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Exploring the Perceptions of Campus Climate Among Mixed Race Students Attending a Predominantly White Institution

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ABSTRACT

This narrative inquiry intended to capture the lived stories told by nine, full-time, undergraduate students, who self-identified as two or more races, to better understand their perceptions of campus climate at a predominately white institution (PWI). The conceptual framework consisted of the study of multiraciality, Renn’s Ecological Theory of Mixed Race Student Identity Development, perceptions of campus climate at a PWI, and the relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences.

A written prompt activity and background questions elicited written and verbal responses that assisted with identifying ecological factors and identity patterns of each study participant. Each study participant was asked to take photographs of their environment that influenced how they perceived the campus climate as a mixed race student attending a PWI and assign each photograph a one-word hashtag title. Nine, audiotaped, semi-structured, photo-elicitation interview sessions produced additional narrative data elicited by 33 photographs and one-word hashtag titles.

Photo-elicitation interviews were transcribed for further analysis. In vivo coding and thematic analysis was applied to discover emerging themes and relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences. Four major areas of campus climate and ten sub-themes of perceptions emerged from the photographs, one-word hashtag titles, and narrative data: Classroom Climate (isolating and close), Peers Climate (divided by like-groups,) Spaces Climate (diverse, enjoyable, beautiful and evil, peaceful, and unifying), and University Climate (responsive and unresponsive).
Relationships were explored and discovered between study participants’ perceptions of campus climate and their individual differences.

Evidence from this study provides higher education professionals and administrators access into the lives of mixed race students. With a better understanding how they experience and perceive campus climates at PWIs, supportive learning environments can be created that includes all students. The perceptions and the relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences expands the literature which currently lacks stories told by mixed race students.
DEDICATION

I first dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Linda Ballard Team and my father, the late John Wiley Team (c/o ‘62). Words cannot express the appreciation I have for the extremely generous support you provided me since I started college as an undergraduate student. We definitely did not know I would make a career out of going to school but here we are. Mom, as dad is not physically here to experience this major family accomplishment, I hope you know he is proud of us and is sitting on a piano bench somewhere smiling from ear to ear. I love you with all my heart and I am truly grateful for all your sacrifices to get to this point. You are an amazing woman and mother.

I also dedicate this work to an incredible man that God purposefully placed in my life, my husband John. Your selfless love never goes unappreciated or unnoticed. You jumped right in to ensure I had all I needed to complete my dissertation and took care of everything imaginable so I could solely focus on my research. I cannot thank you enough. You are my heart and soul and I cannot imagine my life without you.

Mom, Dad, and John - this dissertation is as much yours as it is mine. We did it!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank God for instilling the passion I have for higher education and for the students and communities we serve. Through higher education, I am able to continue His work by providing others with the support and resources needed to be sustainable in today’s world. As this is a challenging career path, I am more than grateful for His continued guidance and strength as I enter into a new chapter in my life.

I want to thank the nine study participants who took time out of their very busy schedules to volunteer for this study. It was such a pleasure to meet each of you and I thoroughly enjoyed listening to your stories as you welcomed me into your lives. Thank you very much for your time and allowing me to share your voice with the world. I also want to thank the total strangers I met along the way who were also willing to engage by sharing personal thoughts and experiences on the subject.

Writing a dissertation within a year is not an easy feat. My extremely supportive, accessible, and encouraging dissertation committee chair, Dr. Tony Cawthon, never gave up on me or my timeline. You were always available with speedy editing turnarounds and optimistic remarks. I am truly grateful for your faith in me during this process. I also want to extend my appreciation for the advice and support received from Dr. Todd Chamberlain, Dr. Russell Marion, and Dr. James Satterfield. I thoroughly enjoyed being a student in your classes and engaging in conversation about this work’s subject matter. You have helped me grow personally, academically, and professionally. Dr. Marion and Dr. Satterfield, you both will be missed by the many graduate students you have supported through the years. I wish you both well in the next chapter of your lives.
Thank you Dr. David Fleming and Shannon Coker for your patience as I submitted frequent emails inquiring assistance with IROAR and confirming if my graduation requirements were met. It is not easy being a commuter student and living two and a half hours away from Clemson University, but your timely responses and calming clarifications kept me level-headed and on track.

My dissertation definitely would not have been completed without the remarkable assistance from Clemson’s Interlibrary Loan program. This program serves as a vital resource for commuter students and I applaud your customer service. I also want to thank the multicultural center for allowing me to use their meeting space to conduct several interviews. I appreciate the work you continue to do and look forward to volunteering and participating in future events and activities.

Lastly, to my mentors and friends that have supported, challenged, and pushed me along the way. You have taken many forms in my life which helped me get to this point. I am forever thankful for those life lessons learned, difficult conversations had, and personal evaluations. To my classmates, your strength and perseverance has been truly inspiring and I wish you all the best of luck during your progression to graduation and beyond. I am so proud of each of you!
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Living our identities is much like breathing. We don’t have to ask ourselves each morning who we are. We simply are. . . . Identity is never fixed; it continually evolves. But something in it stays constant; even when we change, we are recognizably who we have always been. Identity links the past, the present and the social world into a narrative that makes sense. It embodies both change and continuity” (Josselson, 1996, p. 29).

As there is a growing extent of literature focusing on diverse monoracial college students, how they perceive, experience, navigate, develop and personally identify within the context of predominately white institutions (PWI), there is a noticeable gap that includes the told, lived stories of mixed race college students experiences and perceptions within these same contexts. Previous researchers proposed that diverse monoracial groups of students: did not experience and perceive the same campus climate the same way as their white counterparts (Chavous, 2005; Chang, 2003, Ancis et al., 2000; Strange & Banning, 2001; Evans et al., 1998; Hurtado et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1998); had different perspectives of their college experience based on their racial backgrounds and identities (Ancis et al, 2000) and were more likely to experience and perceive campus climates at predominately white institutions negatively compared to their white counterparts (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Ancis et al., 2000, Hurtado et al, 1998).

The literature on mixed race students (Brackett et al., 2006; Renn, 2004, 2003, 1998; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002; Kilson, 2001; Wallace, 2001; and Wijeyesinghe, 2001) focused on identity development models and theories about how mixed race students identify within the context of a PWI but still provided little insight about how mixed race students perceived these climates in relation to their individual differences.
As such, it is difficult for educational professionals and administrators to enhance campus environments to support student development for all students without the inclusion of mixed race students’ voices sharing their stories and describing how they navigate these academic spaces. How students perceived their campus environment influenced both learning and developmental outcomes which makes campus climate an important area of understanding (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Reason & Rankin, 2006).

Before the study participants in this study could share and reflect upon their individual stories, I, a white female raised in the South by two white parents, had to reflect on what I already knew and did not know about race. What I knew when I was a child compared to what I know now are totally different perspectives. As I grow older, I begin to ask those uncomfortable questions about race from others who are from different backgrounds than me. During the process of this study, I learned that race is complicated. I learned that I am viewed as “privileged” by other groups. I do not have to think about how I am perceived in different contexts. I learned that people are afraid of what they do not know which means the conversation never happens. It is imperative to have these conversations to recognize and acknowledge that some groups have been “talking” for a very long time...and other groups are only now starting to listen.

For me, this study was significant personally, academically, and professionally. I had to truly listen to stories which included experiences I never had or could even understand, but at the same time appreciated our differences as people who shared the common passion of education, equal opportunity and cultural awareness. The study participants appreciated sharing their stories to a white female who, to the study
participants, represented the majority on campus. This allowed the study participants to have their voices heard by others who needed to hear them. In other words, this study served as a vehicle for the voices of the study participants to travel by. It was important to the study participants that the majority group and administration on campus heard their voices.

Secondly, I had to consider and accept the South’s documented history of oppression, racism and discrimination experienced across diverse groups to understand the ways in which these students identified and navigated their current landscape at the research site. I initiated random conversations with family, friends and total strangers of white, African American and mixed race backgrounds to test the racial temperature on the current existence of white privilege in today’s society. As all of those that entered into the conversations with me were more than willing, no one had the same response, felt the same way or wanted to come to a consensus. It was okay to disagree, but most importantly, it was okay to listen to each other and to have voices heard and stories told. It was extremely uncomfortable for some including myself, not having the experienced vocabulary to express my thoughts on the topic as I never had to address race or my own or others privileges until now. It was necessary to have these conversations for the foundation of the research, but it was also important for day-to-day social interactions with diverse groups to realize racism, oppression and discrimination is felt and experienced by so many across racial and ethnic groups but discussed, acknowledged and truly heard by few.
For the purpose of this research, “biracial”, “multiracial” and “mixed race” includes individuals with two birth parents who are categorized by two or more races or ethnicities defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office, 2010). It is also helpful to keep in mind that the concept mixed race and multiracial is often interchangeably used with the following referents: mixed, mixed heritage, multiethnic and multicultural. Biracial is seen more in earlier works as further reviewed in Chapter Two. Additional definitions of key terms relevant to this research are located at the end of Chapter One. The main reason I selected the term “mixed race” for this study was because the identity patterns used in this study included a “multiracial” identity pattern and I did not want to cause confusion when presenting the identity patterns of the study participants.

A background and the researchers’ rationale for this study begins followed by the statement of the problem, assumptions, purpose of the study, two research questions that guide the research study and are to be answered by the data analysis process and presented in Chapter Five, and the conceptual framework overview. In regards to the study design, a brief overview of the research site including current events surrounding the research site and results of the most recent administered campus climate survey is presented, the overview of the design, procedure and data collection and analysis, and the significance of the study. The limitations of the study were presented to assist with replications or additions to the current research study. The chapter concludes with a list of definitions of terminology used in the research study and a summation of the organization of the research study.
Researcher’s Rationale

This research topic surfaced when I formerly managed a federal education grant that financially supported the development of college access and awareness programs for high school students statewide. I reviewed data elicited from surveys submitted by students regarding the quality of services they received during these programs each year. I observed a trend developing in the comment boxes provided by students who checked “two or more races”. The trend provided evidence there were many ways these students identified than provided on these forms. I remembered the following terms, in addition to other combinations of races/ethnicities provided, used in those comment boxes: “mixed”, “none”, “I don’t know”, “which one” or listed several family heritages they felt strongly connected to.

I was confused and quite disappointed that there were not better ways for students who identified as two or more races to identify themselves on these forms in order to feel accurately represented. I personally felt it must be frustrating to have to add comments identifying oneself repeatedly because what was offered on forms did not accurately represent them. I also started thinking about all the students that possibly were not included in program development and support data because the data was messy to understand and did not neatly fall into an assigned category. I realized that I did not know one thing about the population of “two or more races”, how they identified or what they experienced in comparison to other student groups. I began to inquire and internally question how it must feel to not have a place on these documents that represented them, and furthermore what was it like for this population in context such as higher education?
I began reviewing the literature on the evolution of mixed race individuals and mixed race students within the context of higher education. I established an interest on how mixed race students perceived their environments in relation to their individual differences in places such as PWI.

My professional background is in psychology within the context of higher education with experiences with diverse student/group personal and academic counseling, developmental education and retention, emotional intelligence, and career and statewide college access program development. My research paradigm is submerged within the interpretivist approach that justifies and evaluates my way of socially constructing knowledge. I believe that reality is socially constructed and fluid and our current knowledge and what we know is negotiated by internal and external experiences, environmental factors, upbringing and relationships with others in a community. I also believe there are many truths and different ways of perceiving things so by inquiring these verbal truths from others is a necessary step in understanding how one perceives an environment. These grounded beliefs justified my selection for the methodology for the research study, data collection methods and data analysis process used for this research to answer the two research questions that guide this study.

In an effort to interpret the stories told by mixed race students to get a better understanding how they perceived their campus climate at the PWI, it was important for me to not only consider my own background, but also review the history of race and the evolution of mixed race in the historical context of the South. It was uncomfortable for me to have discussions on race with family, friends and total strangers, not because I did
not want to, but I did not have to before now. I never considered, what some would call “privileged freedoms”, I had in life in comparison to other diverse groups when having these conversations and listening to stories of total strangers. I was oblivious to the term and to the fact that I was automatically considered “privileged” because of my skin color. I did not know how to comprehend this term before this study. I attended several conferences at the research site to educate myself on the term and to better understand this label before I began my study. These learning experiences made me realize these were possible assumptions the study participants could have about me during our first meeting.

I realized that racism, oppression, and discrimination is experienced across racial, ethnic and heritage lines and not for the color of one’s skin or experienced by one social group. It also included the person’s gender, physical appearance, education level, alliances, political beliefs and the unknowns about that person(s). After having these conversations with others different from myself and within different contexts, I realized the only way for me to understand the perceptions of another person was to listen to their story. As I enter into this study, I want to make it clear that no one is an expert of someone else’s lived life, and this study is not an attempt to be one.

Background of the Study

Starting in the 1990s, mixed race students, became increasingly visible on post-secondary institution campuses in the United States. This seemingly new and vastly growing student population led to the development of, as Renn (2011) specified, a “national multiracial movement to advocate for change in how the federal government
defined racial groups and collected data in the census” (p.192). In October 1997, the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) conducted a revision to Directive 15 which proposed an expansion to the federal racial identification categories to include the option for the respondent to select more than one category to describe one’s self (OMB, 1997). In 2000, for the first time in history, respondents had the freedom to “self-identify in more than one of five designated racial categories in addition to selecting Hispanic of Latino ethnicity” (Renn, 2004, p.1). Today, according to the 2010 United States Census, 2% of South Carolina’s population consists of individuals who self-identify as two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office, 2010).

Since 2011, within the context of higher education, the United States Department of Education requires all postsecondary institutions admission applications to collect data on this growing population by inquiring students to indicate if they are Hispanic/Latino or Not Hispanic/Latino, regardless of race, and select from one or more of the five federal racial identification categories (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or White). With the data that has already been collected, mixed-race students, who in 2000 represented a very minor portion of the student body, will be as common in 2020 as Asian undergraduates were in 2000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001; Renn, 2004).

As high schools across the United States became increasingly racially segregated (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997), higher education institutions simultaneously continue to enroll more diverse student bodies on campus (Ancis et al, 2000). Rankin and Reason (2005) indicated that “many college students…experience their first substantial
interracial contact when they arrive on college campuses” (p. 43), commonly during their freshman year. As racial diversity increases, higher education in this country is charged with creating inclusive college climates to improve the learning and developmental environment for all students who attend. Researchers in social, environmental and psychological fields provided evidence that administrators, student development professionals and educators need to focus their attention on issues regarding diversity. Scholars such as Kellogg (2006) and Wallace (2001) agreed with Renn (2011) who stated, “like other students of color, mixed-race students benefit from a campus climate that is culturally open and inclusive, with programs and services that acknowledge differences and similarities among students from all backgrounds” (p. 204). Involvement in student associations and activities on campus that are racially, culturally and ethnically diverse possibly provide additional opportunities for mixed race students to discover and identify with facets of their cultures, regardless of how others perceive their identities.

Quantitative scholars Harper et al. (2011); Hurtado and Punjuan (2009); Johnson and Bailey (2009); Worthington et al. (2008); Edmond and Brazil (2008); Rankin and Reason, (2005); Brown et al. (2005); Pewewardy and Frey (2004, 2002); and Ancis et al, 2000) and qualitative scholars Maramba (2008); Jones et al. (2002) and Douglas (1998) examined and explored experiences and perceptions of the campus climate at PWIs among diverse monoracial/ethnic student populations (i.e. Black, Asian and Hispanic), but did not include the experiences and perceptions of mixed race college students.

Before one can understand how mixed race students perceive their campus climate at a PWI, placing the student in the middle and becoming familiar with the study
of multiraciality is the first step. The study of multiraciality unpacked the history of mixed race people in the United States, introduced theories about biracial identity and biracial individuals, presented popular literature about multiracial individuals, and described models of bi/multiracial identity development. Recent qualitative scholars such as Renn (2004, 2003), Wallace (2003, 2001), Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002), Kilson (2001), and Wijeysinghe (2001) developed models to understand identity development, ecological factors and identity patterns of mixed race students. Brackett et al. (2006) included multiracial college students to their study of monoracial students focusing on multiracial identification on students’ perceptions of racism. Renn (2004), Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) and Wallace (2002) stated that “the development of racial identity among college students who are biracial or multiracial is in some ways similar to that of other students of color but may differ somewhat from racial identity development among their monoracial peers. It is important to recall that although mixed race identity development processes and patterns may differ from those of monoracial students of color, mixed race students are still subject to environmental and dominant forces of white culture. Renn (2004, 2011) discovered that identity development of an individual is influenced by the dominant race that may favor accommodations to the majority culture. In PWIs, students of diverse student groups who do not represent or are not accepted by the majority, anticipate having a more difficult time navigating that environment and everything it has to offer which can result in negative perceptions of the institutions which can then lead to actions such as leaving roommate hostility, leaving the institution or transferring to another location.
Statement of the Problem

Previous researchers proposed that diverse monoracial groups of students did not experience and perceive the same campus climate the same way as their white counterparts (Chavous, 2005; Chang, 2003, Strange & Banning, 2001; Ancis et al., 2000; Evans et al., 1998; Hurtado et al., 1998; and Miller et al., 1998), have different perspectives of their college experience based on their racial backgrounds (Ancis et al., 2000) and were more likely to experience and perceive campus climates at predominately white institutions negatively compared to their white counterparts (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Ancis et al., 2000, Hurtado et al., 1998). Without including the voices of mixed race students and how they perceive the campus climate at PWIs, it is difficult for higher education professionals and administrators to understand how mixed race students navigate complex landscapes such as PWIs, create diverse environments for learning and socializing that facilitate the intellectual and social development for all students, and learn of existing influences on campus that support or hinder mixed race student success.

Assumptions

There are five assumptions that guided the development of this research study:

- Reality is socially constructed and fluid;
- Race is a “social construct that influences how individuals and situations are perceived and experienced” (Ancis et al., 2000, pg. 181);
- Social inequalities continue to remain between experiences and perceptions had by diverse student populations in relation to their white counterparts;
- Racism, oppression, discrimination and prejudices exist across racial, ethnic and heritage lines; and
- There are many truths.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this narrative inquiry research study provides a platform for mixed race college students to tell their lived stories about their experiences of being mixed race at a PWI, to explore how mixed race students in the study perceived their campus climate at a PWI, and to explore relationships between individual differences, such as ecological factors and identity patterns, and perceptions.

The goals of this study are to bring awareness to the individual concerns voiced by the study participants and shed light on spaces that are significant to their overall success, not to generalize or discover one truth but to “sing up many truths/narratives” (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001, p.112), provide educational professionals and administration full access into the lives of mixed race students to better understand the landscape they navigate at the PWI, encourage colleges and universities to review their campus climates to ensure mixed race student voices are included; and stimulate the creation of diverse environments for learning and socializing that facilitate the intellectual and social development for all students.

**Research Questions**

To understand the perceptions of the campus climate among mixed race college students at a PWI in relation to their individual differences, the following two research questions need to be addressed:
1. How do mixed race students perceive their campus climate at a PWI?

2. What are the relationships between perceptions of campus climate and their individual differences?

Conceptual Framework

Due to the complexity of this research study, creating a conceptual framework was necessary. In order to understand how mixed race students perceived the campus climate at a PWI, it was important to first know the student. This conceptual framework: 1) unpacked the study of multiraciality (history of mixed race people in the United States, theories about biracial identity and biracial individuals, popular literature about multiracial individuals, models of bi/multiracial identity development, and mixed race in the context of higher education), 2) employed Renn’s Ecology Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (ecological factors and multiracial patterns of identity), which led to 3) understanding the perceptions of campus climate among the mixed race students.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework
Renn (2000) stated that “(i)t is necessary to know something about the theory and history of race, racial categorization, and multiracial people in the United States to understand the complicated landscape in which multiracial college students live and learn” (p. 3). She described the literature of the study of multiraciality being divided into four categories (p. 7):

1) the history of mixed race people in the United States;
2) theories about biracial identity and biracial individuals;
3) popular literature about multiracial individuals; and
4) models of bi/multiracial identity development.

For the main purpose of this research, her review of the literature on the study of multiraciality was adopted as the foundation of the conceptual framework for this study. The literature review utilized the study of multiraciality as an outline with an additional section added titled Mixed Race in the Context of Higher Education in the United States. This new section included a review of the culture of PWI and the campus climate in the United States with studies conducted focusing on student perceptions of campus climate in the context of a PWI.

After unpacking the foundation of mixed race research, I explored the diverse backgrounds, including history, cultural values and experiences of the study participants. Torres et al. (2009) reminded scholars that the “role of the environment in identity development remains undertheorized and understudied (p. 591). Torres’s statement led to the search of an ecology theory that focused on the person and their environment to assist with the identification of ecological factors of the study participants to better understand
how they identified in a PWI. Renn’s Ecological Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (2004) consisted of two elements: (1) ecological or environmental factors that influence multiracial identity development and (2) five identity labels individuals with mixed heritages use to identify themselves (Evans et al., 2010). This theoretical framework takes into consideration interactions between the person and their environment and how the environment influences the self-identification of the person. This theory also considers where the person has been, their background, and what surrounds them. For the purpose of this research, the environment is the research site at the time of the data collection process.

The first element, ecological influences, was framed by Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1993) Ecology Theory of Human Development. Renn (2004) stated the Bronfenbrenner built his theory around two central axioms: (a) ‘development is an evolving function of person-environment interaction’ and (b) ‘ultimately, this interaction must take place in the immediate, face-to-face setting in which the person exists’” (p. 28; Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 10). In Renn’s (2000) study, she discovered among her participants the importance of space (physical and psychological elements) and peer culture on multiracial identity development. Participants “were influenced by the extent to which they found places where they saw themselves fitting in, either in formal organizations or informal peer groups (Evans et al., 2010, p. 296). These findings aligned with Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology Theory of Human Development which ultimately became one of the two factors of her ecological theory for her 2004 study. Renn incorporated the four components of the Bronfenbrenner’s theory, person-process-context-time (PPCT), as a
framework to provide sketches of her mixed race participants’ experiences on a college campus. A similar outline for each study participant is seen in the introductions of the study participants in Chapter Four.

To assist with understanding the background of the study participants, the PPCT was applied. The Person component “includes the student’s unique experiences and characteristics, including socially constructed identities (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, ability, etc.), prior academic performance and academic self-concept, political and social ideologies, and family background (Renn & Arnold, 2003). The developing person then interacts with other people in the environment, other objects and spaces within that environment. The following five elements frame the Process component: “(a) on-going; (b) progressively more complex; (c) reciprocal; (d) involve interactions between an evolving person and other people, or objects or symbols; (e) occur in the setting containing the developing individual” (Renn, 2004, p. 32). A students’ Context is their ecological environment that consists of four systems: microsystem (academic setting, residential and/or family settings, formal cocurricular and/or community settings, and informal social settings), mesosystem (interactions, peer culture), exosystem (policies that influence the individual and other settings on and off campus), and macrosystem (sociocultural environment). These systems “work independently and as a system to influence development through the processes” (Renn, 2004, p. 34). Lastly, Time is historical and personal to the centered student. With time the “accumulation of experiences prior to and during college influences the person
component of the PPCT model more than any other, and the chronosystem thus has individual as well as cohort influences” (Renn, 2004, p. 47).

The second element of Renn’s theory was her Five Patterns of Multiracial Identity. It was apparent in the mixed race literature that not all students followed an identical pattern of identification. Renn (2004) discovered out of the 56 students she studied, only eight identified with one pattern alone. Renn (2004) called the identification options “identity patterns to indicate that they exist discretely, yet across the research group” (p. 67). The following five patterns are the second component of the conceptual framework used to identify the participants’ identities in this current research study:

1. Monoracial Identity – “students chose one existing monoracial category (black, Asian, white)” (Renn, 2004).

2. Multiple Monoracial Identity – “students used multiple monoracial identities (white and Latino). They have knowledge about each aspect of their heritage or sought out more information in college. They choose to label themselves instead of being labeled by others” (Renn, 2004).

3. Multiracial Identity – “students saw themselves existing outside of the monoracial paradigm (multiracial, biracial, and mixed). Shared common experiences with other mixed-race students regardless of heritage. This identity can be public or privately held. Multiracial identity is used more commonly on campuses with formal or informal mixed race groups” (Renn, 2004).
4. Extraracial Identity – “students either opt out of racial categorization completely or do not adhere to the categories used in the United States (Renn, 2004).

5. Situational Identity – “students identified differently in different context. Racial identification is fluid and contextually driven. This identity pattern depends on the racial boundaries of campus” (Renn, 2004).

Overview of the Research Site

In 1893, the research site first opened its doors as an all-white male military school located in the South. The school was built as a result of the state’s need for scholarship, agriculture and science with deep-seated roots embedded in the saturated ground of economic deterioration from the Civil War, strictly enforced Jim Crow laws, ignorance of cultural differences and an unknowingly then, a closed-minded political system. Since the end of segregation of 1960 and the increase of the importance of social identity and individuality in the United States, the research site transformed from a college into a public, four-year, coeducational, research university which it remains today.

The number of full-time and part-time undergraduate students documented on campus in the Fall of 2015 was 18,016. The data documented painted the picture of a prime example of a PWI with a total of 14,979 full-time and part-time students who self-identified as “white” or “caucasian” (83%). Students who self-identified as “two or more races” represented only 3% of the total full-time and part-time undergraduate population. Interestingly, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, these percentages also mirror the
demographics of the city where the research site is housed with 79% of the total population is white and 2% are two or more races. South Carolina also has a total percentage of 69% of the total population are white and 2% are represented by two or more races.

The study site currently offers over 80 undergraduate majors, over 75 undergraduate minors and over 110 graduate degree programs. In addition to academics, the study site provides enrolled students with over 400 student clubs and organization opportunities, 50 club sports, six student directed media organizations and 17 intramural sport teams. In an effort to provide a safe place and bring additional awareness to the student body about the cultures represented at the research site, a multicultural center, named in honor of the first African American male student who attended the research site, opened its doors in 2015 to assist with “creating diverse learning environments” and “socially just communities”.

Since the beginning of this research study in 2013, several significant events have changed the racial landscape of South Carolina and our country in the way we live with each other and view individual differences. Following the senseless massacre of nine church members in Charleston, South Carolina, removing the Confederate Flag off the South Carolina Statehouse grounds, and the growing power of the student voice that led to the Black Lives Matter movement which brought national attention to racial inequality across college campuses around the country, the research site has been challenged by its own student and faculty/staff groups, surrounding community and the media to improve the historical foundation and racial climate on its own campus. This included bringing
national awareness to the research site’s racially challenged history and the very Southern foundation it was built upon. This led to student groups requesting institutional alterations to structural name changes located on the research site that represented racial ignorance at the times of their lives in the south. As student tension began to rise, a Greek organization at the research site hosted a themed party where party goers dressed up like gang members. This research study cannot continue without mentioning these significant, historical events which affected the climate of the research site and the students who navigate it. Please keep in mind these important events as the study participants in this study bravely share their stories and reflect on their significance as memories are elicited during their photo-elicitation interview sessions. These stories are presented in Chapter Four.

Campus Climate and the 2012 Campus Climate Survey and Results

Race on campus has and continues to capture the attention of many in the past years as the racial climate on campuses in the United States have changed and student voices have become stronger. In an effort to understand these changes, Hurtado et al. (1998) created four dimensions (institutional context historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, structural diversity, psychological dimension and behavioral dimension) to better assist with understanding campus climate, especially campus climate of PWIs. The researchers explained that higher education leaders have: a) “taken a laissez-faire approach, b) colleges and universities should perform as “agents of socialization”, c) faculty should be “designated socializing agents” in the classroom, and d) colleges and universities have not been addressing issues of race from a critical standpoint with a goal
of creating significant transformation until now (p. 279-280). The research site in this study surveyed a sample of the total student body on how they perceived the campus in an effort to create a supportive learning environment for all students who are part of the majority and minority.

The research site previously administered the 2012 Campus Climate Survey to all students who attended the university during the spring of 2012 which yielded a total of 4,569 students (25% of the student population) who completed and submitted the survey. The purpose of this 130-question survey was to examine students’ perceptions of the campus climate to better assist with program development and opportunities to create positive learning environments for all students. Six campus climate categories grouped the questions which included: (1) Environment Inside the Classroom (2) University Commitment / Responsiveness (3) General Campus Climate – Students (students’ perceptions of their peers) (4) General Campus Climate – Staff (students’ perceptions of staff) (5) Intercultural Competence / Self-Assessment (6) Impact of Learning Experiences (Clemson University, 2012).

The results revealed that African American students responded significantly lower than other students groups for University Commitment/Responsiveness and General Campus Climate – Students (students’ perceptions of their peers). A total of 270 students (six percent of overall respondents) considered leaving the research site due to diversity, inclusion, appreciation of differences and other related concerns. These students included 14% African American (compared to 5.6% overall respondents) and 63% were female (54% of total participants). Student perceptions of the campus climate generated
by the survey included comments such as, “The University can sometimes put too much emphasis on diversity”, “Some populations are treated differently at [the research site], which can lead to social exclusion, alienation and disconnect”, “[The research site] has very little diversity”, “[The research site] students are highly homogeneous and the student body does not create a welcoming and inclusive environment for people from diverse identities”, “People from the South treat people from the North differently”, “Prejudices are revealed when members of minority groups are not present, or when alcohol is involved”, and “Engagement in challenging topics and diverse viewpoints is often discouraged”.

In addition to the survey component, student focus groups were used to collect additional narratives on the perceptions of the campus climate at the research site. These groups included students who identified as white, African American, International, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender students and students from states outside of South Carolina. The research site shared several suggestions to successfully meet university goals based on the results which were to increase enrollment of historically underrepresented students; increase number of historically underrepresented tenure-track faculty; increase student engagement (inside and outside the classroom); increase student retention and persistence; and increase alumni giving. Lastly, the research site’s next step was to share the results and execute a Campus Climate Task Force which is currently in place today. After reviewing these results, I observed that the mixed race student population at the research site was not represented during the focus group component of the 2012 Campus Climate Survey. This exclusion of the mixed race student population in
the 2012 Campus Climate Survey mirrored exclusions of this group from perceptions of campus climate at PWI studies the literature.

**Research Design, Data Collection, and Narrative Data Analysis**

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated that “…qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or, interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p.2). In the context of higher education, Rankin and Reason (2005) concurred that “[q]ualitative research into the experiences of students of color at predominately white institutions reinforces the importance of campus climate” (p. 46). By using a social constructivist approach that is governed by the interpretivist research paradigm, it inserted the student in the center of the research. Placing an emphasis on the voices of each mixed race student was necessary to reach a deeper understanding of their perceptions by first uncovering their backgrounds, experiences that influenced how they identified as mixed race which influenced how they perceived the campus climate. After a thorough review of qualitative research designs focusing on narratives told by study participants as the phenomena, I selected narrative inquiry (Webster & Mertova, 2007) as the methodology.

