**The Contradictory Forces that Lead to Cosmopolitanism:**

**Exploring the Identity Process of Multi-Culturals**

**Abstract**

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The world grows seemingly closer together and yet cultural divides escalate across all parts of society and the globe; fragmentation appears to have a power of its own. In the complex world of business, understanding different cultural contexts both locally and globally becomes paramount. To appreciate the ability to override cultural biases and surpass narrow views on nations, this paper will consider individuals who have moved beyond fixed constructs of identity to decipher the world; multi-culturals who have been required to tackle with differing cultural contexts. Understanding the process of identity development of multi-culturals can provide insights into global leadership skills.

The paper views the identity process of multi-culturals through the lens of cosmopolitanism. I will consider overlapping identities that does not use the nation as a reference point. Even if individuals have internalized cultures that are perceived to be incompatible there can be synergistic effects. The paper proposes that the dissonance of being multicultural can lead to cognitive complexity resulting in an integrative identity past fixed constructs of culture. Work in organizational literature has mainly focused on the outcomes of multiculturalism as opposed to the process. I look to fill this research gap by exploring the mediated relationship in which the identity process of multi-culturals leads to a cosmopolitan viewpoint. Specifically, how does the identity process of multi-culturals develop to result into a cosmopolitan mindset?

I am conducting in-depth interviews of those working in managerial or leadership positions who have multi-cultural backgrounds. I want to consider patterns of identity development across individuals to understand the process towards a broader understanding of global leadership. In previous literature, much of the focus has been on cultivating similarities, rather I look to point out the strengths of contrast within an individual.