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"What Are You?" Sharing The Biracial/Multiracial College Student Experience

Kelly Brophy

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“What Are You?” Sharing The Biracial/Multiracial College Student Experience

by

KELLY DIANE BROPHY

(Under the Direction of April M. Schueths)

ABSTRACT

This study explored the ways in which biracial/multiracial students experience race on a college campus and beyond. Twelve semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with students during the spring of 2015 at a Southeastern University. This study focuses on how participants negotiate being racialized by others because of physical appearances and how racial ambiguity (i.e., shifting from one race category to another) is experienced. The research questions used were broad and geared toward identity development and social environment which included experiences at school and with family. Thematic analysis was used with inductive coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The constant comparative method was used to open code each line of the interviews (Boeije, 2002). Seven themes emerged: (1) School Experiences (2) Racism, (3) Identity, (4) Appearance, (5) Presentation of Self: Manner, (6) Family, and (7) Location. Implications for future research regarding shared spaces on campus for biracial/multiracial students is discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Biracial/Multiracial students, College campus, Southeastern university, Identity, Semi-structured interviews

“WHAT ARE YOU?” SHARING THE BIRACIAL/MULTIRACIAL COLLEGE STUDENT
EXPERIENCE

by

KELLY DIANE BROPHY

B.A., Western Illinois University, 2011

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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DEDICATION

For Lacey- my best friend, my sister, my rock- you never fail to keep it real. You are a true inspiration and an incredible support. I love you girl!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. The 2000 U.S. Census signified a breakthrough in race options, creating the opportunity for people to for the first time, select one or multiple racial categories (U.S. Census, 2000). As reported by Jones and Bulloch (2012), in 2010 U.S. Census of those who reported more than one race, 92% reported two races, 7.5% three races and less than 1.0% reported four or more. Over 90% of people who identify as two races, identify as black/white. Since 2000, the number of individuals who identify as both black and white has increased by more than one million or 134% (Jones & Bulloch, 2012).

The division between black and white populations puts biracial and multiracial people in an interesting position. It is important to focus on this particular subset of the multiracial population due to the significant history regarding black/white race relations in the United States involving the institution of slavery (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). Dalmage (2000) proposes that the social distance between blacks and whites and the stigma attached to interracial unions create a unique situation for black/white biracial people (as cited in Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003). Children of interracial unions of one black parent and one white parent were historically considered black because of the one drop rule which forced them to claim a single racial identity and contributed to a cultural norm where research designs implemented for studying blacks were also applied to multiracial people (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008). Studies show that although the one drop rule has weakened over time, phenotype, which is a persons' physical characteristics, increases the possibility of social invalidation (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2003).

In this case, rejection can occur from one or both racial groups because the said identity may not align with the identity that is assigned by others.

Similar to the larger U.S. population, the number of black/white biracial students attending higher education has also grown, thus more studies are beginning to focus on biracial populations on college campuses (Brittian, Umaña-Taylor, Derlan, 2013; King, 2008; Wong & Buckner, 2008). Although the research on biracial individuals on college campuses is emerging, work on how biracial and multiracial students negotiate their racial identity in the context of interactions with other students of differing racial backgrounds is lacking.

Purpose of the Study

Framed by intersectionality theory, the purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the ways in which biracial/multiracial students experience race on a college campus and beyond. Twelve semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with students during the spring of 2015 at a Southeastern University. This study focuses on how participants negotiate being racialized by others because of physical appearances and how racial ambiguity (i.e., shifting from one race category to another) is experienced. More importantly, what meaning do biracial/multiracial students ascribe to cross racial experiences in this setting and beyond and what does it mean to be a biracial/multiracial student at a predominantly white Southeastern University? This study fills a gap in the research as it focuses on biracial/multiracial college students who have grown up in one or more locations then have settled in the South.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past Research on Biracial/Multiracial Development

Past research on biracial/multiracial identity tends to focus on the importance of the psychological well-being of biracial individuals and proper identity development models, as well as family influences on biracial/multiracial children's identities. Studies on biracial/multiracial college students are still emerging.

Clinical Research and Identity Development Models

Past research on identity development in biracial children has argued that it is important for mental health therapists to be familiar with identity development in children (Hud-Aleem & Countryman, 2008) and is an area neglected by counseling researchers (Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson, & Harris, 1993). A case example presented in Hud-Aleem and Countryman (2008) sheds light on a 12 year old biracial boy's experience in therapy. His need for counseling stemmed from depression and after some careful probing from the therapist, depression was found to be a result of struggling with his identity; seeing himself as African-American but having little contact with anyone who was African-American. As illustrated by this example, the societal reactions to one's race are problems that can deeply affect the wellbeing of biracial individuals. Hud-Aleem and Countryman (2008) stress the importance of parents' roles in instilling healthy identity formation in their biracial children. Similarly, Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2003) present a case illustration on black/white mixed-race clients who experience invalidation of their chosen racial identity (p. 119). Biracial individuals who are said to be negatively impacted most are those who do not have a validated border identity (Rockquemore &

Brunsma, 2008, p. 46). The border identity is one where the biracial individual understands their racial group membership as mixed-race (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008, p. 62).

In recent years, scholars have made attempts to modify past identity development models such as Poston's (1990) model, to gain a better understanding of how and why biracial people choose to identify themselves as they do. Research, such as Hud-Aleem and Countryman (2008), critique prior identity development models such as (Cross, 1971) for people of color, (Helms, 1985) for white individuals, and Poston's (1990) biracial identity development model.

The model Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2008) use in their research makeup four ways in which biracial people may identify: the border identity, singular identity, protean identity, and transcendent identity. The border identity is described as "the creation of a new category of identification, one that encompasses both of the socially accepted racial categorizations of black and white, but includes an additional element from its combination" (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008, p. 62). The singular identity is where the biracial individual identifies as monoracial by identifying as either black or white (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008, p. 67). The protean identity describes the biracial individual who does not claim one particular identity, but multiple identities and they change identity depending on the social setting (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008, p. 69). The transcendent identity describes the biracial person who does not claim to have a racial identity (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008, p. 71).

The literature in this area tends to focus on the identity formation of biracial individuals in therapy who experience invalidation of their chosen racial identity. Poston (1990) suggests that a biracial identity development model is needed and that the counseling implications of having such a model is imperative to further research studies. Although the psychological well-being of the biracial individual is an important part of identity development, research suggests

that environmental influences may play a greater role. Townsend et al. (2012) found that “racial and social class backgrounds, influence their identity claims” (p. 91). For example, skin color has some impact on social mobility. According to Hunter (2002) “light skin also provides an advantage in income attainment. Lighter skinned Black women are more likely to earn high wages than their darker skinned sisters with similar credentials” (p. 188). Clearly, the literature that focuses on the psychological health of biracial individuals only scratches the surface of this wide range of sociological area yet to be explored.

