in participating. For the current study, saturation, “operationalized as collecting data until no new information is obtained” (Morse, 1995, p. 147), was reached after the seventh person. Three more individuals already recruited were interviewed to continue gathering information on unique experiences as well as verify the information gathered from the first 7 participants. Ten individuals falls within Polkinghorne’s (2005) recommendation of 5 to 25 participants for phenomenology. Participants had to identify with more than one nationality, either through birth or migration. Participants’ ages ranged from mid-twenties to mid-forties. Participants were purposely chosen to be at least 24 years old for the following reasons (with the caveat that identity is fluid and continues to change throughout one’s life): (1) Individuals will have gone through Erikson’s stage of identity versus role confusion, (2) Mid-twenties has been identified as the age where society sees individuals as early adults and expects mature adult-like behaviors (Winefield & Harvey, 1996), and (3) From my previous research studies, individuals in this age range could more easily reflect on their identity development than those in their early twenties. I screened participants to ensure they understood and spoke English at a sufficient level to participate, which prevented potential problems with translation and transcription. Furthermore, participants were

required to have access to a computer with SkypeTM. SkypeTM resembles the face-to-face dynamics of traditional interviewing because it has a visual component (Hanna, 2012).

Table 1

Participant Descriptions

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Nationality	Country of Residence	Language(s)	Parents' Nationality
Mari	26	Female	Finnish, American, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Finnish	Mother: Finnish Father: Japanese
Steve	32	Male	American, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Japanese	Mother: Japanese Father: American
Michael	32	Male	Catalonian, German, Spanish	Germany	Spanish, Catalán, German, English	Mother and Father: Spanish
Taina	24	Female	Puerto Rican, Japanese	U.S.A.	English, Spanish, some Japanese	Mother: Japanese Father: Puerto Rican
Suhaili	35	Female	Spanish, Croatian, German	Germany	German, Spanish, Croatian, English	Mother: Croatian Father: Spanish
Shanti	46	Female	Mexican, Argentinian	U.S.A.	Spanish, English	Mother and Father: Mexican
Derek	26	Male	American, Canadian	U.S.A.	English	Mother: American Father: Canadian
Nina	26	Female	Dutch, Russian	Hungary	Russian, Dutch, English	Mother and Father: Russian
Maria	26	Female	Russian, Chilean	Hungary	Russian, Spanish, English	Mother: Russian Father: Russian and Chilean
Elinor	28	Female	American, Israeli	Israel	English, Hebrew	Mother and Father: American and Israeli

I kept a participant journal, in which I documented known demographics of individuals who were interested in participating in the study and my decision-making process for inclusion. Twenty individuals contacted me with initial interest in participating. Ten of these twenty individuals participated. Reasons for exclusion for seven of the individuals were that they did not meet all inclusion requirements. Three individuals withdrew due to not being able to commit to more than one interview. One of these three individuals completed part of the first interview but was unable to set another time to finish the interview and complete the visual and photo elicitation. Therefore, his information was not included.

Data Collection

Data consisted of two to three 60-to-90- minute semistructured interviews, which included photo and visual elicitation, demographic information, and brief field notes. I asked participants to take photos or choose photos they already owned that represent their identity development. Participants compiled four to ten pictures and shared them prior to the interview via email or SkypeTM. The second or third interview focused on what participants' pictures represent and mean. Photos included pictures of the participants, friends and family, landscapes, and objects. They are not included in this article to maintain participants' confidentiality. In addition to photo elicitation, I also incorporated visual elicitation.

Visual elicitation allowed participants to choose objects such as a poem, journal, drawing, or artifact to further express the integration process. Visual elicitation was a useful tool to symbolize or represent the integration process, which may be difficult to

express in words (Johnson & Weller, 2002). I asked participants to take a picture of their memento and email it. I did not keep or have access to the actual memento. If a participant was unable to actually have the memento with them for the interview, they were able to describe the object or find a picture that represents the memento. Individuals chose one to four mementos to share, including a picture of a car, jewelry, and a name change document. The visual elicitation was integrated either in the second or third interview. Time between interviews ranged from 1 to 4 weeks. Follow-up interview questions were based on participants' responses and were aimed at gaining clarification or more depth.

After I transcribed each interview, I sent the transcription via email to the participant, requesting she or he review the transcript for accuracy and add any additional necessary information. Participants were informed about the limits of confidentiality related to using email and sharing files via SkypeTM (e.g., hackers having the potential to access their data). Emailing transcripts was one part of member checking. Participants either skimmed or completely read the transcripts and made subtle changes, such as misspellings of locations. Peer check also occurred by giving one colleague the transcripts, photos, and themes found. The colleague successfully completed multiple qualitative methodology classes. He read through the transcripts and came up with his own themes and then compared them to the themes I found. Then, my colleague and I discussed the results and made some organizational changes.

Analysis

Data analyses followed the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method by Moustakas (1994), in which analysis occurs in several phases over the course of the study. The first phase

includes identifying my personal experience, which Moustakas refers to as bracketing. I chose to use the concept of bridling instead of bracketing. Bridling acknowledges that it is impossible to truly set aside one's biases, but during our research process, we can "slacken" our beliefs in order to allow more room for new understandings and meanings to emerge from the phenomena being studied (Dahlberg, 2006). The first phase is also the time to collect data. The second phase is a content analysis, and the final stage is thematic. During the final stage, I wrote a holistic description of the phenomenon, incorporating composite textural and structural descriptions. This was an attempt to capture the essence of the experience. I increased the rigor of the study through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which included using multiple forms of data, member checks, and peer check.

