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A Study of Racialized Identity Among Single, White Mothers of Biracial Children

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

A limited amount of research addresses the challenges single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children have experienced with racialized identity within their kinships and social networks. In this transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological study, the lived experiences of eight single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children were investigated to address that research gap. The conceptual framework was Helms's Black and White racial identity theory. After thematic analysis of semistructured interview data, five themes emerged to describe the experiences of the single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children: (a) the mother's insight, (b) racism, (c) attitude about a Black partner, (d) perception of biracial children, and (e) the support system. The findings revealed that regardless of the attitudes of family members and friends (i.e., kinships and social networks) and lack of child-rearing participation of the child's father, these single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children benefited from the support of friends, the family of their children's father, and a strong community. In the absence of acceptance by family, the support of friends and community was invaluable for the mothers and their biracial children. The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change by helping counselors provide better multicultural counseling and therapy to single, White mothers of Black-White biracial children. Individuals of other races need to understand the lived experience of these single, White women with Black-White biracial children to help prevent racism and related challenges as well as promote the well-being of these mothers.

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Dedication

To the most amazing husband in the world, my dear Johnathan Moore, Sr., thank you for loving and supporting me in this process, for pushing me even when I wanted to stop, and for taking the punishment when I was stressed; I love you. To my baby girl, Alajah, thank you for your love and support. Thank you for allowing me to take the time to concentrate on my dissertation. Thank you, Johnathan Jr., my baby boy, for giving me that love and motivation and calling me randomly; you always knew the right time to call and make me feel better. To my oldest son, Dallas, and wife, Ranjita, thank you for fixing my computer any time I called and saying words that I did not comprehend, which made me laugh. Finally, to my granddaughter, Korra, you are my strength because I knew I had to press through the frustration every time I saw and talked to you, love you. To the best mother ever, Barbara Swann, you are my backbone, and thank you for never giving up on me but praying, teaching, and loving me. To my dad, James Peterson, Jr., thank you for always supporting me and telling me that I am strong. I love you, and you will forever be missed; this one is for you. To my brother, James III, and sister, Ozzie Moore Bolds, thank you for your support and for not letting me give up. To the rest of my siblings, Quinsette P. Godbolt, LaMonta (Tamika) Peterson Sr., JaShon Green, Lillie Gray, Willie King, Fred (Shirley) Moore Sr., and Mary Wright, thank you for understanding when I could not see you while I was working on my dissertation. To my late grandparents, Ceola Bush, Charlie Murray, Fannie Mae Bush Murray, Kaiser Brown, and Annie Mae Peterson, thank you for all the teachings; you are still in my heart and mind. I love and miss you all. To my late mother-in-law and father-in-law, Ozell Moore and Dr. Dallas Moore, thank you both for the inspirational conversations; you will never be forgotten.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the latter half of the 20th century, a societal shift occurred because two-parent family households have become less prevalent than single-parent households, meaning that only one parent, devoid of a spouse, partner, or significant other, is the primary caretaker of the offspring (Hayford & Guzzo, 2015). Additionally, biracial children are more prevalent (Jones & Bullock, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The 2005–2017 American Community Survey showed that more than 1.88 million single-parent families were headed by single, White women with children of two or more races (Guzman, 2018). Britton (2013) noted single, White women with Black-White biracial children to be lacking a White racialized identity. Ostracization from family and others makes single, White women with Black-White biracial children susceptible to emotional problems, such as depression and anxiety (Edwards & Caballero, 2011).

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into the lives of single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Research was needed to understand the experiences of single, White mothers who become estranged from their kinship and social networks because family members, friends, and others do not understand that, despite having children with Black men, the women remain part of White culture. The potential social applications include addressing the stereotypes accompanying White racial identity to inspire social change and societal equality (see Helms, 1990).

As of 2020, no scholarly literature had been published specific to the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. The population of single

women is growing, as is the number of White women having biracial children (Rauktis et al., 2016). The latter group of women has received the label of "transracial mothers" because they sought relationships outside of their race (Rauktis et al., 2016). Such mothers may lose their privileged status as White while recognizing the racism directed at themselves and their children. Some people might perceive women with relationship outside of their race to be "sellouts," not remaining true to their own race (Caballero et al., 2008; Song & Edwards, 1997). Research was needed to understand the social experiences of single, White, birth mothers of biracial Black-White children; therefore, I solicited the voices of single, White women with Black-White biracial children regarding their experiences and how their kinship and social networks have changed as a result of their racialized identity.

Chapter 1 begins with the background of the phenomenon as discerned from the limited research peripheral to the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. The exploration of prior research showed a gap in understanding the challenges of racialized identity with the kinship and social networks of members of this population. This chapter also includes the identification of and justification for the research problem, including the research question and guiding conceptual framework of Helms's (1990) Black and White racial identity theory. The purpose of the study was to use a transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological approach to provide insight into the lives of single, White women with Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Following a discussion of data collection and analysis procedures are definitions of the relevant terms

used in this study. A review of the assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations leads into an overview of the significance of the study and potential implications for positive social change.

Background

The "melting pot" nature of the United States suggests that everyone is welcome. In school, U.S. children learn that immigrants built the country: people of all races and color; however, prejudice, stereotypes, and denial based on race persist. One problem is colorblindness, or color evasiveness, which Neville et al. (2013) described as avoiding or ignoring the differences by race. Such colorblindness does not lead to understanding between racial groups (Helms, 2017; Neville et al., 2013). Fear and bigotry result when individuals do not understand other people's races.

As noted, increasing numbers of single mothers are rearing biracial or multiracial children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), the number of women without spouses increased from 12.2% in 2000 to 13.1% in 2010. Individuals identifying as being of more than one race also increased, from 2.4% in 2000 to 2.9% in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Jones and Bullock (2012) found that the population of people identifying as more than one race rose 32%, from 900,000 in 2000 to 1.6 million in 2010. The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) reported 47.4% of biracial Black-White children lived in single-mother households.

The knowledge gap specific to single, White women raising Black-White biracial children is regarding how they found their White racialized identity challenged by their kinship and social network. Rauktis et al. (2016) noted that members of society often do

not view transracial mothers as White because they crossed races in having children. According to Helms (1997), women raising biracial children often find the lifestyle they chose can cause a range of problems. First, single, White women with Black-White children could be risking their privilege with other White people who might see themselves as superior to people of other races. Single, White women of biracial children also might experience racism from people of color (Helms, 1997). As a result of feeling ostracized from their families, these women must learn to find the positive within their feelings for their children and for themselves.

