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• Rejoinders

**The Continuing and Evolving Challenge of Race
and Ethnicity in Empirical Counseling and
Counseling Psychology Research:
A Reply**

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We are pleased to have our work be included alongside the work of our colleagues Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005 [this issue]) and Utsey, Gernat, and Hammar (2005 [this issue]) in this issue of *The Counseling Psychologist*. Similarly we are thankful for the helpful and informative reactions of J. Manuel Casas (2005 [this issue]), Lisa Spanierman and V. Paul Poteat (2005 [this issue]), Michael D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]), Jay Wade (2005 [this issue]), and Janis Sanchez-Hucles and Nneka Jones (2005 [this issue]). When race and ethnicity are discussed in the counseling and counseling psychology literature, the endeavor can often be contentious and defensive (e.g., Weinrach & Thomas, 2002), so we appreciated these thoughtful and productive reactions to our work. Consequently we feel free to consider and expand upon the comments of reactors in the spirit of a shared commitment to confronting the continuing challenge of race and ethnicity in counseling and counseling psychology research. The reactants all agree on a need for counseling psychology to respond with commitment to the task of moving forward in addressing race and ethnicity in research as a means of promoting social justice. We will address the major points highlighted by each author.

Casas (2005 [this issue]) focuses on the limitations of the current system of racial-ethnic categorization for Hispanic/Latino/a and the potential rejection of U.S. racial-ethnic categories. Logan (2003) expanded this point by using census data to analyze three racial groupings of Hispanics: Black Hispanics, White Hispanics, and Hispanic Hispanics (those who chose *other*

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race or a panethnic term such as *Latino* for race). Logan found that Black Hispanics were a distinctive group, were less likely to be immigrants, were more likely to speak English at home, but were more likely to experience poorer economic performance, higher unemployment, and higher poverty than those in the other Hispanic categories.

White Hispanics had the highest incomes and the lowest rates of unemployment and poverty. Between these two groups fell Hispanic Hispanics. In the demographic data collection used in research during our 10-year period, these important within-group differences were unlikely to be reflected; such differences are lost with the use of generic categories such as Hispanic.

This specific example supports the eloquently worded concerns of Casas (2005 [this issue]) regarding the effects of the current use of racial-ethnic categorization in counseling and counseling psychology research. Casas correctly views this categorization as an ethical situation with implications for social justice. That is, if studies continue to not report demographic (e.g., race/ethnicity) and contextual data (therefore ignoring within-group differences), we will continue to find that underrepresented samples (e.g., Hispanics and Blacks) are invisible and thus will neglect to give voice to their individual and cultural viewpoints. We are intrigued by Casas's mention of the person-environment theory of Raley, Casas, and Corral (2004) and wonder how this theory might change the nature of counseling and counseling psychology research relative to race/ethnicity.

Sanchez-Hucles and Jones (2005 [this issue]) echo Casas (2005 [this issue]) and D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]) in tying the issue of racial and ethnic classification to the reality of an increasingly diverse U.S. population. They also highlight the role of advancing sciences (e.g., genetics) in our evolving understanding of race (Bonham, Warshauer-Baker, & Collins, 2005). Within the same special issue of the *American Psychologist*, Smedley and Smedley (2005) contribute an article provocatively entitled, "Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real," and counseling psychologist Janet Helms (Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005) deftly examines the consequences of the use of racial categories in research. Consequently, while advances in the genome era (Anderson & Nickerson, 2005, p. 5) led to greater understanding of the genetic meaning (or lack of meaning) of race, the task of dismantling racist structures remains. Casas, D'Andrea, and Sanchez-Hucles and Jones agree that racial-ethnic categorization is an ethical issue.

D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]), Sanchez-Hucles and Jones (2005 [this issue]), and Wade (2005 [this issue]) emphasize the problems in the use of racial-ethnic descriptors as independent variables and the responsibility of the researcher to use more sophisticated conceptual variables to differentiate the sample rather than to draw causal conclusions. In his study with men of

differing sexual orientation, Wade reminds us of the distinction. Race and ethnicity can be used to describe as well as to understand ways in which even a seemingly homogenous sample is diverse, a distinction that can be important to gain understanding of within-group differences. Exploring the racial-ethnic and/or cultural variables that differentiate a sample is increasingly important with the movement in the field toward empirically supported treatments.