Results

Participants' narratives were rich in description and provided meaningful data that allowed the following themes to emerge: (a) process of identifying with multiple nationalities; (b) intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities; (c) reactions of others; (d) cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity; (e) similarities between cultures, language, religions, and spiritualties across nationalities; (g) feeling connected or disconnected through language; (h) where is home, and do I belong?; (i) professional identities; and (j) importance of food. Important to this study was that participants' narratives were shared with a consideration of how their identification with multiple nationalities intersected with other identity areas.

Table 2

Emerging Themes

Main Themes	Subthemes	Underlying subtheme
Process of identifying with multiple nationalities	Migration Relationships	Being exposed Acceptance within one's national group by family Familial and romantic relationships supporting the maintenance of national identities
Intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities	Importance of documentation and legal status within a nationality Changing levels of connectedness to different multiple nationalities Intentionality of learning about and being involved with multiple nationalities	
Reactions of others Cultural intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity		
Feeling connected or disconnected through language	I'm not a chameleon, but I fit in Feeling connected through language Feeling disconnected through language	
Where is home, and do I belong? Professional identities Importance of food		

Intersectionality

The purpose of using an intersectionality framework is that it allows for a richer understanding of how people make sense of the various identities they belong to. It is an aim to look at the whole person and strive to understand how the person makes sense of her-/himself. Participants' lived experiences encapsulated other salient identities in

addition to their nationalities (e.g., influence of gender, religion and spirituality) in addition to other identities not included in the definition such as phenotype, family, professional identities, and language. Most often, research has focused on the interacting effects of gender, race, ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, and religion/belief system (Cole, Piercy, Wolfe, & West, 2014; Hancock, 2007; Maciel & Knudson-Martin, 2014; Oleksy, 2011). Some of these salient identity layers may not have emerged in this study due to not being prominent for participants, such as identifying with the norm in regards to sexual orientation, being temporarily able bodied, and having political access. Surprising was that gender was not discussed in depth or brought up as being imported when considering the intersectionality of gender and nationality, even when prompted. Derek was the only participant who discussed gender, noting that being male allowed him certain privileges that made his navigation between Canada and the U.S. easier. Religion was identified as an important intersecting identity such as for Shanti and Suhaili, both for whom it was a common denominator between their various nationalities. Spirituality was essential for Taina, who discussed in depth her Buddhist practice and how it not only grounds her, but also helps her make sense of herself. Even if some of the expected intersecting areas did not emerge in as much depth or at all, participants did discuss other identities they found important in conjunction to their multiple nationalities not typical in the intersectionality literature, such as their professional identities. The way participant's viewed themselves in their professional lives and career aspirations was a commonality that individuals found important in making sense of who they are. In particular, it introduced them to new nationalities and helped them make sense of their multiple nationalities.

Furthermore, participants frequently explored themselves in relation to others, and familial and romantic relationships, and how this interacted with their multiple nationalities. Thus, seeing themselves in light of others was an important part of who they saw themselves as and is further explored in the theme: process of identifying with multiple nationalities. In addition to professional identities and relationships, phenotype emerged. Several participants including Mari, Steve, Taina and Suhaili discussed phenotype in regards to how others respond to them based on physical appearances. This was important to consider as it often confounded their understanding of their multiple nationalities. Derek, on the other hand, noted that due to his phenotype, it was easier for him to navigate between his two nationalities, similarly to how having the same language in each of his nationalities also made the transition easier. Lastly, language played an important role in how participants viewed themselves. Speaking the language strengthened their connection to their nationalities, even though at times, it could serve as a barrier. Each of these unique intersecting areas is further explored in the themes.

Considering a person's intersecting identities is something important to consider, especially for counseling psychologists and mental health professionals, as it can assist us in our everlasting quest towards multicultural competence and social justice. Intersectionality researchers strive to provide data to support positive social change and make an attempt to understand participants from their worldviews (Shields, 2008; Walker, 2003). Even though an awareness that multiple identities can interact in unique ways does not guarantee we understand the process, it does facilitate the discussion for us to be attuned to the complexities of individuals. For mental health professionals, it prompts us to take a step back and listen to our clients' stories, with all selves included.

Thus, even though the intersectionality of individuals was not captured as expected, some of the salient identities of participants emerged and were explored in their stories.

Process of identifying with multiple nationalities

Important to participants' stories about identifying with multiple nationalities was their experience of coming to identify with multiple nationalities. For some participants, it was through migration; for others, it was their familial upbringing; and for some, it was a combination. Furthermore, relationships, familial or romantic, served as an important source of support in maintaining the multiple nationalities. Lastly, documentation and legal status for several participants served as a catalyst to pursue multiple nationalities. The ways in which participants came to identify with their multiple nationalities is consistent with research, which notes that it is not uncommon for individuals to internalize more than one nationality either through living in a multicultural community or cross-cultural marriages, or through internalization of multiple nationalities through immigration (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). In the U.S. alone, about 13% of the population resided in a different country before immigrating to the United States (U.S. Census, 2010).