This study was needed to contribute to the extremely limited research available on the challenges of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Topics of discussion with participants included the U.S. societal problem of colorblindness, which, in this case, includes not recognizing the unique experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Racism is pervasive in the United States, with traditional and social media showing common race-driven responses by families and communities. Even facing evidence to the contrary, Americans often do not want to accept the presence of racism (Rauktis et al., 2016). This denial is particularly problematic due to the increasing numbers of single, White women with biracial children losing their White racialized identity for acting against explicit or implicit social norms. Luke (1994) discussed the isolation of White mothers when identified as being inferior, or less than White, for having biracial children.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study was the lack of research and understanding regarding the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children; these mothers find their racialized identity challenged by kinship and social networks. Statistics from the latter half of the 20th century showed a societal shift because two-parent households have become less prevalent than single-parent households (Hayford & Guzzo, 2015). The most common type of single-parent household is one headed by a woman (i.e., a motherlike figure) after divorce, followed by a female head of household who has never married (Hayford & Guzzo, 2015). In 2017, single, White women with children of two or more races headed nearly 1.9 million U.S. households (Guzman, 2018). According to Britton (2013), single, White women with Black-White biracial children do not have a White racialized identity, something Helms (1990) defined as

> a shared sense of collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group. White racialized identity is how White [individuals] can identify or not identify with others and/or evolve or avoid evolving a non-oppressive White identity. (p. 5)

Single, White women raising Black-White biracial children can become estranged from their families and social networks because of racialized identity. Ostracization from one's family can create emotional issues, such as depression and anxiety, often leading women to question their ability to be good mothers (Edwards & Caballero, 2011). Berger et al. (2019) found that depression, anxiety, general stress, and parenting stress were higher among single mothers. Yet, researchers have not investigated the perceptions,

behaviors, and emotions of single, White women with biracial children relevant to racialized identity. I designed this study to address that gap in the research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological study was to provide insight into the lives of single, White women with Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Single, White women with Black-White biracial children are in a unique situation amid the perceptions of others. These mothers experience a racial identity of being White and choosing a Black partner, racism for having biracial Black-White children, and social and economic disadvantages of being single in a couple-oriented society (Helms, 1997; Rauktis et al., 2016). The phenomena of interest were the following:

- Single, White mothers have unique experiences with biracial children living in a society that deems them to be sellouts.

- Mothers experience the problem of having children outside of their race.

- Single, White mothers may find their racialized identity challenged by kinship and social networks.

Fulfilling the purpose of the study entailed exploring the perceptions of a sample of the population of single, White women with Black-White biracial biological children through one-on-one, semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. The consideration of single, White women with Black-White biracial children as socially different stems from the racialized identity from having biracial children (i.e., being a sellout) and singlehood.

Research Questions

This study fills a gap in research on challenges to racialized identity experienced by White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children. The following two research questions guided this phenomenological study:

1. What is the experience of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children?

2. How is the racialized identity of single, White women with Black-White biracial children challenged by their kinship and social networks?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was Helms's (1990) Black and White racial identity theory. Racial identity theory, which focuses on the abandonment of personal racism and racial privileges, also includes the avoidance of life options that would cause participation in racial oppression organizations. In this study, racism refers to the personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that White individuals use to convince themselves of the superiority of their race while promoting the inferiority of non-White racial groups. A person who is White might face racial identity issues if Black persons were to intrude into the White individual's environment in ways that could not be ignored or controlled.

Helms (1997) noted that the racial identity of Whites developed in response to significant interracial contact. In the absence of such interaction, people tend to interpret all racial energy through the context of racial identity status or stereotypes. In the absence of racial interaction, racialized people might deny their use of stereotypes, either overt or

covert. Racial identity theory was a useful framework to explore the challenges to racial identity among a selection of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Rejection from kinship and social networks could result from these women going outside of their race in having children (Luke, 1994).

Nature of the Study

The focus of this qualitative, phenomenological study was the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children specific to kinship and social networks not acknowledging the women's White racialized identity because of their biracial children. Phenomenology is the study of individuals' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Data collection involved semistructured interviews with a sample of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. All participants responded to the same researcher-prepared, open-ended questions in the same order. Semistructured interviews enabled the use of probing questions to allow participants to expand on their responses.

Definitions of Terms

Phenomenology/phenomenological approach: This approach incorporates human experiences through individuals' perceptions and lived experiences of a phenomenon. Researchers use phenomenology to understand events, patterns, and commonalities to interpret shared experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994).

Qualitative: Researchers employing this methodology seek to understand social or human problems based on personal experience using participants' views (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Unlike quantitative approaches, which rely on statistics, qualitative approaches involve the words of the participants.

Racialized identity: This term refers to a collective identity based on the perception that individuals share a common racial heritage with a racial group (Helms, 1990).

Single: An individual who is single either has never been married or is divorced or widowed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

White racialized identity: An extension of racialized identity, White racialized identity pertains to how individuals do or do not identify with others of the same race. These individuals might have evolved past or avoided embracing an oppressive White identity (Helms, 1990).

Assumptions

In academic or scientific research, assumptions are things a researcher believes to be true as necessary to adequately conduct a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Three assumptions guided this study. The first assumption was that the participants had experienced a shared phenomenon that enabled them to recognize and discuss their experiences. I also assumed that participants would be truthful when sharing their experiences of racialized identity. A final assumption was that using the transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological approach was appropriate to gather the unique perspectives of single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children.

Scope and Delimitations

This phenomenological study was an exploration of the racialized identity experienced by White, single women who have Black-White biracial children. Participants, chosen through purposeful selection, were eight single, White women with Black-White biracial children. These women lived in a southeastern U.S. state and faced the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. I collected data through semistructured interviews that occurred virtually (e.g., Zoom, Skype, Facetime, phone) to allow participants to share their experiences. All participants responded to the same researcher-prepared, open-ended questions in the same order, with room for probing questions to allow them to expand on their responses. I audio recorded the interviews with the participants' consent and, subsequently, reviewed and transcribed the recordings. The findings from the study do not address the experiences of all single, White women with Black-White biracial children in U.S. society; rather, the findings are specific to the thoughts and perceptions of the single, White women with Black-White biracial children who participated in the research. Additionally, the sample was delimited to White birth mothers of biracial children rather than White mothers who adopted biracial children.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was that the participants might not have answered the interview questions truthfully. Another limitation was the difficulty in maintaining the privacy of the participants, who live in a small community and are familiar to other residents; however, all participant responses remained confidential. Another limitation

was the temptation to overgeneralize the findings. Researchers must properly document and convey the details of interviews so that the findings are unambiguous. The final limitation was that the sensitive nature of the interview questions might have made the participants uncomfortable. If, at any point, participants found answering the interview questions to be too emotional or stressful, they were free to choose not to respond or to withdraw their participation altogether.

A challenge in qualitative studies is to avoid researcher bias (Moustakas, 1994). One way I avoided researcher bias was to not to share any opinions or personal beliefs with the participants about the topic under investigation. Another challenge was to avoid leading the participants to provide responses they believed I wanted to hear. The final challenge was to refrain from showing sympathy to the participants before or during the interviews. One way to control for such researcher bias is to bracket personal feelings prior to data collection through reflection on the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). By reflecting on my preconceptions through bracketing, I could more easily put those biases aside prior to interviews and data analysis.