While efficacy data suggest that empirically based treatments work, research using the sophisticated demographic data collection recommended in our article (including salience, centrality, and meaning of race to the individual) is needed to demonstrate the cultural sensitivity and effectiveness of such clinical models within a heterogeneous population. As a way to incorporate this type of information, researchers must expand the types of research methodologies being employed. Counseling psychologists must be critical of the dominance of quantitative research and how this methodology, if used alone, can limit the understanding of psychological issues. Similarly, counseling psychologists must examine the potential impact of the dominance of quantitative research on the scholarly recognition and tenure/promotion opportunities of those researchers invested in qualitative research, especially when dealing with racial-ethnic minority research (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Consistent with researchers' and practitioners' interests in empirically supported treatments, D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]) emphasizes that counselors rely on research outcomes to better understand diverse populations, issues, and possible treatment approaches but that the knowledge gained from the counseling and counseling psychology research literature depends on those (e.g., researchers and journal editors) responsible for its production. We agree and stress that knowledge shapes our world view, so when our knowledge has ignored a part of everyday reality (e.g., race and ethnicity) we risk developing ideas that lead to stereotypes and social prejudices that maintain the persistence of negative racial attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 2000). D'Andrea further argues that the current use of race and ethnicity in research helps to maintain and promote scientific racism and causes what he terms "sloppy research." D'Andrea also highlights the positive influence of multicultural researchers and practitioners on the field, and he emphasizes that an ongoing commitment is necessary to challenge the existing hegemonic thinking that limits understanding diverse racial and ethnic groups.

We feel that incorporating new knowledge, as D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]) suggested, and research from other academic realms (e.g., criminal justice, critical race theory, and sociology) would help transform and promote the growth of the counseling field by challenging the influence of dominant methodologies and ways of thinking. Adding to D'Andrea's emphasis on accountability, we remind the reader that as counseling researchers and practitioners, we experience a form of privilege that we can use to promote

the empowerment of oppressed groups by serving as change agents both by being cognizant of how we conduct and report research and of how we relate to our clients. Additionally, we must acknowledge that omitting data about salient characteristics of our research participants in research studies denies researchers and practitioners of information that can potentially be used to identify research gaps and to develop new treatment strategies (National Council for Research on Women, 2004).

Spanierman and Poteat (2005 [this issue]) focus on the meaning and implications for White counseling psychologists and trainees and make a strong statement by focusing on White people rather than making comments about counseling psychologists in general. We admire their courage in doing so. Although we agree with and appreciate their comments, we must note that our study does not indicate that the dominance of White researchers is responsible for the under- or overrepresentation of racial-ethnic groups in the published counseling and counseling psychology research we reviewed. This correlation more correctly should be attributed to Guthrie (1976) and Holliday and Holmes (2003). We note this point because racial or ethnic data provided over the 10 years we reviewed were only included for research participants and rarely for researchers. We wonder what a literature review would look like if researchers would provide racial and ethnic data on themselves? What would be the effect on counseling research if researchers were required to own or demark their own racial-ethnic world view as Spanierman and Poteat have done? In addition, the reference to Neville, Worthington, and Spanierman (2001) and Ponterotto (2002) as possible solutions to problems (e.g., time and expense involved with gathering large racial and ethnic minority samples) that we cited was helpful.

A common theme running through the reactions is a challenge to the field to expand methods used for gathering diverse samples for research. We agree with the suggestions of Spanierman and Poteat (2005 [this issue]) and Sanchez-Hucles and Jones (2005 [this issue]) with respect to gathering representative samples and argue that academics within university settings are well-suited to undertaking tasks such as forming indigenous advisory groups, sharing research findings with each other and the community, and establishing relationships with other campus research centers and academic departments to increase diversity in research samples. Promoting social justice in this way may require more work up front, but the payoff may outlast the individual researcher and have a ripple effect on how future research is conducted.

We also appreciate the risk Wade (2005 [this issue]) took in relating his personal experiences with racism, which reminded us that the issue is not solely academic. Wade uses his personal experience as a research mentor to observe a potentially broken pipeline between racially/ethnically focused

dissertations and the subsequent lack of publication of that research. His struggle as a research committee member who challenges the status quo of racial-ethnic data collection may often be lonely. As we noted in our Major Contribution article, published articles rarely present racial and ethnic data outside the broad general categories. We need more dissertation committee members (and journal reviewers) to join Wade in his challenge to researchers.

In conclusion, although we focus on research published in leading counseling journals, we do not believe that the implications of our research are limited to research only. D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]) notes the connection between practitioners and researchers, and given that counseling psychologists espouse a scientist/practitioner training model, the research is bound to affect (both positively and negatively) training and practice. Therefore on an individual student level (e.g., Wade advising his students to include detailed demographic data in their dissertation research) and a programmatic level (e.g., Spanierman and Poteat urging the field to integrate multicultural research into the core of the training curriculum), the connections among research, training, and practice are clear. D'Andrea (2005 [this issue]) summarizes the hope that counseling and counseling psychology research might cause a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of human development, lead to psychological interventions that are effective and foster healthy psychological outcomes for people from diverse populations, and lead to the training of culturally competent professionals. These goals are lofty for counseling and counseling psychology research. However, as we stated in our Major Contribution, we have hope in the future of counseling psychology research, training, and practice relative to the issues of race and ethnicity. Genomics and other scientific advances (e.g., neuroscience; Eberhardt, 2005) will continue to challenge notions of race and ethnicity, and we believe that counseling psychologists should and can be leaders in the attempts to understand race and ethnicity from a normal developmental psychological perspective.

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