Family Influences on Biracial/Multiracial Identity

There is scant research on the role of the family in racial identity development in biracial children (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008). Rockquemore (2002) states that “in addition to marriage market factors, gender structures racial socialization in interracial families” (p. 498) and research on the gendered nature of social interactions is lacking. Root (1998) indicated that girls suffered more ridicule and rejection around phenotype than boys.

The intersection of gender and race of parents can also impact biracial individuals’ experiences. A study on the racial socialization of biracial youth, indicated that those biracial children who had mothers with black heritage were more likely to provide self development racial socialization and mothers without black heritage were likely to provide silent racial socialization (Rollins & Hunter, 2013, p, 140). This study also suggests that the frequency that mother’s communicate with their biracial children about racial socialization is not clear because of the self-reported method that was used to measure it in the study.

Parents’ interactions with children can also play a role in family outcomes. Root (1998) reported that family dysfunction was among four emergent themes after interviewing 20 biracial sibling pairs. These findings indicated that participants who suffered some type of emotional or

physical cruelty by one of their parents, distanced themselves from other people of that same heritage. In addition, a study that focused on family influences on biracial youth development indicated that because parents are the primary caregivers, validation and assurance were crucial in feelings of support in biracial youth (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008). These studies present areas in biracial identity development that still need to be addressed.

What is the Meaning of a Biracial/Multiracial Identity?

Literature that has focused on a biracial meaning have used a series of interviews and questionnaires to link aspects of the respondents self and racial identification to some type of development model. Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2008) for instance, use four distinct categories, discussed earlier in this section, to classify each respondent's way in identifying. "For mixed-race people, the development of a singular black identity has been the historical and cultural norm in the United States" (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008, p. 40). For a singular identity, one of their interviewees, Aisha, experienced something other than this norm. Because she appears black to others, she is treated as such. The fact that Aisha self-identified as mixed race in one community and black in another demonstrate that society has a greater pull on identity than the individual (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2008).

Khanna and Johnson (2010) examine the strategies of identity work on racial passing in biracial individuals. The ability biracial individuals have in claiming a particular identity is strongly embedded in the individuals' phenotype (Khanna & Johnson, 2010). So, the more someone appears "black" or "white" the easier it is for them to pass as monoracial as opposed to someone who is more racially ambiguous where having a self-proclaimed monoracial identity would likely be challenged.

Biracial/Multiracial College Students

Research (Brittian, Umaña-Taylor, & Derlan, 2013; King, 2008; Renn, 2000; Wong & Buckner, 2008) has focused specifically on biracial/multiracial college students, yet the literature on only black/white biracial college students is limited with the exception of Rockquemore and Brunson (2001) and Rockquemore (2002). Rockquemore (2002) found that biracial females reported experiencing negativity from black women. For example some participants were accused of thinking they were “all that” or stuck up. Rockquemore (2002) found that the experiences black/white biracial women had with black women were very different than their encounters with black men. One respondent reported that black men tended to watch over her. The negative experiences were reported most often having to do with skin color and hair texture. Appearances and group membership were found to be very much related. Issues of the color complex that black/white biracial women and men experienced were very different. The experiences dealt heavily with how the participants negotiated their racial identity with black women.

Color blind ideology has become prevalent on college campuses. This so called “post-racial” social climate leaves the perception that inequalities do not exist on the campus and that all groups of people are included, welcome and equal. As stated by Jackson, Sweeney, and Welcher (2014), the colorblind “... ideology allows for the rationalization of inequality” (p. 194) because if no one sees color, then people of every race have equal access to opportunities, but students do not recognize that this is institutionalized racism and therefore of a larger system. Under this idea, issues concerning race become an individual issue as opposed to part of a larger problem (Jackson, Sweeney, & Welcher, 2014). It is important to draw on ideas about race on

college campuses especially when focusing on experiences of biracial/multiracial college students because these ideas impact their racialized experiences on college campuses.

Previous research indicates that biracial women often encountered negativity with black women, but the racial negotiations involving white women are not addressed. Some of the frequent negotiation of race with black women could be a result of biracial women being lumped into a black race category in their social communities, schools, friend groups, etc., therefore leaving more instances of negativity with black peers. This research will focus on cross racial experiences with other college students or other biracial students with encounters specific to college life, experiences within a specific group or organization such as BSA (Black Student Association) or SGA (Student Government Association) and other aspects of student life.

My research questions are: What does it mean to be a biracial/multiracial student at a Southeastern University and beyond and; What meaning do biracial/multiracial students ascribe to cross racial experiences at a predominantly white Southeastern University?

CHAPTER 3

THEORY

My research is informed by intersectionality theory (Collins, 1998). Intersectionality describes the multiple forms of oppression by the overlapping sections of social categories like race and gender (Collins, 1998). Collins (1991), argues that gender be viewed with other social variables, not by having them added to gender because they are all seen as what is referred to as the matrix of domination; they intersect as places of both privilege and oppression. In the matrix of domination people who may be biracial/multiracial or anyone who has an ambiguous phenotype face the backlash of others trying to place them in a black or white category, reflecting the structure of this model (Collins, 1991).

This theory is appropriate for understanding experiences of biracial/multiracial individuals because they face various forms of privilege and oppression based on social class, skin color, race, and gender. Intersectionality theory will also push me to see new details in the experiences of biracial/multiracial women at a predominantly white Southeastern University. As stated previously, status can be gained from having light skin. The more white passing someone is, the more beautiful they are seen which works as a form of social capital for women (Hunter, 2002). In contrast, women with darker skin face the interlocking system of oppression against their skin color, gender and race. One study that focuses on black/white biracial individuals in the South and passing as black is in line with other studies in concluding that the one drop rule has weakened over time. The sample consisted of 40 black-white biracial individuals. The majority of individuals identified themselves as biracial or mixed-race and only six identified as black (Khanna & Johnson, 2010).

Positioning Myself

As a qualitative researcher it is important to position myself. My role as a qualitative researcher would be one with membership into the group I am studying because of insider information (Adler & Adler, 1987) based on my appearance and racial identity; I identify as biracial and black. My educational experiences have played an important role in shaping my own identity and interest in the scholarship of race and education. The following narrative illustrates the beginning of my own interest and quest to understand the experiences involved with having a biracial and multiracial identity.