One potential barrier to this study might have been the reluctance of single, White women with Black-White biracial children to take part in interviews. Another barrier could have arisen if the participants did not have a smartphone or computer with which to conduct virtual interviews. Should have this lack of access proven to be a problem, I would have purchased an inexpensive, prepaid Tracfone smartphone, which I would have sent to the participant via U.S. mail with a postage-paid return. The final barrier could have been the time required to conduct the interviews. Because participants were single

mothers, they might not have been available for a set period and thus declined to join the study.

Significance

The study is significant because it contributes to the scant literature providing an understanding of the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children and the challenges these mothers face in response to the perceptions of kinship and social networks of their racialized identity. The study has societal significance relating to addressing a gap in the research on the topic. The study also has personal significance related to my growth as a researcher.

Societal

Limited academic research is available about single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Helms's (1997) theory of White racialized identity involves moving past stereotypical perceptions of superiority to enact social change and equality in U.S. society. Single, White women with Black-White biracial children need to validate their experiences with racialized identity concerning kinship and social networks. Limited research has investigated White mothers of biracial children, and none was found specific to single mothers. I also found no literature on the specific experiences and racialized identity of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Filling the gap of information specific to this population and their experiences with racialized identity can expand upon understanding within developmental and conceptional frameworks and help move beyond the traditional stereotypes of not being single, not having biracial children, and alleged colorblindness (see Helms, 1997).

The findings from this study can show single, White women with Black-White biracial children that their experience with racialized identity is real knowledge that can help other members of this population, both individually and relationally. The findings of this study could help counselors or therapists working with single, White women with biracial children who find their racialized identity challenged by providing counselors with a better understanding of the women's reality and the effects of their experiences.

Personal

This exploration of the lived experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children could raise awareness of a growing population of single, White women with children of more than one race and show participants they are not alone in their struggles. Findings from this phenomenological study present the experiences of both the subgroup and the individual. Such knowledge can help other women who have experienced racialized identity rise above these challenges and control their paths. In talking to these single, White Women with Black-White biracial children, I developed an understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and concerns. I conducted this original study to explore the experiences of members of this specific population and expand my knowledge of psychology, racial relations, and therapeutic responses to challenges.

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Summary

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In Chapter 1, I presented the limited research specific to the experiences of single, White women with biracial Black-White children; these mothers find their racialized identity challenged by their kinship and social networks. U.S. Census Bureau (2010) data showed an increase in the number of single, White women with children of more than

one race. This study was a means to explore the experiences of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children and their encounters with family and friends in U.S. society.

In this chapter, I presented the background, problem statement, purpose, research question, and conceptual framework guiding the study. The chapter also included a discussion of the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations. The significance of this transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological study was to expand upon the extremely limited literature regarding the experiences of single, White women who find their racialized identity challenged by kinship and social networks due to having biracial Black-White children. In Chapter 2, I included an overview of the foundational research for this phenomenological study. I reviewed the limited research on the phenomenon of single, White women with Black-White biracial children, with alignment to the theoretical framework of racialized identity. The literature review incorporated the challenges these women experienced in their kinship and social networks. The voices of single, White women who have birthed and reared Black-White biracial children should be heard. Therefore, this study gathered their perceptions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Single-female households have increased in the United States as have households led by White mothers of biracial children (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), 6.9% of children are of two or more races. Further, 47.4% of White-Black biracial children live in single-mother households (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain insight into the lives of single, White women who birthed and reared Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity in these mothers' kinship and social networks. Viewing racialized identity requires understanding the challenges facing single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Few studies have focused specifically on the racialized identity and experiences with kinship and social networks of single, White women with biracial children.

Literature Search Strategy

This chapter includes a review of the literature related to single, White women who have birthed and reared Black-White biracial children and the extent to which their parental role has affected familial and social relationships. I conducted online searches to find articles, dissertations, and books on the topic. The keywords used in the search for relevant literature were *single White women AND biracial children*, *mixed-race children*, *multiracial children*, *Black-White children*, and *racialized identity*. I used two databases (i.e., SAGE and ERIC) and two search engines (i.e., Thoreau and Google Scholar) to search for pertinent articles. Research on this topic has been scant; however, the literature

available has indicated a potential causal link between the mother's role and familial and social relationships. Because of the paucity of scholarly literature, I sought help from Walden University Library staff, who also found a small number of research articles related to the specific challenges of racialized identity and kinship and social networks among single, White women with Black-White biracial children.

Theoretical Foundation

Racial Identity Theory

I made two types of philosophical assumptions related to this qualitative study: (a) ontological assumptions, which involve the nature of reality and how it is perceived through many views, and (b) epistemological assumptions, which involve what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). I relied on the participants to share their views. A phenomenological study of racialized identity among single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children could be viewed through critical race theory to explore race and racism embedded in the framework of challenges of racialized identity with participants' kinship and social networks (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). In critical race theory, "race is not a fixed-term but one that is fluid and continually sharped by pressures and informed by individual lived experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 30).

I used Helms's (1990) Black and White racial identity theory as the theoretical foundation of this qualitative study. Racial identity theory, which focuses on the abandonment of personal racism and racial privileges, also includes the avoidance of life options that would lead to participation in racial oppression organizations. In Helms's

(1990) theory, racism refers to the personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that White individuals use to convince themselves of the superiority of their race while promoting the inferiority of non-White racial groups. White people might face racial identity issues if Black individuals were to intrude into their environment in ways that could not be ignored or controlled because they do not share a common racial heritage.

Racial identity focuses on how individuals see themselves (Cole & Levine, 2002). Racial identity deals with challenges such as bullying, prejudices, and bias. Understanding individuals entails exploring the way that they describe their experiences rather than trying to explain or predict the outcomes of their behaviors, and this level of understanding is part of phenomenology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Researchers must understand the big picture of the individuals narrating their stories to understand the theoretical view of or impact on racial identity.

Racial identity theory, as described by Helms (1990), includes studying how racialized identity relates to creating a colorblind society. Colorblindness seeks to include all races into a single, similar social category that disavows the uniqueness of different racial experiences (Helms, 2017; Neville et al., 2013).

Helms (1990) used a quantitative experimental design to obtain data from 506 White students (167 men and 339 women) between the ages of 17 and 33 years old who were attending university in the northeastern United States. The participants received psychology class credit for being in the study. The results showed that racial identity could influence White clients' behavior, which might inspire counselors' interventions

with their clients regardless if they were White Americans embracing a diverse worldview.

Helms (1997) based the White racial identity model on her previous racial identity theory (Helms, 1990). Helms (1997) stated that White racial identity developed in response to meaningful interactional contacts with those of other races. Helms (1997) posited that individuals move through different ego-based phases in racial identity development, with attitudes toward one's own race and those of others changing as the individual progresses through the phases. The five phases are conformity, dissonance (i.e., encounter), immersion/emersion, internalization, and integration awareness. Helms (1990) used these five phases to develop the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale, which has five factors: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independent, and autonomy. Contact represents an unawareness of racism, and disintegration represents the beginning of a racial moral dilemma and a struggle between one's own racial group and morality. Reintegration is idealizing one's racial group, while pseudo-independent represents an intellectual commitment to one's racial group but an acceptance of other races. Finally, autonomy represents a fully informed understanding of racism and ability to let go of race-based privilege.