Root, a clinical psychologist, recommended using non-clinical samples in order to determine normal experiences of biracial people. For the purpose of this research, participants were purposefully selected based on the following criteria: 1) were actively enrolled as full time, undergraduate students, and 2) identified with two or more races on their college application to the research site. The query search generated 444 students who met the criteria.
A recruitment email requested students to attend the Meet the Researcher meeting to receive further information and instructions regarding the study, consent as a participant, complete a personal information form and a written prompt activity. Students were asked to take photographs of anything that influenced how they perceived the campus climate as a mixed race student attending a PWI. They were also asked to assign a one word hashtag title describing each photograph to the best of their ability. Once study participants completed the activity, they were asked to email the photographs and the hashtag titles to the email address created for the purpose of the research study.

The stories collected were generated by the following data collection tools: (a) personal information form and written prompt; (b) participant-generated photographs and hashtag titles, (c) verbal narratives from the photo-elicitation interviews (Collier, 1967), (d) member checking, and e)the researcher’s written journal notes compiled throughout the life of the research study. The analysis process included transcription, constant comparative analysis, coding and thematic analysis. Four major areas of campus climate and ten perceptions of those climates emerged from the narrative data: Classroom Climate (isolating and close), Peers Climate (divided by like-groups), Spaces Climate (diverse, enjoyable, beautiful and evil, peaceful, and unifying), and University Climate (responsive and unresponsive). Relationships between the perceptions of campus climate at the PWI and their individual differences were discovered.

Significance of the Study

After a thorough review of the literature, it was determined that there was a lack of research exploring the perceptions of campus climate among mixed race college who
attended a PWI in the south. Ancis (2000) stated that “[m]uch of the research that examined students’ perceptions of the campus climate focused on one racial ethnic group (typically Whites or African Americans), compared to African American students with their White counterparts, or compared White students with a racially-ethnically heterogeneous group of students of color (p. 180). Listening to the stories narrated by mixed race students regarding their experiences that influence their perceptions of campus climate at the PWI brings awareness to those student concerns and provides educational professionals and administrators with the information they need to create supportive and positive learning environments for all students on campus. Experiences that influence how mixed race college students perceive their campus climate at a PWI cannot be generalized but their voices needs to be included in the conversation with other monoracial groups on campus.

The findings from this research are essential to assist administrators, student development professionals, educators and policy makers with understanding the complexity of the mixed race identity development process and how they perceive the campus climate. Also, this study will provide assistance with the development and implementation of responsive interventions to create supportive and positive learning environments for all students. Renn (2000) expressed that “…doing research on multiraciality helps to create a space for mixed-race people and issues in education which also assists with the lack of knowledge about how mixed-race individuals are doing (p. 19).
Limitations

The limitations of this study encompassed the location of the study and the location of the researcher, sample size of the participants, self-reports from the participants, racial awareness/socioeconomic status/gender, and researcher bias. This study explored the verbal narratives from nine mixed race students, 2% of the total population of undergraduate, full-time mixed race students at the research site attending one PWI. The results from this study should not be used to generalize across the entire mixed race population as this is one of many post-secondary institutions that can be used for a study such as this.

Conversely, validity is strengthened since the results of this study derived from students who only attended the same college campus opposed to students from multiple college campuses. The sample size was a limitation because mixed race college students at this university were identified by their preferred race selection on their college application. These students were sent an email inviting them to participate in the study and depending on accessibility and how often email was checked by the student, attendance during the two Meet the Researcher meetings varied. Also, the moment the photographs were taken by the participants, I was not there to observe and remained unaware of the circumstances surrounding the photo opportunities. Lastly, I identify as a White female which is not the sample focus of this study, but I am aware that my identity as a monoracial white person can possibly influence the data coding and analysis process in this research study.
Definitions of Terms

The following terms and definitions are provided to further assist with the framework of the study:

*American Indian and Alaska Native* – “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment” (Renn, 2004, p. 260).

*Asian* – “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam (Renn, 2004, p. 260).

*Black or African American* – “A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” or “Negro” can be used in addition to “Black or African American” (Renn, 2004, p. 260). *Campus Climate* - product of various elements that include the historical, structural, perceptual, and behavioral dimensions of the college environment (Hurtado, 1994).

*Campus Climate Survey* – A survey which aims to establish the perceptions of the university students with regard to topics such as diversity, inclusion, appreciation of differences, and institutional support (Clemson University, 2012).
Diversity – “variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning which generally flow from the influence of different cultural, ethnic, and religious heritages, from the differences in how we socialize women and men, and from the differences that emerge from class, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and other socially constructed characteristics” (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 1995, p. 2).

Extraracial Identity – students either opt out of racial categorization completely or do not adhere to the categories used in the United States (Renn, 2004).

Identity – “one’s personally held beliefs about the self in relation to social groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation) and the ways one expresses that relationship” (Torres et al., 2009, p. 577).

Mixed race (multiracial, biracial and mixed heritage) – individual with two birth parents who are categorized by two or more races defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. It is important to note that “multiracial” includes biracial individuals who specifically have birth parents from two different racial groups. (Renn, 1999; 1998; 2000; 2003; 2004; 2011)

Monoracial Identity - students chose one existing monoracial category (black, Asian, white) (Renn, 2004).
Multiple Monoracial Identity – students used multiple monoracial identities (white and Latino). They have knowledge about each aspect of their heritage or sought out more information in college. They choose to label themselves instead of being labeled by others (Renn, 2004).

Multiracial Identity – students saw themselves existing outside of the monoracial paradigm (multiracial, biracial, and mixed). Shared common experiences with other mixed-race students regardless of heritage. This identity can be public or privately held. Multiracial identity is used more commonly on campuses with formal or informal mixed race groups (Renn, 2004).

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander – “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands” (Renn, 2004, p. 260.)

Photo-Elicitation Interview – “based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview” (Harper, 2002, p.13).

Predominately White Institutions (PWI) – term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment (Brown & Dancy, 2010).

Race – a social, cultural, and political construct having no scientific basis (Cameron & Wycoff, 1998).
Situational Identity – students identified differently in different context.

Racial identification is fluid and contextually driven. This identity pattern depends on the racial boundaries of campus (Renn, 2004).

White – “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa” (Renn, 2004, p. 260).

White Privilege – “the unearned advantages and benefits that accrue to White folks by virtue of a system normed on the experiences, values, and perceptions of their group (Sue, 2003, p. 137).

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methodology, Presentation of the Findings and the Discussion. Each chapter begins with an introduction of the current chapter followed by main headings that pertain to the specific subject matter. Importantly, each chapter will conclude with a summary of the chapter and briefly state what is expected in the following chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“It is necessary to know something about the theory and history of race, racial categorization, and multiracial people in the United States to understand the complicated landscape in which multiracial college students live and learn” (Renn, 2004, p. 3).

The concept of race has considerably influenced research in human and natural sciences since the early 19th century but throughout social and academic research, race is fundamentally a social construct and not a scientific idea (Cooper, 2013). Zack (2000) stated that “race remains a powerful social mechanism for distributing status and privilege in the United States, and the growing numbers of so-called mixed, biracial, or multiracial individuals are likely to remain an interesting and complex problem of taxonomy and identity for some time to come” (p. 13).

As the U.S. becomes a more diverse nation, so do the campuses of higher education, which mirror the national increase by enrolling more racially and ethnically diverse student populations each year. Ancis, Sedlacek and Mohr (2000) and Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1998) suggested that diverse students who are enrolled in these institutions were not experiencing the same campus environments in the same way as their white counterparts. As there were recent quantitative and qualitative studies conducted by academic scholars focusing on the experiences had and perceptions of campus climate among black/African Americans (Harper et al, 2011; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2005; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Pewewardy & Frey, 2002; and Douglas, 1998), Asian (Maramba, 2008), Hispanic (Jones et al., 2002; Hurtado and Ponjuan, 2005) and Indian (Pewewardy & Frey, 2004) college students at PWIs, there
was a noticeable gap in the academic literature that provided evidence of mixed race college students (Brackett et al., 2006; Renn, 2004, 2003, 1998; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002; Kilson, 2001; Wallace, 2001; and Wijeyesinghe, 2001) experiences which influenced their perceptions of campus climate at PWIs. Although the research focusing on this unique population is not as extant, there were studies that suggested that, like most minoritized students, multiracial students experience challenges when it comes to connecting to their campus (King, 2008; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Ancis et al., 2000) which could influence how they perceive these environments at the institution.

The outline for this chapter adopts Renn’s (2004) review of the order of the literature on the study of multiraciality. Renn (2000) stated that “(i)t is necessary to know something about the theory and history of race, racial categorization, and multiracial people in the United States to understand the complicated landscape in which multiracial college students live and learn” (p. 3). She described the literature being divided into four categories (p. 7):

1) the history of mixed race people in the United States;

2) theories about biracial identity and biracial individuals;

3) popular literature about multiracial individuals; and

4) models of bi/multiracial identity development.

The literature reviewed in this chapter begins with the History of Race and the Evolution of Mixed Race, Theories of Mixed Race Individuals, Mixed Race in the Literature and Models and Theories of Identity Development. The concluding section, Mixed Race in the Context of Higher Education in the United States, was added which
covers the history of higher education in the South, cultures of PWIs, a review of campus climates and research studies focusing on perception of campus climate at PWIs.

**History of Race and the Evolution of Mixed Race**

Race was not considered a concept until after the eighteenth century when Carolus Linnaeus, who categorized humans as *Homo Sapiens*, shaped an “artificial system to categorize all living things by genus and species” (Spickard, 1992). As America moved into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, race was seen as subspecies, or categories, which Renn (2004) expressed as “essential commonality of all humans while allowing for geographically and biologically divergent populations” (p.3). In 1880-1940, there were heavy emphasizes on “social, economic and political incentives for blacks to pass for white” (Nix and Qian, 2015). A person was only considered White if they had all White ancestors, but if a person was White and had a black family member, or forebear (Zack, 2000), no matter the distance between generations, that person was considered black. During the times of slavery, this theory was termed the “one-drop rule” or “hyperdescent” (Nix & Qian, 2015, p. 4). The one-drop rule continued as a form of racial membership that had “a significant economic, social, and political consequence in the United States and it is for this reason that definitions of who belongs to which group take[s] enormous importance” (p. 5).

Smedley and Smedley (2005) indicated that “psychological science has had a long and controversial history of involvement in efforts to measure and explain human variation and population differences” (p. 16). Most scholars in the business of evolutionary biology, anthropology, and other disciplines agree that racial distinctions are
not “genetically discrete, are not reliably measured, and are not scientifically meaningful” (p.16). “Race”, defined by Omi and Winant (2004), is an “unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle” (p. 116). The history of race is noteworthy because it validated that race is a fairly recent construct, one that emerged well after population groups from different continents came into contact with one another (Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

It was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that sexual unifications or “unnatural unions” between whites and blacks were documented. Offspring born from these unions were labeled “mulattos” in British colonies (Daniel, 1992; Williamson, 1995). The term “mulatto” was “originally an Iberian word derived from the Latin term for the mule…a hybrid product of the mating of a horse and a donkey…supposedly like mulattoes, had no parents of its own breed, and no descendants since it could not produce offspring” (Morton, 1985, p. 111). These terms were employed in Northern America. Then starting in 1619-1776, mulattos were on a social mobility path by reaping benefits of denying blacks but also receiving discrimination in some areas.

Williamson (1980) created an “outline history” of mulattos since only one study prior to the 1970s focused on the historical experience of American mulattos. The 1937 study was a dissertation that focused on the American South from 1776 to 1860 by an Afro-American historian, James Hugo Johnston. Johnston “explored views of whites and their treatment of mulattoes and detailed the growth of anti-miscegenation legislation, without pausing to analyze the roots of the racial attitudes of white” (Morton, 1985, p. 107).
In the twentieth century, mulattos were categorized as “victims” in sociology research. Mulattos were seen as victims of their own heritage mixing and of society which would later pull them in different directions regarding how they identified. Renn (2004) indicated that historical evidence showed Mulattos were “constructed as deviant” (p. 5) and were seen as “marginal” which derived from the popular book by Stonequist (1937) titled The Marginal Man. But by the 1940s, mulattos were no longer studied and were merged under “Negro, and all Afro-Americans (Morton, 1985, p. 108).

Distinctions made between whites, blacks and nonwhites started in the nineteenth century until the 1967 Supreme Court case of Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia (388 U.S. 1, 1967). This case was considered a landmark in the movement for interracial marriages and multiracial identity. Following the court decision prohibiting marriages between people classified as “white” and people classified as “colored”, an increase of interracial marriages followed. It was not until 1970 that citizens of the United States were able to freely self-identify on the U.S. Census. From here the study of multiraciality, a social identity-political movement made up of people who identify as two or more races, evolved (Farley, 2001).

In the 1950s, colorblindness was popular among the liberals and people only saw what they wanted to see and never wanted to get uncomfortable regarding race. Morton (1985) stated that “American scholars seemed to work on the assumption that blacks were blacks, even if they looked rather white…during the 1950s whatever they looked like was not supposed to be noticed” (p. 108). In other words, mulattoes were ignored.
In 1997, The U.S. Department of Education followed behind the U.S. Census which ultimately made the decision to provide individuals with the freedom to choose one or more race selections on official forms (Garbarini-Philippe, 2010). In 2010, nine million people self-identified as two or more races in the United States which displayed a 32% change from the 6.8 million reported in the 2000 U.S Census (Humes et al, 2011). As this unique population grew, the phenomena attracted the attention of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, academic, and ethnicity scholars.

**Theories of Mixed Race Individuals**

The theories of mixed race individuals are the second category in the study of multiraciality. These theories place mixed race individuals in the center as Renn (2004) explained, “[e]ach approach casts mixed race people differently in relation to self, family, and society (p. 9). The Problem, Equivalent, and the Variant approaches to the theories were identified by Thorton and Watson (1995) and the Advantage approach was improved by Renn (1998).

**Problem Approach**

The main assumption of the Problem Approach (Thorton & Wason, 1995) was mixed race was viewed as a problem. If an individual found themselves in-between racial groups or moved back and forth between racial groups, the individual would be viewed as “maladaptive” (Renn, 2004, p.9). It was preferred that an individual identified with one race or held a monoracial identity pattern. The literature of Stonequist (1937), who wrote the *Marginal Man*, was considered the foundation for this portion of the research.
Equivalent Approach

The Equivalent Approach (Thorton & Watson, 1995) assumed mixed race people and people of color, shared the same identity development processes which resulted in comparable outcomes. This approach included studies such as Field (1996), Grove (1991), Pinderhughes (1995), and Sodowsky, Kwan, and Pannu (1995) that “showed people are equally well adjusted as their monoracial peers of color (Renn, 2004, p. 10). The Equivalent Approach was viewed as a response to the Problem Approach which wanted individuals to choose one identity and not move back and forth between races.

Variant Approach

The Variant Approach (Thorton & Watson, 1995) focused on the theory that identifying as mixed race is unique and can lead to identifying situationally. Since mixed race people were seen as maladaptive if they chose more than one identity, this approach was the first time mixed race individuals could follow different identity patterns besides monoracial identities. Researchers such as Brown (1995) and Stephan (1992) contributed by stating that mixed race individuals rarely identify with one race or ethnicity. The belief that mixed race individuals were forced to choose (Standen, 1996) one race and the appearance of mixed race individuals (Bradshaw, 1992) was also introduced during this approach.

Advantaged Approach

The Advantaged Approach (Renn, 1998) proposed “not only that mixed race people are a separate, equivalent group but also that the experience of this separateness confers advantages to them” (Renn, 2004, p. 10). Renn presented works from Root (1990,
1996b), Kich (1992), Weisman (1996), and Stonquist (1937) to “describe the situation of mixed race individuals” and emphasize the flexibility of identity patterns among mixed race individuals (p. 10).

**Mixed Race in the Literature**

The recent studies of mixed race individuals occurred against a backdrop of increasing access to the Internet and other technologies that have become a key factor in mixed race research and social and political organizing, as seen by the non-profit political and social action group MAVIN Foundation, which has a substantial online organizing presence (Renn, 2008). During this time, literature on mixed race individuals surfaced, which provided access into their personal lives as mixed race people. Such literature, as Renn (2004) stated included, “essays autobiographies, poems, and novels” which “create[d] a multiracial culture” (p. 10). The recent works of mixed race individuals “gives voice directly to multiracial people” (p.11).

**Ethnographic Studies on Mixed Race Students**

The rise of ethnographic studies whose main focus was on the study of mixed race students and identity development was also introduced. Tizard and Phoenix (1993) conducted a mixed method study that interviewed 15 and 16 year olds who had a one African-Caribbean parent, two African-Caribbean parents and an equal sample of white students. The purpose of this study was to explore the identities of young adults with parents of mixed heritages. Funderburg (1994) published a book highlighting the voices of biracial individuals in America. They focused on topics such as interracial marriages, what it means to be white, black or in between, racial identities and ecological factors.

**Models and Theories of Identity Development**

Renn (2000) noted that “most recent research related to multiracial identity begins from the standpoint that racial categories are socially constructed and racial identity is constructed on an individual level through social interactions and cognitive development” (p. 8). Zack (2000) suggested that “If human races existed, then more people would be properly described as mixed race than are commonly thought to be, but since human biological race is fiction, so is mixed race.” (p. 13). Since America places a heavy emphasize on how individuals are racially categorized, theories about populations and models/theories of racial identity development is necessary to understand and support this unique population.

**Racial Identity Development Models**

The works of Erickson (1950, 1968) and Marcia (1966, 1980) were foundational starting points for racial identity development models which aimed to understand how identity concerns of people of color and white persons were resolved (Evans et al, 2010). Followed by these works came a long line of racially specific models such as *Cross*
Model of Black Identity Development (stage model), Fhagen-Smith’s Model of Black Identity Development (stage model), Helms’s Model of White Development (two consecutive phases), Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s White Racial Consciousness Model (response to concerns with white race identity models), Ferdman and Gallegos’s Model of Latino Identity Development (considerations to understanding how Latinos experience race and racism), Kim’s Asian American Identity Development Model (coming to terms with Asian identity and resolve racial conflicts in white denominated perspectives), and Horse’s Perceptive on American Indian Identity Development (colonization) (Evans et al. 2010).

Multiracial Identity Development

Scholars developed four forms of approaches that have been used to clarify the process of identity development that mixed-heritage individuals experience (Evan et al, 2010). The first set of biracial identity development explanations from Stonequist (1937) and Gibbs (1987) were based on the idea that the individual would end with a “marginal personality” (Evans, et al., 2010, p. 292). Distraught and confused were two of the many characteristics that described bi/multiracial individuals as being a possible problem during this early time in the research on multiracial individuals. It was seen that they experienced “inner conflict about their identity because of their inability to fit into existing society” (Evans et al, 2010, p. 292).

The next approach, stage, considered the fact that historically, biracial individuals have been “declared people of color (and not white), [and] theory predicts that they follow the same stages as their monoracial peers of color” (Renn, 2004, p. 13). Theorists
such as Kerwin and Ponterotto (1995), Kich (1992) and Poston (1990) primarily focused on biracial identity which was described in stages of development models that somewhat emulated the existing monoracial stage models previously developed. One difference is these models did not include immersion because, as Renn (2000) specified “there is generally not a public biracial space in which to immerse oneself. In these models, racial identity remains more of a private construction” (p. 410).

The third approach, typology, included scholars Cortes (2000) and Daniel (2002) who “both rejected the idea that an integrated multiracial identity is the only healthy identity for mixed-race individuals” (Evans, et al, 2010, p. 293). They saw the environment as an influencer which provided the individual with several options on the way they wanted to identify. As the research on identity development becomes stronger, these theories failed to take into consideration the actual influences that affected the identity choices individuals made.

Lastly, ecological approaches encompass not only the environmental factors similar to the typology approach but scholars also consider why they may change their identity over time and location. Scholars such as Stephan (1992), Wijeyesinghe (2001), Root (1996, 2003a, 2003b), and Renn (2004) adopted the ecological perspective in their work. This approach led to the selection of Renn’s Ecology Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development to assist with answering the two research questions that guide this study. Her theory considered the context of higher education and the complexity and fluidity of the mixed race identity development process.
Root (1990) navigated away from the stage model concept of biracial individuals and acknowledged that the multiracial identity development process was more complex and fluid and did not follow along the same linear track as described in previous identity development models. It was suggested that mixed race individuals did not progress through actual stages but rather relied on individual self-definitions and experience border crossings across social contexts (Chaudhari & Pizzolato, 2008). There are four types of border crossings across social contexts: (1) “having both feet in both groups or being able to hold and merge multiple perspectives simultaneously; (2) choosing situational ethnicity and race or consciously shifting racial foreground and background in different settings; (3) deciding to site on the border claiming a multiracial central reference point, and; (4) creating a home base in one identity and making forays into others” (1996, p.xxi). Renn (2000) revealed a fifth type of border crossing from her research which she named “deconstructs space/opt out of spaces” (p. 413).

In the context of higher education, Rodgers (1990) defined student development as an active process when a “student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education – concern for the development of the whole person” (p. 6). The current academic literature on student development reveal a discussion historically based on the insights and experiences of monoracial students, as previously cited by the lack of literature focusing on multiracial college students’ experiences in the college environment. Torres, Jones and Renn (2009) identified that “identity occurs in different contexts on campus such as in how student organizations are created and which students are drawn to them, or in the
social identities among those in leadership positions and those not, as well as in issues of institutional fit within access and retention” (p. 577).

Among the many challenges multiracial college students encounter on campus, there is evidence of pressure to select only one identity and if an individual identifies with multiple identities it is seen as problematic (Gibbs & Hines, 1992; Hall, 1992; Root, 1990, 1997; Suyemoto, 2004). Suyemoto (2004) stated that “…the experience of multiracial individuals has been equated with an experience of confusion, exclusion, alienation, and psychopathology…multiracial individuals describe both negative and positive experiences associated with their racial/ethnic status. (p. 208). Today’s research on multiracial identity development shows how one assumption regarding multiracial individuals the inability to fit into any monoracial group, has been disproved by many studies that predict healthy and positive psychological outcomes for multiracial individuals (Garbarini-Philippe, 2010).

Mixed Race in the Context of PWIs in the United States

In Renn’s (2004) research, she indicated that “[m]ixed race students, who in 2000 represented a very small fraction of the student body, will be about as common in 2020 as Asian undergraduates were in 2000…they will be a significantly strong presence on campus than they have ever been” (p. 2). It was not until 2003 that mixed race students appeared nationally as a distinct group on college campuses (Garbarini-Philippe, 2010). This is a college student population that will not vanish as racial groups become more fluid and interracial relationships become more frequent (Sands & Schuh, 2004). Once mixed race students enter a college environment, they are no longer living within their
familiar surroundings where they felt associated and accepted by like groups and family. Simply attending a diverse higher education institution does not assure that students will have, as Gurin et al. (2002) stated a “meaningful intergroup interactions…Campus environments and policies that foster interaction among diverse students are discontinuous from the home environments of many American students. As racial separation persists, most students live in segregation communities before coming to college” (p. 336).

Culture of Predominately White Institutions

For the purpose of this qualitative research study, it was important to include a review of the history and culture of PWIs located in the south, to provide insight of the landscape mixed race students navigate. In this study “culture” refers to a perspective that is shared by those in a particular group; it consists of those ‘conventional understandings, manifest in act and artifact that characterize societies” (Redfield, 1941).

Diverse groups of students attending higher education institutions in the United States, especially in the south, have multifaceted views of higher education. Since the 1700’s until higher education institutions were desegregated in 1960, approximately 170 years have passed where Johnson-Baily et al. (2009) stated that “these schools were bastions of White privilege” (p. 178). Culture provides us with the belief that it is a continuing process and “norms are creatively reaffirmed from day to day in social interaction. Shibutani (1955) stated that, “Those taking part in collective transactions approach one another with set expectations, and the realization of what is anticipated successively confirms and reinforces there perspective” (p. 564). If one is not familiar
with the norm of that culture, it is difficult to take part in the collective transactions. An analogy might be a navigation system (mixed race students). To access the speakers to play the driving directions throughout the car (predominately white institution), specific cable cords (norms) are needed to attach the navigation system to the car system. If the cable cords are not made for that particular navigation system, the information shared between the navigation system and the car will not sync up. Mixed race students come from different racial and cultural backgrounds and experiences carrying with them an array of diverse navigation systems that do not always sync up with the norms found at predominately white institutions.

When the norm of an institution is slanted towards the more dominant group, it makes it quite challenging for diverse groups such as mixed race students to experience the same campus climate and receive the support needed as those that are white and part of the dominant system that shares the norm. Listening to mixed race students stories assist with understanding their perceptions of these learning environments and will add to the expanding literature on mixed race college students and how they perceive campus climates at PWIs.

Framework for Understanding Campus Climate at PWIs

The need for a framework used to understand the campus climate emerged from the work of Hurtado (1994) who exclusively focused on Latino students and their experiences navigating a PWI. She conducted a multi-institutional study with the primary objective of identifying areas for institutional improvement to enhance administrators’ awareness of the particular campus climate concerns that served as
obstacles for the Latino students attending four-year institutions. Later, Hurtado et al. (1998) developed a framework which continues to be useful for higher education professionals and administrators who “seek to create comfortable, diverse environments for learning and socializing that facilitate the intellectual and social development for all students” (p.2). The framework includes four dimensions (institutional context historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, structural diversity, psychological dimension, and the behavioral dimension) to understanding campus climate. The four major areas of campus climate that emerged from the narrative data aligned with Hurtado et al.’s (1998) framework for understanding campus climate which is further discussed in Chapter Four and Five.

The first dimension, the institutional context historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, examined the resistance of unifying communities and “specific campus settings, the maintenance of old campus policies at predominantly White institutions that best serve a homogeneous population, and attitudes and behaviors that prevent interaction across race and ethnicity” (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 4). Most PWIs have a history of excluding diverse groups from enrolling. Hurtado et al. (1998) added “[r]searchers found that success in creating supportive campus environments often depends on an institution’s initial response to the entrance of students of color (p. 5). How does the history of an institution affect how mixed race students perceive the campus climate at the PWI?

The second dimension, structural diversity, emphasized the importance of providing greater opportunities for interaction across race/ethnicity barriers and erased
the stigma of diverse groups attending PWIs as being seen as “tokens”. Tokenism (Kanter, 1977) was a term that “contributes to the heightened visibility of the underrepresented group, exaggeration of group differences, and the distortion of images to fit existing stereotypes” at PWI (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 8). Lastly, making it an institutional priority to increase diversity among the student body attending the PWI was important in this dimension.

The third dimension, psychological, “involves individuals’ views of group relations, institutional responses to diversity, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, and attitudes toward those from other racial/ethnic backgrounds than one’s own” (p. 11). The literature concurred regarding diverse students, faculty and staff and administrators who see and experience campus climate differently than their white counterparts. Hurtado et al. (1998) brought attention to the concept of the “insider” and “outsider” which translated, “who you are and where you are positioned in an institution will affect how you experience and view the institution” (p. 289-290). Scholars Loo and Rolison (1986) presented evidence in their research that 68% of white students sampled felt that their university was supportive of minority students where only 28% of diverse students in the sample agreed with their white counterparts. Astin (1968) and Tierney (1987) agreed that “perceptual differences of the college experience are significant, for perception is both a product of the environment and potential determinant of future interactions and outcomes (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 290). As there are many studies that focused on diverse student perceptions of discrimination, racial tension, alienation, harassment, adjustment, isolation, to name a few, it seemed the research agreed these
have the potential to have lasting effects on students personal, emotional, social and learning ability and outcomes. Lastly, the fourth dimension, behavioral, consisted of “a) actual reports of general social interaction, b) interaction between and among individuals from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, and c) nature of intergroup relations on campus” (p.293).

Colleges and universities should regularly test the four dimensions of the framework for campus climate for the inclusion of all students. Data collection methods such as surveying, interviewing and providing students the opportunity to enter into open dialogue with other student on campus can provide a platform for narratives to be had to collect feedback from students to ensure that the campus is providing a supportive and positive learning environment for all students. The following studies provided a summary of trends grounded in the literature focusing on the experiences and perceptions of campus climate among diverse student groups attending PWIs.

Perceptions of Campus Climate at PWIs

Hurtado (1992) utilized results from a follow-up survey which was a “nationally representative longitudinal study of college students in the late 1980s” (Harper and Hurtado, 2007, p.9). This study discovered at least one student for every four perceived…racial conflict on their campuses (p.9). This finding was also discovered higher at four year universities. Hurtado found that if racial conflict was present on college campuses, diverse groups of students felt that encouraging positive and supportive learning environments was not a university or administrative priority. Lastly, white students did not seem to experience racial tension on campus or acknowledge
concern that there was any tension present. Hurtado (1992) observed from her findings that “racial tension is probable in environments where there is little concern for individual students, which is symptomatic of many large PWIs that enroll several thousand undergraduates” (p. 9).

Douglas (1998) conducted a qualitative research study on the exploring the perceptions of campus climate among first year African American college students attending a PWI. His study consisted of ten study participants who were asked to take photographs reflected how they perceive the campus environment as an African American first-year student attending the PWI. Douglas used the photographs during interviews and small group sessions. Six themes emerged from the data analysis: physical beauty of the campus, the immensity of the campus, participant’s consciousness of being Black on campus, the influence of Greek-letter organizations, the prevalence of voluntary racial/ethnic separation, and participants’ concerns about preparing for their futures (p. 1).

Lewis, Chesler, and Forman (2000) focused on the experiences and interactions between 75 students of color (Asian American, Black, Latino, and Native American) and their white counterparts at a PWI. Utilizing focus groups and asking questions that generated reflections regarding experiences with peers in academic and social contexts as the data collection method, the authors captured responses to explore and analyze “intergroup relations” (p. 74). Using an inductive research and grounded theory approach, they analyzed the data using coding and thematic analysis. The data revealed
that students of color find it problematic when their white counterparts have “colorblind” ways of thinking and perceiving students of color.

Diver-Stamnes and LoMascolo (2001) conducted a case study that consisted of 153 Asian American, Black, Latino, Native American, and White students. The purpose included two parts: a) “ascertain the existence of experiential and resultant perceptual differences between ethnic minority students as a group and European American students at a California university that is unique in that it reflects one of the lowest rates of ethnic diversity of any campus in either of the public university systems within the state…” (p. 50) and b) “create a series of models for assessing students' comments in regard to their experiences with marginalization, including assessing the severity, frequency, and context of the experiences as well as the complexity of their perceived reasons for its occurrence” (p. 51). Utilizing interviews as the preferred method of data collection for this study, the researchers concluded that “the university has not yet been successful in its goals to diversify the faculty and student populations, to create an inclusive campus climate, and to foster in all its students an expanded awareness of societal realities beyond those experienced by the majority of students” (p. 57).