All of the fourth graders, including myself were ready to slide open the flap of our exams and start filling out the scantron forms. Before we could do so, Mrs. James, my teacher, instructed us to darken, with our number two pencils, the spaces in the key at the bottom. The category that stood out to me the most was the race category. The options available read: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Other. This was a bit confusing seeing how my mom had always told me if anyone ever presented me with the question “what are you?, you tell them that you are biracial.” As her voice played in my head, it did not line up with the instructions above that read fill in only one. As I began to fill in both spaces, the teacher, eyeing everyone as she walked around the classroom restated, that we must only fill in one choice and follow instruction. Confused I walked up to Mrs. James and asked how I was supposed to fill only one when I was both. She then stated “well, fill in which one you are more of.” Confused I stated, “I’m sorry but, I’m not more of one than the other my mom is black and my dad is white.” She then stated, “Ask your mom tonight, then tomorrow you can fill it in before the exams are collected.” When I got home from school I asked my mom what I should do. She grew angry and told me to just fill in both. She then asked if there was anywhere I could write in the word

“biracial.” I said “no, but there is a category with “other” next to it.” My mom acquiesced and told me to fill in “other.”

My identity impacts my interpretations in that I shift identities depending on my audience and the way I am perceived by others based off of how I look. Also, the cross racial experiences that I have had in the past with other people have really shaped how I view myself in the eyes of society. For instance, I code switch between Standard English and African American Vernacular English with ease, having been around people who speak one or both. These experiences impact my interpretations because I understand race and the world through my own experiences thus, giving me an insider view. Although I share these identities with my participants, my experiences do not account for those who do not identify as I do or those who have not had similar experiences as myself. So, my interpretations of certain scenarios may not be a completely accurate portrayal of the way every participant saw or understood a particular situation.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

Qualitative methods were used for this study to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of biracial/multiracial students' lives by conducting semi-structured in depth interviews. Pseudonyms were used to ensure participants' privacy.

Participant Demographic Data

The sample included 12 participants; one male and 11 female participants from a predominantly white Southeastern University. Ninety-two percent (11 out of 12) self-identified as female. Since the sample consisted of only one male, information used from this interview is used as supplementary, because it yielded similar themes as the remaining 11, so focus was given to female participants.

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 38 with an average of 24. Identity differed between participants, some identified as mixed or biracial, one as monoracial, one as black/Latina, and one as black and Chamorro. On the skin color continuum, colors ranged from white to medium brown. Out of the classification in school, one participant reported as a freshman, two as sophomore, four as junior, one post-baccalaureate, and two as graduate students. All but two reported single as their relationship status. Of those two, one participant is married and the other is divorced. For parental relationship statuses four participants reported having divorced parents, four had married parents and that includes one common law marriage, two reported single, one widowed, and one separated. Demographic data can be viewed in tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Participant Identity Information

Age	Sex	Race/ethnicity of participant	Race/ethnicity of parents	Skin color
20	Female	Missing	Mother: Irish/Chickasaw; Father: Black/Blackfoot	Light Brown
19	Female	Missing	Mother: White/Filipino; Father: Black	Medium Brown
23	Female	Biracial	Mother: White; Father: Black	In between light brown and yellow (further towards yellow on continuum).
21	Female	Missing	Mother: Creole; Father: German/Black	Yellow
24	Female	Biracial	Mother: African-American; Father: Caucasian	Between light brown and yellow

				(further towards light brown on continuum).
23	Female	White and Black (African-American)/Biracial	Mother: Black (African-American); Father: White	Yellow
21	Female	Black(African-American) & Chamorro	Mother: Black & Chamorro; Father: Black	Light Brown
22	Female	Biracial/Multiracial	Mother: White; Father: Black	White
38	Female	Black/Latina	Mother: White French; Father: Black Cuban	Olive
21	Female	Mixed or Black	Mother: Black; Father: White	White
32	Female	Multiracial	Mother: (missing);Father: Biracial-Hispanic	Medium Brown
20	Male	Black/African-American	Mother: White; Father: Black	Light Brown

Table 2. Demographic School Information

Housing arrangement	Year in school	Credit hours
Off campus-3 roommates	Junior	15
On campus	Freshman	15
Off campus-3 roommates	Junior	18
Off campus	Junior	14
Off campus	Graduate Student	9
Off campus-2 roommates	Senior	18
Off campus-2 roommates	Junior	12
Off campus	Post Baccalaureate	12
Off campus	Other: DrPH	12
Off campus with roommates	Sophomore	12
On campus	Graduate Student	12
Off campus	Sophomore	13

Table 3. Relationship Status and Location Information

Relationship status	Parent relationship status	Type of community	Region grew up in
Single	Divorced	small town	Midwest
Single	Single	urban	West
Single	Mom-divorced; Father-married	missing	North-birth-13 yrs; South-ages 13-18 yrs
Single	Widowed	small town	South
Single	Separated	urban	South
Single	Other/common law marriage	urban	South
Single	Single	missing	West
Married	Married	suburban	South
Divorced	Divorced	missing	Northeast/South
Single	Married	suburban	South
Single	Married	suburban	South
Single	Divorced	suburban	South

Procedures

Data was collected using a demographic questionnaire and in depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews. First, participants who heard about the study from other students or faculty or saw flyers around campus and were interested contacted me. After initial contact, participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire and to participate in a one-on-one qualitative interview once a meeting time and place had been agreed upon. Once meeting with participants, the first part of the interviewing process consisted of reading the informed consent and obtaining participants' signature's then moving forth with the demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire asked for the participants' age, gender, race/ethnicity, year in school, etc. (see Appendix B). The interviews were audio recorded and took place in quiet, confidential settings such as the campus library and campus offices. Interview questions focused on participants' personal experiences that have led to their current self-understanding and their experiences with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at their university.

Constructing the interview protocol began after reviewing the literature on biracial/multiracial individuals. Before confirmation of the interview questions several women who identified as mixed race individuals were asked questions about their identity to have a more clear understanding of the kind of responses I might get from the participants. Some of the questions, along with the skin color continuum, were borrowed from a study with biracial individuals conducted by Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008). These questions included: What is the racial composition of your closest family and friends? All blacks, mostly blacks, about half black, mostly whites, all white, other? Describe the type of community that you grew up in. Do you recall the racial composition? The complete list of interview questions can be found in Appendix B and C.