However, other researchers have suggested the identity characteristics of Helms's (1990, 1997) theory might not reflect the best racial identity development. Behrens (1997) stated that more research is needed on race-connected life experiences. In a meta-analysis of 22 studies using the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale, Behrens found low coefficient alphas for the Contact scale in particular. Behrens argued that the four factors

were too simplified to capture the complexity of White racial identity. Helms (1997) responded that Behrens's results reflected a simplistic view of the scale and claimed flaws in the type of linear statistics Behrens had used.

Ultimately, Helms (2017) described Whiteness as a set of multicultural concerns, portraying it as the representation of overt and subliminal socialization processes. Helms(2017) reported that how individuals see themselves with regard to the significance and meaning of Whiteness can affect their personal experience. Helms (2017) also stated that White racial groups have privileges that other racial groups lack and receive favor in social contexts. Specific to the current study, White mothers of biracial children may undergo particularly complex struggles with racialized identity as they lose White privilege or observe racism toward their children (see Helms, 1997; Rauktis et al., 2016).

Racialized Identity Patterns

Tatum (2004) identified pattern relationships between the racial orientations of parents and young adults when struggling with or resolving racial identity development. Tatum interviewed 18 college students (six men and 12 women) and six children from interracial marriages who had been adopted by White families or had recently emigrated to the United States. Specifically, the participants were the offspring of interracial marriages and had subsequently been adopted by White families. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 20 years. The students responded to questions about their experiences growing up in primarily White communities and attending predominantly White schools. Most of the 18 students reported having White friends who did not socialize with them after school.

The parents and young adults who participated in Tatum's (2004) study reported the advantages of being White in the United States, where White culture is dominant. Furthermore, the participants believed that biracial children did not fit in because they belonged to both races, making them feel "less than". Tatum's results showed that the parents of biracial children believed that moving into White communities would provide their children with better resources in life; instead, the move left the children alienated from their Black heritage and community. Based on the findings, Tatum identified the need to examine the racial identity development of White and Black students and determine if their environment produced positive racial identities for both Black and White students in their communities. Tatum's findings support previous research by Luke (1994) in which White mothers of biracial children reported being treated as "less than White" (p. 60). Verbian (2006) reported White mothers felt pulled between a desire to connect with their White families and the need to protect their biracial children's self-esteem.

Review of the Literature

Single Mothers

Single mothers, regardless of ethnicity, face specific challenges. Liang et al. (2019) found high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among their sample of single mothers. Although the researchers gave no specific reference to ethnicity, the findings are likely applicable to biracial or mixed-race single-mother households. Liang et al. collected quantitative descriptive data from single and married mothers with various socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. They recruited 8,063 participants through

random probability sampling from a national registry in Germany. A review of

participant questionnaire responses showed that 70% of the single mothers were on

welfare because they were not working compared to 13% of partnered mothers. The

single mothers also had significantly higher stress and anxiety levels than the married

mothers. Specifically, 30% of the single mothers had depression or anxiety, and 37%

experienced general stress, twice as high as the prevalence among partnered mothers. The

findings were statistically significant at $p < .0001$. The single mothers were at a greater

disadvantage than the married mothers based on socioeconomic status, educational level,

and depression and anxiety.

In another quantitative study, Hayford and Guzzo (2015) explored the perception

of women choosing to be single mothers, a perception they dubbed a myth. They found

most single mothers did not choose that status; often, the birth was unintended. However,

the number of single mothers choosing to cohabitate with their partners rather than marry

increased between 1988 and 2010. Hayford and Guzzo used the National Survey of

Family Growth data to gain a national representation of data on families and childbearing

based on the responses of women 15 to 44 years old. These single mothers of firstborn

children gave various reasons for having their children. There were three main takeaways

from Hayford and Guzzo's results. First, the percentage of mothers who gave birth to

their first children outside of marriage increased from 21.9% in the 1980s to 46.8% in the

2000s. Second, of mothers not married or cohabiting at the time of the first birth, 19.6%

did not have a college degree compared to 6% of those with a degree. The researchers did

not mention the racial identities of these single mothers and did not provide details about

the size of their sample. Future studies should focus on the structural and economic conditions of single mothers over extended periods to capture an overview of more challenges these mothers may or may not have endured.

Biracial Children

Other researchers have defined and investigated biracial children (Bell, 2016; Kramer et al., 2015; Luke, 1994; Rauktis et al., 2016). The increase in biracial children has been a demographic trend in the United States (Jones & Bullock, 2012). Previous researchers have investigated the social and racial identity of mixed-race couples and their children. Caballero et al. (2008) used semistructured interviews to collect data from a sample of mixed-race couples (including White–Black, White–Caribbean, White–Asian, and other mixed couples) from London, England. The results indicated because mixed-race couples in Britain often did not reside in multicultural areas, they faced challenges with their geographical mapping and socioeconomic status because of stereotypes and assumptions about cultural mixing. All the mixed-race couples in the study reported experiencing some form of societal disconnection in their everyday lives.

Kramer et al. (2015) suggested that multiracial identity challenges the ways that individuals view and understand race and ethnicity. Kramer et al. administered a 90-minute survey to 200 students from randomly selected high and middle schools to determine how multiracial adolescents dealt with depression regarding school engagement and belonging. The survey results of the quantitative study indicated that a racially inconsistent identity was not as negative to the students as hypothesized. Kramer et al. concluded, "Recent theories of racial identity incorrectly assumed that

inconsistency is a measure not of the salience of one's identity in a given moment but rather an internal struggle to find one's 'true' identity" (p. 285). Instead, racial fluidity may not affect some individuals' well-being.

Bell (2016) suggested the need for awareness, if not concern, of mixed-race issues because Western society has moved past the simple dichotomy and separation of Black versus White races. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and subsequent changes in U.S. law led to increased opportunities for Black Americans as well as women; however, interracial marriages were not federally legalized until 1967. Changes in laws and societal attitudes as well as societal movements have resulted in more White women becoming interracially involved with Black men and men of non-White races (Bell, 2016). In 2008, Barrack Obama became the first biracial President of the United States.

White Mothers of Biracial Children

Challenges

The U.S. population of individuals from multiracial backgrounds is increasing (Rauktis et al., 2016). Caballero et al. (2008) contended that people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and their mixed-race children have become more visible in society. Yet, scant research has been conducted to understand the experiences of White women who have children with Black men. These mothers often experience two significant challenges: being half of a mixed-race couple and being the mothers of multiracial children. The children of Black-White families also have been the target of negativity. White women in relationships with Black men have been judged as sellouts to

their race (Caballero et al., 2008). This societal dismissal of this type of relationship can cause emotional and psychological damage to both parties.