Radloff and Evans (2003) conducted a qualitative research study sampling 27 Black and White students attending a single PWI in the Midwest. The purpose of the study was to “determine if there is a distinctive difference between the prejudice of Black and White college students at a predominantly White Midwest University” (p.1). The focus group data collection method was selected to understand how the study participants socially perceived each other at the PWI. From these focus groups, three main themes
emerged: “(a) Blacks and Whites have different conceptual views concerning the existence of racism in higher education, (b) distinctive differences in prejudice exist among Black and White undergraduate students, and (c) considerable variation exists between Black and White students with regard to factors that contribute to the construction of social distance between the two groups” (p. 8).

Davis et al. (2004) conducted a qualitative research study that focused on Black college students. He used phenomenological interviews to collect 11 “first-person descriptions of diverse human experiences” (p. 423). Davis et al. (2004) employed an interpretive analysis to preserve the voice of the participants which revealed five major themes that characterized undergraduate experiences described by the study participants. The five themes that emerged were: 1) “It Happens Every Day”: Unfairness/Sabotage/Condescension, 2) “You Have to Initiate the Conversation”: Isolation and Connection, 3) “They Seem the Same; I’m The One Who’s Different.”, 4) “I Have to Prove I’m Worthy To Be Here.”, and 5) “Sometimes I’m Not Even Here/Sometimes I Have to Represent All Black Students”: Invisibility and Supervisibility.

Harper and Hurtado (2007) compiled a concoction of studies that were published after 1992, the year of Hurtado’s most widely familiar and sited article, *The Campus Racial Climate: Contexts of Conflict* (1992). The main schema of Harper and Hurtado (2007) study was to “synthesize fifteen years of published research on campus racial climate” and “present nine themes that emerged from a qualitative study of campus racial
climates at five predominately White universities” (Harper and Hurtado, 2007). The nine themes that emerged from their study were:

1. Cross-race consensus regarding institutional negligence
2. Race as a four-letter word and an avoidable topic
3. Self-reports of racial segregation
4. Gaps in social satisfaction by race
5. Reputational legacies for racism
6. White student overestimation of minority student satisfaction
7. The pervasiveness of whiteness in space, curricula, and activities
8. The consciousness-powerlessness paradox among racial/ethnic minority staff
9. Unexplored qualitative realities of race in institutional assessment

Renn (1999) explored how multiracial college students' interactions with peers, involvement in activities, and academic work influenced the kinds of identity-based spaces, which she defined as opportunities to explore and “try on” different identities, they chose to occupy and what caused them to create new, multiracial spaces on the primarily monoracially campus landscape. Renn understood the experience of belonging or not belonging to identity-based spaces on campus actually “influenced students' identity choices” (p. 31). She analyzed 24 bi/multiracial college students’ perceptions from three different institutions in an effort to explore if the college environment stimulated or inhibited their identity development.

In 2004, Renn applied Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1993) ecological model as the theoretical framework that guided her grounded theory research study. The model
included the Person-Process-Context (microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems)-Time model. She also collected data from individual interviews and responses during focus groups. The interpretive framework used to analyze the data collected was the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) “for generating data of elaborating and modifying existing data, which was the purpose of the study” (p. 7). Renn discovered two main themes that surfaced from her data: “the notion of space and the impact of peer culture” (pg. 405). When evaluating the responses from the participants from the three campuses, space was acknowledged as both public and private…embedded in microsystems in academic work (category 1: academic work), involvement in activities (category 2: involvement in campus activities), friendship groups (category 3: friendship groups), and social/dating situations (category 4: social and dating life) (p. 10). Space was “formal student organizations, and physical space in which the students felt as if they belonged as well as the private space of student’s reflection and intimate conversations about who they were and who they wanted to become”…”peer culture…shape life on campus in terms of group membership, acceptable discourse, and desirable behaviors” (Renn, 1998).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) studied campus climate and presented key environmental influences that have the potential to impact student development. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted several common environmental themes that affected students’ identity development: (a) residence, (b) major field of study, (c) academic experience, (d) interpersonal involvement, (e) extracurricular involvement, and (f) academic achievement. Similarly, Chickering and
Reisser (1993) found seven significant college environmental factors that encouraged students’ identity development: (a) institutional objectives, (b) institutional size, (c) student faculty relationships, (d) curriculum, (e) teaching, (f) friendships and student communities, and (g) student development programs and services.

Rankin and Reason (2005) conducted a qualitative study that explored how students of color and white students experienced their campus climate but differently from Pewewardy and Frey (2002), collected samples from multiple sites. Rankin and Reason (2005) defined climate as “the current perceptions and attitudes of faculty, staff, and students regarding issues of diversity on a campus” (p. 48). They also developed a campus climate instrument similar to the one developed by Pewewardy and Frey (2005). They surveyed a larger sample of 7,347 students from multiple sites that included data collection from focus groups, individual interviews, and document evaluations. The climate in which these interactions occur influence the learning and social outcomes students will derive (Pascarella & Terezini, 1991), which makes campus climate an important area of understanding for higher education administrators, policy makers, and researchers (Rankin and Reason, 2005, 43).

Renn (2010) commented on formal and informal networks of multiracial peers and how they do provide locations for identity exploration where they can “discuss shared experiences about growing up with parents who were from different backgrounds and who were different from the students themselves, and to provide educational activities for the rest of the campus” (Kellogg, 2006; Renn, 2004; Wallace, 2001, p.198). In addition to locations, multiracial peers also play an important role in their experiences.
Multiracial college students experience resistance, as mentioned numerous times in the literature, because of their physical appearance and students feel they must be “authentic” or loyal (p.198).

Renn (2011) stated, “mixed-race students benefit from a campus climate that is culturally open and inclusive, with program and services that acknowledge differences and similarities among students from all backgrounds” (p. 204). She provided several action items that focused on ways colleges could assess their climate to ensure it includes all students, including multiracial college students. Chavous (2005) stated that “The college/university campus represents a distinct type of community setting, with a climate created and perpetuated by physical structures, policies, and social norms that guide its functioning (p.239). “The campus climate is not only a function of what one has personally experienced, but also is influenced by perceptions of how members of the academy are regarded on campus” (Ranking and Reason, 2005, p.52).

Chapter Summary

As the mixed race college student population in the United States continues to expand, the literature focusing on understanding how they perceive their institutional environments and how they identify within those environments requires expansion. This chapter outlined the history of race and the evolution of mixed race in the United States, theories of mixed race, mixed race in the literature, mixed race in higher education, and lastly the models and theories about mixed race identity development. Chapter Three will provide the procedural steps how the sample was recruited, how the study was conducted and lastly how it was analyzed.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

“Experience happens narratively . . . Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively”
(Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 19).

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the methodology selected for this study, explains the procedural steps involved and followed, presents the data collection tools, and explains the analysis process which provided answers to the following two research questions: (1) How do mixed race students perceive the campus climate of a PWI in the South?; and (2) What are the relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences? Since the narratives are told by mixed race college students, experiences are explored to understand the perceptions of the campus climate of a PWI. The phenomena of this study are the perceptions of campus climate at the PWI which required an inductive research approach. This approach allowed for ideas, concepts and themes to first emerge from the narrative data collected from the written prompts and the photo-elicitation interviews before selecting a theory.

Employing a complex conceptual framework that unpacked the study of multiraciality, Renn’s (2004) Ecology Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (2004), and explored the perceptions of campus climate and the relationships between individual differences was essential. This framework displayed the literature surrounding mixed race research, identified the ecological factors and identity patterns of each study participant, explored their perceptions of campus climate, and lastly explored relationship
between how they perceived and their individual differences. This chapter contains eleven sections: (a) researcher’s rationale; (b) research design; (c) research questions; (d) research site; (e) participant recruitment and selection; (f) instruments used data collection; (g) data collection procedure; (h) narrative analysis; (i) limitations of the design; (j) trustworthiness and (k) chapter summary. There were seven data collection methods used to generate narrative data for the study: (a) personal student information form and a written prompt form; (b) participant-driven photographs; (c) one word hashtag titles assigned by the participant for each photograph; (d) individual photo-elicitation interviews; (e) member checking; (f) researcher’s personal journal for observations and note taking; and (g) researcher as an instrument.

Once the narrative data was manually transcribed from the photo-elicitation interviews, in vivo coding and thematic analysis was employed to scan the photographs and one-word hashtag titles for common subject matter which framed the organization of the four major areas of campus climate and perceptions. Liamputtong and Ezzy’s (2005) coding process was adopted to organize the coding process.

The results included four major areas of campus climate which aligned with Hurtado et al.’s (1998) framework for understanding campus climate at a PWI and ten sub-themes, or perceptions, of those four major areas: Classroom Climate (isolating and close), Peers Climate (divided by like-groups), Spaces Climate (diverse, enjoyable, beautiful and evil, peaceful, and unifying), and University Climate (responsive and unresponsive). Relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences were discovered and discussed in Chapter Four and Five.
Overview of the Research Site

The research site was chosen because of accessibility, resources offered, sample available. It is also a prime example of a PWI in the south where more than 70% of students who attend are white. In 1893, the research site first opened its doors as an all-white male military school located in the South. The school was built as a result of the state’s need for scholarship, agriculture and science. The foundation has deep-seated roots embedded in saturated ground of economic deterioration from the Civil War, strictly enforced Jim Crow laws, ignorance of cultural differences and an unknowingly then, a closed-minded political system. Since the end of segregation of 1960 and the increase of the importance of social identity and individuality in the United States, the research site transformed from a college into a public, four-year, coeducational, research university which it remains today.

The Fall 2015 enrollment data painted the picture of the institution as a PWI with a total of 17,626 students who self-identified as “white” or “caucasian” which is approximately 78% of the total student population. Only 2% of the total enrollment is represented by students who self-identified as “two or more races”. Interestingly, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, these percentages also mirror the demographics of the city where the research site is housed with 79% of the total population is white and 2% are two or more races. South Carolina also has a total percentage of 69% of the total population are white and 2% are represented by two or more races.

The study site currently offers over 80 undergraduate majors, over 75 undergraduate minors and over 110 graduate degree programs. In addition to academics,
the study site provides enrolled students with over 400 student clubs and organization opportunities, 50 club sports, six student directed media organizations and 17 intramural sport teams. In an effort to provide a safe place and bring additional awareness to the student body about the cultures represented at the research site. A multicultural center, named in honor of the first African American male student who attended the research site, opened its doors in 2015 to assist with “creating diverse learning environments” and “socially just communities”.

Since the beginning of this research study in 2013, several significant events have changed the racial landscape of South Carolina and our country in the way we live with each other and view individual differences. Following the senseless massacres of nine black church members in Charleston, South Carolina, removal of the Confederate Flag from the South Carolina Statehouse grounds, and the growing power of the student voice that led to the Black Lives Matter movement which brought national attention to racial inequality across college campuses around the country, the research site has been challenged by its own student and faculty/staff groups, surrounding community and the media to improve the historical foundation and racial climate on its own campus. This included bringing national awareness to the research site’s racially challenged history and the Southern foundation it was built upon. The research site’s history led student groups to request institutional alterations to structural name changes located on the research site that represented racial ignorance at the times of their lives in the south. As student tension began to rise, a Greek organization at the research site hosted a themed party where party goers dressed up like gang members. This research study cannot continue
without mentioning these significant, historical events which affected the climate of the research site and the students who navigate it. Please keep in mind these important events as the study participants courageously shared their stories and reflected on their significance during their photo-elicitation interview sessions. These stories are presented in Chapter Four.

Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated that “…qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p.2). Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) agreed and believed that “to understand and respond to the multiple social and physical facets of human lives, research methods must be capable of exploring the complexity of human behaviour beyond the scope of numbers and statistics”. In the context of higher education, Rankin and Reason (2005) concurred that “qualitative research into the experiences of students of color at predominately white institutions reinforces the importance of campus climate” (p. 46). Placing an emphasis on the voices of mixed race students was necessary to reach a deeper understanding of their perceptions by first uncovering their backgrounds, experiences that influenced how they identified as mixed race which influenced how they perceived the campus climate. After a thorough review of qualitative research designs focusing on narratives told by study participants as the phenomena, I selected narrative inquiry (Webster & Mertova, 2007) as the methodology.

Narrative inquiry is a “qualitative investigation, representation, and presentation of the participants’ lives through the use of a story” (Saldana, 2009, p. 207). Clandinin
and Rosiek (2007) stated that “these lived and told stories and the talk about told stories are one of the ways we fill our world with meaning and enlist one another’s assistance in building lives and communities” (p. 35). Webster and Mertova (2007) defined narrative inquiry as being “set in human stories of experience. It [narrative inquiry] provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (p. 1). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that “Experience happens narratively . . . Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively” (p. 19). Narrative inquiry is described by Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) as “embrac[ing] narratives as both the method and phenomena of the study. Through the attention to methods for analyzing and understanding stories lived and told, it can be connected and placed under the label of qualitative research methodology” (p. 5). The goal of narrative inquiry is not to generalize or discover one truth that falls across like-groups who tell their stories but to “sing up many truths/narratives” (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001, p.112).

I adopted and followed the procedural guide for conducting narrative research presented by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). They provided the following steps: 1) determine the research problem or question(s) that are most appropriate for narrative research; 2) select the individual(s) who possess the stories to tell and schedule time with them to capture their stories and experiences, 3) collect data using several data collection tools, 4) capture information about the “context of these stories”, 5) analyze the transcribed narrative data by rearranging them to display chronologically or “restorying” into a framework that makes sense in order to then further analyze for key elements, and
5) collaborate with participants to include them in the research. This is done by “negotiate[ing] relationships, smooth transitions, and provide ways to be useful to the participants” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Research Questions

To understand the verbal perceptual realities of mixed race college students and how they perceived the campus climate at a PWI, the following two research questions were investigated:

1. How do mixed race students perceive their campus climate at a PWI?
2. What are the relationships between perceptions of the campus climate and individual differences?

Participant Recruitment and Selection

After approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was received (see Appendix A), the researcher contacted the Office of Institutional Research to assist with purposefully selecting students who (1) self-identified as two or more races on their college application and was (2) currently undergraduate, full-time students at the research site. According to Fall 2015 enrollment data presented by the Office of Institutional Research, a total of 534 students self-identified as two or more races on their college application (undergraduate, graduate, full-time and part-time students) at the research site. After the parameters were set, a systems query search was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research that produced a total of 444 (212 male and 232 female) students who met the above criteria for the purpose of this research study.
Email Recruitment Letter

I created a student recruitment letter which was reviewed, scheduled and disseminated via email by the Office of Institutional Research to the 444 students who met the criteria (see Appendix B). Prior to IRB’s approval, I contacted the director of the multicultural center at the research site to review the content of the recruitment letter for understanding and accuracy. This cross checking allowed other difference from me to review the letter for areas that could be improved, removed or enhanced for better understanding by undergraduate students of mixed race. The recruitment letter included a brief introduction of the research, the background and purpose of the study, information about the researcher and an invitation to the “Meet the Researcher” meetings to learn more about the study, review and sign the consent form and complete the written prompt.

To attend the “Meet the Researcher” meeting and to be considered a participant in the study, the students were required to meet the following:

1. Must self-identify with having two birth parents from two or more races defined by the U.S Census;
2. Is currently a full time student at the research site;
3. Access to a smartphone, able to take photographs with the smartphone and email them to the researcher with the assigned hashtag title;
4. Meet two times between January-February 2016 (Meet the Researcher meeting and complete an one-on-one photo-elicitation interview session); and
5. Complete a participant-drive photograph and hashtag activity and email to the researcher by the set deadline.
Meet the Researcher Meeting

The Meet the Researcher meeting was held in a reserved study room inside the research site’s library. Out of 444 students who met the criteria of (1) self-identifying as two or more races; and (2) are current undergraduate, full time students attending the research site, nine students attended the meeting. I hosted the Meet the Research meeting twice in January 2016 as the first meeting produced four participants and the second Meet the Researcher meeting produced five students.

During each meeting, students were provided a thorough overview of the study delivered by a power point presentation. I shared my background and rationale as to why I was conducting this study at the research site as a white female. I equipped each student with a folder and documents that were covered during the meetings. I first read aloud the consent form (see Appendix C) and went over expectations of each student if they participated. I gave the students the opportunity to sign or not sign the consent form, chance to exit the meeting if preferred, and to ask additional questions. All students who attended the meetings signed the consent form and were provided an additional copy for their records. The students were then asked to complete the Participant Information Form (see Appendix D) which collected their contact information. They were also requested to choose an alias to protect their identity during the study, in Chapter Four and Five of the dissertation, and during the dissertation defense.

Following the completion of the Participant Information Form, I provided the participants with paper instructions explaining the steps of the participant-driven photograph and hashtag title activity (see Appendix E). The activity requested each
student to take photographs reflecting areas on and around campus influencing how they perceived the campus climate as a mixed race student at the PWI. There were no restrictions except for taking pictures of people who were not consented participants of the study. Multiple copies of the Non-Participant Consent Form (see Appendix G) were provided for the participants to have on hand for people who have their photograph taken but were not participants of the study. Participants were granted permission to make additional copies of the consent form if needed. Participants were given one week from the Meet the Researcher meeting to take photographs and assign each one a one-word hashtag title describing the photograph. I created a password protected Gmail address strictly for the use of the study (PerceptionsofCampusClimate@gmail.com) for the participants to use when sending in their photographs, one-word hashtag titles and any other communication between the participants. Students were reminded about confidentiality and protection of their photographs and were asked to sign a Photo Release Form (see Appendix F). Lastly, participants were given time at the end of the meeting to ask questions and voice concerns they had about participating in this study.

Sample

The study sample consisted of nine undergraduate, full-time, currently enrolled students who self-identified as having parents from two or more races on their college application to the research site. As indicated in Table 3.1, the sample included five females (two freshman, two sophomores and one junior) and four males (one sophomore, two juniors and one senior). Two study participants transferred from another higher education institution. At the time of the nine photo-elicitation interviews, four students
lived on campus and five lived nearby but off campus. In regards to family race/ethnicity/heritages, three students were born from black and white parents, one student was born from Italian and Japanese parents, one student was born from white and Japanese parents, one student was born from caucasian and Chinese parents, one student was born from one parent who is mixed (Chinese and Japanese) and the other parent was caucasian, one student was born from black and German parents and one student was born from Hungarian and Filipino parents. Lastly, three study participants were born and/or grew up in states outside of South Carolina while six study participants were born and/or raised in South Carolina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Father/Mother</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
<th>Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destrova</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>black/white</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fredrick</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Italian/Japanese</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>white/Japanese</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jess</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>caucasian/Chinese</td>
<td>NY/SC</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Japanese &amp; Chinese/caucasian</td>
<td>Northern Virginia</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>black/German</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>white/black</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tie Guy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>black/white</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Hungarian/Filipino</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Study Participants’ Background Information

Data Collection Methods and Procedure

There were several data collection instruments used in this study to accumulate narrative data to analysis and discover common themes which were then used to explore the perceptions of campus climate, how the participants identified using Renn’s
multiracial identity patterns, and if there were relationships between how the participants perceived the campus climate and how they identified.

Consent Form, Personal Student Information and Written Prompt

During the Meet the Researcher meeting, the consent form was presented to the students who were interested in participating. After the signed consent forms were turned in, students were asked to complete to the best of their ability a Personal Student Information Form and a Written Prompt. Students were allowed to choose an alias for the purpose of the study and supply dates and times they were most available. The answers to these questions assisted familiarizing with the study participants, identifying their ecological factors and identity patterns in the Presentation of the Findings chapter.

Participant-Driven Photographs

Participants were asked to take participant-driven photographs that reflected and influenced how they each perceived their campus climate through the eyes of a mixed race college student attending a PWI. Students were permitted to use their personal smartphones to take the photographs. If other students, who were not participants in the study, needed to be present in the photographs, the study participants were asked to present the nonparticipants with a consent form to sign before their photograph could be taken and used in the study. All consent forms were then required to be brought to the photo-elicitation interview before the photograph can be discussed and used in the study. The students were given a one week deadline to take the photographs, assign each of them hashtag titles and submit via email to the study email address I created.
One Word Hashtag Titles

Hootesuite, a popular multiple social media generator, stated that “the hashtag is likely the most popular means of categorizing content on social media. This application made content discoverable and allowed the individual to find relevant content from other people and businesses. The hashtag (#) allowed individuals to connect with and engage with other social media users based on a common theme or interest. (http://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-hashtags/). Hashtags are extremely popular summation statements used on social media among young adults today. The study participants were asked to review their photographs after they were taken and assign each of them a one-word hashtag title. These titles were used as an additional data collection method because it demonstrated how the participant perceived their photograph summed up in one-word in relation to how they saw the campus climate at the PWI. These hashtag titles were used, in addition to the photographs, to discover major categories that emerged from this activity.

Photo-Elicitation Interviews

To elicit in-depth, lived, told stories of experiences that influenced perceptions of campus climate from the voices of each mixed race participant, the use of photo-elicitation (Collier, 1967) threaded through the interview process was selected. Photo-elicitation was used as a data collection method in this research study. This method, for the purpose of this research, utilized photography to elicit recollections and descriptions of experiences had by the individual(s), in this case mixed race participants, during individual interview sessions. The use of the participant-driven photographs submerged
within this qualitative design equips each participant with natural prompts that triggered details and feelings of their experiences that influence perceptions of the campus climate in which they can elaborate on during their individual interview. The insertion of photographs in the interview process will allow for rich narratives that were used during the analysis process.

During each Meet the Researcher meeting, a photo-elicitation interview scheduling sheet (see Appendix H) was passed around for each study participant to reserve their photo-elicitation interview session time block. They were asked to review the dates, times and print their alias next to the best suited time block to conduct their photo-elicitation interview. Once all dates and times were selected, I was able to reserve rooms around campus that were suitable to meet the selected reserved dates and times set by the study participants. I then sent several reminders regarding their selected interview date, time and location via email or text message, depending if the study participant allowed for this type of communication. Eight study participants permitted me to contact by email and text and one by just email.

Each interview session lasted between 30 minutes and an hour and 12 minutes for a total of approximately nine hours of interviewing time. All photo-elicitation interviews with each study participant were audio recorded, with the approval of the study participant, by my personal IPhone using the Voice Memo application and a personally purchased microphone lapel which attached to my IPhone earphone jack and the study participant’s shirt collar. Each study participant, except for Marie, was able to use the microphone by attaching it to their own shirt. The microphone lapel did not arrive on
time when I met with Marie for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview. The microphone lapel was purchased to ensure each participant’s voice, including sighs, laughs and under-the-breath comments were heard.

Semi-structured interview questions were constructed using the guidance of Renn’s (1998) Interview Protocol in addition to several I created and added to the protocol (See Appendix J). The first part of the interview elicited information about their ecological factors and identity patterns to assist with understanding where the study participants came from and who they are as I had a limited amount of time to spend with each participant. Each study participant was asked the same questions listed in the photo-elicitation interview protocol. Clarification questions were asked in each interview if I felt I needed a better understanding on a story, emotion or statement. Overall, all the questions were asked evenly among the study participants to elicit information.

Before starting each photo-elicitation interview session, I requested their verbal consent to permit the interview to be recorded using my personal cell phone which was visible on the table for the study participant to see. I then presented their previously signed Study Participation Consent Form and Photo Release Consent Form for them to acknowledge their previously signed signature with a yes or no. Following the background questions, I pulled up each of their photographs and one-word hashtag titles on my personal laptop and showed them individually to each study participant. All study participants previously emailed me their photographs except for The Tie Guy who brought them on his personal laptop to use during his photo-elicitation interview session. At a later date, he emailed them to the assigned study email with his one-word hashtag
titles typed onto the photographs as seen in Chapter Four. The photo-elicitation interviews were participant-driven which elicited stories, reflection, discussion, thoughts, emotion, and expressions regarding their experiences that influenced their perceptions of the campus climate as a mixed race student at the PWI. Once I was confident that I had captured my study participants’ stories, I then transcribed verbatim the photo-elicitation interviews into narrative data onto a Google Drive Document to further organize, analyze and interpret.

Field Notes

I purchased a notebook for the sole purpose of this study. I took notes throughout the data collection stage of the study and into the analysis stage. I wrote down feelings, emotions, thoughts, notes, and observations made during the study. I also kept track of personal finances expended during the study as I live two and half hours away from the research site. The journal was also used to take notes during a one day-long social justice conference hosted by the research site and one presentation from a distinguished educator, researcher and author in the field of cultural awareness and higher education. These experiences strengthened my sense-making knowledge in regards to this study and further exposed me to other ways of thinking and appreciating differences in other groups of people.

Photographs and Narrative Data Analysis

Before the data analysis process could begin, I organized 33 photographs, submitted by the nine study participants, by like-subjects to discover the major areas of campus climate that influenced how each study participant perceived the campus climate.
This initial step allowed overarching themes to emerge. After grouping the photographs by like-subjects, four campus climate themes appeared: Classroom Climate, Peers Climate, Spaces Climate, and University Climate.

Transcription

Once the told stories from the individual photo-elicitation interviews were recorded by my personal cell phone, I transferred the audiotaped interviews into words to analyze during the narrative data analysis stage. I manually transcribed each interview session. For each 30 minutes of audio, it took approximately one hour to manually transcribe for a total of approximately 18 hours of transcription time.

To transcribe, I listened to the audio through headphones to better hear the content of the audio file. I typed verbatim onto a blank Google Drive document attached to the research study Google file. Once I finished with an interview transcription, I saved the document as PDF file and assigned it to the study participant’s file I named by their chosen alias in my personal Google Drive file assigned for the study. I then printed the PDF file when I transitioned into the data analyze stage. The transcribed narrative data permitted me to read, re-read, code and find themes among the words spoken by the study participants. I had to select an analysis process that would allow sifting, sort of speak, of the narrative data until common themes surfaced from the stories told to describe the campus climate and discover relationships between how the participants perceived the campus climate in relation to their individual differences, such as ecological factors and identity patterns.
Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was selected to analysis the narrative data because, as Braun and Clarke (2006) defined, it is a “method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data” (p. 79). Boyatzis (1998) stated thematic analysis can be used as:

...a way of seeing, a way of making sense out of seemingly unrelated material, a way of analyzing qualitative information, a way of systematically observing a person, an interaction, a group, a situation, an organization, or a culture, and a way of converting qualitative information into qualitative data” (p.4).

Boyatzis (1998) presented four stages in developing the ability to use thematic analysis in research, such as narrative inquiry, that focuses on the perceptions among a group of people about something they have in common. The perception is the phenomena in this study being explored which has to generate narrative data to be analyzed.

The first stage presented by Boyatzis (1998) was “sensing themes”. During this stage, the researcher was expected to “recognize a codable moment” (p. 9). Consistent reviewing of the narrative data was needed in order to become familiar with the data to recognize codable moments. After each photo-elicitation interview, I listened for understanding, again during transcription, and a third time during a final reading to recognize codable moments. The second stage was to “recognize the codable moments and encoding consistently” (p. 11). Coding is an essential part of the analyze process. It is not a “precise science” but an “interpretive act” to understanding the data (Saldana, 2009, p.4). Charmaz (2006) stated that coding is the process of “naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data” (p. 43). The third stage of Boyatzis (1998) consisted of “developing codes” (p. 11). The researcher is expected to “immerse themselves in the information to appreciate its
richness, various steps in the process are aided by discussing multiple views and perceptions of the same information” (p.11). Boyatzis recommended working with others during this stage of the analysis. The fourth stage, “interpreting the information and themes in the context of a theory or conceptual framework” is when the researcher contributes to the body of knowledge (p.11).

As sited in Saldana (2009), Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) presented a coding development process by organizing pages of complex narrative data into three columns that contained the transcripts in the first column, preliminary code and additional notes in the second column and final coding development in the third column (p.17). I adopted Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) outline to organize my coding process of the data, summarize and condense the complex data narratives and to arrive to an outcome of an interpretation of the data as outlined in Boyatzis (1998) fourth stage of thematic analysis.

Following Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) outline for organizing coding, I created a separate Excel document for each study participant and named the tabs by their alias. In the first column, I copied the transcription from the photo-elicitation interview, minus my comments, from the saved Google Drive document and pasted it into the first column of the Excel worksheet. In the second column, I applied in vivo coding by honoring the voices of the study participants when “coding with their actual words” which “enhances and deepens an adult’s understanding of their [study participants] cultures and worldview” (p. 74). This step allowed me to sift through complex narrative data and highlight words and phrases that will assist with identifying the ecological factors of each study participant in order to present as a narrative sketch in Chapter Four. In the third
column, I reviewed the in vivo codes in column two and looked for themes which allowed me to accurately categorize the narrative data when introducing each study participant in the results section.

Member Checking

The study participants were sent an email with a copy of their transcripts and the photographs and hashtag matrix for their review. They were asked to carefully review their stories and photographs and one-word hashtag title placements for accuracy and to respond with comments or concerns regarding what they read or type the word, confirm, if not further action was needed. I welcomed all comments, discussion or concerns during this stage as I wanted ensure I captured the most accurate lived experiences and worldview of each study participant. Once each study participant responded, they were each entered into the $100 gas/station gift card drawing. I contacted that student via email and mailed them the gift card.

Limitations of the Design

The limitations of this study encompassed the location of the study and my commuter student status at the time of the research study, the sample size of the participants, self-reports from the participants and racial awareness/socioeconomic status/gender, and researcher bias. This study solely explored the perceptions from a small sample of the mixed race college student population attending one specific predominately white institution in located in the South. The results from this study should not be used to generalize all mixed race college students across the country. This is only one of many post-secondary institutions that can be used in a similar study to gain further
understanding how this population perceived their campus climates and self-identified within these environments across the United States. On the other hand, validity is strengthened since the results of this study derived from students who only attended one college campus opposed to multiple college campuses. The sample size was a limitation because mixed race college students at this university were identified by their race/ethnicity selection during the application process. These students were sent an email inviting them to participate in the study. Depending on email accessibility, how often they checked their email and schedule availability to meet during the two hosted Meet the Researcher meetings, participation varied. Also, I was unaware of the circumstances surrounding the times when photographs were taken by the study participants. Lastly, I identify as Caucasian which is not the focus of the study.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter describes the procedural steps involved in conducting this narrative inquiry research study. The chapter begins with an introduction to the chapter followed by an explanation of the selected research design, researched questions that guided the study and the selection and background of the research site. The remaining sections described the study by walking through the process of recruitment of the participants and selecting the sample used in the study, the instruments used to collect data and how they were used, a description of the appropriated data analysis process. Lastly, the chapter stated the limitations and the process to gain trustworthiness from the participants.

The following chapter introduces the nine study participants’ narrative data from the Written Prompt and background section of the Photo-elicitation Interview, ecological
factors and identity patterns of each study participant, presents the common themes of how the study participants perceived the campus climate at the PWI and discusses relationships between how the study participants perceived the campus climate at the PWI, their ecological factors and how they identified.
CHAPTER FOUR
STUDY PARTICIPANTS’ VOICES

Introduction

This chapter introduces the study participants by their told stories captured by their responses on the written prompt, photographs and one-word hashtag titles, and during the background portion of their semi-structured, photo-elicitation interview sessions. This chapter consists of four sections (a) Introduction; (b) Introduction of the Study Participants’ Individual Differences; (c) Presentation of Perceptions of Campus Climate; and (d) Chapter Summary.