The recruitment process consisted of distributing flyers on campus, handing flyers to professors for their classes and posting the flyer on the University's activities and involvement page for members to see. For further recruitment I used snowball sampling by asking participants to share the information to other eligible people. All of the information regarding the criteria of the study was on flyers which were explained clearly and further questions were to be directed to me or the advisor of my committee. To meet the criteria of the study, participants had to be enrolled in a Georgia College, 18 years of age or older, and be biracial or multiracial. Informed consent was explained to each participant before proceeding to the questionnaire and the interview (See appendix A).

Data Analysis

Following transcription of the interviews, for the first read-through, I gained a sense of the whole from the responses I received on specific topics (Hatch, 2002). In doing this I created notes getting an idea of the particular patterns that could emerge and put a list of possible notations aside for use later if these topics continued to be of focus in the interviews that followed. Thematic analysis was used to build the themes in my data. "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). I used inductive coding with a constant comparative method, using open coding by reading through each line of the interview and applying codes based on what the participant was trying to say (Boeije, 2002).

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

My findings indicate that school experiences and racism were key in helping shape how participants understood their identities and as well as how the world perceives them. Though family was an influential factor on how participants understood race and identity, it appeared less salient than appearance. The following themes emerged from my research: School experiences, Racism, Identity, Appearance, Presentation of Self: Manner, Family, and Location. Some components of each theme overlapped with others leaving little to no exclusivity for each theme.

School experiences

School experiences were reflected on in numerous ways. These ranged from the participant explaining the racial composition of the schools they attended, to being bullied, feelings of acceptance or rejection, and school activities. In Tamera's experiences, she feels and has felt accepted in school and is proud of being different, so when people ask her where she is from she does not mind. Although she generally feels accepted, black people make up her social circle, she describes the segregation on campus: "I feel like all the black people at this school, like we're in a little huddle... and the majority of the university doesn't really like us so we're just like... okay we'll stay here."

In contrast to Tamera's school experiences, Cloee is often questioned about her blackness. It frustrates her because she was overlooked by a black student university club because it was assumed she would not be interested even after she inquired about it. The students working the table expressed surprise that she actually wanted to join. After joining the club, the club was preparing for a debate on some recent issues of police brutality in the black community,

and she was told to sit out because spots were filled, to later find out that her “white” half might change the perception of the point they were arguing so she stopped attending the club:

I was told that... the spots were filled for everyone who was going to debate but I was later told by someone else that... if I were to debate cause my perspective of my mom being white and my dad being black it would've been a different perspective from what they were trying to get at.

After interviewing Cloee and other participants, those who did not feel represented on campus, felt as if there should be some type of club for biracial/multiracial students. Cloee states, “someone should start an organization for just like multiracial and biracial students so that we can just talk about everything that ticks us off.” Participants who felt this way did not fit into a black or white category and their appearance affirmed acceptance or rejection in some social settings.

Racism

Racism emerged among the majority of interviews. In all but one, participants provided an example of microaggression or experience of racism that they had at some point. Jewell, who did not mention anything on racism, talked about embracing both sides and being comfortable in her identity. Jewell described her mother as African-American and her father as Caucasian. Of those who did not expand much on racism, Andrea spent a great deal of time talking about racism and I attributed that to her appearance but also the location she lives in. In her experiences, she is almost always viewed as a black woman unless her name is called and then her identity is questioned (see identity/appearance). Andrea touches on racial profiling:

I noticed that if I went into a store and I was with a group of black people, then the store owners or security might follow a little more... but if I was with my Caucasian roommate we could just run all the way around no problem.

Shannon also elaborates on being racially profiled:

I work at the store, like some white people come in and don't want to be helped by me they'll rather be helped by other white people and it's just like, "okay I can help..." Or if me and my boyfriend which is black... we'll get pulled over for something suspicious and we'll be like "what did we do?"

As a result of an incident of racism, one participant, Kortney expressed being afraid to go out after the occurrence: "A truck pulled up and it was a white guy and he rolled down his window and he was screaming very derogatory terms at us... I was very upset... It bothered me for a really long time." These narratives illustrate some of the experiences of racism participants had.

Identity

Participants were clear that anyone who was not in their immediate social circle of understanding their family dynamic were quite inquisitive about their racial mixture especially if there was some ambiguity in their appearance. One of the most common questions participants were asked was "What are you?" Instances of this occurred at young ages and followed them into adulthood. Jada's parents, a white father and a black mother, talked to her about race for the first time in about fifth grade when she came home from the park after having an encounter with another girl. Before then she did not really think of herself in terms of black or white and just saw her parents as her parents. Jada explains:

I still remember, it was like this big oak tree at the park in the South and one of my classmates, which was a white girl came up to me and was like point blank, “what are you?” And I was like “what are you talking about?” She’s like, “what are you, you white or you black?” and I was like, “my mom’s black, my dad’s white,” and she goes but “what are you?” and I was like, “I don’t know.”

Identity also reflected how participants understood themselves or how they negotiate race in some situations. Identity was in some instances imposed, sometimes by family pressuring participants to choose one category, including pressure to identify as biracial. One participant, Jalen, has a black mother and a white father and generally identifies as black or biracial. She experienced an interesting dynamic while visiting her dad’s family; who are all white. “Like back home in the Southeast, cause that’s where I’m from, like with my dad’s family I feel like they just want me to identify as mixed.” For Jalen this situation is annoying because she identifies as black or biracial depending on the situation but understands herself as a black woman, surrounds herself with black people and does not feel connected to white people at all. She explains:

I have always felt more accepted like as I get older from the black community and like, the white community has nothing for me. There’s not, there’s nothing for me there. I see white people on campus or out somewhere and I don’t feel a natural connection with them.

Though Jalen is firm in her identity as a black woman, since she has grown older she has more issues dealing with her identity because she is so light. When asked if she has ever felt pressured to identify one way or has experienced negativity from others for being mixed she responded:

Very much, cause I think it's more of the fact that I have more identity issues as I get older just because I'm so light. Cause I'm so white passing. Like I'm sure if I straightened my hair then someone would probably be like, "oh you're white." Maybe, probably and like sometimes I feel like I have to overcompensate. Because like, if I... if I don't, it's like "oh this girl's like half white, she's acting like she's somebody blah blah blah..." So I've had some issues with that.