In an early study, Luke (1994) addressed the relationships of race and politics among a sample of White women with biracial children. The women depicted themselves as isolated and self-identified as being "less than White" (Luke, 1994, p. 60) for having children of mixed-race parentage. These women considered themselves outcasts from their race because they had children with Black men. Luke drew upon published research on interracial and biracial families as one source of data. In addition, Luke conducted pilot interviews with White women in families with whom he had a working relationship. The White women with Black partners reported overt and covert discrimination through other White people's comments, looks, and judgment. The results showed that White women of interracial children had experiences unique from mothers of monoracial children. Luke did not provide an adequate analysis of the data to support the cultural and identity politics of interracialism or racism.

In a more recent study, Bell (2016) collected varied data (structured interviews, video and photographic images, internet posts, and graphics) to show how White women who specifically wanted to have Black biracial children demonstrated not caring what others thought of their choice of a partner. In response to Bell's interview questions, the women in the study focused on race and ethnicity. They considered having children of mixed, biracial, or multicultural ethnicity as a sign of social and cultural success. Specifically, the mothers considered their children "designer babies" about whom they

could talk or showcase in public to increase their social standing. Bell did not provide the ages of the mothers or the number of participants in the study.

Individuals who self-identify as having a heritage of more than one race consider themselves part of a multicultural group. The children in multicultural groups can experience negative affection from their extended family members, causing them physical, psychological, and emotional stress (Bell, 2016). Bell (2016) concluded further research is needed to explore how White women talk about race.

Rauktis et al. (2016) explored the experiences of 18 White women parenting Black-White biracial children. Data were collected from three Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, organizations: a family support center (two focus groups: $n = 3$, $n = 5$), Early Head Start (one focus group: $n = 4$), and a community group (two focus groups: $n = 2$, $n = 4$). The 18 women represented one of two categories: low socioeconomic status (ages 21 to 42 years, with a median age of 26 and first birth occurring around 21 years) and high socioeconomic status (ages 36 to 50 years, with a median age of 45 years). In semistructured interviews, the participants discussed their experiences having Black-White biracial children. Results showed that racism remains a challenge for White women raising biracial children (Rauktis et al., 2016). Socioeconomic status was not a buffer; two women in the higher socioeconomic status described unpleasant, unwarranted encounters with police and child welfare officials. Upon giving birth to biracial children, women reported being viewed differently by their families and communities. In some instances, however, initial conflicts with family members upon partnering with a Black man were improved upon the birth of the child. The results of Rauktis et al.'s study

showed that having Black-White biracial children placed the women in a position of being neither White nor Black, not a sociocultural space. Many of the mothers described their children as of mixed race rather than Black, believing being colorblind was the best tactic, possibly contributing to the feeling of being in a liminal space. The mothers did not realize their White privilege until having mixed-race children and experiencing racism.

Effects of Kinship Relationships and Social Networks on Racialized Identity

Britton (2013) focused in a qualitative study on how single White women with Black-White biracial children experienced racialized identity in kinship relationships and social networks. Britton identified the participants as single White women who were the mothers of mixed-parentage children; no other information about the sample were provided. Researchers have largely overlooked mixed-parentage households, with the term *Whiteness* permeating societal practices, activities, and dealings with other extended family members.

Edwards and Caballero (2011) conducted a qualitative, phenomenological study of 10 British mothers with mixed-race children. The researchers investigated support networks and negative judgment for having a mixed-race child. They used two sets of interviews and one survey to collect the data. The participants lived in a multicultural ward of Bristol, a large port city in southwestern England. The 10 mothers in the study were of various ethnicities: six were White British, two were Black British, one was mixed British, and one was Latin American. The mothers' ages were not given.

The results in the Edwards and Caballero (2011) study showed that racism and prejudice were still part of the lives of these lonely women who felt rejection and a lack of support for their children. Results supported the traditional social rejection of women in interracial relationships. Participants reported being criticized for entering into relationships that were doomed to fail. Single White mothers faced judgment as having loose sexual morals or standards. Further, single White mothers with Black-White children reported being judged as incapable of rearing their children in a way that embraced their multicultural, non-White background. Multicultural literacy was an important part of their lives as mothers. White mothers endeavored to rear their children in multicultural neighborhoods, in which they found a degree of social support (Edwards & Caballero, 2011).

However, Edwards and Caballero (2011) concluded, "White women with biracial children face challenges with loneliness and lack of support from their children's father and others" (p. 533). Although some of the women did acknowledge that the support they received from the fathers of their children was helpful, many reported feeling socially isolated. Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2017) observed the importance of family interaction in biracial families to support socialization of biracial children. The experiences and needs of lonely mothers of biracial children merit further inquiry.

Summary and Conclusions

Single White women who birthed and are rearing Black-White biracial children experience challenges to their racialized identity based on their kinship relationships and social networks (Britton, 2013; Caballero et al., 2008). Those challenges can relate to

racial identity experiences associated with bullying, prejudice, and bias among their kinship and social networks, causing emotional and psychological damage. Racial identity could progress to the abandonment of personal racism, an understanding of racial privilege, and the avoidance of life options contributing to the participation within organizations supporting racial oppression (Helms, 2017). The published research has described racism faced by mothers of biracial children. Much of the research was in England rather than the United States. Further, little to no research has investigated single White mothers of Black-White biracial children and these mothers' racialized identity.

Exploring racialized identity among single White mothers of Black-White biracial children helped to answer two research questions in this phenomenological study:

1. What is the experience of racialized identity among single White women with Black-White biracial children?

2. How is the racialized identity of single White women with Black-White biracial children challenged by their kinship and social networks?

Because these women might or might not struggle with racial identity challenges from kinship and social networks (Research Question 2), it is necessary to determine the role of racialized identity in their experiences (Research Question 1).

The study population comprised single White women who birthed and are rearing (or have reared) Black-White biracial children. In semistructured, one-on-one interviews, participants discussed their experiences in choosing a Black partner, having children outside of their race, being a single mother, forming or changing their racialized identity, and facing challenges from their kinship and social networks. Learning the social and

psychological effects of kinship and social networks on racialized identity could help counselors provide better multicultural counseling to White mothers of Black-White biracial children.

Chapter 2 included an overview of the foundational research for this phenomenological study. I reviewed the limited research on the phenomenon of single White women with Black-White biracial children, with alignment to the theoretical framework of racialized identity. The literature review incorporated the challenges these women experienced in their kinship and social networks.

The voices of single White women who have birthed and reared Black–White biracial children should be heard. Therefore, this study gathered their perceptions. Chapter 3 includes the research methodology, design, and rationale, as well as the researcher's role. The chapter will cover the processes of selecting participants, sampling, collecting data, scheduling and conducting interviews, and addressing ethical considerations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological study was to provide insight into the lives of single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. U.S. society holds unique perceptions of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. These mothers experience a racial identity of being White and choosing a Black partner, racism for having biracial Black-White children, and social and economic disadvantages of being single in a couples-oriented society (Rauktis et al., 2016). The phenomena of interest were the following:

- Single, White mothers have unique experiences with biracial children living in a society that deems them to be sellouts.