Introduction of the Study Participants’ Individual Differences

The nine study participants are introduced in the form of their personal stories. After a thorough review of the written prompts and the background portion of the photo-elicitation interviews, these responses were chronologically rearranged by using the process “restorying” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This method allowed the researcher to present their stories and experiences chronologically as they happened in the study participant’s lived life. Each study participant’s individual story is presented following the framework developed by Renn’s Ecological Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (Person-Process-Context-Time, and by their Multiracial Identity Pattern placement).

Written Prompt and Photo-Elicitation Interview Questions

The stories told by each study participant were captured by the questions on both the written prompt (See Appendix I) and the photo-elicitation interview protocol (See
Appendix J). The written prompts were completed by all study participants and collected after each of the two Meet the Researcher meetings. Photo-elicitation interviews were held the first two weeks in February 2016 which allowed the research to cycle through each interview several times before analysis. Below are the questions asked, which data collection tool they came from, and what data was collected from the responses.

Table 4.1 Written Prompt and Photo-Elicitation Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Written Prompt</th>
<th>Photo-Elicitation Interview</th>
<th>Ecological Factors</th>
<th>Identity Pattern(s)</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you self-identify? Do you consider yourself mixed race?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your parents, immediate family, where you lived and how you were raised.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your background and your high school friends etc…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you decided to attend this university?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What have been your overall experiences at the university as a mixed race student?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe something that happened to you in the past few days that related to your racial/ethnic identity?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write about a time you came to the University that you were aware of being mixed race. Please tell me what that situation meant to you.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What areas of your life influence how you identified as a mixed race individual?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What areas on campus do you feel the most connected and not connected?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What groups of students do you feel the most connected and not connected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever considered leaving Clemson University? If so, why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you want the university to know about being mixed race at a predominately white institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ecological Factors

Renn’s Ecological Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development consists of two parts. First, Renn incorporated four components of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory of human development, person-process-context-time (PPCT), as a used framework to explain how ecological factors influenced how individuals, such as college students, identified within the context of their environment. For the purpose of this study, the concept of PPCT connects the family background, parents heritages, prior experiences and physical appearance of the study participants (person), their understandings with and responses to their environment and experiences had while in the process (process), their interactions within the immediate environment (context), and developmental changes happening during particular historical events (time). This was the format followed to present the backgrounds of each study participant in this chapter.

It is important to note that time was identical for each study participant. As presented in Chapter One, during the time of the research study, South Carolina experienced dramatic changes and events that progressed the way race is viewed and how we live with each other in our country. As some of the students commented on those events, most of the study participants commented on being influenced by events happening on and around the research site such as the controversy surrounding the name change request of Tillman Hall, discipline actions against Greek organizations for hosting specific themed parties, cultural awareness events that lacked collaborated planning with like-culture groups, and educating others on the history of the research site and the
Several study participants also expressed their political views and the influences of the 2016 presidential campaign. Explanations and examples of Person-Process-Context frame the introduction of each study participant.

**Five Patterns of Multiracial Identity**

The second component applied Renn’s Five Patterns of Multiracial Identity to each study participant. It is apparent in the mixed race literature that not all students identify the same way and not just through one pattern. Renn (2004) discovered in her study of 56 students that only eight did not identify in more than one way. She called the identification options “identity patterns to indicate that they exist discretely, yet across the research group” (p. 67). The following patterns are defined by:

1. **Monoracial Identity** – “students chose one existing monoracial category (black, Asian, white)” (Renn, 2004).

2. **Multiple Monoracial Identity** – “students used multiple monoracial identities (white and Latino). They have knowledge about each aspect of their heritage or sought out more information in college. They choose to label themselves instead of being labeled by others” (Renn, 2004).

3. **Multiracial Identity** – “students saw themselves existing outside of the monoracial paradigm (multiracial, biracial, and mixed). Shared common experiences with other mixed-race students regardless of heritage. This identity can be public or privately held. Multiracial identity is used more commonly on campuses with formal or informal mixed race groups” (Renn, 2004).
4. Extraracial Identity – “students either opt out of racial categorization completely or do not adhere to the categories used in the United States (Renn, 2004).

5. Situational Identity – “students identified differently in different context. Racial identification is fluid and contextually driven. This identity pattern depends on the racial boundaries of campus” (Renn, 2004).

Table 4.2 presents the Five Patterns of Multiracial Identity of each study participant based on their responses to questions on the written prompt and during the photo-elicitation interview. An explanation and examples for each study participant’s identity patterns are presented after PPTC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Monoracial</th>
<th>Multiracial</th>
<th>Multiple Monoracial</th>
<th>Extraracial</th>
<th>Situational</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destrova</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fredrick</td>
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<td>Jenny</td>
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<td>Jess</td>
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<td>Matthew</td>
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<td>Sophia</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tie Guy</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 (44%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>7 (78%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 (67%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 (33%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 (22%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Renn’s Five Patterns of Multiracial Identity Placement

Out of the nine study participants in this study, four (44%) followed the Monoracial Identity Pattern, seven (78%) the Multiracial Identity Pattern, six (67%) the Multiple Monoracial Identity Pattern, three (33%) the Extraracial Identity Pattern, and two (22%) the Situational Identity Pattern. All participants identified with two or more of the
identity patterns which is why the percentage calculated is over 100%. When comparing these identity pattern placements to Renn’s findings in her 2004 study, the percentages mirrored her results except for the least amount which fell in the Extraracial Identity Patterns category and not in the Situational Identity Pattern as found in my study.

The following study participants are individually introduced. The presentation is framed by their ecological factors (person-process-context-time) and by the identity patterns (monoracial, multiracial, multiple monoracial, extraracial and situational) in which they affiliate with. Following the introductions, the 33 photographs and hashtag titles submitted and narrative data elicited from nine photo-elicitation interviews are presented.

Destrova

When I met Destrova for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 5, 2016, he was an off-campus, junior attending the research site. My descriptions of him was introverted, composed, and laid back. He arrived on time to the original reserved location but to our disappointment, the reserved study room was occupied by students who had not reserved that time slot. Instead of requesting them to leave, we discreetly switched to another location on a different floor of the library and found a corner study cubby that was isolated from other distractions. Destrova took two photographs (#Cookout and #prominence) for the purpose of this study. We met for approximately 30 minutes. After the interview session, Destrova headed to an on-campus movie hosted by the research site.
Destrova was born in Kentucky and lived there for only two years. He then moved with his family to Batesburg-Leesville, a rural town in South Carolina, where he was raised by his white mother and white grandmother, no siblings and without his African American father. Destrova’s physical appearance resembled his father’s side of a person of color with lighter skin, but he also has bright blue eyes which he clarified came from his mother’s side. When people look at Destrova they automatically see his skin color and “that’s the first thing they think of me and that usually determines whether or not they are gonna talk to me…”

While living in Batesburg-Leesville, he attended primary school until third grade and before moving to Aiken, South Carolina. Destrova explained that it was pretty easy to make new friends when he moved to Aiken because he attended a preparatory school that had approximately eight students in his immediate class. Soon after settling in, his family moved back to Batesburg-Leesville where he attended fourth grade. He moved, again, back to Aiken where he entered fifth grade. His family frequently moved back and forth so his mother could work closer to Aiken. When they lived in Batesburg-Leesville, her commutes to work lasted around an hour and a half versus driving thirty minutes from Aiken.

Destrova described his school experiences and friendships he had growing up. He stated there were not many African American children in his school system:

...I kinda well really didn’t grow up seeing black and white too much so it kinda was just one color but once I started getting into middle school, I started to see more and more differences (Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).
The majority of his friends were white but Destrova was also friends with other students who were members of the NJROTC. He laughed when he said he “gravitated” to the “nerds”:

I really didn’t consider myself um friends with just one single group of people cause I had friends who were the cool kids, I had some friends who were the nerds, some of the smart people and the smart, cool people you know were cool cause they were smart...I wouldn’t say I was too much friends with like the extremes, I guess, of one race or another but...I was friends with everyone...(Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February, 5, 2016).

Destrova also played high school football until he injured his knee by an opposing player who slammed his facemask into his knee. This act caused his knee to have significant problems from that point on. Currently, he is not “super attracted to football” but having a football team at the research site definitely made it easier to attend the university.

Destrova wanted to attend the research site to “get as far away from my mother as possible.” I asked him was this for positive or negative reasons and he stated:

I can’t keep being babied all the time but also I went to a science technology engineering math camp here when I was like in the ninth grade...so I kinda got a look at the campus and I kinda liked how it was just like one small things versus [removed for privacy] which is like everywhere and versus the [removed for privacy] which is just like...no...(Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February, 5, 2016).

Process

Destrova commented on his physical appearance and stated that his skin color was automatically “the first thing they think of me and that usually determines whether or not they are gonna talk to me…” Destrova carried this concept with him to college where he became more aware of his surroundings and made frequent attempts to engage with other students who were different than him. Being mixed race for Destrova:
...definitely opens up your perspectives on a lot of different things...um...when most people look at me they see this skin tone and that’s the first thing they think of me and that usually determines whether or not they are gonna talk to me. Like sometimes I try - like I usually try sometimes like earlier in the semesters like last semester especially I try to sit with people and just like talk to them and usually depending on how responsive they were kinda told me how much they either like me or dislike me just cause I don't know...I’m just trying to make new friends and you know, if someone is sitting alone I’m just gonna go sit with you...yeah...just have a conversation while we eat and then but it was a - it’s definitely eye-opening...(Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

When Destrova entered the research site, he was required, as all new students entering the research site are, to take a “community dialogue” course. This course was mentioned by mostly all the study participants as a significantly negative or positive turning point in their lives regarding processing their identity, surroundings and how other students, faculty and staff view race at the research site. Destrova described his experience as “kinda the most eye opening experience…it was just like all this blatant racism in a sense. It was like ‘Oh it’s just like how we do things’ like ‘That’s not right!’

There was an occurrence during one of the classes when one white female student mentioned the “Cripmas” themed fraternity party held by students who attended the research site where the party goers were dressed like “Bloods and “Crips.” This student claimed the party “was not offensive” her as other classmate agreed. “The blatant prejudice had stricken me. After that night, I had an uncomfortable feeling when I was around white people that I didn’t know” confirmed Destrova.

Destrova wrote on his written prompt that there was a time he visited the health center at the research site and the health professional who assisted him automatically
marked him as “black” without consulting with him. He corrected her because he did not identify as just “black”:

_Truly, as I have grown up, I have noticed that the color of my skin is how other people prejudge me. The only thing that I have left to me that others might observe and notice ‘Hey he’s not just black’ would be my eyes and the way I act_ (Destrova, written prompt, January 25, 2016).

**Context**

When Destrova spent some time in New York he made the observation that people who live there are very open when they do not care for someone. In the South, “it seems the majority of people are all ready to tear your heart out or wish ill upon you, but mask it with ‘God bless your heart.’” He thought that this observed behavior “may be akin to Southern hospitality.” As Destrova described himself as being a very “accepting” and “tolerable” person, but his “tolerance is not shared amongst my peers.” He will never allow being mixed race “dictate” who is friends with. Destrova’s inner circle includes his close friends, his family, roommates, his personal room environment and also unifying spaces such as eating dinner out with friends and attending tailgating and football games which he reflected on in the next section.

**Multiracial Identity, Multiple Monoracial Identity and Extraracial Identity**

Destrova considered himself mixed race which followed the Multiracial identity pattern. He also explained that being mixed race was not something that defined who he was as a person or who he was friends with. He stated, “I see myself as both black and white, however my skin only shows black” which followed the description of Renn’s (2004) Multiple Monoracial Identity pattern. Destrova felt that he could be a “different” person with specific groups but still stayed close to his background. Lastly, he stated,
“Well I’ve never really seen myself as really two different races as I’m kinda my own separate race in my opinion.” This description aligned him with the Extraracial Identity pattern.

Fredrick

When I met Fredrick for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 5, 2016, he was an off-campus junior attending the research site similar to Destrova. My descriptions of him were self-confident, collected and structured. He arrived on time to the previously reserved location which was in a small study room located in the library at the research site. Fredrick took two photographs (#Home and #Lernin) for the purpose of this study and we met for approximately 47 minutes.

Person

Fredrick’s father was born and raised in Ohio and his mom was born in Hawaii and raised in Los Angeles and then moved back to Hawaii. Fredrick’s father side of the family is Italian which he described as “third or further generation Americans.” His mother’s father is white and his mother’s mother is a “second generation US citizen” from Japan. Fredrick’s parents met in California while working for different military branches of a company. Then his parents moved to Japan to become more acquainted with this mom’s cultural heritage. Shortly after, they both moved to Ohio where Fredrick was born. He joked that it was questionable if he was conceived in Japan or Ohio but it did not seem to make a difference to Fredrick. Fredrick is the oldest of three siblings.

His parents introduced him to Japanese and Italian food and ways of cooking. He knows how to make “like really good sushi and uh some of the less known Japanese
foods.” He can also make pasta and meatballs “from scratch”. Fredrick referred to himself as an “Americanized Italian”. His physical appearance is white with a slight olive tone and has dark hair which he keeps short for ROTC at the research site. “Most people don’t notice that I’m mixed at first glance; it takes seeing me a few times for some to notice (unless it comes up in conversations)” Fredrick stated.

When Fredrick was about five, his family moved to South Carolina where they have lived since the summer before Fredrick left to attend the research site. His family moved back to Ohio while he stayed in South Carolina the summer before he started his freshman year. He described himself as looking “more Asian” in elementary school than he does now and also described a bit of resentment then because of his mixed race.

Fredrick described his high school as “low income” but also described it as “simultaneously the high income high school”. Apparently there was a program that was historically adopted by higher income high schools around the state, but the superintendent in this specific area decided it needed to be placed in the lower income high school. Fredrick went into further detail by describing his high school:

*I went to high school um this thing called the IB Program. International Baccalaureate Program got introduced and there was a really big push to have it at the rich high school cause that’s actually where it normally ends up going in most high schools but the superintendent at the time was like “nope we are not going to do that it’s going to go to the poor high school” cause that’s going to be like the only thing they have going for them and so...yeah it was like simultaneous like the poor high school but also like the really rich high ... but also the kids that are kinda just smartish and are willing to apply themselves I guess is the big thing... we joke that everyone that went there was just really stupid and they kinda were I still think mostly they just no one none of them really wanted to apply themselves very hard especially when it’s like everyone that just couldn’t make it in IB instead of just staying at the current high school they were at they just usually went to that high school...*(Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).
Fredrick liked attending the IB high school because of all the international students who attended which he was friends with. He also shared with me his experiences with another group in high school where they “joked that we were kind of the Asian club but then there was also like the real Asian Club separately…” The “real” Asian Club, he explained, was made up of “all Korean, Chinese and Japanese kids then we were like mixed or like Southern Chinese or Indian...Um and also there were a bunch of white girls in there too.” Fredrick also was harassed occasionally by “rednecks that would make small penis jokes”…or call him a “chink”. Even on Pearl Harbor Day he would receive teasing comments about his heritages.

When talking about why he decided to attend the research site after his senior year in high school, he expressed that it was not his first initial choice since he wanted to go to another college but was not accepted. He spoke about a minority scholarship he received as a senior in high school not only because of his high GPA, but because he checked “minority” on paperwork. It was something he received automatically from the research site because he identified as a “minority” on paperwork who had a high GPA.

Process

Fredrick expressed that he has not had to think about race very much, even while attending the research site. He had a professor that would joke he had an all-white class, but little did he know that Fredrick was not fully white.

*I am completely unaware that I (usually) fare no stigma because I don’t (at first glance) looked mixed. That I miss out on the more common negative experiences...The fact I get the best of being both white and ‘a minority’, but occasionally also get the worst of being half-blood or not-white has shaped how I view race. I subscribed to the ‘race is a social construct’ worldview, because I*
personally have experienced more than one racial experience (Fredrick, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

Fredrick commented about a friend who was getting “more in-touch with her racial background” and he thought that was “neat that someone would want to do that.” Fredrick laughed and explained for him to get in touch with his racial background was “just an excuse to cook tasty/exotic foods.”

Context

Fredrick is closely tied to his ROTC family and spends most of his time in Tillman Hall at the research site. He is also close with other students in his major and the several clubs he participates in.

There was a time when Fredrick “tried and joined the Japanese Cultural Association” at the research site. He described an “unspoken prerequisite that you had to actually speak Japanese, which I can’t and everyone does.” He sensed the males in the group were not fond of his membership because he was not full Japanese and did not resemble some who was Japanese. He commented that a lot of the members were:

...white guys who just wanted to learn Japanese. And thinking back I think most of them probably were looking to find a Japanese girlfriend - probably - but they thought I was one of that particular side. Though it was a little bit awkward... and I don't know...it was weird because like cause most of the other people in the group were Japanese girls and so I was like...because of the guys I couldn’t like, I guess, bond with the girls because they all thought I was one of them as well. I don’t know it was just a little bit awkward and also I couldn’t speak Japanese so - perfectly reasonable [laughs ] (Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

Fredrick commented on the racial and political controversy that surrounds Tillman Hall at the research site. As the building is a positive space for Fredrick, there are rules that restrict him as a member of ROTC to participate or congregate with other
students who are gathered to protest or demonstrate behind the building. When in uniform, he is prohibited to participate in or be near any sort of activity.

*I am not really allowed to go stand around in them while I’m in uniform. If I’m like today when I’m not in uniform I’d be allowed to go hang, do whatever, but I’m not allowed to participate in political rallies or something. Basically if you even have to think about like ‘would or should I be wearing my uniform to this’ then the answer is no. We are not a country with a politicized military and we don’t aim to be one. Our boss changes every 4 or 8 years* (Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

**Monoracial Identity, Multiple Monoracial Identity, Extraracial Identity and Situational Identity**

During the time of our interview, Fredrick shared that he does not “… really don’t think of myself as being part of any of the groups but um I definitely was raised very much like both halves…” which aligned with the Extraracial identity pattern and Multiple Monoracial identity pattern. He is very aware and active in his family’s heritages, Italian and Japanese, and learned to cook very cultural specific foods from both heritages which also followed the Multiple Monoracial Identity. He even knows quite a bit about his background through historical stories told and retold by family members. He also shared with me a statement that classified as a Situational Identity pattern:

*I am very self-aware that I have probably the best combination of race because I am white enough that most people wouldn’t notice that I’m not completely, well some people would, but most people don’t though notice, that I’m not completely white at first and so it’s like I get white privilege but then on applications form and scholarships and stuff I get to say that I am a minority or two or more races or other…I donna know I guess I double dip. But other than that I’m not really super aware of it cause it’s not really something that never pops in my head too much* (Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February, 5, 2016).

Fredrick did not talk about race very much during our interview in comparison to the other study participants. He seemed to consider himself white most of the time but only
discussed his differences when questioned but did not seem to offer up that information which led me to believe that he also fell into the Monoracial Identity pattern and the Situational identity pattern when it came to filling out forms such as scholarship paperwork.

Jenny

When I met Jenny for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 8, 2016, she was an on-campus freshman attending the research site. My descriptions of her are vigilant and realistic. She arrived on time to the multicultural center where the reserved meeting room was located. Jenny took two photographs (#Commoncause and #Family) for the purpose of this study. We met for approximately 34 minutes.

Person

Jenny’s mom moved to the United States from Tokyo when she was thirty years old. Jenny’s father is white and is from Missouri. Jenny lived in Missouri with her parents and her younger sister until they moved to Illinois. Jenny shared with me that her mother had a supportive group of Japanese’s women in Illinois who threw parties at her house twice a month. Jenny laughed and said “So there’s like thirteen drunk women in my house [laughs]. Yeah they have a good time.” She described her younger sister as “sensitive” and “struggles with race more than I do”. Jenny resembled a more Asian appearance than her father’s white side.

Jenny has been to Japan several times and will also be visiting this summer. She described her mother’s family in Japan as “they live in a very urban area it’s not super
traditional.” She felt her family did a great job at balancing both cultures. She expressed:

*I feel like we do American cultural things like holidays and what not so my sister and I can like relate to our classmates or whatever. We used to do a few like Japanese specific things like food and TV shows...stuff like that [laugh] but overall I think I was raised like pretty much like everybody else in America at least* (Jenny, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Jenny speaks Japanese as her first language and talks to her mother in Japanese on the telephone.

Jenny went to high school Illinois, which described her area having five high schools but the one she attended was the public high school in the area even after applying to a private high school. She described her high school as “pretty diverse...there were some of the rougher neighborhoods like came down from Chicago that got moved into our district...like some people moved because of that.” She described that “richer families” would often transfer their children to different high schools because of the downtown neighborhood zoning filtered into her high school. She expressed that “it really honestly wasn’t a problem for me because if you don’t associate yourself negatively with anybody then it’s not going to be a problem...” She described herself as friendly with all different types of people. Most of all her friends lived in the same neighborhood as she did. They called their peer group the “I Crew” because their neighborhood started with the letter I. Her neighborhood was upper middle class, white and Catholic which she explained was very typical for central Illinois. Most of the people who lived there donated to charities and were kind.
In high school, Jenny was a member of a competitive color guard and completed six seasons doing what she really enjoyed. She found it a great opportunity to visit different places like Arizona and around the Midwest. She observed differences in the quality of instruments and uniforms of other bands when they traveled to what she termed as “poorer schools”. She described her band as predominately white which mirrored the demographics of the town she lived in. Out of 150 band members, there were three Asian students and several African American students but she could not recall any other races or ethnicities.

It was important for Jenny to attend a college far enough away from home because of personal reasons. She wanted to go to another college but realized it was not comfortably far enough way for her, so she traveled to the research site and visited with her mother and quickly made the decision this is where she wanted to attend.

At the time of the interview, Jenny was enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program at the research site. She wanted to work with children because she thoroughly enjoyed a class she took in high school that had a daycare on site where students could put their developed lesson plans to work. She knew at that time she was hooked and continued to take another class the next year.

Process

Jenny wrote in her written prompt about a time since she arrived at the research site she was aware of being mixed race. First, her community dialogue class brought attention to not only her differences but the differences among the other students as well. Like Destrova, she experienced “harmful, racist comments” during open discussion. She
also shared a story about another male student who attended a community dialogue class like her and the one Destrova attended at the research site. Jenny described this student as being from a small town and never had to think about race until he came to the research site.

There’s this freshman group thing that was mandatory. He said he never thought about the fact that he was black before that. But that’s what made him realize that he is different from everybody else. And I was like, I think that is the exact opposite as what it was supposed to do but yeah so - for him I guess it wasn’t a good thing. It is a pass or fail type thing. I hated it. Everybody I talked to hated it. If you don’t have anything to say you just sit there. And if you sit there in silence it’s like you’re judging other people even if that’s not how you mean to come across (Jenny, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Jenny also talked about how being a participant in this study made her aware of being mixed race, but in a positive manner. She also reflected upon her Japanese class that she is taking for an “easy A.” She speaks fluent Japanese and most people in her class cannot. Her experience in this class is further discussed in the next section.

Jenny claimed that “forms” influence how she identifies as a mixed race individual. She reflected on how she can only choose one identity on most of the forms she fills out. And if that is the case, she selects white. She is also reminded that she is mixed race when she speaks in English when speaking to her dad on the phone and in Japanese when speaking with her mother. And lastly, answering “What are you?” questions she receives from time to time.

**Context**

Jenny’s microsystem consists of her dorm located on the research site, the performing arts center because the color guard and the marching band practices there, her friends in and outside of the color guard, football games, the library, dining halls, family,
and friends from home. An example of her mesosystem would be her enjoyment of class at the research site colliding with personal beliefs of a professor who is a member of the dominant culture she does not particularly relate to. She added to this statement by writing on her written prompt that she does not relate to “heavily Southern people…conservatives”:

...it bothers me because he [the professor] is very open about his opinion and it feels like he’s pushing it on us and I don’t like...um...like it’s fine to have your own opinion but a lot of the assignments...we had an assignment where we had to make a video about...we had to make an argument about something very politically correct. We’d have to make an argument on why it shouldn’t be...you know what I mean like picking the problems...He is very politically voiced...it’s an English class. I told my dad about it and he got kinda salty about it. He said, ‘that’s what happens when you go to the South’... (Jenny, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

**Multiple Monoracial Identity and Situational Identity**

At the time of our interview session, Jenny stated that her self-identification depended “…on the context so if I’m at home we speak mostly Japanese but if I’m in public or like at an appointment or something I’ll be with my dad usually and he’ll speak English so it kinda depends on what we are doing.” This statement alone represented both the Multiple Monoracial Identity pattern and the Situational Identity pattern. Jenny is very aware of both of her parents’ cultures and is especially submerged and active in her mother’s Japanese culture but simultaneously finding herself having to choose which way to identify based on the situation she finds herself in or which one the groups she is with silently prefers.
Jess

When I met Jess for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 4, 2016, she was an on-campus sophomore attending the research site. My descriptions of her are passionate and persevering. She arrived on time to our meeting at Starbucks, which she selected, located at the research site. Jess took three photographs (#Different, #family and #Understand) for the purpose of this study and we met for approximately an hour and three minutes.

Person

Jess’s father is Caucasian, her mother is Chinese and she has three younger sisters. She described her sisters physical appearances as “pretty well mixed…we don’t look [like] either one too much. We look right down the middle I think but we all look pretty white.” Jess described herself as resembling Chinese the second most in comparison to her sisters. Two of her sisters “…have very curly hair, long eyelashes like big eyes and the other sister has like very slanted eyes so like she…gets a lot more Asian comments than any of us like do.”

Jess was born in Michigan, but for her first nine years, she grew up in Queens, New York. She reflected on a memory of building snowmen and doing things outside and knew it was cold there, but cannot remember it actually being physically cold. She described her neighborhood as “good” and “low income”. She was surrounded by lots of diversity which she seemed to really value the influences those friends had on her. On one side was a family from India who were Hindu and on the other side was a Jewish man. There was a building above which she described as a “townhouse” full of Chinese
families. This was nice for her mother to have a like-group nearby. Her mother sent her a text during our interview to remind her of other cultures she surrounded by while in living in Queens. Jess said she definitely hung out with Hispanics and Asians but also “grew up with around like Japanese, Bangladesh, Indian, Jewish, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and then like Europeans...so...yeah…I think a lot of it helped shaped how I viewed other people…”

When Jess was nine, her family left New York and moved to Maryland for five years. During that time, she met her first white friend. Jess also started thinking about race since she went to predominately white school with a small amount of diversity. When Jess was in the sixth grade, she was placed on the Presidential Honor Roll for her outstanding academic performance. She remembered that the white male students in her school started to make fun of her for her accomplishment. They said things like “oh it’s because she’s Chinese.” She explained that year being especially hard and lost friendships because of her accomplishment.

So I feel like it’s more social stuff kinda...like I was never on that honor roll again and I definitely think that played a part into it cause I still remember that and that was so long ago. So that I think was the first time that I was like I realized that I was different (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Her family moved to Minnesota for two years to then move to South Carolina when she was 15 because it was too cold in Minnesota. She described this transition as a “huge culture shock.” The diversity she grew up with in New York was no comparison to how it was when she moved to South Carolina. She stated, “…coming here I met people who had never been friends with someone who wasn’t white and they just like viewed
stuff really differently from me so...that was a culture shock…” Her mother even struggled as it was difficult to find other Chinese families to connect with.

Jess said after she graduated from high school in South Carolina, she decided to take year off and travel. Jess valued her independence and wanted to visit parts of the world before moving into in the next chapter of her life.

Jess began to reflect upon why she decided to attend the research site. She talked about her Advanced Placement Calculus class she did really well in high school. She remembered her teacher encouraged her to consider a math of science major in college since there were not a lot of women enrolling in these programs. Jess decided on engineering because she ultimately wanted to go overseas and serve through mission work. She learned that engineering would be a great skill to have. She applied to the research site and received the LIFE Scholarship. She then “tentatively” decided to attend but wanted to take a year off to travel before continuing her education in engineering.

Jess thought having mixed parents provides mixed race children with cultures and experiences:

...is a huge blessing for each of the students like you talk to because I think it will be hard if we didn’t have that background. Cause it’s like whenever we were home we were always taught as a mixed person that like all people are valuable and we have experience like the value of different groups (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Process

Jess is aware of being mixed race when she participates and leads new student dialogue. Unlike Destrova and Jenny, Jess cares very much about the community dialogue class. She shared “…no one really understands like why I do…” Jess disclosed
she led some of these dialogues and is currently facilitating a dialogue group on race/ethnicity. This is an outlet for Jess to talk and listen to other about concerning racial issues experiences by student and staff groups around campus. On the other hand, Jess felt the research talked about race “so much.” Like Destrova, she encountered some students being “blatantly racists, and some students are like social justice oriented.” It was apparent from her experiences that the groups who express the most concern are the ones not attending the dialogues and benefitting from the opportunity.

So I think that was the only thing that changed for me coming here was like I think I became more aware of being mixed race cause like before I could like blend in as a white person and then now it’s like people are asking me to speak up, people are asking me to lead discussions... (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Jess’s additional experiences in these dialogues are further shared in the next section, but to summarize an experience she had during one the dialogue classes:

We were told to line ourselves up according to how privileged we thought we were. After much discussion, a lot of the class decided I should go after the white people but before the black. I guess it emphasized how even though I look white, there is a lot that still sets me apart from kids who are totally white (Jess, written prompt, January 25, 2016).

A common theme describing the PWI culture at the research site was “Southern” in nature, behavior and culture by most of the study participants. Jess was shocked and frustrated that she “met people who had never been friends with someone who weren’t white.” Jess did not think it was “really shocking” to be one of the few mixed race students on campus at a PWI located in the South. She thought this may be true for “colored students…and being the only black people here is nothing new.”
Some areas that influence Jess’s identity as a mixed race individual is what she eats and how some food items cannot be located in a grocery store. She spoke Chinese fluently when she was growing up at home and now pronounces American words strangely. She also visited China a lot and appreciates the experience and how different the culture is from American. She commented “some of my attitude and values are different from other students” because of those experiences and lastly she reflected on her friends “joke about how the strange things I do are because I am Chinese.”

Context

Jess’s microsystem consists of other students such as the Hispanic students on campus. She also “appreciates” the purpose of the multicultural center, and her Christian organization “not because of race but faith which is a bigger part of my life.” She does not feel connected to Greek life and the Engineering Department as it is “pretty heavy on white male.”

Jess talked about her mesosystem and how inside her Engineering classes, race does not come up. But what she does experience is gender playing a role. She is a mixed race female among white, male students. She described the culture within her major as “male dominating” and during projects, she observed the white male students taking over the lead role. The little females there are in her classes, she felt they needed to “prove ourselves more as female engineers.”

Another example of Jess’s mesosystem is her relationship with her roommate and their discussions. Jess felt comfortable talking with her roommate about “racial issues and politics.” She commented:
...she’s voting for Donald Trump if he’s the last candidate and I think it’s because she’s hot as affected by his racial comments as I am. My mom isn’t a citizen and he seems super gung ho about deporting everyone (Jess, written prompt, January 25, 2016).