Migration. For some participants, moving to a new country opened the doors to identifying with multiple nationalities. This migration occurred as a child, such as for Nina who moved to the Netherlands at age 8, and for Mari, to the U.S. as a baby. For others, it was a choice they made as an adult such as for employment opportunities, as was the case for Shanti, who moved to Argentina from Mexico, or Michael who moved to Germany. Some participants migrated to a nationality with which they had already started to identify due to their parents being of that nationality, such as Derek (moving to

the U.S. during high school), Steve (moving to the U.S. for his undergraduate studies), and Elinor (moving to Israel after having visited several times).

Relationships. Mari, Steve, Taina, Suhaili, Derek, Maria, and Maria were exposed to their multiple nationalities via their parents. In their cases, their parents came from differing national backgrounds, such as Mari whose father was from Japan and Mari's mother from Finland. While Michael was introduced through his parents to the Catalán and Spanish nationality, it was through his career pursuits and migration that he came to also identify as German. Shanti, unlike others, had parents of a similar national background—Mexican. Participants were also influenced by other relationships, such as romantic partners, to new nationalities or ways to foster their current national identities. This was the case for Suhaili who was influenced by her fiancée's multiple nationalities. Due to both of them sharing the Spanish nationality, she was able to deepen her connection with the Spanish nationality. Elinor, like Suhaili, was also influenced by her fiancée. Her fiancée is Australian and both identify as Jewish. Having both this common ground in the Jewish community as well as attending similar Jewish camps allowed them to have many shared feelings in terms of identifying with the Israeli nationality. For Michael, having his wife also identify as Spanish and Catalán supports him in exploring these nationalities, while having different degrees of connectedness with the German nationality adds a challenge. Steve and Derek shared that their romantic partners have encouraged them in exploring their multiple nationalities, even if they do not identify the same way.

Importance of documentation and legal status within a nationality. Participants identified receiving documentation and legal status for the respective nationality as a

catalyst in identifying with multiple nationalities. Derek, Maria, and Nina expressed that receiving their social security card, passport and name change, respectively, was instrumental in their process of identifying with multiple nationalities. Derek shared that receiving his social security card indicating he was a resident, which allowed the information that he was Canadian and American to sink in. Maria echoed this sentiment, explaining that receiving the Chilean passport encouraged her to start learning about Chile and make plans to move there. For Nina, it was the documentation that her name change was official; having a Dutch name meant that she truly fit in as a Dutch person. It was more meaningful than having Dutch citizenship.

This document made it actually finally official. So this was an important moment of when I could actually say, “Now I’m really Dutch, and I don’t have my Russian last name anymore, so now I’m a truly Dutch person so to say.” I think actually that document represents quite well, like, the transition I went through, at least the first stage when I first tried to get rid of the Russian nationality and try to assume as much as I could my Dutch nationality.

Just as documentation was helpful for participants in becoming aware of their multiple nationalities, the lack of it was identified as weakening the relationship, as was the case for Steve, who does not have a Japanese passport, instilling the sense of being *gaijin* (foreigner).

Intentionality about identifying with multiple nationalities

All participants were intentional about choosing to recognize their multiple nationalities. For some it was a process of purposefully learning about their nationality or recognizing how strongly they related/connected to their multiple nationalities over time. Furthermore, for those participants who were introduced to their nationalities through family, they selected to keep identifying with these nationalities into adulthood. For example, Suhaili expressed:

I'm old enough . . . when I was a kid, I couldn't choose if I want to go with my parents to vacation or not. And when I was living at home, I was more or less obligated to speak my parents' languages, this is not something you can choose. When you are 18 or 20, you leave your home because you go for studying, you can choose your own life, you can say "okay, this is my past, this is my family, and I love my family, but I would like to go another way." I never made this question for myself because I always felt good being the way I am and having the past I have.

Changing levels of connectedness to different multiple nationalities.

Participants experienced changes over time of how strongly they felt connected to their nationalities related to developmental changes, exposure to the nationalities, where they were residing, or ability to travel to the various nationalities. Common to participants' descriptions of their experiences coming to identify with multiple nationalities was a shared experience of changing levels of connections with each nationality and making an intentional choice to maintain their identification with multiple nationalities. Even if at the time the changes of how deeply connected they felt to a nation did not feel intentional, their following actions and choices were intentional. For example, as a young child, Mari identified primarily with her Japanese and Finnish nationalities. As she became older, her American identity became stronger, and her Japanese identity faded to a point where she thought it was nonexistent.

Similar to Mari, Derek also noticed a shift in how strongly he identified as Canadian and American. Derek's story related to Mari's, as his sense of national identity has shifted over the years to a point that he at times wonders if his Canadian nationality is still there. Steve's sense of identifying as Japanese and American has shifted over the years from being equal to the American nationality becoming stronger with the experiences he creates in the U.S. Elinor's identity shifts as she travels, sometimes identifying as American and other times more strongly as Israeli. Michael reflected that

his sense of national identification has changed, and he feels positive that it will continue to evolve as he gathers more life experiences. Suhaili expressed that because she grew up with all three nationalities, she feels confident she will always identify with all three, yet she has recognized that some of identities are stronger than others, something that may continue to change over time.