In feeling like she has to defend her blackness, Jalen also recognizes that with her appearance she is in a position of privilege. For Zoe it was the confusion of figuring out how to identify that bothered her. The confusion mainly stemmed from the fact that other people would try to tell her how to identify based on her racial mixture. "Like, 'well if you're black, so you're black,' but then it's like 'oh well you're a white girl,' so it gets confusing whenever someone's trying to tell me what I am and it's like 'well I'm just mixed.' Zoe expressed a lot of frustration in navigating these situations, and feels it would be easier to just be able to identify as one racial category. "I just wish I could identify with one thing because people are like 'well, what are you?' It's like, 'what are you?' But I really don't know, I'm just a mix of everything." Similar to Zoe, Cece, who described her mother as white French and her father as black Cuban, also feels it would be easier to just be able to fit into one group:

It is much easier to function in the world when you belong to one group. It's much easier to not have to explain your different cultures, you're different "what are you?" All of that. It is much easier which is why I prefer Louisiana over any type of place because I never had to explain. People just assume and it's great because technically yes I am you know... we come from, on my dad's side especially, a very strong Creole side.

Cloe identifies as biracial and described her mother as being of Irish and German descent and her father as black, of African-American and Jamaican descent. Cloe believes that she should not have to choose. People often ask if she identifies as white or black and she stands firm in identifying as biracial. After I asked how she identifies herself, Cloe explains, “I’ve always just... I say biracial. I don’t feel like I should choose.” Cloe’s identity was influenced by her parents (see family).

In contrast to having a racial identity, Andrea who puts multiracial when asked her identity, described her identity as “just a woman.” She mentioned that she did not like the question when I asked her about her identity, so I asked her why and she stated:

Why does there have to actually be a division between what I am and what I’m not? Because of the fact that I am multiracial which is I guess African-American mixed with Hispanic... I’m usually just seen as a black person.

Andrea’s identity is shaped by the way she is treated based on her appearance. But it is her name that confuses people because it does not match her appearance; people have a difficult time hearing a Hispanic name and attaching it to a black woman. These responses clearly show that identity is understood in many different ways and the individual does not have much control in how they are identified and how they identify themselves; the two are interconnected. Even participants who resist being defined by others must fight a constant battle. These results confirm earlier studies on the ways multiracial individuals identify and the patterns were consistent with earlier studies.

Presentation of Self: Manner

Participants’ manner (Goffman, 1959) also influenced how others were racially identified by others which sometimes negatively impacted how they self-identified. “Talking white” or

speaking properly was associated with whiteness and talking “ghetto” was associated with being black. Many participants used code switching in their daily routines depending on who they were interacting with in a given scenario. One participant, Jalen referred to this as having a phone voice. When asked to elaborate she stated:

‘Cause black people can easily, I’m sure you do this, I can do this, every black person can do this. Like you have like your “this is how I actually speak voice,” and “this is how I need to speak in like society voice.” So like everyone has their phone voice, well I don’t know about white people, and everyone has their fake voice.

Because speaking properly was associated with whiteness, participants explained that they did it to blend in with peers or family. In code switching, participants who would speak standard English around some of their black peers were accused of talking or acting white. Shannon elaborated more about how she speaks when she is around both black and white friends. She says:

When you hang around you know, this sounds so bad, but when I’m with my black friends it’s like “you sound so proper, the way you speak, why you talk like that? You know what I’m saying? White side, “you know, you know you’re a little ratchet.” you know what I’m saying? Like you can have your ghetto moment.

Among actions were also the types of activities that were seen as white or black. Kortney explained her situation with this: “I guess my personality you know I always hated hearing, “well you don’t act black, you’re not black enough for that.” Zoe, in explaining not being accepted by black kids described the type of activities she and her friends would do, which were seen as

white activities: “We would do all the country bumpkin stuff, have bonfires, go camping, go fishing, go on boats and everything cause I’m familiar with that.” She used her location, being from the Midwest, to explain why she and her friends did those particular activities. Actions were very complex and weighed heavily on how participants spoke and the kinds of activities they chose to participate in.

Appearance

Appearance was a major determining factor of how participants were treated by others; not just by the color of their skin but hair type and clothing choices. The topic of hair came up in every single interview. Some participants experienced getting their hair relaxed and straightened, so their parent could manage it or because they begged to get it done so that they could fit in at school. Emily explained: “When I went into high school then I started relaxing my hair so um, that kind of helped me with my identity a little bit because I felt like I fit in a little bit more.” Talking about hair was not among questions that were asked directly but unfolded in participants’ experiences.

Kortney’s experience highlights the importance of environmental context. Kortney who describes herself as a Wiggapino since her mother is white and Filipino and her father is black, describes some of the situations she had involving her hair and other girls in high school while living in the South:

Um I also, I don’t know why, the hair, um I know a lot of the black girls said I was better than them because my hair. I would do my hair every day. I feel like they didn’t like me because of that, and if there was something wrong with my hair, I promise you there would be someone to tell me and it was always a girl and

it was always a black girl. “Your split ends are really bad you need to get a haircut.” “Oh, your hair is messed up.”

After these encounters she wanted to return home to the West and live with her mother because she was getting picked on for looking “different,” and was having a difficult time making friends. In another instance she was asked about her identity based off of the way her hair appeared:

One girl came up to me and was like, “you look black.” I was like, “well, I am black.” And she was like, “then why do you have white girl hair?” I was like, “well, I’m white, and Filipino too and she was like “oh.”

Kortney’s experiences with her appearance were bothersome, especially being from a diverse area in the West where there were so many mixes of people. While out West, Kortney attended elementary through high school, but moved in the middle of high school to the South. When she moved to the South her appearance was seen as exotic by boys and girls bullied her. Jalen recalls a situation in elementary school in which she was picked on for her appearance, particularly her hair. She explains:

Like I remember, I think I was in like first grade and like, some white boy put like little pieces of paper in my hair. Cause they, (laughs), cause they’re like “oh this big ass curly hair.” Cause all the white girls would have like straight hair and so they would sit behind me at my desk and like put shit in my hair.

Though Jalen was picked on for her hair looking different than everyone else’s, as she grew older she gained a very strong understanding of how her light skin actually puts her in a place of privilege in society. Marking white on the continuum as her skin color, Jalen, voiced her disgust at the negative treatment she has seen of black women with darker skin and the representation of

black people in the media. Her awareness of light skin privilege put her in a position where she explains she has a tendency to overcompensate when she is around her black friends (see identity). Although she does not always feel accepted in the black community, she understands she is in a position of privilege with light skin and that she does not experience some of the problems that someone with darker skin would:

I don't have to suffer like through the everyday racism as people do obviously. So I'm never going to understand like the full problems that they have to go through. And they're like "you don't, you will never understand, fully understand the shit we have to go through," so it's like don't put yourself in the same category. Cause people don't want to talk about colorism. Like there is light skin privilege. Like there is light skin privilege so fucking much. Especially if you're a girl.