Multiracial Identity, Monoracial Identity, and Multiple Multiracial Identity

At the time of Jess’s interview session, she initially stated she considered herself mixed race but then she talked about her mother’s Chinese culture and how she spoke Chinese before she spoke English. She followed the Multiracial Identity pattern and the Monoracial Identity pattern. Jess talked about transitioning into American culture when her family moved to the South. She shared that not only did she lose a bit of Chinese culture but so did her mother as they lived in a white area with not as much diversity as they were used to up north. During this time, Jess did more things that related to her white father’s side than she did when they lived up north. Jess followed the Multiple Monoracial identity pattern as she became aware of both of her parents’ cultures.

Marie

When I met Marie for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 1, 2016, she was an off-campus sophomore attending the research site. My descriptions of her were enthusiastic and insightful. Marie arrived on time to the previously reserved location which was in a small study room located in the library at the research site. She took five photographs (#Eden, #fake, #ironic, #isolatedcell, and #nodifference) for the purpose of this study. Marie’s interview lasted approximately 49 minutes.

Person

Marie is from outside the District of Columbia (DC) area as she described as “Northern Virginia” and lived in the “suburbs.” Her dad is half Chinese and half Japanese
who actually grew up 18 years in Japan on an American Airforce base. Marie described him as not having “any Japanese culture” and could not speak Japanese. Her mom is from Ohio and has French and German heritages. She also has an older brother. Marie described their physical appearance as:

I definitely look more Asian than him [brother]…um… so that's interesting and I always tend to be more like interested in Asian culture…um…but I don’t really think that Asian culture is a part of me…does that make sense? So it’s interesting and it’s cool and I love to learn about it but, I don’t know, it’s not authentic to me (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).

Marie described her high school as being “big” and “diverse” which she called a “majority/minority school.” She told me that at her high school there was not just one specific minority, but many. Marie described her friends as “…kinda all over what they were but my three best friends were white um but there were like very comfortable with other people if that makes sense…” She talked about a guy she dated that was half Asian and that there were a lot of half Asian students at her high school because the area the high school was in had a lot of job opportunities which is why she thought her high school was so diverse.

Marie decided to attend the research site because a large amount of students at her high school usually attend the surrounding post-secondary institutions and she wanted to do something different from them and applied elsewhere. Marie stated:

...just wanted to do something where I didn’t know anyone so I could experience something different um so I really wanted to go to the University of Texas at Austin…um…really far…really different…um…but I didn’t end up getting in so then I was like okay so what’s the second furthest from home…I don’t even remember why I applied probably one of my friends applied but I ended up being the only one from my high school to go here…um…which is cool…um…but I do like that it is far it been very very different (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).
Marie wrote about two incidents where she realized she was mixed race at the research site. The first incident occurred when she planned to attend the Meet the Researcher meeting for the current research study. She communicated with her roommate that she was attending a meeting for a mixed race study. Her roommate replied with a laugh. This response reminded Marie that “even my best friends will never understand what it’s like to be a minority.”

The second incident is more of a feeling Marie gets when she is around Chinese exchange students who attend the research site. She finds herself getting annoyed with them and does not like to be “seen associating with them because people think they are annoying and weird.” Marie feels “ashamed” when she admits these feelings because she, herself, is half Asian.

*I have to remind myself to not give into that even and ignorant thinking because I’ve felt outcasted before. I would’ve never even thought twice about them being there before Clemson, but I let my fear of rejection get in my head and act differently* (Marie, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

Marie reflected on how coming to the research site was an “eye-opener” for her about being a mixed race student. Since she is from Northern Virginia, it was not uncommon to be mixed race. She reflected on a memory during her freshman year when her hall mate made a generalized comment about how weird Asians were. Marie did not make a comment to this remark. The hall mate realized what she said stated, “Oh no you…you act white so it’s ok!” Marie explained this occurrence:

*...freaked me out because I do identify with American culture, but look Asian – so where I fit amongst groups of people is confusing...it pissed me off that she*
basically said to be ok, normal, & cool you have to be white or act like white people, whatever that means (Marie, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

This comment opened Marie’s eyes to the fact that people “overlook” that she is “as much white” as she is Asian and will automatically place her:

...in a category of being only Asian, because physically I don’t look white. However, I have no connection to Asian culture so I don’t fit in with full Asian people either. Most full Asian people can tell I’m mixed (Marie, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

Similar to Fredrick, Marie is more adventurous with food selections than her friends are. She does not stick with just Asian or American food but is more exploratory with other foods outside of her heritages. Marie is also more “political and open to new cultures and languages” than her friends. She takes learning Spanish very seriously and “realizes that learning a new language connects people.” She is also a Christian and is heavily involved in her Christian ministry group. She observed that she “sticks out where I want to or not” but attached that to all aspects of her college life.

Context

Marie’s microsystem consists of her friends, Christian ministry group, and her teammates. Her mesosystem displayed her disconnect with Greek life on campus because the “minority population involved with frats and sororities is so small, I was too afraid to rush.” She felt “second rate” when she strolls through public places on campus at times. She felt like she did not belong like she is a “visitor on campus.” As Marie describes her “love” for the research site in the next section, she, at times, feels that the research site did not love her back. Marie said, “…there’s no one who can fully get it – not even my parents because obviously they aren’t mixed.
Monoracial Identity and Multiracial Identity

During the time of our photo-elicitation interview sessions, Marie considered herself as mixed race since her father is half Chinese and half Japanese and her mother is white with French and German heritage. But other times she does not consider herself part of her Asian culture or as she described it, “I don't really think that Asian culture is a part of me... I don’t know it’s not authentic to me.”

Matthew

When I met Matthew for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 8, 2016, he was an on-campus sophomore attending the research site. My descriptions of him were informative and personable. Matthew arrived on time to the previously reserved location which was a small study room located in the library at the research site. He took three photographs (#Divided, #Separated, and #United) for the purpose of this study. Matthew’s interview lasted approximately one hour and 11 minutes. He disclosed to me that he is dyslexic which clarified some of the ways he presented his thoughts and spellings.

Person

Matthew was born in Mannheim, Germany. This is also where his mother was born which is why Matthew placed an “emphasis on being born in Germany. I always consider like those like type of European countries like different like white American.” His father is black and was retired from the Army when he was born in a German hospital. Matthew has one sister who is approximately 7 to 8 years older than him. His parents met while he was stationed overseas. Matthew described his upbringing as
“disciplined” and “strict” since his dad was in the military. He learned that “…in order to get somewhere I have to do something...I always had to earn what I got.” Matthew would travel to Germany every summer until 2011 which he really enjoyed. His talked about his mother’s family and how he liked to experience their culture. Matthew talked about how he was viewed as mixed race by telling me:

*I wasn’t considered like different as far as um like this is so and so’s son and he’s from America that was like the only thing that I was classified as...as I wasn’t classified with anything on my color or anything like that when I would go over there* (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

He talked about his father’s side and said “…for the most part they would accept me.” Matthew resembles more of his father’s with a darker skin tone but would not know he was German unless he disclosed that information. He told the story of a time that they went to a family wedding on his dad’s side and during the reception, his father sat at the family table and his mother was placed at another table because she was white. He definitely felt his family treated his mother differently than her family treated his father.

As Matthew described his high school, I realized that his description of area surrounding the high school seemed very familiar, so I inquired about where he attended. Knowing that we both attended the same high school assisted me with recognizing some of the experiences he may have had in relation to the other study participants. He ran cross-country and track in high school and hung out with other athletes.

Matthew did not start out attending the research site but the research site was his ending plan. He transferred in “…mainly for like the major. They have a really good Engineering and Agricultural program here and it’s a lot better than USC’s so I might as well come here [laughs].” He told me that his uncle hires civil engineers and told him that
when he gets stacks of resumes, he takes the ones who graduated from the research site and separates them from the others. This told me that the research site was important to Matthew and for his future.

**Process**

Matthew is not a stranger to being asked the question, “What are you?” He always responds by stating that “I am Black and German.” Some people he comes across see being “German” as different from being “White”. But others do not see the difference at all and assume being German is white. He understands why people consider German as white but it is a part of him when he was born there, having family that still live there and the fact that he travel to Germany often and got to embrace the culture as his own grants him membership in that culture which he takes very seriously. Matthew does not try to “fit in were people look like me, I like my friend group to be the way I am and that’s mixed.”

Matthew reflected on a time last summer when he was asked a more “direct” question of “What do you fall under?” This made Matthew wonder if they were trying to force him to choose between the two heritages which he respects at a high level.

When he first arrive at the research site and started to meet new people, he realized that some students saw him as “mixed.”:

*Some would always ask what I am because it is clear to them that I am mixed. Others would point out how [I] act sometime to make it seem as if I have two difference personality because I am mixed. I can tell for some that I am looked at a little bit different not only by White people but also by back people as well* (Matthew, written prompt, January 25, 2016).
Context

Matthew’s microsystem consists of the community where he lives, his work on campus, other athletes, sports on campus and people that are involved in a lot of different activities. Similar to Marie, his mesosystem is not connected with Greek life and people “that try to find racism in everything.” He is careful when selecting his friends and takes these into consideration.

Multiple Monoracial Identity and Multiracial Identity

Matthew self-identified as mixed race but also considers himself both black and German, not white. This is a perfect example of how Renn’s Multiple Monoracial identity patterns which were defined by this pattern as both X and Y. Matthew is aware that other people see German as being white but to him it is different like the countries themselves.

Sophia

When I met Sophia for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 2, 2016, she was an off-campus junior attending the research site. My descriptions of her were out-going and enjoyable. Sophia arrived on time to the multicultural center meeting room which was previously reserved as the interview location. Sophia never visited the multicultural center which made the location an appropriate location to interview. She took seven photographs (#celebration, #cruising, #discuss, #future, #leave, #sarcastic, and #waiting) for the purpose of this study. Sophia’s interview lasted approximately one hour and thirteen minutes.
**Person**

Sophia’s father is white and her mom is black. She lives with her mom and grandmother in a predominately black neighborhood in South Carolina. She relates more to her mother’s side which is explained in more detail when talking about her identity patterns. She is from Florence and described her elementary school as “mixed.” She reflected when she and her mother would receive forms asking “do you want to go and like help create diversity based on the percentages of the elementary school?” Sophia told me that she would stay in the same school system. Sophia described middle school and high school as:

...50% white and 50% black and high school it was the same thing so I’ve always been around a good mixture of like even if there were not a lot of people that exactly had my background there were a lot of the components were right there...
(Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

**Process**

When Sophia observes a group of “black people” on campus, she is consumed with thoughts of being “too white”. When she sees a group of white students, she wonders if she is “too black”:

This doesn’t happen often because I have a great set of friends, but sometimes I feel like Clemson has a hard time recruiting the in-betweener, people who aren’t stuck on one edge of the cultural spectrum, because I find it hard making new friends here where I can be myself and be as white or black as I want without pushing people away
(Sophia, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

Sophia explained a very confusing and frustrating experience she had in a lab class. She was the only person of color among her predominately white peers. Students were interacting with animals and were asked to think of names for them. One female selected the name “Promise”. Immediately, her friend responded, “Promise is a black girl name”.

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Sophia wrote in her written prompt that she did not think the students in that class realized she was half black. But amusingly, the only Promise she ever met was white. This experience “rubbed” Sophia the wrong way. Later that semester, they were asked to designate a name for the animal they were working with again but this time the animals had black fur. Several students stated they should give it a black person’s name because the animal was black. Sophia felt “disrespected, isolated, and unseen or misunderstood as a biracial student”.

*Context*

Sophia’s microsystem consists of the bus transportation system at the research site, diversity on the bus, students who “are at ease and have experiences with friends of color” and her cultural experience dance class. Similar to Marie and Matthew, Sophia is not connected to “people who make it obvious they’ve never had a person of color friend or who are extremely isolated in their ethnicity and/or subculture”. She provided an example on her written prompt that explained her mesosystem, “Any person who has lived in the South (a pretty diverse place: black/white) and has never had a friend of a different ethnicity.”

*Monoracial Identity and Multiracial Identity*

Sophia also considered herself as mixed race during our session since her mother is black and her father is white. Prior to college and during breaks, she lives with her black mother and grandmother which influenced her multiracial identity pattern. Sophia described on her written prompt and during our interview session that she always checks two ethnicities or other when requested on surveys but stated:
... I consider myself biracial but if I had to choose which, if I was forced to choose, if I had to choose a side that I identified more with, it would have to be my mother’s side of the family (Sophia, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

The Tie Guy

When I met The Tie Guy for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 2, 2016, he was an off-campus Senior attending the research site. My descriptions of him were unique, clever and creative. The Tie Guy arrived on time to the study room which was previously reserved as the interview location. The Tie Guy took seven photographs (#FOCUSUP, #GAP, #HEADQUARTERS, #OUTDOORHALLWAYS, #PEACEFULPLAZA, #STEPSTOSUCCESS, and #STUDYCAFE) for the purpose of this study. The Tie Guy’s interview lasted approximately one hour and eight minutes.

Person

The Tie Guy’s white mother was born in Washington State and his father, who is black, was born in California. He has a half-sister who is older than him. His mother moved to Charleston, South Carolina because his dad was in the National Guard. The Tie Guy explained Charleston and his feelings towards the southern culture portrayed there. He described the accents and how he did not have a particular southern accent like other people who are from Charleston. He creatively coined the term “air dropped” when describing his place in Charleston.

So there’s a lot of Charleston people...like a lot of Charleston people have the accent and the culture and the southern culture and all their families are from there so I was kinda like airdropped sort of being born there...um...like I don’t have an accent...a Southern accent...I have an accent but not a Southern accent...or like it’s really hard for me to identify with the South...well it was when I was like younger but you know but now I like really identify with them so it was
just...I have no family in the South at all like I was the only one born here. All my family is in the West Coast so... (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

The Tie Guy has a dark skin tone that resembles a person of color more than a person who is white. He also described himself as “the guy with the hair”.

In high school, The Tie Guy reflected on times he rode the bus for the first two years. He remembered not wanting to sit next to anyone on the bus except people he was friends with. His close friends consisted of both black and white students and mentioned:

...like there were really extreme sides to the whole racial diversity like uh um well it’s hard to describe. You got like all these cliques of people and I just didn’t like wanna try and like be like them and give them my respect so I was always by myself a lot. And I didn’t have like a ton of friends and wasn’t super popular but I was popular enough to be satisfied...um...that was the first two years (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Once he got off the bus, he would go sit in “this huge cafeteria courtyard and you know with all the cliques.” I related to this imagery because in my high school, we also had a courtyard in the middle of the squared-shaped high school where all the different social networks of students would congregate. For me, it was quite intense if you were not part of the in-group. I was like The Tie Guy, I did not consider myself very popular but just enough to get by. The Tie Guy described his group in an interesting way which I made a note of:

And our clique was like and we were not even like part of anything I guess. Not being part of one is being one by default but like we didn’t like people for you know being this or that we just like them for who they were... (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).
This was a significant statement describing how he connected with people for who they are instead of what they looked like. This will be introduced more in the Identity Pattern section for The Tie Guy.

Being able to drive a car when he was in the 11th and 12th grade was very significant. The act of being able to drive seemed to provide him with independence as he emphasized on this during the interview. He then talked about a program called the International Baccalaureate (IB) program which was also discussed by Fredrick. The Tie Guy became close friends with students in that program and in the Advanced Placement (AP) program. He described these friends as “the geeks and the smart people.” He also ran cross-country like Matthew did in high school in South Carolina. To me, The Tie Guy quickly became clever with description words as he described himself as a “floater” with a friend of his. This meant that he “floated” from social network to social network and not just focusing on one particular social network which other study participants expressed frustration when they observed white students only hanging out with other white students and not experiences other friends of color or ethnicities. The Tie Guy did not particularly like being “identified with just one cause it was really not cool in my opinion.”

The Tie Guy came to the research site because he

...really love art and music and all that but I guess all I saw was money at the time and I did really love computers too. I love gaming, I love computers...I’m a geek...stuff like that so I thought I could...and I scored really high on my Math SATs like so I thought I could do engineering...computer engineering so I think [removed for privacy] program was as good as Clemson’s. All for school though, no sports, I wasn’t big on college sports. It was all NFL and still am really a more NFL guy (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).
Process

The Tie Guy talked briefly about the Tillman Hall vandalizing and the entire controversy surround name of the building. That incident “meant a lot” to him because “it created social tension between social groups leading to a small dichotomy of the social groups for some time at the beginning of the semester”.

*It made me realize that I cannot say which side makes more sense to me without identifying with one side other than both sides. If I say both sides have pros and cons, people of one race are isolated from me. If I say I agree with a particular side, the other side is isolated from me – a side which is probably discriminated by people of one race* (The Tie Guy, written prompt, January 19, 2016).

Context

The Tie Guy’s microsystem consists of listening to music, roommates, gaming, social media, being raised in the South influences how he identifies, his friends and other students with major of smaller populations, relaxation spots or ‘pockets’ around campus, sports such as Frisbee and cross-country and attending football games, being open-minded, his major, television and books, and American History. He is not connected to the idea of “Southern Pride”, Greek life, socially awkward students, foreign exchange students, and the Tillman Hall controversy. An example of his mesosystem would if tension began to rise at the research site and spilled into his relaxing spots around campus, he would be unable to relax, take breaks and take time to himself to complete his computer coding assignments.

Multiracial Identity and Extraracial Identity

During the time of our interview, The Tie Guy aligned himself with mixed race individuals and even called President Obama his, “long lost brother.” This comment led
me to believe that he affiliated with the Multiracial identity pattern. He explained that he self-identified as “…both, honestly, I don’t lean towards one or the other…I wouldn’t say I identify with either. I strongly identify with both of them equally and make it into my own thing [laughs]” which followed the description of the Extraracial Identity pattern.

Victoria

When I met Victoria for our scheduled photo-elicitation interview on February 9, 2016, she was an on-campus freshman attending the research site. My descriptions of her were soft-spoken and sincere. Victoria had to reschedule her first scheduled interview because of a prior engagement but was able to reschedule for the same week. On the day of the interview, she arrived on time to the study room which was reserved as the interview location. She took two photographs (#close and #open) for the purpose of this study. Victoria’s interview lasted approximately 34 minutes.

Person

Victoria’s father is from Hungary who lived in Beaufort, South Carolina and her mother is from the Philippines who also lived in Beaufort and worked in a hospital. Her father’s mother also worked in the same hospital and asked Victoria’s mother if she, and some of her friends who were also Filipina and were also employed at the same hospital, could come to her house and cook for her family. Victoria’s mother agreed and along with her friends, cooked Filipina food for Victoria’s father’s family. Needless to say, this is how Victoria’s father and mother met and soon married.

When Victoria was six months old, her family moved to Budapest, Romania for a year and then moved back to Beaufort, South Carolina. She has a younger brother and a
younger sister. Her younger brother is 15 and she described his physical features resembling more Asian than Victoria and he “has my mom’s nose like having a bigger, wider nose and a round face like circle face so I got my dad’s like longer face and skinnier nose so he definitely looks more Filipino than I do.” Her younger sister is six years old and has not really developed into her physical features for Victoria to describe her. Victoria’s first language is Hungarian but then her family started to teach her English by just talking with her and using basic words. Victoria is very close to her father’s family as they still live in Beaufort. Victoria’s mother parents were living in the Philippines has since passed away. She shared memories with me of times they go over to her father’s parents’ house to have Sunday dinner:

...so we went to the house like every Sunday it was like a family thing. So I was raised like mostly eating like Hungarian food and yeah we didn’t have American food a lot because my parents like I don’t know they don’t really like American food. They want like real home cooked meal...yeah so um my dad would cook like my grandparents would cook. Um my mom would sometimes cook Filipino foods and we go to like Filipino parties but that was like a few times a year so it’s mostly Hungarian (Victoria, photo-elicitation interview, February 9, 2016).

Interestingly, Victoria also described herself as a “floater” between social groups similar to The Tie Guy’s experience. Victoria communicated that she was friends with anyone that “friendly, outgoing and funny.” Also similar to The Tie Guy, she stated, “...it’s like I didn’t base it on skin color or anything so...” She described her high school in ninth grade as “majority black” which she explained she was able to interact with all types of people. In 10th grade through her senior year she moved to predominately white school where most of her friends during this time were white but only because there was a small amount of minority students at this school.
Victoria decided to come to the research site because she thought it “just seemed like a beautiful college…” She originally wanted to be a registered dietician but discovered she had to take the ASCEND accreditation. She learned that only three colleges in the state dealt with this. The research site was one and after exploring the three colleges, she chose the research site based on her personal preferences. She also found that the research site was “the top 20 and it’s like in the top 10 of like happy students so it just had a better reputation than the other schools…”

**Process**

Victoria recently applied for a few jobs and was asked to choose her race/ethnicity on several of the forms. This was a time that she was aware of being mixed race.

*I had to put my race, but it would only let me choose one. For these instances, I usually put Asian because that is more unique than Caucasian. This is pretty big to me because I think about how unfair this is every time I fill out something that asks about my race* (Victoria, written prompt, January 25, 2016).

Victoria shared a time she was at the research site and was made aware of being mixed race. She wanted to join several clubs on campus and noticed that the members were all Asian and also looked full Asian. She tried to visualize herself a member and “didn’t feel like I would fit in”. Like Sophia and Fredrick, that particular incident for Victoria was significant because she had to pass up a perfectly good opportunity “that could’ve been a great experience, just because I didn’t think I looked Asian enough”.

Victoria is well aware that her physical appearance influences how she identifies as a mixed race student. Similar to the experiences of Matthew and Jess, when she
receives the “What are you” questions, people are shocked that she does not respond with being part Hispanic.

**Context**

Victoria’s microsystem consists of working with her professors one on one, being with a small group of friends that share similarities, her boyfriend, family and playing volleyball on campus. An example of her mesosystem is groups of students in class that are loud as she enjoys her classes but also likes to stay quiet and in small groups. Big personalities are something she does not connect with. Victoria is “a quiet person and I follow the rules. I don’t do well with people that do crazy things”.

**Multiple Monoracial Identity and Multiracial Identity**

When Victoria identifies, she follows the Multiple Monoracial identity pattern when she introduces herself as Hungarian and Filipino and follows the Multiracial identity pattern when she describes herself as mixed race. Victoria is very closely tied to her father’s family Hungarian living and also to her mother’s Filipina culture. Victoria illustrates the importance of both sides of her family and how they both have an impact on how she identifies. To Victoria, one side cannot exist without the other.

**Presentation of the Perceptions of Campus Climate**

This section presented the experiences and perceptions elicited from 33 photographs that represented areas of the campus climate that influenced how each study participant perceived the campus climate as a mixed race student attending a PWI.

The following section is divided into the four (4) major areas of the campus climate that emerged from the subject matter of the field texts and one-word hashtag titles.
and ten (10) perception themes of the four major areas of campus climate: Classroom Climate (*isolating and close*), Peers Climate (*divided by like-groups*), Spaces Climate (*diverse, learning, beautiful and evil, peaceful, and unifying*), and University Climate (*responsive and unresponsive*).

**Table 4.3: Perceptions of Campus Climate**

The 33 photographs and one-word hashtag titles assigned by each study participant accompanied the narrative data elicited by the photograph during nine photograph-elicitation interview sessions.

**Classroom Climate**

*Isolating*

![Figure 4.1: #Isolatedcell](image)
Marie was the only minority in the class which she aimed to capture in Figure 4.1: #isolatedcell. She enjoyed this class and thought her professor was a “funny guy”. However, her professor was not the main focus of the photograph but the fact she felt isolated in this class was. She described the amount of diversity in classes at the research site as a “sprinkle of minority students” which made Marie feel a “little isolated”. Marie had a tendency to “isolate” herself, she explained, because she was fearful others would not want to engage with her because of her obvious physical differences. She took most of the blame for this postulation and thought this “was a poor assumption” on her part and of the “person’s character” sitting next to her. She has been making an honest effort throughout this semester by engaging with other students around her:

...a lot of times, you know, they are really nice and like we help each other with work...um...but there is always that feeling when the semester starts that...um...okay like I’m gonna be the only one and where should I sit? It’s all very vain in thinking that people are watching me or if I sit in the front like people are just gonna stare at me the whole time. Does that make sense? And they might not be but it’s just very in my head at this point because it happens a lot (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).

Marie was reminded when she looked at Figure 4.1 that she needed to be more self-aware and willing to meet new people, engage and “willing to put myself out there and just knowing that my classmates are nice people.”
Similar to Marie, Sophia took Figure 4.2: #sarcastic who also illustrated the lack of diversity in her class. This particular class was not a major class of hers but was one of the larger classes she attended with approximately 100-200 students in attendance. She assigned the title #sarcastic because she commented on the amount of diversity at her previous school and gave the research site credit for having a bit more diversity than her previous school did. Sophia considered herself a person of color (POC) as she reflected on thoughts about this particular photograph. She remembered being the only POC when she attended her previous school but felt that the research site had a bit more POC in class:

...it’s like I’m only half [laughs]...but here it’s a little better but it just sarcastic. It’s like no diversity when I see it. I get kinda sad when I go into a science class and it’s like I don’t see a lot of diversity and I’m like this problem is a lot bigger than Clemson...there are a lot of things going on that create this problem but it’s sad that it is like my reality when I go to classes...like it’s still there (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

As negative experiences in a class were previously described in her introduction, she described feeling “disrespected, isolated, and unseen or misunderstood as a biracial student”.

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Victoria took a photograph of a seating area at the research site where students could sit closely together and eat, study, or visit with one another. Victoria preferred this close-type of environment as a freshman at the research site. She talked about having to find a place to eat lunch alone because she had a difficult time locating a table to sit because she was unfamiliar with the people already seated there. Victoria would rather sit at a “smaller table or just a smaller like location than in the dining hall…there’s so many seats and like I just rather be with my friends and the people that I know.”

Victoria observed the study room in which we were interviewing and reflected on the importance of the size of the room. She liked the closeness of the room and how it only fit approximately four people comfortably. She liked that the research site provided alternative sized rooms for people, like her, who preferred areas of “closeness”. She said, “I like that they are small and I can have like my close friends and um like privacy.” As described in Chapter One, the research site is considered a large university with some classes with over 100 students in attendance. Even though the research site had large classes, Victoria still felt like the research site was perfect for students who like smaller
classes, such as herself. The research site also provided smaller classes for more of an integrated feeling:

*I feel like the university is great for people that um have like those close groups. Now I’m in smaller classrooms like my math class has like 25 people maybe so I feel more comfortable asking questions. So I like that Clemson is a big University but they still have the small classrooms and that’s like another thing that led me to Clemson because it was like an 18 to 1 student faculty ratio so that was great like the average class size was like 30 I think so that’s great. I had a class that was like a 150 students but I sat in the front so I always sit in the front. I just feel like a little closer to the professor* (Victoria, photo-elicitation interview, February 9, 2016).

![Jenny in class](image)

**Figure 4.4:** #family

Figure 4.4: #family was taken by Jenny who thoroughly enjoyed her Japanese class. She already learned to speak Japanese prior to coming to the research site. She was even open with her professor about her prior experience with the language. This class was an easy A for Jenny, but she enjoyed assisting her classmates with their assignments. She described the closeness of her classmates and mentioned they regularly hung out after class and off campus.

Jenny described this class as diverse in nature. She was the only Japanese person in the class among other exchange students. There were also African American students,
an Asian female, white students and a young man from Mexico. Jenny laughed a bit and commented on the young man from Mexico and why he did not take Spanish since she thought that might be easier than Japanese. The professor is also pictured in Figure 4.4 who Jenny described having a “good relationship” with. Jenny then described the connection she had with the class:

*Unified is a good word. Most of the people there really like Anime. I mean I don't personally but a lot of them - yeah like the Japanese cartoon and stuff...I know a lot of boys like it. My boyfriend dies for it. But a lot of them have anime watching parties and something like that...We are very unified...we are all there for one common reason. I feel like no one feels like they have to be there. I mean it is a class that I look forward going to. Not really because of content but because of the people there. The class is so tight with each other so anybody that is not in the class like their gonna you know what I mean...(Jenny, photoelicitation interview, February 8, 2016).*

Figure 4.5: #United

In Figure 4.26: #United, Matthew reflected on the variances of his close circle of friends that he photographed. He appreciated the differences among them. Whether one day most of the people sitting at the table are black or white, he still appreciated their differences, the way they each act, and what they bring to the table regarding backgrounds. Matthew enjoyed working with this group of friends and how they can rely on each other and “cope with one another.” Matthew described:
...what’s good about this is you see they have like laptops out, phones, like their showing that they can work together still regardless of their differences on how you look. This is like a lounge that we have that we will sit down, do some homework every now and then (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Matthew and his friends do not think about the race of each other when they are together. “Like okay yeah I know that this is a black person and this is a white person I know this is a female and that but yeah we know all of these things” said Matthew. They just continue on being friends as friends do without pointing out the race of someone when they talk to each other. They call each other by their names…not the color of their skin. Matthew described the Greek life at the research site and observed that black fraternities and sororities “don’t just allow black people in” but they allow white people too. The same went for the white fraternities and sororities.

Peers Climate

*Divided by Like-Groups*

Figure 4.6: #Different

Jess described this photograph as a flower plant that her mother gave her to grow in her apartment while staying at the research site. Jess does not have a history of successfully growing these flower plants as she had already killed two plants prior to
taking this photograph. She laughed as she described them turning brown already so she
was quite nervous this one may follow the same fate as the two before it. The plants have
a harsh smell which Jess told me her roommates:

...contribute that to my weird Asian-ness and um and it smells really bad like I
have to clean it every day it like smells so bad.... like um I’ve never seen that
before like neither have they and so they just assumed it because it was like a
Chinese thing so that’s why I say #different cause they have never seen that
before (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Jess is not a stranger to doing something totally different from other people and
having to explain her actions or reasons to other people who do not understand. She
would bring “weird” food to school and use chopsticks to eat with while other students
are using forks and knifes. A lot of students have never seen chopsticks before so this
was completely strange for someone to use sticks to eat with. She would also dress
“weird” or maybe wear something that was from China and she would have to explain
what it is and why she is wearing it…just like the plant. Jess was homeschooled by her
mother at first so she would pronounce some words differently from other students her
age and would have to explain that as well.

Now that Jess attends the research site and attends community dialogue classes,
she is more aware of the division that surrounds her. She noticed that people of like color
will sit to one side in buildings on campus while white students will sit to the other side.
She described this observation as a way she felt as a mixed race person:

...there’s like those two sides of the room and we will always be in the middle and
depending on how we look we will like try to go to one side and so for me like -
like the comfort on the one side is comfort and a part of me just wants to go on the
white side and I usually do because like if I go to the colored side, the people
who don’t know me are just like “What is the white girl doing here?”...um...I
think that’s the most difficult thing like for me growing up in the North what I
really want is like unity and that was like much more possible in the north like people of color and white and white people hang out all the time and it wasn’t like we would talk about race sometimes we even joke about it and like I think we still like understood each other respected each other didn’t have as much conflict but then like here I feel like I don’t even know if it’s like unity that people want like I feel like they just want to be heard but I don’t know if they actually want to be united...so... (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Since Jess is from the North, she has had many experiences with different cultures.