- Mothers experience the problem of having children outside of their race.

- Single, White mothers may find their racialized identity challenged by kinship and social networks.

In this qualitative study, I explored the perceptions of a sample of eight single, White women with Black-White biracial children through one-on-one semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. I used racial identity theory as the theoretical framework, drawing upon the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 as a guide. The topics discussed in interviews included racialized identity patterns, the perception of being single mothers, and having biracial Black-White children. In Chapter 3, I present the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and trustworthiness of the study before concluding with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

I employed a qualitative, phenomenological approach rather than a quantitative approach based on the purpose of the study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the qualitative, phenomenological approach is holistic. Using this approach, the researcher develops a picture of the problem by allowing the participants to discuss their lived experiences. Conversely, the quantitative approach is used to examine relationships between variables to answer questions and hypotheses through surveys and experiments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Quantitative research relies on statistical, numerical data, whereas qualitative research relies on the words and meaning essences by participants (Moustakas, 1994). A qualitative approach is best suited for studies in which the researcher collects not numerical data but participants' narrative perceptions and experiences. The qualitative approach has been used in previous studies of the topic, or similar topics, such as Caballero et al. (2008), Britton (2013), and Rauktis et al. (2016). Edwards and Caballero (2011) and Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2017) conducted phenomenological studies using interviews similar to the current study.

The phenomenological analysis design was appropriate to research the racial identity challenges from kinship and social networks of single, White women who have Black-White biracial children. Phenomenological research in particular is appropriate to gather the experiences of a specific population. In phenomenology, researchers explore an individual's meaning related to their essential descriptions of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) explained how the phenomenological approach "provides a logical system and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and

synthesis needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience" (p. 47). A phenomenological design allows participants to tell the stories of their lived experiences in their own words (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). More specifically, Moustakas defined phenomenology as being "committed to descriptions of experience, not explanations or analyses" (p. 58) by using the participants' own experiences with the phenomenon. This project allowed participants to describe the racialized identity they have experienced in giving birth to and raising Black-White biracial children.

The following two research questions guided this qualitative, phenomenological study:

1. What is the experience of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children?

2. How is the racialized identity of single, White women with Black-White biracial children challenged by their kinship and social networks?

The racialized identity experienced by White women with Black-White biracial children was an apparent gap in the literature. Three key findings emerged from the literature regarding this topic: (a) White is the dominant race in the United States (e.g., Tatum, 2004), (b) the number of women without spouses grew from 12.2% in 2000 to 13.1% in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), and (c) White women who birth and raise biracial Black and White children experience challenges with racialized identity (e.g., Britton, 2013; Caballero et al., 2008; Edwards & Caballero, 2011; Rauktis et al., 2016).

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher in this study was to adopt a phenomenological approach to identify and describe eight single, White women's experiences of having Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Bias challenges exist in qualitative studies; thus, I avoided researcher bias by not sharing my opinions or beliefs with the participants about the topic under investigation. I also avoided leading the participants to provide responses they might believe I wanted to hear. I reflected on and used bracketing to identify my personal feelings and biases prior to data collection (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

To build trust with the participants, the researcher must be a good listener. Thus, I remained quiet except when asking interview questions or follow-up probes (see Rubin & Rubin, 2011). My intent was to allow the participants to provide insight into their lives. I did not have any previous work or personal relationships with the participants prior to the study.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Participants were eight single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children who live in the southeastern United States. They were selected through purposeful and snowball sampling. I used the multistage sampling strategy. According to Ravitch and Carl (2020), multistage sampling involves identifying initial interviewees and then asking the interviewees for other contacts who meet study criteria and can

provide different or confirming perspectives. In addition to church organizations, I placed flyers inside the Department of Family and Services office, with permission, listing the study's purpose and my contact information. Participants were offered a $25 gift card for completing an interview in the study. Flyers listed the following study inclusion criteria: single, White women who have given birth to and raised biracial Black-White children. Additionally, the women who met participation criteria and schedule interviews might know other potential participants and give them information about the study, in snowball sampling.

A small number of participants are required in qualitative research; Giorgi and Giorgi (2008) recommended as few as three participants. Rather than a large sample, in-depth, rich data are gathered from fewer participants. When continued interviews do not reveal any new information, the process has reached data saturation (Dworkin, 2012). Saturation of data may occur with a small number of participants if the sample is homogenous, as in this study (see Dworkin, 2012).

Participants engaged in one-on-one, semistructured interviews to share their lived experiences with the phenomenon of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Given COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, I conducted the interviews with participants using Zoom, Skype, or phone videoconferencing online platforms that enabled audio recording. Audio recording and transcribing the interviews were essential to capture participants' responses fully and accurately.

Instrumentation

Data collected in qualitative research are in the form of words and descriptions. According to Moustakas (1994), the qualitative "researcher method of collecting the data is through topic and question" (p. 114). Common instruments include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. The data collection instrument in this study was a researcher-created interview protocol (see Appendix A).

Participants engaged in one-on-one, semistructured interviews to share their lived experiences with the phenomenon. As noted, due to COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, I conducted the interviews with participants via Zoom, Skype, or phone. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. I found no instrument or interview protocols in the published literature relevant to the specific phenomenon under study; therefore, I developed interview questions based on the literature and aligned with the research questions. To gather rich data in a conversation-like manner, the interview questions were few in number and relatively broad in scope, with potential probing questions also included on the protocol (see Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Research Question 1 was the following: What is the experience of racialized identity among single White women with Black-White biracial children? Interview Questions 1–4 gathered data related to racialized identity among the sample. These interview questions were based on the literature (i.e., Edwards & Caballero, 2011; Kramer et al., 2015; Liang et al., 2019; Rauktis et al., 2016). Research Question 2 was the following: How is the racialized identity of single White women with Black-White biracial children challenged by their kinship and social networks? Interview Questions 5–

8 gathered data related to kinship and social networks. These interview questions were based on the literature as well (i.e., Caballero et al., 2008; Rauktis et al., 2016).

Using expert review adds validity and reliability to a study instrument (Johnson & Morgan, 2016). Expert reviewers can confirm questions are appropriate to answer the research questions, providing content validity (Johnson & Morgan, 2016). Reviewers also can ensure questions are clear and objective. I had the interview questions reviewed by my dissertation chair and committee as well as by an expert with 20 years of experience in developing education dissertations and research, including devising interview protocols.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment

Participants were eight single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children who live in the southeastern United States selected through purposeful and snowball sampling. As noted earlier, I recruited the sample through flyers and the snowball sampling of interested participants. I posted flyers, with permission, in church organizations and the local Department of Family and Services office.