Jalen continued to expand on her knowledge of issues of colorism and how dark skinned girls are treated:

You are shit on so bad in our society as a dark skin girl like you're just retaliating against that. Like you're not doing it out of nowhere. You see how the light skin girls are treated and you see how you are treated and you are just responding to that so... dark skinned girls aren't just like "oh ya'll aren't natural bitches blah blah blah." There's a reason people see you and think you're uppity. People have told me all the time, like "when I first met you I thought you were going to be a typical light skin bitch."

Similar to Jalen's awareness of light skin privilege, Cece, who described her skin color as olive, mentions that "when you're mixed and you're light enough you are exposed to a lot more."

She meant this in the sense that many white people sometimes forget that she is also black when they are talking to her and she experiences some of the microaggressions from their conversations. Microaggressions are defined as “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously” (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2001, p. 60). Cece explains:

There’s... you see the microaggressions and you experience them. And you’re a lot... you think about things differently and then you also see that maybe two people who has very similar circumstances, the end result is very different and you begin to see these patterns and that forces you to kind of take more of a militant stance, um and I always used to joke that it’s the light ones that are always more militant than darker skinned individuals. But it’s true at times because you see, I think you see a lot more and you, you’re privy to a world that darker, that my siblings who are dark were never even privy to. They didn’t even have those experiences. And so I think that that’s what kind of shapes, who you become and how you look at race and injustices but then you also become very cognizant of colorism as well, within whatever group you’re in. I mean whatever minority you’re in, there’s always gonna be colorism cause just how our system is.

Cece’s identity was shaped through her appearance and her treatment by others. Like other’s whose identity is shaped by their appearance, Andrea who is black and Hispanic goes through life being treated as a black woman because of her appearance but she is often questioned about her marital status because her Spanish name “does not fit” what society expects to see. She explains: “I should be fair skinned, straighter hair, uh, slimmer nose... and I should have an

accent.” This created a dilemma for Andrea because sometimes she did not know whether or not to speak Spanish in some situations or address that she is Hispanic since people already put her in a box.

Family

In some way, family influenced how participants understood themselves in terms of race. Jewell and Cloee’s parents strongly encouraged and accepted both racial sides of the family. Cloee, who spent her childhood growing up in the North, was surrounded by other mixed kids in her community. Her parents also bought her materials that described mixed families: “My mom and dad they were really good about like buying books to describe mixed families and stuff like that so I was able to accept being biracial at a very early age...” Cloee’s parents involvement with shaping her identity at a young age helped her to embrace it, so she stands firm in identifying as biracial. Jewell’s parents were also very involved. Jewell explains: “I grew up with parents who were very comfortable with teaching me who I was and where I came from and they were both very comfortable with each other which made it even better.” Like Cloee, Jewell also identifies as biracial and refuses to not choose one when given a questionnaire or survey. Parents who embraced their child’s racial identity had children who grew up with a more positive racial identity. Participants whose parents were separated or divorced and did not communicate racial identity with them, seemed to distance themselves from their absent parent’s heritage. Kortney’s father who is black, was never around when she was younger so she distanced herself from that side of her family. It was not until she grew older that she started to embrace it but at a young age she would just identify herself as Filipino:

When I was younger... would tell people I was Filipino... I didn't like identifying with my other races just because... or I would tell them I was white and Filipino... I didn't like saying about my dad. I didn't like talking about him.

Zoe's parents are also divorced, and Zoe grew up around her mom's family who are white. She expressed that both parents families are racist and they talk about each other using derogatory names like "white trash barbie," or "the milkman." Though, Zoe does not distance herself from her dad's family or other black people, white people have always been in her immediate social circle so her identity strain comes from not understanding things that her black peers do. One of the situations she addressed was having black roommates since she has been in college but not being able to relate to them:

I've always had black roommates and I was okay with it. I'm just like okay, I'm half black, it's not an issue, but umm I noticed that we are totally different and I can't relate to them on certain things... I've never lived around black females before and the way that they do their hair and the way that they dress is completely different than the way I do my hair and the way I dress.

These narratives highlight the impact parental relationship status has in assisting biracial children in shaping a racial identity.

Location

About half of the participants moved from other regions of the United States at some point during adolescence, to the South. In many cases, adjusting was quite difficult because living in the South is where racism was experienced for the first time. Participants also felt as if there was more strain on them to choose one racial side or the other. One participant grew up when the one drop rule was still in full effect, so what did it really mean to be biracial? Despite

having one parent who was non-black, mixed race children were considered black. Cece is in her late thirties and expanded on her move from the Northeast to the South in 1989:

I developed my identity from a very strong extended family that one first taught me that..I, it was okay to be black and proud and growing up in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, mixed was not a thing. You were either one or the other. So when I left the Northeast and moved to the South in 1989, you didn't have a choice. There was no racial ambiguity allowed. We were still busing minority students to majority areas. So you were either black or you were white; the one drop rule was in full effect. So to me I've always been a black woman.

Although Cece made it clear that she was able to navigate racial spaces with ease, it was her mother's change after moving to the South, that Cece became fully aware of the pressures her mother had of being white and wanting to belong in the new community:

My mother became more white when she moved to the South. She was not that white and I've told her that a number of times. I was like "you were not this white when you lived up North, you were more of an equal opportunist whereas down here you became a true white woman."

When I asked Cece what she meant by "true white woman," she meant that her mother's interactions had changed and that it was completely different from how things were before the move:

For example, "why do you always bring black guys home to date?" "Are you ever going to date a white guy?" "You cannot get through the world successfully with just black friends." That's what she told me. Um, so I guess that subconsciously shaped my always, the need to always have a diverse group of friends.

In addition to Cece, Emily, who has a white mother and a black father. She reported in her family of origin income as making less money than other families. Emily made a drastic move, coming from from the Midwest to the South and expressed differences in the education she was receiving versus her experiences after the move. She felt as if her education was not as challenging and there was more ignorance on race. Even though moving regions was a new experience, it was Emily's move from one end of the community to another that made her uncomfortable:

We moved out to the other side of the city in the South, and it was a lot different. Mostly white people and the other thing that was a lot different is that it was mostly upper class. Middle, upper class people when I was used to being with the lower class people. So, I think that was more different to me than just seeing white people because everything... These kids had cars, they had big houses like everything that I never experienced before, so it was even harder for me to relate and I didn't really make a lot of friends. I ended up dating somebody a few months into school, so I pretty much hung out with him until I graduated so I didn't really make a lot of friends there.