Coming to a research site where the PWI culture is the majority on campus, she observed that white students tend to look the same, hang out in the same groups and not venture out as much as people of color or other ethnic groups. She truly “values” the friendships she has with people who are not like her. She described the phenomena about white students on campus staying close to those that look like them as “easy”:

...like I talk to my white friends they have no desire to become friends with people of color and I talk to people of color and there’s a lot of pain there there’s like “I just want to be heard” “I don’t want to be treated like badly anymore” but I don’t really have any desire to like become friends with white people either and that is something I really struggle with because it’s just like my desire if for unity but none of us really desire that they just want justice which is like important but I don’t know if the end goals is unity which is what I want I feel like their goal is to get our rights you know what I’m saying? (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Figure 4.7: #divide

Matthew creatively illustrated the idea on how he felt about his place among his peers in Figure 4.7: #divide. This was an example of Matthew’s frustration when people
tried to “categorize” him. He felt divided between two racial groups on the research site because he has membership in both of them: white and black and has stronger physical characteristics of people of color. He had his two friends, a white female and a black female, face down two different hallways. This symbolized the “different experiences” they each face because of their color. Matthew expressed that the white female faces the path for white people with the assumptions they receive, and the same for the black female on the right. Black people assume that he is accepted by white people and white people assume he is accepted or “in” with other black people because of his strong physical characteristics. Matthew said:

*I’m just standing alone because neither will black people accept me and neither will whites. So I just feel like I’m stuck in the middle...I’m divided from everyone else just because they’re trying to figure out a category to put me in but they can’t find it* (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Matthew reflected on feelings of discrimination and racism and stated that just because he was a mixed race person, did not mean that he was separated from those negative feelings or experiences. He told me a story about a time when he was playing a sport-like activity with friends. When he could not jump high enough, he received the comment “That’s the white side of you” if he did not meet the stereotypical characteristics of a person of color.

*Other people I don’t even know will say certain comments and it’s just one of them things I just don’t feel like starting in this argument about...like most people will like...um...I guess bring up how I’m treated and I might be getting a little bit more luxury because I am light skinned and I’m like “no” - I always bring up the argument that we can go back a 100 years, 200 years from now. Me and you would both be slaves. Me and you would both be slaves. Me and you would both would not be considered like. I would not be a free man and you would a slave just because I’m here...no. They see that I’m not fully a white person so I immediately am thrown over* (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).
Matthew felt like most people possibly think that he receives discrimination from white people but he clearly expressed that that was not the case. He received discrimination from people of color as well, but in a “different way.” Matthew explained:

...like black people will look at me knowing I’m black, but they’d say I don’t act black. And sometimes I get a little bit confused like how do we exactly - how does a black person supposed to act? Like some say, I’m proper, I don’t act crazy or ratchet around - whatever terms they want to use by, I’m just like I’m just being myself (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

During our interview, a memory from his childhood surfaced from the photograph. He remembered a family friend telling him about a time when his mother (white) and his father (black) attended a family wedding of the father’s as guests. The father had a seat reserved for him with the family at one of the head tables where he sat during the reception. Usually the wife sits with her husband, but in this case, she was placed far away off in a corner of the room because she was white. His mother and father were married at the time. He also shared with me that his sister received a comment from a distant cousin stated that she did not see her as “black” because she was mixed race.

Matthew said:

I think the most, I guess, like stuff that happened to me like face first was I would either like just got mad or more like frustrated that people actually still think this way...Cause like people would like...this is like you know this is not just a white woman...this is my mom. That is my mom, that is my dad - I see them...yeah...these are the people I grew up with and raised me so like there’s no like just one color or so because like they all see exactly how I see how I’m different as far as I came from a different home, I came from a different family like everybody’s different that way but then I don’t see how that should make a huge impact on like why you know you should wanna be around me (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).
Matthew observed that there are diverse groups who do hang out together at the research site. He reflected on the photograph and mentioned that this was an example of when he walks into a room and see like groups hanging out together: white with white and black with black and a group with a bit of a mixture. When Matthew arrived to the research site, he was not looking to be friends with just one group that looked like him. He wanted a diverse group. He was “looking for people that he could cope with and be around most of the time.” He talked about his friends and their diverse activities such as autocross, weightlifting and sports like track and football. He said, “I have a very diverse group of friends and don’t like to stick into one category.” Matthew made the observation that at the research site he would see more diverse groups out at night than earlier in the day. He also observed that he sees more white people earlier in the day than at night in certain parts of the campus.

Figure 4.8: #nodifference

Figure 4.8: #nodifference was a photograph taken by Marie who wanted to capture a group of her close ministry friends from the waist down. The students skin tones are all very similar but to Marie, whose physical appearance favors her Asian heritage, pointed out that when someone looks at her friends from the waist up, the
differences are quite obvious. But pictured in this photograph everyone is the same, same skin tone and same style of dress, and no one can see a difference.

*I don’t think anyone could pick out which one is me...um...because like I am Asian but like my skin is very similar to non-Asian people um does that make sense? But also we’re like all wearing similar things like Birkenstocks and like Chaco’s and our fashion - since like no one can pick out who I am but then from waist down but then from the waist up you know everyone likes “She’s different” really like just look at it a little differently* (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).

Marie described her friends as her “greatest friends” and “understanding people”. She serves with them in ministry which also unites this group of students. She also commented that they all believe in the Bible which also unifies them and teaches them “love people despite in the end you know we follow Jesus’s example um and I think that’s what makes them so loving and caring.”

![Figure 4.9: #seperated](image)

Matthew also took Figure 4.9: #seperated. This photograph illustrated when he realized when people gravitated to like groups. On the left hand side there is a group of black students working together and on the right hand side there is a group of white students working together. Around campus one can see students grouped in like groups.
It would almost seem that students were afraid to “venture” out of their comfort zone and meet other people different from them… but it is easier to stay in a familiar group that look like you. Matthew offered the example of walking into a classroom and not really know where to sit. Do you sit with people you do not know or people you are familiar with? Of course you would sit with the people you are comfortable with.

Like with some of us like when I come in I see like these groups so like okay and I’ll just come off the assumption that everyone knows each other already. Well I don’t see anybody I know so I just sit by myself - so I’m just separated from everybody else. Like me, I just go wherever there is room. Like same thing with the dining hall. I typically find like a table or every morning I’ll sit generally in the same spot and like people are like kinda like scattered around (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Matthew viewed this photograph as a representation when students are grouped by like-groups and made the assumption they may not accept the people in the other group so they stay in their like groups.

I walk around campus sometimes. I feel like a little mini celebrity because I know like just like other people that are just so many different people all around so it’s just nice to have that as far as like even though they are in like their own little groups whether it would be colors or maybe just in that club, particularly most of the time, it is that with me...um...it’s just nice to have a little bit different groups instead of just having one strict group all the time like that’s not where at least that’s not how it was like growing up for me (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Matthew commented on the idea that he would like to send his future children to public school instead of private school. He reflects on the like-groups on the research site and compares it to a private school atmosphere. He would rather his children experience different groups of people then be around like-groups all day.

Like that’s how you kinda get the idea of not having everyone the same. Some people are fake, some people are actually like real off the start and it kinda gives you an idea like when you meet new people in the future like what to kinda expect
Matthew clarified that he will always stick to who is and not let color or memberships of groups define him. He laughed when he said “…am I supposed to find all the mixed people on campus? Like am I gonna look them up through the school website...alright so where are all the...let me get all the mixed students emails and email them and just become friends like it doesn’t work like that cause even us we’re all different”

Spaces Climate

Diverse

Figure 4.10: #Cruising

All of Sophia’s photographs portrayed her views from the lens of a mixed race student using the bus system at the research site. The bus was very important to Sophia which provided her with the diversity she needed to help her navigate the difficult landscape of the research site. She was very insightful and knew what she required to be a content student at the research site. As some specific needs of Sophia’s will be shared through her other photographs, she described a strong appreciation and connection to the bus system which transported students to campus dorms, apartments, classrooms, and
events on campus. This was a very important space for Sophia to feel connected to the research site. Figure 4.6 was named #Cruising because Sophia felt like the research site’s student bus system influenced how she perceived the campus’s racial climate. “This one is just like me going on the bus, ready to go to school, go to Clemson and getting off from my diverse experience” Sophia explained.

The bus system as the research site was a pocket that included the type of diversity environment that Sophia desired since the last college she attended. Sophia is a transfer student from a school that did not have a lot of diversity and was hoping the research site had what she was looking for. As she explained the research site being somewhat of a disappointment to her regarding the amount of diversity across campus and how she remembered feeling “naïve” about realistically expecting more diversity on campus, she did feel like the bus system on campus satisfied her need for diversity at times. She said, “you don’t see the diversity but when you are in certain parts of Clemson you see the buzz…you do see diversity. For me personally it makes me feel nice.” Sophia enjoyed hearing different accents and languages and seeing culturally specific attire worn by college students on the bus. These experiences influenced her appreciation of the research site, the efforts the university is making and the opportunities they provide, and made her feel “positive” in that moment.
In Figure 4.11, Fredrick reflected on experiences had inside the library at the research site. He laughed as he described, “The spelling is like just a joke I guess [laugh]” as he was trying to be clever with his hashtag title of Figure 4.7. This space was a place where Fredrick experienced more diversity than he did in Tillman Hall, a building that is found in the center of racial controversy at the research site but a place the Fredrick called #HOME with his ROTC family. As he later described Tillman Hall as a place one would see more white students, according to Fredrick’s observation, #LERNIN is more diverse:

Um, I guess the second most common place I spend time is the library, unless I’m in classrooms, but uh I mean there’s a lot more diversity there like you even like have to go to the library like 2 am because you forgot to write a paper or your roommates are throwing a party or something that - you go there you still are going to see like someone that doesn’t look like you cause everyone is allowed to forget assignments [laughs] (Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

Being a member of ROTC, he is bound by rules which included not taking political sides while in uniform. During the interview, Fredrick was not in uniform and was able to discuss racial issues he experienced at the research site. Figure 4.11 elicited some of those comments from Fredrick:
It’s just being able to go basically any hour of the day, just seeing people that don’t look like you. It’s like a reminder that I mean even now we are like...not deep South...but we are well in the South that the world just isn’t white people (Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

Fredrick also commented on his interest in the Japanese Association that met in the library at the research site. He wished he spoke Japanese and wanted to join but felt like since he was not fully Japanese they would not accept him. He still enjoys interacting with other Japanese students and meeting them in the library:

*I met a couple of friends in the library uh not all of them white...yeah - also this is where the Japanese cultural association had met...the one during the couple of times I did go to meetings* (Fredrick, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016)

![Figure 4.12: #waiting](image)

Sophia took Figure 4.12: #waiting. This picture illustrates Sophia waiting for her diverse experience to happen. The fact that she has to ride the bus to experience diversity at the research site influenced Sophia’s perception of the racial climate on campus. She saw the same faces every day when she went to class so being able to experience new cultures and people on the bus was a breath of fresh air for Sophia. Sophia attended a “50/50 high school” and was used to seeing diversity around her in an academic context.
The research site, to Sophia, does not have enough diversity she requires and she really appreciated the differences of other people and seemed to crave it at times when we reflected during her interview:

I’m waiting for something with being on the bus...it’s like...I feel like I blend...like I feel like everyone blends into this big mixture and it...it’s like at Clemson it’s kinda hard to keep that because there aren’t a lot of kids who are biracial even identify if they are biracial so it’s like you have to pick either/or. And Clemson has a lot of just either/or where it’s just like you have to be clearly strong this way or really strong this way...it’s like floating in the middle (Sophia, photo-elicitation, February 2, 2016).

Sophia wanted me to know that she truly appreciated spaces on campus such as the bus system because she did not “feel bleak...Clemson is really diverse in this little space...you know...it makes me feel just happier you know like it’s not just all one thing”.

It definitely made it better [attending the university] like uh it help me meet people... um so yeah it was my first semester so it definitely helped me make some friends made my experience here even better...it definitely opened me up to meeting more people of different races. It enhanced it I guess - opened I guess [laughs ] (Victoria, photo-elicitation interview, February 9, 2016).

Enjoyable

Figure 4.13 #HOME
In Figure 4.13: #HOME, Fredrick spends most of his time inside the academic building pictured. Fredrick titled Figure 4.13: #HOME because he considered ROTC his family which is housed in the academic building. As this particular building is very recognizable and symbolizes the center of campus, it is also found in the middle of current racial controversy. Fredrick did not seem to get bogged down with the issues surrounding racial issues on campus because he saw the building for what it was to him. He enjoyed attending his classes inside and collaborating with his ROTC family during the week. He saw viewed this building as a place he called home on campus and where he could learn and enjoy his time at the research site.

Similar to Fredrick, The Tie Guy also “loved going to the library”. The Tie Guy illustrated feelings of walking up the front steps to the library as:

Let’s like pretend this photo is like the hill of a roller coaster like your walking up to...like when the roller coaster is cranking and when you are getting a little bit excited and a bit anxious for me but when finally when you clear those stairs or I’m already on the stairs cause I’m on the bridge...I’m like yes! I’m here I can get a lot of work done (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016)!
The Tie Guy reflected about professors and how he did not see any in the library when he would study there, but he did express his appreciation for the staff that clean the library after students who do not pick up around their study spaces when they were finished. There are seven floors inside the library that has to be looked after and that made The Tie Guy:

...really appreciate that I don’t take it for granted um but there is a lot going into operating a library that I didn’t know about cause it’s not just a library it’s just not full of books it’s a study center...it’s more of a study center then the library even. I mean yeah it’s a library you need the books but way more people are studying and when people don’t have enough study space they get kinda mad. You know...(The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Figure 4.15: #STUDYCAFE

Following The Tie Guy’s photograph of the library, he then reflected upon Figure 4.15 which illustrated the second floor of the seven floor library. This is the “programmer’s lab” even though other majors enjoy this space. This is a space where The Tie Guy can really hunker down and study and work on computer coding assignments. The Tie Guy “love[s] the second floor!” He enjoyed watching other students work while he worked on his own assignments. He found it very “encouraging” to see that much work happening around him. He side tracked and described his
personality as he told me the story of taking the Myers Briggs Personality test and how his results were used to create groups in Computer Engineering. He described himself as an ENTJ:

*I've taken some really complex personality tests and it said like I was an ENTJ...forgot what it was called [Myers Briggs]. Yeah you know what I am talking about...the 16 panels...it’s the same one as a lot of famous people that I know. Yeah I had to take it...I took it years before...no I took it for kicks...last year I took to so we could pick engineering groups and I scored the same thing again. That and GPA - they did not want to have quote unquote 4 smart kids on the same group - some people are just really smart but just have a low GPA. Um they want 4 quote unquote smart kids on the same team* (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

The Tie Guy really placed a heavy emphasis on the library and its meaning in his life as he stated that he felt the library has really strengthened his relationship with the university because of the resources that are offered to him to be a successful student at the research site.

*Beautiful and Evil*

![Figure 4.16: #Eden](image)

The physical beauty of the research site was very important to Marie. Figure 4.16: #Eden illustrated a photograph Marie captured last year which elicited several emotions she had about the research site. It captured the “campus really well or part of it…my
favorite part.” Like The Tie Guy, she loved to spend time at the amphitheater and sit by the reflection pond which was located by the library. Marie was very connected to her faith when we met so assigning the title #Eden to the photograph was appropriate for her description. When she was accepted by the research site, she then visited the campus. Usually students will visit the research site first, but Marie knew this was the place for her at the very beginning.

I saw the lake and like the trees and like everything it was so beautiful so I was like it's so adventurous here and I just like love being outside um so I was like this is great this is like the perfect place for me (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).

However, this photograph elicited the darker side of the research site in comparison to the meaning of Eden. She described the photograph further and stated that “…so you know EDEN is supposed to be happy, but in EDEN there is also a little bit of evil…” She described some of the buildings on campus that has hidden meanings or “symbols” of evil times. Several of the study participants also reflected on the racial issues that surrounded these buildings and how it affects the racial climate on campus. Marie’s other photographs reflect these feelings which will be presented in the other overarching themes. But overall she reflected on the good and stated:

I mean like when I look at it I’m just reminded how like beautiful Clemson is and I don't want to harp on the bad stuff but there are great things um...and I love President Clements. He’s trying really hard so it just reminds me that there is some good and it’s not all bad (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).
Figure 4.17: #FOCUSUP

Figure 4.17 #FOCUSUP is a photograph that The Tie Guy took at one of the two on-campus coffee shops, Java City and Starbucks, which are housed at the research site. He began his description by telling me first and foremost, he was a big coffee drinker. He even showed me the Gold member card to prove it. He reflected on the observation that other people who frequent the two coffee shops may have not ever seen a mixed race male drinking coffee before. To him, white people visit Starbucks more on campus then they do Java City even though Java City is more diverse than Starbucks, he still does not see black males in either establishment. Starbucks resembled the old second floor of the library to The Tie Guy when they had long tables to sit at. It seemed important to The Tie Guy that Starbucks had long tables for people to sit at so you could sit together and talk if you had a large group. He said:

*Kinda reminds me if you there studying in small groups you better have headphones or something cause it gets loud in there. But it’s kinda awesome and you are just chillin in there. Just having fun with good friends. I love going in there* (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

The Tie “built upon” and “reinforced relationships” with students and faculty when drinking coffee in the coffee shop. He liked to meet up with his friends and other
students and catch up. This photograph also elicited a memory he had when he met one of his professors there during his first semester as a student to go over a rough draft. He described the atmosphere as:

> Java City was like the perfect place and you know it was laid back and it wouldn’t be that awkward and it was awesome you know and I wasn’t really a coffee drinker back then... just like the atmosphere - laid back and chill (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

The Tie Guy appreciated the fact that the research site has their coffee shops for the students, faculty and staff to use. It is a place where he “can just chill or study or both and drink coffee now that I am like a coffee connoisseur…I’m just the guy with the hair drinking coffee.”

In Figure 4.18 #GAP, this photograph elicited many memories for The Tie Guy. This is an area located at the research site that had three parts to it. The pond is first, then the white amphitheater behind the pond, followed by the green area at the top. These three spaces also represented relaxation spaces that influenced how The Tie Guy perceived the campus climate at the research site. He first discussed the reflection pond and talked about how people, on a sunny day, would usually site around its perimeter. He
laughed when he shared the thought that some people actually dive into the reflection pond on hot summer days, which they are obviously not allowed to do. There used to be fish in the pond which they are no longer there because of people jumping into the pond most likely. Also, the pond usually has a fountain going off in the middle but was not displayed in this photograph as it was very cold this day. Sometimes, on Yik Yak, the popular social site for students around the country, a group of students will call for a flash mob polar plunge at the reflection pond, which The Tie Guy said received lots of votes. Another memory the photograph triggered was that the research site tried to dye the reflection pond orange. The Tie Guy remembered it looking more brown than orange but they made an honest attempt. Overall, this was a place where The Tie stated:

...students would like study at that place like the other place like relaxation and you don’t have to worry about anything or anybody...unity and relaxation. But yeah, that’s me being off campus that’s where I am just gonna walk to every day (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

The green portion, called the North Green, of the photograph was another place that The Tie Guy really enjoyed. The Tie Guy reminisced about the times he played ultimate Frisbee as a “newb”. He then became a really good ultimate frisbee player and joined an intramural team at the research site. The Tie Guy stated that:

My racial identity in that was of being an ultimate frisbee player. It’s kinda rare for someone like me to play ultimate frisbee so I guess I was like that’s who I am. I mean most people I play with are white (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Cross country was also another sport that The Tie Guy identified with and thought that as a runner, this helped him throw better as an ultimate Frisbee player. Also located on the North Green would be remembrances of important dates, cancer awareness, birthdays and
celebrations of important moments in history. The Tie Guy described the 911 attacks display they had:

...like on 911 they had like 911 right there just with flags and stuff. If you are on top of the library bridge you can see it clearly...yeah and they will do that for other things too. No doubt you will be on the library bridge and will have to look right...or left...which way you were going into the North Green and the amphitheater (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Figure 4.19: #PEACEFULPLAZA

Figure 4.19: #PEACEFULPLAZA is the third photograph that The Tie Guy took which represented relaxing spaces on campus. This area is located right outside of the library which was another space that he enjoyed being in. This space is useful for breaks and listening to music and just sitting still for The Tie Guy. He decided to take this photograph because when he is studying for long periods of time, he will take a 10 minutes break and walk out to this place. The Tie Guy explained “it’s a good place to relax. Like it’s right in front of the fountain area you know there...is like usually a lot of people there like during the middle of the day.” This area represented “relaxation and bliss” for him and he did not have to worry about anything for those 10 minutes that he was taking a break out there.
...like after those 10 minutes if I’m stuck on like a really hard project...like...a...like that [showed me a computer coding project he was working on]...uh it helps me free me mind like kinda and I go back to it with a new mind kinda knock out problems really fast after that...I work really hard and then those 10 minutes or relaxation are just I have to have or something or I’ll just freak out you know? Cause that’s just who I am you know...I need that. [talked about extroverts]...I’m never alone when I take this break so it shows that the students...I’ve seen teachers there talking...tons of teachers and that their all...you know...sense of unity like and of relaxing not everyone is relaxing but they just seemed chilled out when in this spot. It’s like a healing zone almost. (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

The Tie Guy laughed as he reflected on a memory where there used to be a duck that the students named called, “Dabo Duck”. Dabo Duck would swim in the pond next to this space which brought students, who were looking for him to catch a glimpse of the famous duck, to the area. But it seemed that Dabo Duck has not made an appearance in quite a while and it is speculated that he is being “protected” by the research site.

Unifying

Jenny has enjoyed being a member of the color guard since she was in high school in the Midwest. In Figure 4.16, she displays her school spirit by “repping” the research site. In this photograph she is taking a snapchat photograph with one of her best friends as they sit in the stands of one of the football games. Jenny and her friends
always try to send a Snapchat photograph from the perspective of the color guard to the stadium site that posts photographs sent by fans and place them on the marquee for all to see – but to no avail, they never make the cut. But they are persistent and try during each game. She also shared this photograph with me because it was a “representation of their friendship” and showing their diversity and differences from one another.

Jenny is a member of a diverse color guard at the research site compared to her high school color guard.

...well I mean you can tell she is African American and she is actually Hispanic and then she is white, Asian so it’s a very diverse color guard. This color guard was much more diverse than mine at home. It’s been interesting um coming from the Midwest and most of them are from instate - it much of a culture shock than a racial shock…(Jenny, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Jenny’s observation about the diverse color guard is similar to Destrova’s observation about the players on the football team. It seems that the football team and the color guard are both diverse in nature but do not seem to represent the composite of the overall student body. This is one reason why this is a unifying space for at least the study participants who commented on this space.

Jenny then shared a story with me about the time the President of the research site and the head football coach attended one of the color guard practices. They said, “You are a crucial part of the game the football team really feeds off your energy!” This was very well respected among the members of the color guard and left an impression on Jenny and her friends. She was a bit skeptical at first about maybe this “could be all sauce just to get us to practice but a lot but if people do believe it so it’s nice you know.” Jenny liked the fact that everyone comes together during those football games and
support the team and share in the common cause which is what she named the photograph she took. “I’m not a huge football fan but I do get pretty hyped!”

Destrova laughed as he described Figure 4.21: #Cookout as a “major part of my life”. This picture was taken at an off-campus fast food restaurant location that is known for quick and economically priced American food. I visited one that is located in downtown Columbia, when I am in a hurry or in between meetings, so I was able to recognize some of Destrova’s descriptions of the place. Some of Destrova’s favorite meals there, which he described to me, were the “BBQ sandwich and then either two wraps or quesadillas”. Destrova and his friends frequently visited this place, especially late at night, because for one, it stayed open later than the other places around the outside of campus such as Wendy’s and Taco Bell. Destrova informed me that one main reason why he eats there was because the research site did not offer preferred meals late night accept for “green plates that we get from the dining halls…they’re to-go plates but I’ve been filling those up lately so I can something to eat late at night…”. This sometimes makes Destrova feel “upset” with the university that he has to leave campus to get something to eat late at night.
Destrova really enjoys staying up late with his friends. He told me that “…me and my friends we usually stay up really late and last semester we ended up going to Cookout for an entire week…everyday…” As he does other things on campus, like after this interview he was going to see a movie the research site was hosting on campus, going to Cookout was a unifying, positive experience for him and his friends.

*Whenever I go to Cookout on the weekends, you know, there is all different types of people there so…it’s kinda…no I don’t think there is tension there. It’s kinda like everyone is having a good time…it’s the weekend…* (Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

He further reflected on this thought and moved to the research site before moving into the next photograph and shared:

“Um…on campus I think it’s uh…pretty stable. I don’t think there is really any tensions with anything like that nothing...definitely nonchalant…not like you know wars or anything going on…it’s kinda just you know – cause it’s football season. I think that’s really helped liked that’s been amazing” (Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

Figure 4.22: #family

For Jess, Figure 4.22 elicited lots of sentiments as she described the experience as being a positive, passionate, unifying space where she does “not think of race at all
there”. It is easy to see in the photograph that there are thousands of fans celebrating their win…together.

*I just really love the games like...yeah...like when we are all cheering together it makes me feel like we’re a family...I just really feel that way because...like...but then also like we all like just really want them to win and we all have the same passion and that like I think unites us you know...what I really want...so that’s why I said family for this one* (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Destrova mentioned previously that the football game experience made him “comfortable” around other students and “feel better” about attending the research site.

Similar to Destrova, Jess felt a sense of family, hope and promise for herself and the research site when thinking of the racial climate while sitting with other students, who are different from her, but sharing the same experience. This sense of “family” that she felt made Jess want to become more involved at the research site and “seek it’s good”. To her that is what it means to be a member of a family. These experiences made Jess search for opportunities at the research site to become further involved. Jess explained these feelings:

*...when I’m here, I believe that Clemson can do great things...I believe we can do anything like when we win those game and so like...yeah...I know it’s like amazing and so I think that in general. It gives me a lot of hope like believes in the good of mankind and how like we all like have some good in us and how like society is hopefully like progressive and leaning more towards like a life like without race so I guess this like kinda captures the hope that I do have...* (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).
The Tie Guy took seven photographs that reflected his perception of being a mixed race student at the PWI. Each photograph fell under the area of campus climate: Importance of Space. Spaces on campus, to The Tie Guy, was where he could be himself, not think about things like racial issues or division among students, and concentrate on computer coding, his music, relaxation, and frisbee. In Figure 4.18 is a photograph of a “central hub” on campus that The Tie Guy spent the majority of his time. He works in this building besides visiting with friends and purchasing textbooks and class supplies. He compared the center to a “Swiss army knife” but you could get anything you needed there. The Tie Guy was a senior who lived off campus when we met and liked to make the most of his time when he is on the research site. When he is on the campus, he spends the majority of his time at the Hendrix Center.

*So like I really think it's like really connected with like everybody on campus everybody has to go there at one point. I’m pretty sure everybody goes there at least once a day. So like through the four years I’ve been here like but the 4 years that I’ve been here like with classes that’s the one place I go to every semester every day of every semester cause like I have to...I don’t know...it’s like gravity you know - you are drawn toward it um but yeah and it’s part of my route that I but...well. yeah take every day to school* (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).
The Hendrix Center is a place where all students go at some point during the day. He made the observation that all races are there…all different types of students visit the Hendrix Center. The Tie Guy reminisced back to when he was a freshman during the time he met with his Welcome group when first coming to the research site. He said he:

...met a lot of new people there and it just like it represents a place of organization um to meet up with new people you know and I just think it was just really vital in some of the friends I have now (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

One reason why this photograph was so beneficial to The Tie Guy was that it represented his positive relationship he has with the research site. The research site appeared to make a good impression on The Tie Guy because he felt the campus was organized and was displayed through the buildings’ purposes to support student success. He said “it is a symbol that represents how organized the university is and kinda like a...I want to say it represents like a launch pad before you enter your college career.”

The Tie Guy reflected briefly how he really enjoyed spaces on campus that provided him space for creativity and relaxation. He did not spend time on reflecting on negative aspects of the research site or discussed diversity or racial issues. He actually tries to spend time thinking about other things instead of the negative that surrounded the research site at times. This was just one of the spaces that freed his mind to do so.

...it’s just a place where I don’t think about that [racial climate] at all which is a good thing. I just go there and it’s like there’s nothing to worry about, people are studying or eating or reading books... like all these places that I’ve taken photos of so far kinda the opposite...it doesn’t make me think about that...it’s like maybe some places do but like this place in particular just doesn’t. I don’t think of anything bad while I am there (The Tie Guy, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).
Victoria was a freshman at the research site at the time of our photo-elicitation interview. She lived on campus and really enjoyed utilizing the volleyball sand court between the dorms. She took this photograph and titled it #open because it is a unifying space for all students to use. She started playing volleyball with her boyfriend and then every day a new student would walk by and want to join in the game with them. She enthusiastically told me that she even met new friends this way and exchanged cell phone numbers so they could all get together and play volleyball games in the future. She likes this space as she brought my attention to the fact that she or other students never look at each other and say “so it’s not like ‘oh you're black...you shouldn’t play with us’ or “You’re white we don’t wanna another white person’ it’s always like anyone who wants to play can play and it’s always been so fun.”
This is another unifying space on campus that The Tie Guy found influential in his identity as a mixed race student at the research site. He compared this space to high school and how the hallways in high school were inside but at the research site, it was almost like the hallways were outside to get from class to class. This courtyard type space also seemed to be a central location for visiting with friends and catching up with people he does not see very often. The Tie Guy even mentioned that he has met other mixed race students in this common area, “I would meet other mixed people there so it made me feel more passionate in some cases...I’m serious...you meet everyone there.” In other words, this was a central location for students to meet up in-between classes.

“Everyone has to take classes here when you are an undergrad. I’m certain so...knowing that I’ll see all my friends from different races is just really nice.”

![Figure 4.26: #prominence](image)

Figure 4.26: #prominence

Destrova’s second picture, Figure 4.26 #prominence, displayed the research site’s football stadium.