With changing levels of connectedness came the discussion that a national identity could be re-integrated. When reflecting back, Nina discussed how as a child, she actively tried to make her Russian nationality nonexistent: “I was trying to make it [Dutch identity] a 100%.” Wanting to fit in, Nina felt that her Russian side needed to be extinguished. Thus as a child, she demanded her mom not speak Russian with her in public, and she wouldn’t respond in Russian. Maria expressed her changing level of connectedness by stating that she would not have responded to my letter 10 years ago because at that time, even though she had learned about her Chilean roots, she had solely considered herself Russian. She expressed that her identification will most likely be different again in 10 years, evolving and constantly changing.

Intentionality of learning about and being involved with multiple nationalities. Some participants discussed how they purposefully took time to learn about the nationalities that they were less familiar with in order to strengthen their connection with the nationality. For example, Maria spoke about how important it is for her to learn about the history of Chile and speak Spanish in order to feel that she has the right to identify as Chilean. “I think there are some points that you have to respect, you have to know the history . . . for me it’s disrespectful to kind of say that you are from that

nationality . . . and not knowing the history or the language of that place or something like that.”

Elinor’s work experience at a place where she was the only American “helped me solidify and understand my relationship as an American.” Furthermore, traveling back to the U.S. to visit family and friends in addition to visiting her boyfriend’s family in Australia, all help her evaluate and assess her different national identities and make an intentional choice that she identifies as American and Israeli. Michael discussed his exposure as a child to the Catalanian and Spanish culture helped define and influence his identification with multiple nationalities. Mari shared her journey of trying to make a decision of whether to identify as Japanese or not considering with the consideration of her father being Japanese and her physical appearances matching the nationality. In high school she actively explored the culture and styles related to the nationality and made the choice that she did not want to identify as Japanese. “I stopped trying to be Asian because there is no point of trying to be something you don’t feel strongly about.” However, as time has passed and Mari feels less pressured by others, she is now intentionally reconsidering her identification with multiple nationalities—“Actually I’m re-exploring my Japanese heritage a little bit.”

Reactions of Others

Participants’ experienced that how others reacted to them had an impact on how they made sense of their multiple nationalities. Participants described a range of reaction that others had when realizing or finding out that participants came from a background of multiple nationalities. These reactions came not only from individuals but also were perceived by participants as being reactions based in part by the culture of the nation.

Reactions of others were in the context of participant's accent, physical appearance, and name, which were cues that others picked up on.

For Steve, it made it harder to identify as Japanese because in Japan, he is labeled as *gaijin*. Steve explained that in Japanese culture one is either Japanese or *gaijin*. Steve described that foreigners are seen as “big, blundering, and boisterous and that type of view. And I kind of see myself like that from my Japanese side.” Yet when Steve thinks about himself in the context of his American nationality, this description does not fit. Mari noted that her family considers her Japanese, but others in Japan do not. In the U.S., she is often identified as Japanese, but not Finnish. The experience of Mari highlighted that in the context of the U.S., people tend to notice and emphasize non-European identities such as Latino American or Asian America.

Taina described a similar experience, in which other individuals label her as Hispanic, but not American or Japanese. Suhaili's experience aligns with others, “It doesn't matter what I do or what I say, most of the people always say the ‘Spanish girl’ to me.” Nina agreed with others expressing it was other people at times that made it challenging to identify with more than one nationality, especially when she is told from people in Russia, “oh you're so Dutch, you're not Russian at all, come on.” Elinor's identification as American and Israeli can at times be challenging due to context, in particular, the difficulties she faces in Israel of not being accepted as Israeli. This has led to Elinor identifying with the Israeli nationality, just in a different way.

In the Israeli culture in and of itself, is very exclusive versus I would almost say the American culture is very inclusive, not as individuals, but as groups, right. . . . So, that cultural reaction from the other people has made it very difficult for me to feel I'm Israeli, when everyone is telling me suddenly you're not, suddenly I'm not Israeli.

For Derek, he noticed an internal pressure as a result of reactions by others that he perceived or thought he perceived. “I probably would be identified by my friends and family as: ‘oh you are living in the US now’ and they would identify me as someone who left Canada and is American now.” Considering the reactions of other people towards participants with invalidation was an extra layer participants had to navigate in making sense of their multiple nationalities.

Cultural Intelligence—openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity

As participants shared their experiences identifying with multiple nationalities the theme of cultural intelligence emerged as being something that strengthened their identity with multiple nationalities. With this theme came the discussion of openness, appreciation, and acceptance of diversity. All 10 participants expressed that something they appreciate about identifying with multiple nationalities is feeling that they have an open mind. This notion involved having a raised awareness that there are other cultures in the world with different belief systems and customs, along with a stronger patience and tolerance to learn from other people.

Participants addressed the idea of cultural intelligence—the ability to relate and work across cultures—in a variety of ways. Taina shared that identifying with more than one nationality has allowed her the opportunity to develop and establish “so much cultural intelligence and being able to go to different countries and communicate, understand that we come from different cultures and be accepting and appreciating of other cultures as well.” Suhaili expressed similar thoughts in feeling more open and having a better understanding of how life may work for other families from various backgrounds.

Many participants thought that being more open-minded also made it easier to communicate with individuals from all over the world and gave them a sense of being a “global citizen.” As Mari expressed, “I never grew up with thinking that one world view is just correct and that this is the only way that things are.” She spoke about realizing the world was a big place and that “it’s worth exploring these things and understanding where I come from, and get to know those cultures, and things like that.” Shanti noted how being exposed to different cultures and identifying with multiple nationalities has helped her challenge her prejudices and assumptions.