Whereas earlier in the interview Emily expressed having both black and white friends and in some situations feeling awkward because of her white skin and curly hair, it was not her color that made hers feel out of place when attending high school. Social class had an impact on how she saw herself and perceived others. Later in the interview she mentioned how she had more resentment towards white people because she felt like they had more.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the ways in which biracial/multiracial students experience race on a college campus and beyond. Twelve semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with students during the spring of 2015 at a Southeastern University. After conducting the interviews themes emerged out of the participants' responses. The themes that emerged were: School Experiences, Racism, Identity, Appearance, Presentation of Self: Manner, Family, and Location. These themes were further analyzed and varied by participant. Family was important to participants' understanding of race and identity. My findings also indicated that intersections of racial identity which was linked to skin color and phenotype, social class, and gender impacted the lives of participants. For instance, having white or really light skin was linked to participants experiencing less instances of others identifying them as black and also as Jalen expressed, her light skin and hair are equated with beauty which she mentions that she often benefits from by receiving things for free which is a form of capital. Though social class was not of main focus, one participant, Emily, did feel the strain on her identity when she moved to a school in a more affluent neighborhood. Emily did not feel like she belonged even though her appearance was white passing her socioeconomic background did not allow her entry into this social arena. Participants' gender and skin color were judged by peers, both male and female, and lightness, along with looser curl patterns were associated with prettiness while kinkier hair and darker skin were marked in comparison as not as desirable and having darker skin marked those who carried a biracial/multiracial identity as being perceived as only black. This complex web of intersections demonstrates the many ways biracial/multiracial individuals see themselves and how they are viewed in the eyes of others. These findings

confirmed earlier studies of biracial/multiracial individuals (Brittian, Umaña-Taylor, Derlan, 2013; King, 2008; Wong & Buckner, 2008).

First, Identity and Appearance overlapped and in participants experiences of how they saw themselves and how others perceived them weighed heavily on skin color. Just as one of Rockquemore and Brunson's (2008) participants experiences the world as a black person because she is seen as black by others, participants with darker skin in my sample also expressed these experiences. In contrast to this experience, one participant with lighter skin grew up when the one drop rule was still strongly applied so she understood herself as a black woman. This was investigated further in Khanna's (2010) study which focused on the reflected appraisals of the one drop rule. In this instance my participant experienced this in how she identified.

Second, to participants, their actions were understood in terms of how they were perceived by others. Some things were considered acting white and others were acting black. Many of these situations took place in school from grade school through college. Since social interaction makes up a major part of the school experience the importance of having a shared space on a college campus has been expressed in prior studies and in the current study. Cloee's situation, in the current study falls in line with King (2008) who recommends that multiracial college students need shared spaces on campus. Needing some type of club for biracial/multiracial college students was expressed by a few of my participants.

Third, family had to do with how participants shaped their identities. Studies like Rollins and Hunter (2013) who focuses on maternal racial socialization approaches in biracial individuals expand on some of the ways that messages are sent to biracial children growing up. The participants in the present study had some guidance from parents when it came to identity. Both parents seemed to influence them somehow whether they were present or not.

Since over half of participants in the current study moved from other regions and then settled in the South, racialized experiences were more pronounced. In examining biracial adults in the South, Khanna (2010) focuses on the one drop rule and its pertinence, especially in the South. One participant in the current study felt the effects of the one drop rule after moving to the South with her mom, making location an important factor in identity. Cece who experienced the effects of the one drop rule after moving to the South differed from other participants who moved to the South in more recent years, who, experienced societal pressures when it came to race were more adamant about claiming a mixed race identity. This trend supports current literature on the weakening of the one drop rule (Khanna & Johnson, 2010; Khanna, 2010; Rockquemore & Brunisma, 2008).

There are limitations that exist that have impacted my findings. First, the sample size was small and therefore was not generalizable. Second, about half of my participants' parents were either separated or divorced so this may have biased my findings on the degree of impact family had in shaping identity for all participants. A report from Pew Research Center indicates that the likelihood of divorce rates between couples who marry outside of their race, are listed as having about a 41% chance of separation or divorce (Wang, 2012) which reflects the trends in divorce and separation in the current study. Socio-economic status was recorded in the demographic findings but was not of significant focus. Future studies could focus on SES in more biracial/multiracial individuals to see how impactful it is. The current study mentioned one participant who was affected by it. The number of hours participants worked, if they worked while in school was recorded but was not focused on. Hours worked while in school could greatly impact the desire to be involved in campus activities, not just whether or not students feel included or not. Since the focus was just to get a grasp on how biracial/multiracial students

experience race at a predominantly white Southeastern University, the themes that were focused on were the most popular that emerged from the data; not to take away from the importance of other factors that did arise in the development of identity. Interview questions were expanded on by participant and which direction the discussion went, so the consistency with certain responses was impacted.

Implications for Future Research

The findings indicate that a more in depth understanding of biracial/multiracial students is necessary. Though, not expanded on in the study, participants explained different situations where guidance counselors or teachers encouraged students to identify in ways that she/he felt were important, not the student. Teachers and counselors also had the tendency to guess students' race and mark it down for the student. These situations describe the sensitivity of race and how it is sometimes avoided or imposed by others to keep the dichotomies of black and white clear cut so that those who do not understand or have a multiracial identity are comfortable. More research could test for effectiveness of having clubs for biracial and multiracial students. A longitudinal study could be useful in this case. Last, diversity training and also programs in school before students head to college could be beneficial in biracial/multiracial students feeling like they are part of the community and not invisible by having to always choose a side.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Biracial/multiracial college students manage identity in many ways. The foundation of that is set at home and then either validated or invalidated when they go out in the world. Depending on context and appearance, biracial/multiracial college students are able to adjust to a particular social setting or experience uncomfortable feelings in settings they identify with but do not feel as if they belong. As indicated, appearance had a great impact on identity. With more shared spaces for biracial/multiracial students on college campuses, students can gain a sense of community.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Please read this document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.
Title of the Research Study: “What Are You?” Sharing the Biracial/Multiracial College Student Experience

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine the ways that biracial/multiracial individuals experience race at a Georgia College

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Please carefully read the information presented below and decide whether or not you wish to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in this research project. To be included in this study you must be 18 years of age or older. You also must meet the following criteria:

- 1) **You are a student currently attending a Georgia College**
- 2) **Biracial/Multiracial**

What you will be asked to do in the study: You will be asked to participate in an interview, located in a neutral community location, in the safety of your own home, or on the telephone, whichever was agreed upon by the researcher and participant prior to the study. Your interview will consist of two parts. First, you'll be asked to fill out a general demographic questionnaire that includes your age, gender, race/ethnicity, year in school, etc. Second, you will be asked to answer a series of open-ended questions about your personal experiences that have led to your current self-understanding and your experiences with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at Georgia Southern University. The interview will be recorded by an electronic audio recording device. The electronic recording will be destroyed following the transcription of the interview. You will not be asked any identifiable information during the interview and all identifiable information disclosed during the interview will be removed during the transcription. You are under no obligation to be interviewed if you do not wish to do so. You may decline to answer any or all of the questions, ask to take a break, and you may terminate the interview at any point.