*This photo – I wanted to keep it as a memory for me because my mother always said you need to take pictures of stuff or else you’ll forget ’em...or it’s always good to look back at something...so but this one kinda captures everything. It’s the pizza party that they had was amazing in the sense – yeah it was the pizza party but just them announcing that Clemson’s number 1. That was pretty*
Before I met Destrova, the research site had just played in the National Football Championship which was a unifying event in and of itself that several of the study participants talked about. When Destrova attends the football games he is seated in “block seating” which is an arrangement created by the research site for the students who attend the university. Destrova explained these seating arrangements:

...brought you closer to people because you were able to sit with people you would spend time with anyways I guess and enjoy the football game, tailgating before was amazing – fun stuff (Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

For Destrova, who used to play football before he injured his knee in high school, felt like these football games strengthened his personal relationship with the university. He described this feeling to me by saying, “Yeah but not being super attracted to football…this kinda just makes me feel better not just about football although it makes me feel better about being here…” He continued to reflect on the fact that attending these games made him “more comfortable with other people per se…I didn’t know cause we are all celebrating this…such a wondrous team…” Destrova even observed that the team was made up of both black and white team members which is opposite of the composite of the population makeup of the research site. This observation added to the description that this was a positive, unifying event for him and his friends.
University Climate

Responsive

Figure 4.27: #celebration

Sophia was very excited to talk about Figure 4.27: #celebration. This photograph is a picture of a cane and a scarf that she uses in her belly dancing class at the research site. This fun, intense class was finally offered during a semester Sophia could take it after she waited an entire year. There are four people in her class who are all or part black. She described the dance style as “African style” but also integrated different dances from other cultures. Sophia was “so happy this university has this class...I wanted to take a class like this for years and they offered it I was so excited about that.” She commented on the composition of the people that took the class with her by stating:

*I was really shocked and happy, in a good way, because this wasn’t the predominantly ethnicity here and to come out and celebrate something different and different cultures, and on top of that we are not just pulling from one place, we are pulling from so many different cultures and that was just like a cultural extravaganza...this picture to me represents appreciation just in case anyone asks...this is appreciation in the highest form...it is* (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).
As described in the area of campus climate: Importance of Space, Sophia spends a lot of time riding the bus and waiting at the bus stop. Figure 4.28: #Discuss shows the call button for the traffic light when waiting on the bus. Underneath is a spider that was in the process of spinning a web when Sophia took this photograph. Sophia told me that no one has killed this spider because it has been there for numerous semesters. Just the other day she saw it building another web in the same place. The story of the photograph was a metaphor regarding starting conversations at the research site for Sophia. She said:

...when you want to start conversation it’s like what are you getting next to and this is what it’s like with this spider like do you really want to start this conversation... (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Sophia took a dialogue class where they talked about racial issues and other diversity factors surrounding the campus climate. Her goal was to “engage more” but the facilitator of that course made a crucial statement that made sense to Sophia. She told her:

... ‘you need to be healthy’ and I’m like what do you mean and she’s like ‘don’t start like this subject can be taxing on you...you can’t get bogged down on it and you can’t get unhealthy’ and so I think that when it comes to discussing on
campus or with students it’s like don’t get unhealthy and you will get stressed and you already have school (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Sophia appreciates how the university makes the dialogue classes available to students. These classes provide a space for students to talk about difficult topics such as race and social justice. These classes can be “really positive” for those that really want to be heard and have something to talk about or share. But on the other hand, Sophia felt like:

...sometimes because there aren’t people with different dialogues...and when it comes to speaking on campus, I think it all depends on the location on campus and what words...like anything...what words do you use. Are you gonna use a strong word that will get straight to the message or are you gonna like tiptoe around it and I think sometimes with Clemson you have to tiptoe around that big trigger word even if it is exactly you mean (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Sophia believed that you have to “navigate very wisely” at the research site when talking about these issues with other groups on campus. Sophia advises that if you want to enter into these types of dialogues, you need to first become aware of your space where you are entering into the dialogue, know your audience and know the level of understanding you are working with. Sophia said, “…you shouldn’t have to tell them to tiptoe around them like at a human level people should see where you’re coming from so I have lots of hope for Clemson [laugh].”

Figure 4.29: #Future
Figure 4.29: #Future reflected how Sophia appreciated the way the university is currently improving and educating others about the racial issues surrounding the history of the research site. As she was walking home from her dance class, she took this picture at night because:

*I feel like it’s such a...it’s such a conversation starter because I feel like people feel a certain way and the history and everything and that’s why I wanted to change the name to future cause we all know the history, or we should all know the history by now - of the school, the founders and so it’s blurry and so I wanted to change it to future so like what does the future hold for Clemson* (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Sophia reflected that she was not aware of the racial tension surrounding the research site when she arrived on campus after her first year attending another school. She did not know the history of the research site at the time but appreciates the fact that the university is making an effort to provide education for those new and transferring into the research site. Since the topic of changing the name of the buildings surfaced, Sophia reflected on the subject:

*Overall I didn’t expect them to really to change it so I wasn’t disappointed I just think it would have been great if they would have changed it cause it would have made a lot of people happy and it just would’ve like made people see Clemson is like really trying to change and make a difference and more emails and creating a panel like it’s something that is effective right now so...* (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).
Figure 4.30: #understand

I learned a great deal of new information about the research site from Jess. In particular, I learned about a mandatory class for new, incoming freshman and transfer students called the “Community Dialogue Program”. This program was put into place by the research site in response to the need for open dialogue and safe places on campus to have these discussions about diversity, racial issues and differences among students at the research site among other topics. Jess was the only study participant who was actually in training to teach the course as a student during the time of the interviews. She definitely cared about this program when we met because she spent a good bit of time sharing her experiences with me and telling me stories about activities that were conducted with other students and training groups when this picture was displayed. She explained these experiences as “uncomfortable” and “emotionally draining” but really enjoyed them because they caused her to think and appreciate herself, others and the time to openly discuss racial issues. Jess said, “Yeah...so this is like I really love this kind of stuff and it’s like I don’t get to talk about it too much because a lot of people don’t care.”
However, she described to me that she felt the research site focused on race too much. I found this extremely interesting because this kind of statement seemed to be a common thought among most of the study participants who mentioned this community dialogue course. In most cases, it seemed to have more of a negative effect than the expected positive effect one would think when bringing students together to talk about racial issues. Jess had mixed feelings about it but other study participants’ experiences were very similar to a negative experience.

...the only difference in coming here was like this school talks about race so much and there’s like some people who don’t care about it all. Some people are like blatantly racists, and some people are like very social justice oriented. So I think that was the only thing that changed for me coming here was like I think I became more aware of being mixed race cause like before I could like blend in as a white person and then now it’s like people are asking me to speak up, people are asking me to lead discussions ...yeah...and like people wanna know how I can relate to being like a minority um so I guess that’s the only thing is like I’m like have to think about it more. It’s not really easy. Like I honestly like talking about this stuff...it’s really heavy cause I don’t...none of us want to think of that we’re different from other people and like constantly thinking about this like...makes like...emphasizes my differences when before I was trying to like hide it and...so...like it’s not easy but I do think it’s something that I do have to talk about just for like not just for my sake but for so like the sake of a lot of other minorities who don’t look white and don’t have like as a lot of voices as mine I guess...yeah... (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Jess talked about her relationship with the research site and described it as “mixed”. As a mixed race student whose physical appearance resembles more white than her Asian side, she felt she needed to be an ally, sort of speak, for her Asian side and other minorities attending the research site. Jess was very introspective and seemed comfortable sharing with me her thoughts about race and the how she felt about the university as a whole.
...those are my people that is struggling in this school that is feeling slated and stuff so as usual my relationship with the University is kinda like mixed because there’re some days I’m like I don’t care especially like doing this um New Student Dialogue Program and teaching the class now it’s so emotionally like draining and like lots of energy put into it and you know sometimes you just get really tired about talking about race and so there are days where I am just like no - yeah - like I just need to go home and I’m gonna watch like New Girl with my white roommates and not think about this at all. And then there are other days where I’m just like...okay...yes...like I need to do this dialogue I need to like talk about these issues and like find out more like learn more about like different races and like how they grew up differently from me so you know it’s like a mixed relationship I guess (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

The picture was a snapshot of a diagram that was used during one of her training meetings. The conversation surrounding this diagram was about looking at one’s life in each context and how each one can overlap, such as discussing issues happening in the United States and bringing the conversation inside the classroom at the research site. They also talked about racial and ethnic differences and how people or groups being discriminated against might feel compared to the ones actively discriminating or stereotyping. She then went into further detail about why she named her photograph #understand:

I think the reason is we will always talk about the majority to most like white people have the most powerful voice in society in America but um...and so it’s not until recently that black people are starting to like say hey we need a voice too. Like we are a minority but we are still like a significant amount of people in America but then like mixed race people are still like small like so like I don’t think it was necessary...I felt like I was being understood as much as like me understanding myself and other people through the class so like when I say I understand it wasn’t like I felt understood by other people...I started to understand more about like other people and also like who I am in relation to like whole topic of conversation and everything (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Jess is extremely pleased that the research site is providing place for students and groups to have these conversations. She talked about the racial conflicts on the Missouri
State’s campus and made a comparison to the research site and felt we were much farther along in the positive direction than most schools. What is difficult for Jess is having these conversations with other minorities on campus. The research site is a very large public university but she observed that “there’s still people that are having a painful experience here and it’s not okay like even if they are minority. She then talked about “white privilege” and being introduced to the term when she attended the research site after never hearing the term before. Jess talked about how she went from never hearing the term at all to hearing it “every single day”. She questioned the idea about having a portion of white privilege since she is half white. She then shared with me a story about an experience she had during her training where the supervisor asked her group of 20 students (half black and half white, half female and half male) to talk amongst themselves and placement themselves in a line of privilege starting with the person representing the most privilege to the least. Jess was shocked but considered this activity very memorable.

Well we talked about it...that was the thing that made it so horrible was like she was like set your selves up according to privilege, yall can talk about it. But like try to listen to each other’s voices and I’m just gonna sit back and watch and so you know we all just stared at each other for like the first minutes because we were like “This is so awkward!”. Finally we started like putting ourselves in okay...obviously like black people are going to be at the back of the line, white people in the front, probably put the males first for each race but then after that of course it like super weird and we were like so do we talk about religion and this other - cause like - so the group I was with like talking they also feel there’s like topics we feel strongly about and that’s another reason why I didn’t really connect with them is because like religion was another one they felt very strongly on. And like being a Christian is definitely a privilege in our society and I think quite a few of them were not and were actually like hurt by Christians in the past so that was definitely like a negative. So like I was like well I am a Christian and I think for they kinda forgot that I was white or not completely white so that at first I was like near the front with the other girls and the other girls were Atheist
so they were like you go in front of us because you are a Christian but then the whole time the white people talking about it and then like the colored people talking about it and our supervisor would call out just like “I just noticed you are not talking with each other within the races” and she’s like “I noticed that the men white males are telling the people of color what to do” and after that we were all like “what do we do?”. So that’s why this experience was so hard. I think that a lot of us just wanted to cry...yeah...and the males were like “I don’t want to do this anymore” [laughs ] (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Jess continued by explaining to me where she fell in the privilege order. She told me that one of the girls who was placed towards the back shouted her name and said “Hey! Jess is not completely white…I think in our society if you are not completely white you might as well be black so you should put her at the end of the white line - like in between ours.” Jess agreed with the group that she made an interesting observation. Jess said:

Well, I look white um I have experienced like a ton of privilege in my life so I’m going to put myself up here in the front but someone else who is mixed race probably half white half Chinese like me might definitely put themselves like further down. So I was like that was the only time that like the mixed race thing came up in the dialogue in that group where it was super like I don’t know what to do (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

Jess told me that there were a lot of “sorrys” following this activity as it seemed to be an eye opener how some groups feel and sense other groups.

This experience was powerful for Jess as she took away many new understandings from the activity such as white students had the privilege to pretend white privilege did not exist, especially at a PWI like the research site. When she was in high school, Jess did not have to think about race or racism like she does now while attending the research site. She talked about the negative affects the media was placing on the climate at the research site regarding the recent racial issues and the surrounding history it was built on. Jess definitely disclosed that racism and discriminating acts do exist and
happen at the research site. It was difficult to hear, but Jess also shared painful experience where she observed one of these acts right in front of her on the research site.

I was like walking down the street and there was an Indian man in front of me and someone just like shouted something at him and drove off and like I didn't' know I didn't really know what it was but like...he just looked really upset about it and like I noticed stuff um...so this class definitely made me more aware of the crappy stuff that has happened and it also was interesting with the other students that have been here longer who have been in this program who are super involved in like the Gantt Student Center - like some of them have like a very negative view of the campus and like the college and...so that was kinda hard for me because I was like I don't want to think that my school is horrible and I still don't think my school is horrible but for some people it’s just like so difficult” (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).

These dialogue courses brought awareness to Jess about the temperature of the racial climate at the research site and what other student groups are possibly facing and experiences at a PWI in the south.

Before we ended our interview session, Jess talked about how our country needed to share and discuss the positive progression we have made as a country to improve racial issues. She said that:

I think another struggle for social justice is like we especially when it comes to racism we really focus on the negatives like with the Charleston nine, there was a lot of diversity going to that like there was a lot of white people there’s a lot of colored people coming together to like show respect for that - yeah - but the problem is when we’re doing social justice and race you don’t talk about that good stuff you just focus on the problems and so I think like you were saying we’ve come so far in 10 years and that’s something I have to remind myself all the time - black people were enslaved years ago and now we are already moving towards this and it’s something I have to keep reminding myself cause I always get caught up in like “oh but this horrible thing happened to this person today” so yeah... (Jess, photo-elicitation interview, February 4, 2016).
Figure 4.31 #Fake

Figure 4.31 #Fake was taken by Marie when she went out for dinner, off campus near the research site, with friends. She took this photograph to display the unauthentic view of Asian food and Asian font depicted by American culture. She explained that “food in Clemson is not real Asian food” as she laughed at her comment. She also thought it was humorous that her friends thought it was real Asian food but she also made the observation that this type of experience may be the only “foreign food they’ve ever had…” Marie cunningly described the food at Asian restaurants as “American food with some like soy sauce on it.”

Marie is a graphic designer major who has had experience working with font and matching font with appropriate marketing. She commented on the font that was chosen for the menu in the picture:

_I was looking at that title Osaka Express and just like, I am graphic design major, so typography is a big thing…um…and I was looking at the font of it and it’s like in this…I guess people would say it’s Oriental which I hate that word…Oriental font they think they would see that in Japan or something it just reminded me its English in this stupid font…_(Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

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Marie anchored on this thought for a moment and explained the reason why she took the photograph which influenced how she perceived the campus climate as a mixed race student at the research site. To Marie, she physically resembles an Asian person on the outside, the part that other people can see and interact with. But she is also “very American”, the part that people do not see because of the way she looks. This made Marie feel like “a little bit like a fraud”. Marie then realized she did not have other Asian friends at the research site which shocked her a bit as she never really thought of that before. Marie does consider herself more connected to her American side than her Asian side but does still have “some culture outside of like American culture” so she is aware of things “about the world and… about where I am from but still not that much but a little bit more than any of my friends.”

Destrova also reflected on an “eye-opening” cultural experience similar to Marie’s but the event was hosted by the research site on the campus. This cultural event was held in the dining halls to bring awareness to popular food items and culture which they titled “Fiesta Day”. Tacos are very popular in America and after listening to Marie’s story, it seemed this event took more of an American approach then a Hispanic one on the heavily recognized cultural food. Destrova described the staff, which were serving during the event, were wearing “little straw sombrero things” which added to the stirred up controversy surrounding the event not just on the campus but also around the state. The event was posted by the media which so happened to be during the time other racially related issues were being brought to light at the research site.
...some people thought that was a very close-minded look at a culture and everyone was saying if they have gotten the assistance from the, like some of the...uh...I guess Latino groups, fraternities or what have you that are eh here at Clemson to get some perspective onto other parts of the culture but - but I donna know how, to me, I can see where it can be very offensive but then again I can also see how it can also be a very simple something that is very simple just like “Hey we wanna have tacos” they're just taking a major part of a culture so that we can share and experience that which yeah...so...it’s definitely a view on perspective. Like someone may be offended if I said something a common place to another culture...so ... (Destrova, photo-elicitation interview, February 5, 2016).

Matthew also shared an event that was a spin-off of a real group held in a tasteless manner by a Greek organization who attended the research site. Party-goers where required to dress up in gang-like attire and pictures were taken and posted to social media outlets for all to see. Controversy surrounded this event as the other issues on campus were being simultaneously highlighted in the media. Matthew commented on the fact that the party and the title “Cripmas” did not offend him per se, but he has had some personal experiences with gangs while attending a public high school and thought it was comical that the party-goers outfits (colors) did not come close to how real gangs are represented in parts of the state and around the country.

_Yep so like everything was a little bit tense right now for race and things...So basically like they kinda picked the wrong time to do anything like that. So if they would have kept it to a simple party, like they would have been fine, but then like...um...like this comes on again and like where I saw it I was just like laughing and other people were like truly offended and things like that about it. Like I understand...okay...like you're offended like but are why?...tell me why you're offended? Is it more of cause like I saw some of the videos and some people were saying like they felt offended. My friend pointed out like they...white people are dressing up like gang members and I'm like...okay...do you consider yourself a gang member? Like some people are like being offended. I'm just like you have no association with gangs why are you even offended by this right now. Um some people are offended by like they're mocking black people so I'm like why you consider blacks gang members? Um...I'm not a gang member. Like the only thing - they don’t consider themselves a black gang they're considered the_
Crips and Bloods and their colors are red and blue. There’s no only black people can be in this - yeah it’s strictly just a gang and do you represent this or do you represent that. That’s just like um say we have uh when we do like world soccer for an example like we have all the different countries okay the only thing that’s being excluded is like is this person from Spain, is this person from Germany, is this person from USA and so on um just like with gangs (Matthew, photo-elicitation interview, February 8, 2016).

Marie took Figure 4.32: #Ironic in the dining hall at the research site. Marie commented on the first part of the sign that read, “YOU TALK WE LISTEN” followed by “IT’S EASY TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.” This was a “load of crap” to Marie as she reflected on how this influenced her perceptions of the campus climate as a mixed race student. Marie felt strongly that the administration and the university, as a whole, did not listen to the students very well. She told the story about a time last year when Black Lives Matter was heavily demonstrated on campuses across the United States, the Yik Yak account for the research site was saturated with “harsh things” and felt if she wanted to stand up against some of the statements being said on the feed, she was afraid she would “get trashed”. She felt a division among some of her friends that lived in the surrounding area of the research site their entire life. She could not talk to them about some of the racial issues that were bothering her at the time. There was a division of
communication had between her and other students who were considered part of the southern culture on campus.

Um sometimes my great friends, they are so great um and like we all do ministry together um and it's really great but a lot of times they just don't understand so when I just want to talk to them about something they think it's not as serious or as important as I make it and like understand that too. There all for the most part from South Carolina some of them lived on like farms so I have to like respect that and understand that but I feel like since I am mixed race I am a little bit more open to learning about those cultures and some of my friends (Marie, photo-elicitation interview, February 1, 2016).

Figure 4.3: #leave

Sophia took Figure 4.3: #leave which pictured her on the bus at the research site. As this was a positive experience and space for Sophia, she was reminded about a time when she wanted to leave the research site because of the lack of diversity and opportunities on campus. The red sign flashed STOP REQUESTED repeatedly overhead, which she learned was a broken light, but immediately was reminded about the time in her life when she wanted to request stop at the research site.

So that kinda ties into when I got here, I was like, ‘should I leave?’ because when I went to my first school as soon as I walked into orientation, I was like, ‘I don’t think this is going to work.’ I just had the feeling it was wasn’t gonna work, and then it ended up not working for all those reasons and so my gut feeling would tell
me it wouldn’t work. And then when I got to Clemson I was just like ‘I don’t know if this will work’ like maybe there’s a school out there that’s like diverse enough for me, that has everything that I want, but I don’t want to have to go to like across the country to get the diversity that I want and so in the beginning I did think about leaving cause I was like “I don’t know is this the school for me?” And I remember my mom when we went into orientation at the other school she was, I was like “mom...I don’t know if I want to go here” and she was like “You already signed up...you have to go” [laughs]. Clemson was like better so I kinda...I had to stay because it was really good in my major. I wanted to give it a shot but that was my first thought when I first got here and it just kinda like I thought “Oh my gosh should I stay here? This isn’t what I thought it would be’...It was just...I didn’t know if I wanted to stay because I didn’t feel like I would feel comfortable here. I didn’t feel like there was an outlet for my racial identity here...so (Sophia, photo-elicitation interview, February 2, 2016).

Since this feeling Sophia had on the bus, she has engaged more with diverse students on campus through diverse and culture experiences like her dance class that she is currently participating in. These types of experiences are vital to students like Sophia, as she stated, “this is appreciation in the highest form…it is.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results in two parts: 1) introduction of each study participant framed by Renn’s Ecology Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (person, process, context, time and placement within the Five Mixed Race Identity Patterns) and 2) presentation of four (4) major areas of campus climate which emerged from numerous reviews of the subject matter of the photographs taken and hashtag titles assigned to each photograph and twelve (12) perceptions of campus climate themes which emerged from the analysis of the narrative data elicited from the photo-elicitation interviews: Classroom (isolating and unifying), Importance of Space (diverse, enjoyable, beautiful, peaceful, and unifying), Peer Groups (divided by like-groups), and University Commitment (responsive and unresponsive). The nine study participants’ voices were
revealed throughout the entire chapter. The following chapter will discuss the relationships discovered between how the study participants perceived the various areas of the campus climate as a mixed race student attending a PWI and their individual differences.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the voices of the nine study participants were presented. Their narratives were framed by Renn’s Ecological Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development (ecological factors and identity patterns) and by their ten perceptions of the four major areas of the campus climate as described by Hurtado et al. (1998). Chapter Five reaffirmed the purpose of the study and the two research questions that guided this narrative inquiry. The discussion of the findings includes the discussion of ten perceptions of four major areas of the campus climate and the relationships between the perceptions of the four major areas of the campus climate among the study participants and their individual differences. Implications for practice and recommendations for further research are provided to expand upon the areas that were studied in an effort to stimulate additional interests and produce supplementary research by higher education professionals and administrators on mixed race college students, how they identity, navigate, experience, and perceive PWIs. A summation of the narrative inquiry research study follows and concludes with the final chapter summary.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this narrative inquiry research study provides a platform for mixed race college students to tell their lived stories about their experiences of being mixed race at a PWI, to explore how mixed race students in the study perceived their
campus climate at a PWI, and to explore relationships between individual differences, such as ecological factors and identity patterns, and perceptions.

The goals of this study are to bring awareness to the individual concerns voiced by the study participants and shed light on spaces that are significant to their overall success, not to generalize or discover one truth but to “sing up many truths/narratives” (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001, p.112), provide educational professionals and administration full access into the lives of mixed race students to better understand the landscape they navigate at the PWI, encourage colleges and universities to review their campus climates to ensure mixed race student voices are included; and stimulate the creation of diverse environments for learning and socializing that facilitate the intellectual and social development for all students.

**Research Questions**

To understand the perceptions of the campus climate among mixed race college students at a PWI in relation to their individual differences, the following two research questions need to be addressed:

1. How do mixed race students perceive their campus climate at PWI?
2. What are the relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences?

**Discussion of Findings**

The goal of this narrative inquiry was to explore the perceptions of campus climate among mixed race students attending a PWI and discover relationships between
how they perceived the campus climate and their individual differences. This section answered the two research questions that guided this search study.

Research Question One

*How do mixed race students perceive their campus climate at a PWI?*

The findings resulting from research question one specified a total of ten perceptions of the *Classroom Climate, Peers Climate, Spaces Climate,* and the *University Climate* which aligned with the dimensions of campus climate highlighted in Hurtado et al. (1998) framework for understanding the campus climate. Out of the 33 photographs submitted by nine study participants, two submitted photographs that illustrated the perception of the classroom climate as *isolating* and two submitted photographs that illustrated the perception of the classroom climate as *close*. Marie and Sophia shared the same perceptions of their classroom climate as they both were the only minority in their class and felt their physical appearances automatically categorized them as a minority. Even though they both agreed they enjoyed their professors, they experienced negative interactions with several classmates. Victoria and Jenny perceived their classroom climate as close since they described positive experiences in their classrooms and were connected to classmates, professors, and preferred working with other students in small groups.

The second major area was the Peers Climate. Three study participants submitted four photographs that illustrated their perceptions of the Peers Climate as *divided by like-groups*. They also described their peers at the research site as “Southern”, “southern culture”, and “Southern pride”. Jess, Marie, and Matthew shared feelings of “different”,

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“divided”, “no different”, and “separated” when observing the Peer climate at the research site. Jess felt that she had to explain herself each time she did something out to the overall norm set by the culture at the research site, Marie felt she looked the same as her white counterparts by skin tone, but her facial features automatically set her apart from her peers, and Matthew felt divided and separated from peers because of feelings of not being accepted by either side of his heritages. All three students were frustrated with the lack of diversity on campus and the groupings of like-groups at the research site. They also were taken back by the fact that there were students on campus that never either experienced a diverse person before or had not had other diverse friends outside of their like-groups.

The third major area was Spaces Climate which was the largest category supported by 17 photographs submitted by eight study participants that illustrated the Spaces Climate, or “pockets”, around campus which were important to their well-being on campus. Sophia and Fredrick perceived the bus system and the library as diverse which temporarily satisfied their diversity needs while the overall campus student body was not diverse in nature. Fredrick and The Tie Guy perceived specific building spaces as enjoyable because of the comfort the space offered and the access it provided the study participants to resources and scholarship. Marie perceived the research site as beautiful and evil because of the physical beauty of the research site but also perceived the university as evil in reaction to negative exchanges with students of the dominant race during open dialogue opportunities and one on one conversation. The Tie Guy perceived social spaces peaceful because they promoted creativity, relaxation, peace of mind, and
physical activity for introverted students who required these spaces to reboot and not think about race or the controversial events surrounding the research site. Jenny, Destrova, Jess, The Tie Guy, and Victoria perceived entertainment spaces as *unifying* because these spaces brought all types of people together for one common purpose and instilled hope into the study participants for a more unifying research site in the future. These entertaining spaces such as football games, volleyball matches between dorms, meeting spaces between classes, dining spaces with friends and work spaces provided these study participants the personal space they required to stay true to self, experience diversity outside the pressures of racial lines and boundaries, and have an overall positive experience as a mixed race student at the research site.

The last major area of campus climate was University which was illustrated by seven photographs taken by three students. Sophia and Jess perceived the University climate to be *responsive* to the needs of minority students by providing diverse and cultural awareness opportunities such as cultural specific dance classes, community dialogues about race and individual differences and leadership opportunities. Marie and Sophia perceived the University climate to be *unresponsive* when it came to increasing diversity on campus, opening up direct communication lines between the student and the university and administrators, and restaurants around and outside of campus that serve cultural specific food but realize it is only “American food with soy sauce on it”.

Research Question Two

*What are the relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences?*
This section discusses relationships discovered between study participants’ perceptions of the four major areas of campus climate and their individual differences. Relationships between perceptions of campus climate, ecological factors (Person-Process-Context-Time), and the five patterns of mixed race identity (monoracial, multiracial, multiple monoracial, extraracial, and situational) are important to document as they could possibly be used as predictors of retention or overall success of mixed race students at PWIs.

Classroom Climate

Isolating

Marie and Sophia submitted photographs illustrating their classroom climate. Figure 4.1 #isolatedcell and 4.2 #sarcastic reflected shared observations regarding the lack of diversity found in their classrooms which influenced their perceptions as isolating. Marie and Sophia mutually shared misgivings regarding the lack of diversity and expressed feelings and experiences of isolation as a mixed race student in their classrooms. Even though Marie is from Northern Virginia and Sophia is from a predominately black neighborhood in South Carolina, alike, they both attended diverse high schools and placed a high value on growing up with diverse friends. They also shared and expressed the disconnection from, as Sophia specified, “people who make it obvious they’ve never had a person of color friend or who are extremely isolated in their ethnicity and/or subculture”.

Marie and Sophia both aligned with Renn’s (2004) Monoracial identity pattern and the Multiracial identity pattern. As they concurrently identified as mixed race during
the time of their interviews, or as Sophia’s described, “biracial”, they also identified along the Monoracial identity pattern. As acknowledged in Renn (2004), Marie identified as “sometimes Asian and sometimes as mixed” (p.96). Sophia identified more with her mother’s black side of the family as this was the person she lived with most of her life. She was raised in a predominately black neighborhood and formed a predominately black milieu which she established a monoracial identity (Renn, 2004) before she attended college.

For Marie and Sophia, there was a relationship between leaning towards one parent’s race or heritage, previous experiences attending diverse high schools, engaging in positive relationships with diverse friends who also have diverse friends of their own, desiring a more diverse learning environment at the research site which lead to perceiving their classroom climates as isolating since their diversity needs were not met within this portion of the campus climate.

Close

Victoria, Jenny, and Matthew submitted photographs illustrating their classroom environment. Unlike Marie and Sophia, Figure 4.3 #close, Figure 4.4 #family, and Figure 4.5 #united reflected positive experiences and perceptions of their classroom environments. Jenny is from the Illinois, Victoria is from the low country of South Carolina and Matthew is from South Carolina. Jenny is connected to her mother’s Japanese culture as she can speak fluent Japanese but communicates in English with her father. Victoria is more connected to her father’s Hungarian culture as they spend a lot of family time with his extended family but still values her mother’s Filipino side and
Matthew resembles a person of color but is connected to his mother’s German side. They all experienced diverse high schools that consisted of students from “rougher” neighborhoods and “richer families” who ultimately ended up leaving to attend another predominately white high school. Matthew had negative experiences with gangs at his high school. Jenny and Victoria have friends that are predominately white as they both grew up in areas where this social group was the more dominant racial group. Matthew associated with athletes in high school and at the research site.

Both Jenny and Victoria aligned with the Multiple Monoracial identity pattern. The fact that they both related to both sides of their heritages, this affiliated them with this particular identity pattern.

When they came to the research site, Jenny described her inability to “relate to the Southern culture” and Victoria found herself acting as a “floater” between social groups. They both shared frustrations with questions on paperwork that required the person to choose an identity. But when it came to their classroom experiences, both perceived the classroom climate as close. Victoria enjoyed the closeness of her classroom environments and Victoria preferred her family oriented feeling with her Japanese class.

For Jenny and Victoria, a relationship was found between their active involvements with both of their parent’s heritages, aligning with the Multiple Monoracial identity pattern and perceiving the classroom climate as close as they enjoyed integrating with classmates, professors and smaller learning spaces on campus.
Spaces Climate

Diverse

Sophia and Fredrick submitted photographs illustrating diverse spaces on campus. Figure 4.5 #cruising, Figure 4.6 #LERNIN, and 4.7 #waiting displayed areas on campus where they perceived the space at the campus to be more diverse. Sophia and Fredrick shared similar comments that the campus overall was lacking in diversity but in these photographs, these spaces were very diverse. As they both differ in requirement levels of diversity, these spaces influenced how they both saw the research site for what it was and for Sophia, retained her as a student at the research site. In Sophia’s photographs, Figures 4.5 and Figure 4.7, she displayed the bus system at the research site and reflects on the importance of having a space that reflects the racial environment that she is used to growing and desires at the research site. This environment, for Sophia, is what retains her as a student at the research site she is at her happiest riding the bus with other diverse groups of students. Her perception of the racial climate in these spaces is diverse.