So then, this is another thing I learned from when I was out of my country and my comfort zone, that I learned not to judge anyone by the way they look, it’s about what they have in their brains and in their heart, and the difference there is how a culture, in this case, my own culture limited me on going outside of my comfort zone to learn and meet different people.

Michael agreed with being more open-minded, something he hopes to pass on to his family, and said, “You just keep yourself open to many options to have new experiences.”

Elinor shared that she sees many advantages of identifying with more than one nationality and that it is a humbling experience.

Advantages is I feel much more worldly, and I also feel the process that took me to identify here and actually live here and get acclimated here is very humbling . . . the tools that I have to solve problems and to think critically is much bigger toolbox, again because I have those two things to draw on.

Shanti agreed with Elinor, that identifying with more than one nationality has helped her evolve to have a more open and accepting worldview. Shanti, on numerous occasions expressed her recognition that we are all humans, and we can find similarities among all of the differences: “I conclude that at the end, you can find people with very similar profile and background that you have. It’s not about the country you live.” Nina also

expressed the importance of connecting with others and putting nationality second. The idea of becoming a global citizen and the importance of treating people fairly and equally seemed a strong value carried and expressed by many of the participants. Shanti has developed an ability to view new things with an open attitude and expressed, “The cultures are everywhere, but if you don’t want to learn from them then they are going to be there forever and you are not going to grow inside.”

Suhaili shared that she loves and appreciates all the countries she is from and that she picks the parts that make sense to her and that she appreciates: “I pick a little bit of here and a little bit of there.” Michael also expressed a similar thought process of taking what he believes are the most positive aspect of each nationality with which he identifies and then integrating them to make sense for himself. Picking and choosing whether consciously or unconsciously was very common throughout and expressed in one form or another by each participant.

Similarities between cultures, languages, religions, and spiritualities across nationalities

Participants discussed how overlapping cultures, languages, religion, spirituality, and in general, a consistency across nationalities helped them build a stronger connection to their nationalities. Suhaili noted that consistent across the three nationalities she identifies with is that they are Catholic. For two of them they share a Mediterranean culture. Shanti also noted that both Mexico and Argentina being Catholic made it easier for her to transition between the two, in addition to both countries having the same language, even if with some differences. Derek also discussed how cultural similarities between Canada and the U.S. made it easy for him to identify with both, but also made it

difficult to differentiate them. Elinor found the Jewish culture connected her to both nationalities—having a Jewish community in Israel and the U.S.

I was thinking, like, more when my two identities started, how did they form and how did they, how did I become to have such a strong identity with Israel, and it's really through one of the strongest, not the only, one of the strongest ways is through my Jewish identity. . . . I knew that my Jewish connection is really central to both identities, like, it directly answers what you requested of me.

Along the idea of consistency between the various nationalities, participants also discussed their experience of internal consistency—feeling they could adapt and fit in with the various nationalities—while feeling they were the same person. Shanti created a process for herself to help her settle in to new places without losing the sense of who she is. Elinor explained it as being culturally adaptive, which may result in portraying herself differently, but not changing who she is or how she sees herself. This matched most of the participants' experiences including Michael, Taina, Suhaili, Derek, Nina, and Maria—perceiving themselves to be the same regardless of their multiple national identities, but adapting their actions or behaviors to the environment. With keeping a consistent core, Michael shared it was important to be able to integrate the various nationalities, in order to have all of them represented. Nina discussed her experience of trying to reintegrate the Russian nationality into her life, which became lost when she was actively trying to fit in as Dutch. She now is looking at balancing how she can be both, working towards becoming a global citizen. Elinor noted that it's helpful at times to remind herself that it is possible to identify with multiple nationalities and that there are parts she appreciates as well as feels distant from in each nationality.

Feeling connected or disconnected through multiple languages

Participants brought up the realm of communication, i.e., language, as a determining factor in whether they felt connected or disconnected to the nationalities. Being able to speak the language of participants identified nationalities was an important component of participants' identity process and what it means to identify with a nationality.

Feeling connected through language. Maria emphasized that in her process of identifying as Chilean and Russian, it was vital for her to learn Spanish, because she had less exposure to Chile. Learning the language was a key step for her to feel that she was allowed to call herself Chilean. Suhaili expressed that her Croatian nationality is smaller than her Spanish nationality because she feels her Spanish is more fluent than her Croatian, in addition to being more involved in Spanish activities. Michael described how his journey of learning German helped him feel connected and comfortable. He sees the importance of being multilingual and hopes to teach his children. Being able to communicate with others seems to invoke a sense of belonging, which appears important when a person identifies with a nationality

Speaking fluent Finnish was an important reason that Mari felt very close to her Finnish nationality. It helped her be involved in the Finnish community both in the U.S. as well as when visiting Finland. Without speaking the language, Mari pondered whether she would have felt as Finnish as she does. Along with others, Taina shared that her ability to communicate with people was important to her. In Japan, she communicates with the little Japanese she knows and the help of her mother translating in order to connect with her Japanese family. Derek also noted that by identifying as Canadian and American, he found it easy to transition between the two as both nations share a common

language—English. He brought up that by not having an accent, he was less likely to be “pigeonholed” and could more easily blend in.