Time required: 45 to 60 minutes

Risks and Benefits/Compensation: There are no direct benefits or compensation to you for participating in this study except potentially expressing your opinions and needs in a safe, confidential setting. Potential benefits to others include sharing valuable information related to the needs of biracial students attending colleges or universities. The risks include disclosing personal information regarding your race or ethnicity.

Confidentiality: Due to the sensitive nature of this study, maintaining your confidentiality will be given the utmost concern. As mentioned, you will not be asked any identifiable information during the interview and I will remove any identifiable information from your transcribed interview if it is stated at any time during the interview. Codes will be assigned to your interview materials and audiotapes, instead of names to ensure confidentiality. Interview notes and audio tapes will be kept in a locker in the investigator's office at Georgia Southern University and will be maintained in a secure location for a minimum of 3 years following completion of the study.

Voluntary Participation: Explain that the subjects don't have to participate in this research; that they may end their participation at any time by telling the person in charge, not returning the instrument or other options; that they do not have to answer any questions they do not want to answer. (For juveniles in classroom settings, add that they may decide to stop working on the project at any time and discuss how they should communicate this to the researcher; also state what alternative activity is available to a juvenile if the research takes place in a classroom setting.

Potential Risk: Some of the topics covered in this interview may be sensitive in nature. If at any time during the interview you experience any emotional distress please stop the interview and contact the Georgia Southern University, Psychology Clinic (912) 478-1685.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. In the event of problems resulting from participation in the study, psychological treatment is available for low cost at the Georgia Southern University, Psychology Clinic (912) 478-1685.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Please direct all questions regarding the study to Kelly Brophy at the following email address kb07266@georgiasouthern.edu

Right to Ask Questions: You have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 478-0843.

I have provided two copies of this informed consent. You will be given an extra copy of this consent form to keep. You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your written consent certifies that you have decided to participate in this study after having read and understood the information presented.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number **H15217**.

Principal Investigator: Kelly Diane Brophy, 1057A Carroll Building, Statesboro, GA 30460, (912) 478-2585, P.O. Box 8051

Faculty Advisor: Dr. April M. Schueths, 1060 Carroll Building, Statesboro, GA 30460, (912) 478-2368, P.O. Box 8051, email: aschueths@georgiasouthern.edu

Written Consent of Participant:

Participant Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

Appendix B: Demographic Survey

Title: "What Are You?" Sharing the Biracial/Multiracial College Student Experience

1. Age _____

2. Sex _____

3. Race/Ethnicity (how do you typically describe yourself?) _____

4. Race of your parents (how do your parents typically describe themselves?)

Mother: _____

Father: _____

5. Circle the area on the continuum that best describes your skin color?

Black	Dark Brown	Medium- Brown	Light- Brown	Yellow	Olive	White
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5. What is your current living arrangement? (e.g., on campus housing, off-campus, roommates, etc.)

6. What is your major(s)?

7. What is your classification (year in school)?

Freshman Graduate student

Sophomore Post Baccalaureate

Junior Unsure

Senior Other: _____

8. How many credit hours are you enrolled in this semester? _____

9. What is your current marital status?

Single Separated Other: _____

Living with a partner Divorced

- Married Widowed

10. What is the current marital status of your parents?

- Single Separated Other: _____
- Living with a partner Divorced
- Married Widowed

11. Which of the following best describes your family of origin's income level?

- None
- Less than \$9,999
- \$10,000- \$19,999
- \$20,000- \$29,999
- \$30,000- \$39,999
- \$40,000- \$49,999
- \$50,000- \$59,999
- \$60,000- \$69,999
- \$70,000 or more

12. Compared to other families in my hometown, my family made:

- Less money than other families
- About the same amount of money as other families
- More money than other families
- Unsure
- Other: _____

13. Are you working while attending college?

- Yes No Other: _____

If yes, approximately how many hours per week do you work? _____

14. What type of area did you grow up in: urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

City _____ State _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interviewee Code _____

Interviewer _____

Date/Time/Location of Interview _____

I. Consent and Introduction

Introduce yourself

Review:

- The study's purpose
- How long the interviews are expected to take
 - Approximately 45-60 minutes
- Plans for using the results from the interview
- Informed consent- written permission is required; Note response: _____
 - 18-28 years old? Note response: _____ If yes, proceed to demographic questionnaire. After demographics, proceed to #1.

I have several questions to go through, and this interview should take no more than 60 minutes. Please let me know if you need a break at any time. Keep in mind there are no right or wrong answers. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What is your racial identity? (did friends or family try to tell you how to identify yourself?)

How do you think you developed your racial identity?

How would you describe the elementary school you attended: mostly white, mostly black, fairly balanced, or something else?

How would you describe your middle school/jr.high school: mostly white, mostly black, fairly balanced, or something else?

How would you describe your high school: mostly white, mostly black, fairly balanced, or something else?

2. What is the racial composition of your closest family and friends? All blacks, mostly blacks, about half black, mostly whites, all whites, other?

3. Describe the type of community that you grew up in. Do you recall the racial composition? What was it like?

4. Has being in college made you rethink or change your identity? If yes, how has it changed?

5. What kinds of organizations are you affiliated with on campus? Any off campus?

6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix D: Flyer

Research Participants Needed For A Study On Biracial/Multiracial College Student Experiences

I am looking for college students to tell their stories about their racial experiences in college. I understand that you might be hesitant to participate in this research project; however your privacy is my top priority. This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia Southern University (IRB#H15217). Personal information discussed will be kept strictly confidential.

Who Can Participate in the Study?

- 18 years old and up
- You are a student currently attending a Georgia College
- Biracial/Multiracial

What does it involve?

Participants will take part in a 45-60 minute interview. The researcher will come to a private office on campus, a private room at the GSU library or a neutral community location, in the safety of your own home, or on the telephone, whichever is agreed upon by the researcher and participant prior to the study.

If you qualify and are interested in participating in this study or have any questions, please contact Kelly Brophy, Graduate Student, at kb07266@georgiasouthern.edu. This research is supervised by Dr. April Schueths, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology (aschueths@georgiasouthern.edu).