Fredrick enjoys the diversity of the library space as he is reminded that, even though he lives in the South and the research site is in the South, the state is not all white people, but diverse people as well.

Sophia was raised by and lived with her black mother and grandmother and Fredrick was raised by his Italian father and Japanese mother. They were both raised in South Carolina. Both attended diverse high schools and expressed occurrences where they felt like their physical appearances isolated them from specific social groups. Sophia felt like she could not be as black or as white as she wanted to, and Fredrick
shared a critical event where he wanted to join a Japanese club but seemed there was an unspoken rule about having to be full Japanese. As this did not seem to bother him very much, it still was a lasting memory that reminded him he was mixed race.

They both shared an association with the Monoracial identity pattern. Sophia aligned more with her mother’s side as her physical appearances also leaned towards a person of color. Fredrick described his physical appearance as white and leans towards his white heritage than his Japanese side. For Fredrick, it was easier to identify as white as he would have to explain his differences to others if not.

In Sophia’s photographs, Figures 4.5 and Figure 4.7, she presented the bus system at the research site and reflected on the importance of these spaces on campus. These spaces were pockets that encompassed the racial environment she was used to growing up and desires at the research site. This environment, for Sophia, is what retains her as a student at the research site she is at her happiest riding the bus with other diverse groups of students. Her perception of the racial climate in these spaces is diverse. Fredrick enjoys the diversity of the library space as he is reminded that, even though he lives in the South and the research site is in the South, the state is not all white people, but diverse people as well.

There is a relationship between their dominant physical features, attending and experiencing diverse high schools, aligning with the Monoracial identity pattern and appreciating the research site for providing more diverse spaces, or pockets, around campus. Even more so for Sophia than for Fredrick, diverse spaces around campus are vital for a mixed race student who is on the fence about leaving a university because of
the overall lack of diversity of the study body. These types of diverse spaces allow students, like Sophia, to experience the level of diversity they were used to prior to attending the research site to be content and successful at the university.

*Enjoyable*

Fredrick and The Tie Guy submitted photographs illustrating learning spaces on campus. Figure 4.8 #HOME, Figure 4.9 #STEPSTPSUCCESS, and 4.10 #STUDYCAFE displayed areas on campus where both study participants felt like they could concentrate on their academics and be themselves with no pressure from other social groups or outside racial forces.

Fredrick described himself as more white in appearance and The Tie Guy resembles a person of color and described himself as “the guy with the hair”. Fredrick and The Tie Guy were both raised in South Carolina and attended and experienced diverse high schools. They also both displayed characteristics of keeping to themselves in regards to racial controversy and debate in response to events around campus but at the same time are affected by those discussions happening around campus.

Fredrick and The Tie Guy both aligned with the Extraracial identity pattern. Fredrick and The Tie Guy described being raised equally between their families races and ethnicities but was not connected to any part of them and “makes it into my own thing.” This is the least followed pattern of the five identity patterns, according to Renn (2004), but was also seen accompanied with Multiracial identity pattern which The Guy Tie is also affiliated.
The photographs taken by Fredrick and The Tie Guy displayed spaces around campus that represented scholarship, learning, focus, and enjoyment. They both perceived these learning spaces as an enjoyable, “strengthening their relationship with the university” and by learning in these spaces helped them to “enjoy their time” at the research site. There is a relationship between their personal characteristics of keeping to themselves, focusing on the future and their academics and not putting too much emphasis on what was going on around them. As they identified with the Extraracial identity pattern, this allowed them to enjoy the learning spaces available to them on campus which provided room to focus without the concern of outside racial concerns and other debates.

Beautiful and Evil

Marie submitted Figure 4.11 #Eden which illustrated her perceptions of the physical beauty of the research site as a whole. Several of the study participants described the overall attractiveness of the campus and how they relished in being outside and relaxing in specific spaces, but for Marie, this was the drawing force that brought her to the university in the beginning.

Marie has a strong connection to her faith which led her to make the comparison of the research site to the biblical place called Eden. As Eden was very beautiful, Eden also symbolized evil as Marie described when she talked about her racial concerns and experiences had with her roommates and while attending community dialogue classes. But overall, she appreciated the physical beauty of the outside spaces at the research site
and perceived the physical campus climate as beautiful which helped retain Marie as a student who considered leaving during her first semester.

*Peaceful*

The Tie Guy submitted Figure 4.12 #FOCUSUP, Figure 4.13 #GAP, and Figure 4.14 #PEACEFULPLAZA. These spaces represented spaces on campus that provided The Tie Guy peace, relaxation and stillness. The Tie Guy’s personality is keeping to himself, original, and focused and in order to complete assignments, he requires spaces that allow him to concentrate, unwind, and by himself. There is a relationship between his perception of the relaxing spaces on campus climate, described as peaceful, and his individual differences. During high school he did not want to be a part of social cliques on campus and kept to himself a lot. The Tie Guy is an original and prefers to stay that way even at the research site as a college student. This also represents his affiliation with the Extraracial identity pattern. These spaces on campus that he perceived as peaceful, allow him to stay original to himself which he appreciates about the research site.

*Unifying*

Jenny, Destrova, Jess, The Tie Guy, and Victoria submitted Figures 4.15-4.21. What these photographs have in common is spaces around campus these study participants perceived as unifying. Jenny, Destrova, and Jess submitted photographs of football games at the research site. These events were important to the study participants because the overall climates of these events are unifying in nature and racial concerns are not considered or observed. Destrova, The Tie Guy, and Victoria took photographs that
displayed areas on campus that were also unifying and allowed them to have positive experiences with other students from different social groups on campus.

Jenny, Destova, and Jess have had similar negative experiences with the racial climate on campus through their community dialogue classes. Even though Jess is in training to lead a community dialogue class, all three shared negative stories. Destrova and Jenny shared stories about personal experiences with other students who share opposing views on race which made them uncomfortable. When they attend football games, they feel as if the school is unified at that moment which provided a sense of renewed hope for the future. So while attending these games, they perceive the campus climate as unifying. Jess and Jenny were both raised in states outside of South Carolina and are close in nature to their backgrounds. They appreciate differences in other people which is frustrating for them when they are confronted with climates that are racially polarizing. Even though Destrova is from the South Carolina and raised by his white mother, he also is frustrated with students who are close minded and openly “racist”. Jess, Jenny and Destrova all identify with the Multiple Monoracial identity pattern which relates to how they perceived the campus climate as unifying during football games.

Destrova, The Tie Guy and Victoria shared positive experiences with friends and other students in spaces around campus such as restaurants, engaging between classes, and recreation spaces between dorms. These study participants appreciate these spaces as it brings them closer to not only their friends, but to other groups of students different from them. As these students like to stay in familiar spaces with familiar friends, these spaces provide opportunities to engage with people different from them. Destrova, The
Tie Guy and Victoria share affiliations with the Multiracial identity pattern which relates to perceiving these climates as unifying. These study participants are submerged in both sides of their cultures and appreciate the differences of others. They associate with people for who they are, not because of the color of their skin.

Peers Climate

*Divided by Like Groups*

Jess, Matthew, and Marie perceived their Peers climate as *divided by like-groups* which was also described as “Southern” and “southern culture”. They submitted Figures 4.22 – 4.25. Each study participant has a one parent they described as either “caucasian” or a different ethnicity that some would consider caucasian. They each had experiences with diverse high schools and value those experiences with other students different from themselves. Another relationship between these students is they each have strong connections to at least of their parent’s heritages. Marie is the only study that does not feel especially connected to either side of her family but is very aware of their backgrounds. During interviews they all commented on the frustration they felt when they meet white students at the research that never either had a friend of another race or ethnicity or desires to meet or become friends with someone different from themselves. The study participant in this portion perceive the Peers Campus Climate as divided by like groups rich separates them from the majority group on campus.
University Climate

*Responsive*

Sophia and Jess both perceived the university climate as responsive to their diversity needs. They submitted photographs that reflected areas on campus that were influential and responsive to their needs as mixed race student such as making cultural and diverse opportunities available, providing communication outlets for students to engage in open dialogue with other students, and educating students and the surrounding public about the history of the research site.

For Sophia, there was a relationship between the levels of experience she had with diversity high school, being raised by her black mother, requiring more diversity overall but also appreciated the research site for creating diverse opportunities for students like herself. Being raised by her Chinese mother and caucasian father, living in Queens to traveling after high school, Jess valued the many diverse experiences had in her life. Coming to the research was a bit of shock as diversity was scarce and peers congregated by like groups as described in Peers Climate. Students from the majority group never seemed to step out of their comfort zone and meet someone different from them. This led Jess to participate training to help other students communicate frustrations and concerns about racial differences on campus.

*Unresponsive*

Sophia also perceived the university as unresponsive to enrolling more diverse student on campus. She rides the bus to satisfy the need to be among diversity on campus but expressed concern for the lack of diversity enrolled at the research site. Sophia
considered leaving the research site for environments with more diversity, but decided to stay since she was able to participate in activities and surround herself by diverse spaces on campus to get through her time at the research site.

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

The findings from this narrative inquiry have implications for those who work in student affairs, counseling, multicultural centers, institutional research, administration, building management and development, and student activities or directly with student programming, research and support. As Renn (2004) discovered in her study, mixed race students do not desire to achieve one racial identity. Mixed race students identify in a variety of ways which is important for educational professionals who work with college students to be aware of.

This study identified several important areas on campus that serve as supportive spaces for mixed race students where they feel comfortable identifying in several ways, meet and engage with new people, and interact with other diverse groups. Some of these spaces were not obvious until their voices were heard through stories and photographs. For an example, Sophia described the importance of the bus system and the people who ride it at the research site. Not only does it get her from point A to point B, it also served as her daily dose of diversity she required to be successful at the PWI. Higher education professionals and administration need to be mindful of the spaces around campus and the affect they have on the mixed race students who participated in this study. Removal of spaces like these could be academically and emotionally detrimental to students like
Sophia who are on the fence about leaving the research site because of the lack of overall diversity.

At a research site where the majority of the student population is white, based on the stories told by the nine mixed race study participants, diverse spaces or “pockets” need to be made available around campus. The study participants require options around campus that support their fluid identity process such as diverse and cultural awareness programs and activities, transportation that is available to all students, quiet spaces where students of all races and ethnicities feel comfortable visiting, and areas where they can meet new people.

Another important finding that relates to practice is the negative affect the community dialogues seem to have on the study participants and how they identify within those settings. As several study participants expressed appreciation for the communication outlets made available to them by the research site, the overall consensus was the community dialogue classes were not useful and only promoted isolating behaviors among the study participants when attending the classes. Some felt the research site placed too much emphasis on talking about race, which caused them to retreat in silence while attending the class for fear of being discovered as a mixed race individual or having partial membership in the dominant race, called upon to talk about something they do not feel animosity about, or judged because they do not have anything to say at all. For an example, Matthew felt like his class was trying to get him to make negative statements about the research site which did not represent how he actually felt. Destrova experienced “blatant racism” during his dialogue class and Jenny shared a story
about a classmate who never thought about being a person of color until he attended the research site. Higher education professionals, administration, and the class’s program development team should take these stories into consideration and re-evaluate the mission, purpose, goal, design, and projected outcomes of the community dialogue classes. If the program was constructed to support mixed race students, I would like to see a volunteer student panel used. Each student in the panel would represent a group on campus, share stories, and answer questions the students in the class may have. This would be voluntary but would include mixed race students as a member on the panel. This design would not place pressure on students to speak if they did not feel comfortable and this also would include students who wanted to share their experiences in a volunteer manner.

Implications for policy on an institutional level continue to request enhanced data collection tools for mixed race students to accurately self-identify on forms and applications. This improvement would allow for the creation of programs and services that might be beneficial for mixed race students’ overall outcomes consisting of their supportive learning environments and development. The study participants in this study shared their experiences with forms where they were either unable to represent themselves accurately or were forced to choose one identity. This type of false reporting is inaccurate and can be damaging to the creation of supportive programs and opportunities for mixed race students who attend PWIs.
Recommendations for Further Research

There are several areas I would recommend exploring further to expand the literature on perceptions and experiences of mixed race students who attend PWIs. The first area is exploring the outcomes of mixed race college students such as critical events, retention, and graduation rates. As the focus of this study was not on outcomes of the study participants, several students reflected on events that influenced contemplation of leaving the university for another, more diverse, accepting institution. Knowing what these trigger points or events are would bring higher education professionals and administrators awareness to the areas and events on campus that promote or hinder overall success of mixed race students.

Another area of recommendation for further research includes a larger scale study and sample size consisting of diverse combinations of race and ethnicities of mixed race students heritages. Most qualitative studies on mixed race college students are small in size. As generalization cannot be applied across the mixed race college student population, it is imperative to collect as many stories as possible to enter into saturation among the narrative data. As Renn (1998) concurred, “It is time for a national study of mixed race students, their experiences, identities, and college outcomes” (p.254). The mixed race student population continues to increase not only in our country but across college campuses throughout the United States. Large national studies would provide a comprehensive understanding on how mixed race students and higher education are or are not maximizing resources to meet the needs of the mixed race college student population.
The more higher education professionals and administrators know about the complex lives of mixed race students who attend PWIs, the more awareness is brought to the importance of the creation of spaces that encourage diverse experiences for mixed race students who attend a PWI, providing diverse opportunities on campus that accurately reflect cultures represented by different student groups, and encourage communication and engagement across different student groups on campus.

**Conclusion**

This narrative inquiry expanded the work of previous researchers who focused on mixed race students in higher education. This study intended to capture the lived stories told by nine mixed race, full time, undergraduate college students to better understand how they perceived the campus climate of a PWI located in the South. Renn’s Ecology Theory of Mixed Race Identity Development uncovered the ecological factors that influenced how each study participant identified among Renn’s Five Identity Patterns. Photo-elicitation interviews were used as a data collection method to elicit narratives about influential areas on and around campus and how the study participants perceived the campus climate as a mixed race student attending a PWI.

Transcription, in vivo coding, and thematic analysis uncovered four major areas of the campus climate and ten perceptions of those areas communicated by the study participants: Classroom Climate (*isolating and close*), Peers Climate (*divided by like groups*), Spaces Climate (*diverse, enjoyable, beautiful and evil, peaceful, and unifying*), and University Climate (*responsive and unresponsive*). The four major areas of campus climate represented by the 33 photographs taken by the study participants corresponded
with the four dimensions of Hurtado et al. (1998) framework for understanding the campus climate of higher education institutions.

Major relationships between perceptions of campus climate and individual differences were: 1) perceived the classroom climate as isolating, identified as monoracial and multiracial, contemplated leaving the research site for a more diverse environment, and being the only minority in class at the research site, 2) perceived the classroom climate as close, identified with multiple monoracial identity, participated in high school and/or college intramural sports, and preferred close spaces, classmates, and peer groups, 3) perceived the peers climate as divided by like-groups, attended diverse high schools, identified with the multiracial identity pattern, possessed distinct physical features that automatically placed study participant in a racial category even if they expressed feelings of rejection by the particular group, and are close or aware of both of parents’ heritages, 4) perceived the spaces climate as diverse, attended a diverse high school in South Carolina, and identified as monoracial, 5) perceived the spaces climate as enjoyable, attended a diverse high school, identified as extraracial, participated in on-campus activities and organizations and expressed their importance, stayed close to self, and was not defined by race, 6) perceived the spaces climate as beautiful, evil and peaceful, identified as monoracial, multiracial, and extraracial, connected to personal religious faith and spaces where the study participant could unwind and take breaks, 7) perceived the spaces climate as unifying, identified as monoracial, multiple monoracial, multiracial, and extraracial identity patterns, and was either connected to parents’ heritages or did not consider themselves a race or was defined by race, 8) perceived the
university climate as responsive, strongly connected to one parent’s heritage, identified with monoracial and multiracial identity patterns, and participated in diversity and cultural awareness opportunities on campus offered by the research site, and 9) perceived the university climate as unresponsive, self-identified as monoracial and multiracial, expressed concern that the research site did not accurately represent cultures and races on campus either by enrollment or by programs and events.

Chapter Summary

This concluding chapter reaffirmed the purpose of the narrative inquiry and the two research questions that guided it. The discussion of findings was presented by answering both research questions. The implications for practice and policy advised higher education professionals and administrators to be mindful of spaces around campus that support identity development for mixed race students, re-evaluation of the community dialogue classes provided by the research site, and improving the ways in which mixed race student identification is collected to allow for the creation of programs and services that might be beneficial for mixed race students’ overall outcomes. Recommendations for further research included focusing on critical events that occur for a mixed race student to contemplate leaving a PWI for a more diverse environment, and the creation of large scale studies that primarily aim to collect stories from many combinations of ethnicities, races, and individual differences to add to the expanding literature focusing on mixed race students who attend PWIs.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Dear Dr. Cawthon,

The Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the protocol identified above using exempt review procedures and a determination was made on December 16, 2015 that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as Exempt under category B2 based on federal regulations 45 CFR 46. Your protocol will expire on June 30, 2016.

Please find attached the approved consent document to be used with this protocol.

The expiration date indicated above was based on the completion date you entered on the IRB application. If an extension is necessary, the PI should submit an Exempt Protocol Extension Request form, http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/forms.html, at least three weeks before the expiration date. Please refer to our website for more information on the extension procedures, http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/guidance/reviewprocess.html.

No change in this approved research protocol can be initiated without the IRB’s approval. This includes any proposed revisions or amendments to the protocol or consent form. Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, any complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately. All team members are required to review the IRB policies on "Responsibilities of Principal Investigators" and "Responsibilities of Research Team Members" available at http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/regulations.html.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth

B. Elizabeth Chapman '03, MA, CACII
IRB Coordinator
Clemson University
Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
223 Brackett Hall
Voice: (864) 656-6460
Fax: (864) 656-4475
E-mail: bfeltha@clemson.edu
Appendix B

Purposeful Sample Recruitment Letter

Dear Student,

My name is Catherine Sturm (researcher) and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Educational Leadership (Higher Education) program at Clemson University. I will be conducting a study titled “Exploring Perceptions of Campus Climate Among Mixed Race Students Attending a Predominately White Institution”. This study is under the direct supervision of Dr. Tony Cawthon, a professor in the School of Education Department at Clemson University (864-656-5100).

This study focuses on the lived stories told by mixed race students regarding their experiences and perceptions of campus climate at Clemson University. Results from this study will provide useful information to college and university personnel on the experiences had by mixed race students and how the campus climate is perceived in relation to individual differences. Additional information on individual identity development patterns will also be useful in order to create supportive programs, resources and safe spaces on campus.

As a participant in this study, please be aware that your told story as a mixed race student will provide insight on how you perceive the campus climate at Clemson University. Your reflections and experiences will add to the literature that currently does not include verbal narratives of mixed race students and how they perceive their campus climate at a predominately white institution in relation to individual differences.

Your participation in the study will consist of the following: 1) attend one Meet the Researcher meeting with other study participants; 2) attend one in-person individual interview with the researcher; 3) complete and submit an activity via email consisting of taking photographs with your smartphone reflecting how you as a mixed race student perceive the campus climate at Clemson University and assign hashtag titles to each photograph; and 4) review the overall campus portrait and personal narrative sketch for accuracy. Please know that your participation in the study will be completely confidential. You will have an opportunity to provide an alias to hide your identity in the study. The individual interviews will be tape recorded for transcription, analysis and presentation purposes only.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop taking part in this study without giving the researcher any reason. You can also ask to have all the information collected about you destroyed.

If you are interested in participating in the study, do you meet the following criteria?:

1. Are you born from parents of two or more races?
2. Do you self-identify as a mixed race individual?
3. Are you a currently enrolled, full-time, undergraduate student at Clemson University?
4. Do you own a smartphone that can take photographs?
5. Can you email photographs from your phone?
6. Are you available to participate in January – February 2016
   a. One Meet the Researcher meeting (2 hours or less depending on responses and questions)
   b. One individual interview (2 hours or less depending on responses)
   c. One participant-driven photographs and hashtag title activity (deadline one week)
   d. One review of the campus portrait and your personal narrative sketch for accuracy

If you meet the above criteria and would like to learn more and participate in this study, I would like to invite you to the Meet the Researcher meeting on:

**January 19, 2016**
5:30pm
Cooper Library – Room 107
*(Located near the main stairs on the 1st floor – on the side with 101 and 101A)*

*Light snacks will be provided and please bring a pen or pencil.*

Thank you for your assistance and I look forward to meeting and working with you!

Sincerely,

**Catherine T. Sturm**
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership (Higher Education)
Clemson University
(e) PerceptionsofCampusClimate@gmail.com
Appendix C

Study Participant Consent Form

Exploring Perceptions of Campus Climate Among Mixed Race Students Attending a Predominantly White Institution

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. Tony Cawthon (Principal Investigator) and Catherine Sturm (Researcher) are inviting you to take part in a research study during the Spring 2016 semester. Dr. Cawthon is a professor at Clemson University and Mrs. Sturm is a doctoral candidate at Clemson University who is managing this study under the direct supervision of Dr. Cawthon.

The purpose of this research is to explore how students who self-identify as mixed race perceive the campus climate at the University utilizing participant-driven photographs to elicit reflection and discussion during interview sessions. The second purpose is to explore ecological factors and identity patterns of mixed race students in relation to the different perceptions of the campus climate expressed during the interviews. Lastly, the researcher would like to find out what this means for higher education.

Your part in the study includes meeting with the researcher two times, complete a participant driven activity between January 2016 – February 2016 and provide electronic feedback on the campus portrait and respective narrative sketch: (1) Meet the Researcher meeting – 2 hours or less depending on the participant’s responses and questions; 2) interview session -2 hours or less depending on the participant’s responses; 3) complete a personal photography activity by taking a series of photographs with your personal smartphone, assign each photograph a hashtag (#) title and email them to the researcher – student will have one week to complete activity and email consent/photo release form to the researcher.

Risks and Discomforts

There are no unforeseen risks involved in participating in this project, but you may feel uncomfortable discussing some of the topics described below. As the participant you will be reflecting and contributing personal experiences and perceptions of the campus climate at Clemson University as a mixed race student. You possibly will be sharing personal experiences with race, individual identity formation, diversity, and differences. There may be times that personal experiences with racism, discrimination, and oppression will be shared and discussed and can be sensitive to some. You may discontinue participation at any time if you become uncomfortable discussing these topics.
**Possible Benefits**

This study aims to tell the lived stories of mixed race college students regarding their experiences and perceptions of campus climate at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) which is a term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment. Results from this study will also provide useful information to college and university personnel on the importance of mixed race identity development in order to create supportive programs, resources and development safe spaces on campus.

As a participant in this study, please be aware that your voice as a mixed race student will provide insight on how you perceive the campus climate at a PWI. Your reflections and experiences will add to the literature that currently does not include verbal narratives of mixed race students and how they perceive their campus climate at PWI in relation to their individual differences.

**Incentives**

The researcher will provide light snacks during the Meet the Researcher meeting. There will also be a drawing for a $100 gas card at the end of the study. You will only be entered in the drawing after all components required of you for this study have been completed (Meet the Researcher meeting, submission of participant-driven photograph/hashtag title activity, participant photograph release form, nonparticipant photograph release form, and member check email).

**Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

You will be provided the opportunity to choose an alias you would like to use to protect your true identity during this study. All transcriptions from the audio recordings during the interviews will be saved in the researcher’s Google Drive that is password protected and for the use of this study only. All photographs taken for the use of this study will be saved in the researcher’s password protected Google Drive. Anyone that is in the photographs and not part of the study must review and sign a consent form provided by the researcher before they have their picture taken. Anyone in photos that does not have a consent form (besides the participant) will be excluded from the study.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not disclose to anyone outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular.

**Choosing to Be in the Study**

Please be aware that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop taking part in this study without giving the researcher any reason, and without penalty. You can ask to have all the information collected about you
destroyed. Researcher has the right to discontinue your participation in the study if you do not follow and meet the timelines set by the researcher.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Catherine Sturm (researcher): (e) PerceptionsofCampusClimate@gmail.com

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

Consent

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant’s signature: ____________Date: _________________

A copy of this form will be given to you.
### Appendix D

**Personal Information From**

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<td><strong>Anticipated Graduation Year</strong></td>
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**Choose an alias**

*(this name will be used during the study for organization purposes)*

______________________________

- I would like to receive the final results of this study and a copy of my narrative sketch.
Appendix E

Photo-Elicitation and Hashtag Title Activity Directions

This photo-elicitation and hashtag title activity will assist with the interview component of this research study. Photographs that are selected for the purpose of this study will be included within the text of this study. The photographs will be kept for one year for research purposes and will then be destroyed after one year of presenting the results.

1. Each participant must use their own personal smartphone for this activity;

2. Take pictures of your environment, life, and day to day interactions that reflects and influence how you perceive the campus climate as a mixed race student attending Clemson University;

3. Starting today, each participant will have up to one week to take photographs and assign each one with a one-word hashtag title describing the photograph (think of Instagram);

4. Please email the photographs saved using the one-word hashtag title along with your chosen alias to the researcher, Catherine Sturm, at PerceptionsofCampusClimate@gmail.com no later than January 27, 2016 by 5:00pm. The researcher will send you a receipt when photographs saved by assigned hashtag title arrive via email.

Things to remember:

- When taking photographs, think why the image is important to you and how does it influence or reflect your perception of the campus climate as a mixed race student attending Clemson University, a Predominately White Institution (PWI), which is a term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment.

- If you include people’s faces as the focus of a picture, you MUST have them sign a consent form prior to having their photograph taken to ensure their privacy. You are provided copies of the consent form they must sign. Please make additional copies if necessary. Please bring all signed photograph consent forms to your scheduled one-on-one interview with the researcher. If these forms are not brought to the interview, the photographs with these individuals in them will be eliminated from the study.

- You will have one week from today to email photographs you want to use along with the assigned one-word hashtag titles. If the researcher does not receive your photographs and hashtag titles by the deadline, January 27, 2016 by 5:00pm, your information will not be used in the study.
Appendix F

Participant Photograph(s) Release Form

I _______________________________ authorize the researcher, Catherine Sturm, to access and use the photographs that I took with my personal smartphone and submitted via email to the researcher for the sole purpose of the current research study, “Exploring Perceptions of Campus Climate Among Mixed Race Students Attending a Predominantly White Institution”.

I understand that I will participate in an audio recorded individual photo-elicitation interview where I will meet with the researcher and review the photographs that I took and provide feedback regarding how I perceive campus climate as a mixed race student at Clemson University.

I am aware that I have the ability to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

I have read this entire Participant Photo Release Form and I fully understand and agree to it.

I represent and certify that my true age is at least 18.

Participant’s Signature:

________________________________________

Date:
Appendix G

Non-Participant Photograph(s) Release Form

I ____________________________ consent to the photographing of my person and property and the use of my photograph for the sole purpose of the research study, “Exploring Perceptions of Campus Climate Among Mixed Race Students Attending a Predominantly White Institution”.

I am aware that my name will not be used in the research study, only the photograph for the purpose of collecting data on how the participant of the study taking the photograph perceives campus climate as a mixed race student at Clemson University. The photograph(s) that I am in will be reviewed during an individual photo-elicitation interview with the participant as the photographer and the researcher, Catherine Sturm.

I am aware that I can withdraw my photograph at any time without any penalty.

I have read this entire Participant Photo Release Form and I fully understand and agree to it.

I represent and certify that my true age is at least 18.

Student Signature:

__________________________________________________________________________

Date:

__________________________________________________________________________
Appendix H

Study Participant Photo-Elicitation Interview Schedule Sheet

(Interview locations will be determined and sent to the participant via email or text message prior to scheduled interview)

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Appendix I

Written Prompt

Alias___________________________

Please respond to each written prompt below. Do not worry about following formal university writing regulations and include as much or as little as you want. Please use whatever writing style is most comfortable for you and most importantly, there is no right or wrong answer.

**Prompt A:** Do you consider yourself mixed race? Please explain.

**Prompt B:** Describe something that happened to you in the past few days that related to your racial/ethnic identity. Then tell me what that incident meant to you.

**Prompt C:** Write about a time since you came to Clemson University that you were aware of being mixed race. Please tell me what that situation meant to you.

**Prompt D:** What areas of your life influence how you identify as a mixed race individual?

**Prompt E:** What areas on campus do you feel the most connected and not connected?

**Prompt F:** What groups of students do you feel the most connected and not connected?

**Prompt G:** Have you considered leaving Clemson University? If so, why?
Appendix J

Photo-Elicitation Interview Protocol

Introduction:
- Ask permission from the participant to tape record the interview
- Turn on the recording device - state date, time, alias name chosen and location
- Review the title of the study
- Present the signed consent forms from the Meet the Researcher meeting
- Ask permission to pull up photographs taken by the participant
- Ask for signed consent forms from non-participants

Background Information:
- How do you self-identify?
- Describe your parents and immediate family, where you lived, and how you were raised
- Tell me about your background and your high school, friends etc…
- Why did you decide to attend this university?
- What have been your overall experiences at the university as a mixed race student?
- What would you want the University (administration, faculty, staff) to know about being mixed race at Clemson University?

Photo-Elicitation:
- Once each photograph is shown, ask the participant if they took that photo before starting each time.
- For each picture, ask the following questions:
  o Describe why you took this photo?
  o How has what is captured in this photograph influenced your racial identity?
  o How has what is captured in this photograph influenced your relationships with other students, faculty and staff
  o How has what is captured in this photograph influenced your relationship with the university
  o How has what is captured in this photograph influenced your relationship with the racial climate on campus?
  o Are there other things you would like to share with me regarding this photo?

Closing
- Inform the participant they will have a chance to review the overall campus portrait and their personal narrative sketch for accuracy.
- Leave time for additional questions or concerns from the participant
- Thank the participant for their time

(Renn, 1998)
Appendix K

Member Check Email

Dear [Alias],

Thank you very much for your patience as I took time these past few weeks transcribing your interviews and analyzing your narrative data, photographs and one-word hashtag titles for emerging themes and sub-themes.

I ask that you review each attached document very carefully for accuracy:

1. The first document is your transcribed interview verbatim. Review this transcription very carefully and please reply with any thoughts you may have from what you read. I will be telling your story from your narratives but will only use the quotes that pertain to the emerging themes that arose from responses across the study participants.

2. Secondly, you will see a Photographs and Hashtag Titles Matrix that placed all 33 photographs within their respective overarching theme and sub-theme. Please review your own photographs and let me know if you agree with their placement based on overall subject matter.

If you do not have any thoughts or feedback regarding your transcript or photographs and hashtag titles placement, please respond to this email with “CONFIRM” so I can enter you into the drawing for a $100 gas/station gift card.

Again, I am very appreciative of your participation in this study and I look forward to sending you the results when the completion of the study is confirmed.

Thank you and have a wonderful afternoon,

Catherine Sturm - Researcher
Doctoral Candidate
Clemson University
# Appendix L

## Perceptions of Campus Climate: Photographs and One-Word Hashtag Title Matrix

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REFERENCES


Kilson, M. (2001). *Claiming Place: Biracial Young Adults of the Post-civil Rights Era*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, LC.