Feeling disconnected through language. Some participants talked about their realization that when they could to speak one of their languages or a language that they grew up with, or their language of origin, it had an impact on their identification with the nationality. In order for Nina to reconnect to her Russian nationality, she began to study the language and culture. She noted it was when she realized that she could no longer speak with her family in Russia that she decided things needed to change. Not being able to speak the language paralleled her identifying less strongly with the Russian nationality. Elinor described how language helped her adapt, yet also was a reminder that she was not considered Israeli by other Israelis.

Even though I speak perfect Hebrew . . . the second they hear my accent, no matter how complicated a sentence I’m speaking, often they will switch to English, and whether they switch to English or not, that’s a whole other story that we can talk about. They can already see I’m not Israeli; whereas in the States, there’s no outside thing to define I’m not American.

Shanti had a similar experience to Elinor. Despite speaking fluent Spanish, this was still, at times, a barrier when she lived in Argentina. “Although we speak Spanish in Mexico and Argentina, we have different meanings of certain words that, for me, could be a nice word, but for them, the worst word in the world.” She further encountered language difficulties while living in Puerto Rico as the Spanish there that she described has been heavily mixed with English in addition to having varying dialects. Thus, despite being fluent in the language of each nation in which Shanti has resided, she still encountered communication difficulties that were related to the actual language as well as the cultural way of communicating.

Taina also brought up that despite being fluent in Spanish, she reported being more self-conscious in Puerto Rico, especially because she feels awkward when she cannot understand the other person or has to ask them to slow down. Higher expectations of herself, mixed in with feeling like she “looks Hispanic,” result in her feeling more self-conscious:

They expect that I’m following the conversation, because, you know, I look Hispanic. So they expect me to be able to speak it and understand it, but I’m very embarrassed, because I have to tell them, “I’m so sorry, can you repeat that?” or “Can you speak slower?” or something. That’s what I get embarrassed about.

Mari echoed other participants’ experiences bringing up that not being able to speak Japanese led to a barrier in communication, and despite feeling close to her Japanese family, it made it more difficult. The essence of language has had a strong impact on participants’ identification with a nation. Being able to communicate with others as well as not being able to be differentiated from others based on language has had a powerful influence of feeling like they belong.

Where is Home, and Do I Belong?

Participants expressed feeling that there are many benefits in identifying with multiple nationalities, however, one salient drawback is not knowing where home is or whether they belong in the nation in which they reside. This leads participants to question their current decisions and creates wonder about the future. Along this idea of not knowing where home is or belonging is feeling removed from family. Steve shared, “I guess the only disadvantage I would say is that my family isn’t here. So having that real sense of belonging you know somewhere, it’s not something I really have.” Michael also shared his internal debate about not knowing where the best place would be for his family to live, balancing where he feels comfortable in comparison to his wife and

children, “where is the right place? Where do you imagine your life? It is the only drawback.” Fortunately, Michael shared that there is not much difficulty transferring back and forth between Spain and Germany, “In terms of the Spanish and Germans, with the EU, it makes it very easy, changing from one place to another.”

Elinor’s experience matches that of Steve and Michael, sharing, “I think it makes it harder for me, because I don’t feel at home ... I don’t really identify with the general public in either places. ... I also feel like I’m always going to be in the scenario of the grass is greener, because I know both lawns sort of thing so that’s also very frustrating.” Elinor further highlights her struggle, wondering “whereas if I only knew one thing, maybe I wouldn’t be so torn between the two?” Talking to other people who have lived in different places resulted in Elinor hearing a common message of “feeling that you don’t belong here nor there, like I feel now, I’m stuck.” Steve expressed that identifying with both nationalities and having lived in both countries has led to him feeling like a foreigner—in Japan due to being labeled as *gaijin* and in the U.S. because:

I don’t know the same TV shows the kids grew up with, if anyone talks about anything that was going on in the west, you know, during the kind of my younger years, I kind of have the Japanese version of that, you know, so TV shows, music, pop culture, so I guess in that regards, it always made me feel that I’m newer here, too.

Taina expressed that the disadvantages she notices and struggles with seem to feel “more on a psychological” level in the sense that she feels she can’t really belong and because she wonders how others perceive her, “she’s not truly Japanese because she’s only half.”

Mari expressed similar confusion of not being sure whether she belongs. She highlighted that this was very salient during her high school years when she was constantly figuring out the idea of “where do I belong?” Nina expressed that it was other

people at times that made it challenging to feel like she belongs, especially when she is told from people in Russia, “oh, you’re so Dutch, you’re not Russian at all, come on.” Nina described this sense that maybe neither country accepts her fully or that she, herself, just does not feel she belongs in either Russia or Netherlands. Participants shared this general uncertainty of where their home is and their ambivalence about whether they belong. It was agreed that this confusion was a challenge related to identifying with multiple nationalities.

Professional identities

As participants discussed making sense of their multiple national identities, they also brought up the importance of their professional identity. Participants’ professional lives contributed to strengthening or fostering their multiple nationalities. As Michael expressed, it was his professional life, his career, that triggered the process of moving to Germany and identifying as German. Nina, on the other hand, identifies as a global citizen matching her professional interests in pursuing her work to alleviate problems from a thematic global perspective that addresses concerns in multiple countries.