If my initial efforts had not resulted in an adequate sample, I would have expanded the geographical area. A multistage approach would have been used, and snowball sampling could have yielded additional individuals who live in other parts of the United States. I also might have posted the flyer to social media groups; Facebook, for example, has private groups and public pages, such as Mommies of Biracial Children,

Biracial Children, and Biracial Children Rock. I did ask for permission from Mommies of

Biracial Children but received no response and did not post the flyer on the group's page.

I served as the instrument of data collection by conducting the interviews. The

participants had to reply to the recruitment email with the words, "I consent," before their

interview took place. They also were asked demographic questions, including their name,

age, phone number, college experience, occupation, number of children, and time being

single, before the interview. The demographic questions were separate from the interview

transcript, and the participants' responses to these questions are stored in a locked filing

cabinet.

Data Collection

Before each interview, I ensured I had a strong internet signal and checked the

audio-recording function. I asked each participant if she had any questions or concerns

before beginning the interview. Each participant was interviewed one-on-one using the

semistructured interview protocol. The maximum sample was expected to be 10

participants to obtain data saturation (i.e., the point at which additional interviews do not

provide new data). Interviews were anticipated to take 60–90 minutes, with participants

sharing their experiences of being single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial

children. All participants responded to the same researcher-prepared, open-ended

questions in the same order, with room for probing questions to allow them to expand on

their responses. Participants took part in virtual interviews from their homes or another

place they felt comfortable, using Zoom, Skype, or phone. I audio recorded the

interviews with the participants' consent and transcribed and reviewed the recordings

following the interviews. I expected that participants would openly and honestly share

their perceptions and experiences, given assurances of the confidentiality of their identity.

I debriefed all participants after the interviewing process. The participants had the

chance to review their transcripts, editing anything they felt was misinterpreted or further

justifying their answers. All collected data remain secure. I used only pseudonyms for the

participants and keep all data on a password-protected computer or in a locked file

cabinet. Under Walden University guidelines, I will retain the data for 5 years after

publication before deleting all digital files and shredding all hard copies.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis consisted of five primary steps, adapted from Moustakas's (1994)

seven-step adaptation of phenomenological analysis. Note that clustering, thematizing,

and validation, which are typically separate steps, were combined into a single step for

the purposes of simplicity and because validation necessarily occurs during thematizing.

1. Listing/grouping (horizontalization) meant transcribing and summarizing each

   interview. I listed every expression relevant to experience.

2. Reduction/elimination meant defining, finding, and marking codes in the text

   and noting excerpts with relevant concepts, themes, events, examples, names,

   places, or dates.

3. Clustering/thematizing/validation of themes involved two steps:

   a. Across the interviews, I found the excerpts marked with the same code,

      sorted them into a single data file, and summarized the contents of each

      file. These clusters represented the source of key themes of the experience.

b. I sorted and resorted the material within each file, compared the excerpts

between different subgroups, and then summarized the results of each

sorting.

4. I identified key textural descriptions. After weighing different versions, I

integrated descriptions from the interviewees to create a complete picture.

5. I constructed textural-structural descriptions for each participant.

Data were coded manually, without the use of software. Following participant

checking and correction, if needed, of the transcripts, I reread the transcripts to

familiarize myself deeply with the data (see Moustakas, 1994). Then I analyzed the text

using thematic analysis by coding (see Saldaña, 2015). Initial coding established

immediate, clear codes from the data, including a priori codes based on the literature

review. A priori, preexisting codes are also called sensitizing concepts based on the

background literature (Charmaz, 2003). Such a priori codes included depression and

anxiety, isolation, sellout, and colorblind, based on the literature (Berger et al., 2019;

Caballero et al., 2008; Edwards & Caballero, 2011; Helms, 2017; Luke, 1994). Initial

coding also included in vivo codes, which are based on the actual language or words of

the interviewee (Saldaña, 2015).

The next type of coding was descriptive coding, which included codes describing

concepts (Saldaña, 2015). In subsequent reviews, I combined or collapsed codes into

categories. These categories ultimately were combined into overarching themes to answer

the research questions. Discrepant cases would be narratives or experiences of a

participant that contradict those of the others. I noted such discrepancies or different

perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). I identified excerpts from each transcript that exemplified emergent themes. I then developed composite descriptions to represent the population as a whole.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research means that the findings are an accurate representation of the participants' lived experiences. According to Ravitch and Carl (2020), ensuring credibility is essential in qualitative research. Trustworthiness includes four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is based on the findings being plausible, particularly to the researched population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Multiple strategies can establish trustworthiness and accuracy, or credibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Qualitative credibility is connected to the research design along with the researcher's instruments and data collection. A researcher can improve credibility by utilizing a set of prewritten questions. In this study, I used the same semistructured interview protocol with all participants. Additionally, the protocol was reviewed by an expert and the dissertation committee to promote content validity.

Strategies to establish credibility also include member checks, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review. The participants are the only ones in the study who can judge the credibility of the research outcomes (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Member checking allows participants to review their interview transcripts and make any necessary changes for accuracy (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Saturation is another strategy to establish

credibility. By the eighth interview, the data obtained likely would begin to reflect and

repeat the data from previous interviews (see Dworkin, 2012). Saturation was noted in

the research findings, and outliers or discrepant cases were described. I used reflexivity

by taking notes during interviews and reflecting on the findings as well as my own bias,

as recommended by Ravitch and Carl (2020) and Palaganas et al. (2017). Finally, the

findings were reviewed by the content expert who reviewed the interview questions as

well as by the dissertation committee, in a form of peer review.

Transferability

When qualitative results have external validity, the findings are generalizable to

other settings and contexts. Transferability in qualitative research is the equivalent of

external validity in quantitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). The perceptions of

single White mothers that I collected, analyzed, and presented in this study have

transferability if readers can apply them to populations and samples outside of this study.

Given the homogenous, specific nature of the sample (single, White, birth mothers of

Black-White biracial children), findings may be cautiously transferred to similar

populations. Thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1995) of the data and participants'

experiences assist in allowing the reader to determine transferability.

Dependability

Specific to qualitative research, dependability means the data are stable. A

researcher must clearly delineate and defend the data collection approach based on the

purpose statement and guiding research question (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Strategies to

establish dependability include triangulation and audit trails. I used an audit trail, keeping memos and careful records of the complete research process.

Confirmability

A qualitative researcher brings an inimitable perception to a study. Qualitative findings have confirmability if readers can replicate the study and draw similar conclusions (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Researchers must be aware of and mitigate biases and prejudices that could hinder the interpretation. Continuously checking the study procedures and information and debriefing with the participants increase this study's confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

A researcher must adhere to the three main ethical principles outlined in *The Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979) of beneficence, justice, and respect for participants to prevent harm. I ensured confidentiality and fair treatment. First, prior to any recruitment or research activities, Institutional Review Board approval was gained from Walden University (No. 08-23-21-0317615).

All participants must indicate their consent by replying to the consent form with the words, "I consent" prior to any data collection. The informed consent form explained the confidential nature of the study, efforts to protect identities, and the voluntary nature of participation. The participants could choose not to answer any questions and could discontinue the interview at any time.