Derek was in agreement with Michael and Nina in that his professional identity was very salient. Derek is an entrepreneur who has started his own business with a close friend. Derek sees himself as creative, inventive, and insightful through his professional identity. Establishing his business in the U.S. has also helped Derek form a more positive view of what it means to be an American and has played a key role in identifying more strongly with his American nationality, “Yes, I have this opportunity, and America is helping me do this thing.” As Derek continues to establish himself in the U.S., he has noticed that his American nationality is growing and his Canadian sense of self is

becoming smaller. Thus, his professional life helps him feel closer to his American nationality and further away from his Canadian nationality

Maria's professional identity was also very salient, and her research interest is an opportunity to learn more about Chile as well as stay connected to Russia. Maria spoke that the experiences she has created have been instrumental in her process of making sense of herself. "I have had very different experiences and variety of experiences, work and studies, and it's" shaped who she is. Elinor presented a book made by her colleagues at her previous employment at a university because her professional identity or work experience has influenced her identification process. The book is one of the only things she has from that time period, "I love the book!" and it reminds her of working primarily with American students on a staff that was Israeli. Her work experience often evoked the feelings of "I'm American and I'm Israeli." For students, she was a role model because she spoke Hebrew, was on an Israeli team, and was successfully living in Israel, something for which many of the students strived. Interestingly, while students saw her as an American who successfully integrated, the staff saw her as Israeli. Even though this experience allowed her to see her dual nationalities, the exploration of her dual nationalities took place more intensely at a previous job where she realized, "I got to be in both worlds simultaneously" encouraging her to explore her sense of nationality.

Importance of Food

Even though not all participants discussed food, four participants brought up the exposure to food as an important component in helping them identify with more than one nationality, such as Taina learning how to prepare Japanese cuisine by watching her grandmother or Mari eating Japanese cuisine growing up. Steve shared via one of the

mementos the idea of how food was an indicator that he identifies with more than one nationality. The picture shared was of delicious Japanese food that he buys at a store selling Japanese products. “I think probably the biggest difference between what you see between something that I do, versus what a normal American would do or someone who grew up here, is probably food.” Food brought comfort and seemed to indicate a piece of stability. As Steve shared, regardless of where he lives, he always makes the effort of finding Japanese food for him to prepare. Suhaili also emphasized the importance of food as shown in her memento depicting Croatia. The spices included in the picture are common to Croatian cooking. A green spice called *Vegeta*, similar to a vegetable broth and used in that manner, and a red paste called *Ajvar*, used similarly like ketchup. Several times she referenced that her cooking reflects her exposure and immersion with the cultures she grew up in. Cooking and baking foods that might not be found in Germany is one way others can identify that she is influenced by other nationalities. Being exposed and immersed in the nationalities with which participants identified, such as through food common to the nation, was instrumental in participants identifying with multiple nationalities.

Recommendations for Mental Health Professionals

One purpose of the present study was to obtain recommendations for mental health professionals when working with individuals who identify with multiple nationalities. Each participant was asked to make recommendations for mental health professionals based on this premise. Insights, either through personal experience or through people they knew, were shared.

A consistent response from participants when considering what they would see as important when receiving mental health services was for the clinician to have basic knowledge of the nationalities with which they identified in order to gain a sense of from where the participant is coming. Most importantly, participants expressed wanting someone with an open mind. That means, the clinician did not need to identify with the same nationality or even identify with multiple nationalities, but should be aware that other worldviews exist. This is consistent with the literature exploring cultural competence, which highlights the importance of the therapist taking an open, receptive, and respectfully curious stance (Cole et al., 2014). Elinor, in particular, noted that having a clinician work within the context and framework of her multiple nationalities was instrumental and powerful in her journey of making sense of her nationalities. Suhaili shared an experience of a close friend who felt misunderstood by the clinician in terms of her national background. Thus, the message in our field to continuously strive to be culturally competent psychologists and mental health clinicians is further reinforced as participants highlighted the importance of feeling understood.

An area of strength for participants related to identifying with multiple nationalities is connecting to the concept of cultural intelligence, which emerged for participants through their exposure and identification with multiple nationalities. This area of strength could be beneficial to highlight in counseling, especially when someone is navigating other areas that feel distressing, such as where to live. This openness and curiosity about other cultures is something that could help improve therapeutic relationships by clinicians learning from their clients in having a curious and open-mind. Addressing not only the strength, but also difficulties experienced in session is important.

One area that was identified as more challenging was reactions of others based on their physical appearances, accents, names, etc. The theme emerged as participants had experiences where individuals or society at large labeled them with identities that were not encompassing or fitting. Being labeled by others, whether perceived or actual, could result in tension and confusion, which may result in feeling excluded or different. Furthermore, mislabeling or ignoring other important identities may lead to identity confusion, an important area for clinicians to tap into. This theme also highlights the importance of addressing and exploring cultural differences in the counseling room.

An important consideration that Taina brought to the forefront was for clinicians to be aware of language and discuss how this will impact treatment. She noted that for herself, language may not be as crucial, especially if she sought services in English; but, she was aware that for those receiving treatment not in their first or main language, it would be challenging. The importance of language can easily be overlooked or not considered (Softas-Nall, Cardona, & Barritt, 2015). As various studies have found, accounts expressed in the language in which the event occurred tend to be more elaborate and richer in detail (Softas-Nall et al., 2015). Research studies have found that in the U.S., those less proficient in English are less likely to seek mental health services (Bauer, Chen, & Alegría, 2010). Findings seem to indicate an interaction between language and other cultural factors in creating a barrier to mental health services, an important line of research to be continued. Discussing language as well as the cultural factors from the multiple nationalities are important areas for mental health professionals to explore when providing treatment. It is also important to be self-aware as a clinician of how language is being utilized in the room as some research has found that “counselors frequently

impose their language style and preferred dynamic onto their clients” (Torres-Rivera, et al., 2008, p. 11). It is important for mental health clinicians to be aware of the power differential that may result from working in the clinician’s primary language (Ali, 2004; Softas-Nall et al., 2015).

Participants identified various forms of coming to identify with multiple nationalities, migration being one of them. Migration is an integral part for a significant portion of the human population and is growing for diverse reasons and means with varying social effects (Amrith, 2014). An important point to note for clinicians is that as migration continues to increase, they are more likely to encounter clients impacted by adjustment and the struggle of reconciling a desire to fit in within the context of maintaining their previous nationality. This was the case for Nina who expressed this conflict of wanting to fit in with other children, but not understanding that she could not only adapt, but also maintain her Russian nationality. Not understanding that this could be an acceptable alternative led her to actively try to rid herself of her Russian nationality, which resulted in much distress as she grew older. Providing support to the individual in finding a balance between integrating aspects of the new culture to fit in comfortably and keeping important parts of the heritage culture is an important focus area.

Along the notions of desiring to fit in comes the dilemma of whether participants belonged. As discussed previously, humans have an innate need to belong. The questions, “Where is home, and do I belong?” tap into Maslow’s need for humans to belong. Thus, failure to feel that one can belong could interfere in a person’s capacity to self-actualize (Maslow, 1987). A research study by Taormina and Gao (2013) created

several scales that explored Maslow's hierarchy of needs and determined which were met and how they impacted each other in a sample of Chinese individuals. From this study, the need of belongingness was influential to achieve higher needs such as self-actualization. According to the study, family emotional support was an important component for belongingness. Feeling a lack of home and belongingness can impact a person's overall psychological well-being; therefore, it may be important for clinicians to assess social support and other factors important in facilitating one's sense of well-being. At this stage, a clinician's ability to recognize this dilemma, which may last a lifetime, and validating it can be crucial in the individual's process of making sense of themselves and their environment. Recognition and normalization can be a fundamental step in the process that may not take away the confusion of where home is, but may allow the participant to sit with the dichotomy of being at home and not being at home.

Furthermore, participants highlighted the importance of their professional identities. Pursuits of career aspirations at times introduced participants to new nationalities or helped them make sense of their nationalities. Considering the importance of client's professional identities in providing counseling services is an important area to explore, especially as similar to cultural intelligence, professional identities can serve as a protective factor and area of strength. Currently, professional identity and professionalism is being explored in regards to how it relates to a person's identity development (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012). Wilson et al. (2013) define professional identity as: "the integration of personal values, morals, and attributes with the norms of the profession." Participants discussed their professional identity in how it strengthened their connections to their nationalities. This fits as researchers explore the

importance that professional identity has on personal identity development due to the individual integrating the knowledge, skills, and values with one's own unique identity and core values (Thistlethwaite, 2014; Boisaubin et al., 2014).

Participants in this study intentionally identified with multiple nationalities. Factors that contributed to maintaining and adopting new nationalities is an important area to consider, especially as some chose to not integrate a nationality. This was an area that was not explored in as much depth in the current study, but would be beneficial to do in future research and determine the impact it has on mental health.

These implications provide not only considerations for mental health professionals, but also opportunities for future research. The findings of this study may provide information in the area of multicultural competencies of counseling psychologists and mental health professionals. In particular, this study provided a view into the life of individuals identifying with multiple nationalities and factors at play that contribute in the process of making sense of themselves. Information learned may be beneficial in applied psychological practice such as therapy interventions and treatment focus.

Discussion & Conclusion

Overall, this study attempts to foster international connections among psychologists by engaging in multicultural research on an international level. As we continue to increase our knowledge base, we move closer to becoming culturally competent psychologists. Results will inform discussions for future research and clinical practice. An area for future research would be to compare individuals who intentionally decided to maintain their multiple nationalities with those who do not, to better understand contributing factors. Additionally, longitudinal studies, both quantitative and

qualitative in nature, would also add a more thorough understanding of the experiences by better capturing the various dynamics that impact the changing levels of connectedness with multiple nationalities. Participants also provided advice for mental health professionals to consider when working with individuals identifying with multiple nationalities. Participants highlighted the importance of the clinician being open and understanding of other cultures. It will be important to explore what can help clinicians take an open and curious stance. Furthermore, participants shared perceived advantages (i.e., cultural intelligence), as well as difficulties experienced (i.e., reactions of others), which are important areas to highlight in counseling, but also to explore further in research. Lastly, considering the language in which interviews are conducted could also have a profound impact on the results. Allowing participants to speak the language of their choosing might add a richer layer of information about the individual's experience, especially as research on language supports the notion that the experience we create in one language feels different when conveyed in another. Overall, important information can be obtained by continuing researching individuals identifying with multiple nationalities and how this could shape future research and clinical practice.

Increasing our understanding of the lived experiences of individuals belonging to multiple nationalities will help us continue to develop cultural competency and foster a safe space for our clients. Better understanding the various dynamics at play when making sense of multiple nationalities will guide us in taking a more global and individual perspective in our clinical work. As Mari noted, "I never grew up thinking that one worldview is just correct and that this is the only way that things are," an important message for clinicians to take home.

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