According to the American Psychological Association (2010), "Maintaining confidentiality is the main responsibility of the researcher to protect confidential information obtain through or stored in a medium, recognizing that the extent and limits confidential may be regulated by law" (p. 7). By demonstrating good judgment and adhering to ethical guidelines, a researcher can reduce the potential of harm to participants. Participant names were not used, and information that might reveal their identity was not included in the final report.

All research data are kept in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected file. Transcripts are labeled with participant pseudonyms (a number) rather than names. No one but I and the dissertation committee, if required, will have access to the data. Five years after the study, all data will be destroyed.

During interviews, I avoided sharing opinions or personal beliefs or asking leading questions to prevent participants from answering how they thought I wanted them to, rather than true to their perceptions and experiences. Instead, I engaged in active listening. Adhering to a code of conduct helps researchers uphold their integrity and the participants' dignity.

Summary

The goal of the study was to uncover participants' insight into their lives as single White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Chapter 3 included the research methodology, design, and rationale, as well as the researcher's role. In this chapter, I

presented the processes of sampling participants, developing the interview protocol, collecting data, analyzing data, and addressing ethical concerns.

Using purposive and multistage snowball sampling, I selected eight participants meeting the criteria of being White mothers birthing and raising Black-White biracial children and living in the southeastern United States. One-on-one, semistructured interviews allowed the participants to share their experience with the phenomenon of racialized identity and challenges from their kinship and social networks. The role of the researcher was to recruit participants, compose and ask interview questions, and analyze the collected data. I presented in Chapter 4 the detailed findings of data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into the lives of single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. I used a transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological design that allowed the participants to tell their lived experiences in their own words (see Moustakas, 1994). The following two research questions guided this study:

1. What is the experience of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children?

2. How is the racialized identity of single, White women with Black-White biracial children challenged by their kinship and social networks?

In this chapter, I present the findings of the study. First, the setting and participant demographics are described before the data collection and data analysis procedures are briefly discussed. Then, I present the findings by theme.

Setting

The Walden University Institutional Review Board granted me approval to conduct this study. I placed a flyer in the local county Public Health Department; however, I had no formal role at the organization other than being a guest researcher, and the organization's name was not used in the study. I was not able to place flyers in church organizations due to COVID-19 guidelines. I also could not put a flyer in the local Department of Family and Children Services because they were closed due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and their business was handled by solely phone services. Most of

the participants in this study were recruited through other participants using snowball sampling.

Each participant who met the criteria and agreed to take part in the study selected the date and time for their interview to be scheduled. To adhere to COVID-19 guidelines, the interviews took place over Zoom, Skype, and the phone. I audio recorded the interviews to capture the participants' responses fully and accurately. Zoom audio and a cell phone recorder were used to capture the recording data. These data were then uploaded on a USB drive, secured in a locked file cabinet, and saved as a password-protected file on my personal computer. All interviews were conducted in September 2021.

Demographics

This study consisted of eight volunteers who were interviewed. Each participant met the following inclusion criteria stated on the recruitment flyer: They were single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children who live in the southeastern United States. The participants interviewed resided in Florida, Georgia, or Alabama. In addition, the volunteers were a range of ages, held different occupations, and had varying education levels. None of the participants had been married. The mean age was 31.6, and the median age was 29 years. Table 1 shows the demographics of the sample.

Table 1

Demographics of the Sample

Demographic	*n*
Age	
19	1
26	2
28	1
31	1
34	1
39	1
50	1
Highest level of education	
High school or GED	4
Some college	1
Associate degree	1
Bachelor's degree	1
Master's degree	1

Note. GED = General Educational Development.

Data Collection

Number of Participants

My objective was to collect data from eight to 10 participants. Initially, I had 10 participants interested in the study, but only eight responded to the emailed consent form. Each participant responded via email, "I consent," before taking part in the interviews. The participant data were captured using my Zoom account and my cell phone.

Data Collection Location, Frequency, and Duration

The data collection process started with sharing the recruitment flyer at the county Public Health Department and on Facebook, showing the recruitment flyer, and asking people in my community if they knew anyone who fit the criteria. All individuals

interested in participating contacted me by using the information presented on the recruitment flyer. I responded to the interested individuals with an invitation and consent form within 24 hours. Each participant had to respond, "I consent," via email. I submitted a follow-up email thanking each participant for volunteering for my study and allowed them to select a date and time convenient for their interview.

Participants took part in virtual interviews from their homes or places they felt comfortable, using Zoom, Skype, or the phone. I interviewed each participant from the privacy of my library at home. Prior to each participant's interview, I verbally ensured each participant met all inclusion criteria listed on the invitation flyer and consent form. All participants were also reminded that the interview was voluntary, and they could stop at any time during the interviewing process. I also stressed the significance of the participants' confidentiality and the steps taken to protect it. Each participant answered eight open-ended, in-depth questions in a confidential, one-on-one, audio-recorded interview.

Variations in Data Collection

I made some changes to the data collection process described in Chapter 3 to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions. First, I was not allowed to post recruitment flyers in churches due to social distancing and temperature-checking guidelines; church officials did not want people gathering to look at a flyer. Second, I could not post a recruitment flyer in the Department of Family and Children Services because their doors were locked. After encountering these issues, I decided not to try to use any other organization for the recruitment of participants.

My attempts to use social media for recruitment were also not successful. I did not receive any response from private or public Facebook groups, such as Mommies of Biracial Children, Biracial Children, and Biracial Children Rock. However, despite these changes, the data were collected successfully and were informative, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I used the qualitative, transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological approach model outlined in Chapter 3 (see Moustakas, 1994). The emphasis in this data analysis was to vividly describe participants' lived experiences. As the researcher, I made sure I was aware of and mitigated biases and prejudices that could have hindered the interviewing process. I avoided leading the participants to provide responses they believed I wanted to hear. I also reflected on and used bracketing to identify my personal feelings and biases before data collection (see Moustakas, 1994).

When each interview was completed, I used Moustakas's (1994) stepped approach described in Chapter 3. First, I transcribed and summarized each interview. The data were transcribed manually after I realized the Microsoft Word transcribe feature would not work properly on the Walden University website. I listened to the audio recordings several times to make sure I heard the participants clearly for accuracy. Then, I reread the transcripts to familiarize myself deeply with the data (see Moustakas, 1994).

Initial coding established immediate, clear codes from the data, including a priori codes based on the literature review, such as depression and anxiety, isolation, and colorblind. As stated in Chapter 3, my initial coding also included in vivo codes, which

are based on the actual language or words of the interviewee (see Saldaña, 2015). After completing the data collection process, I used Microsoft Word documents for coding, as highly recommended by another doctoral student at Walden University. I also watched videos that provided further clarity on the use of Microsoft Word for coding purposes. Ultimately, I decided to use this format because it was comparable to NVivo software coding in data and thematic analysis coding as well as preexisting codes.

I constructed a Microsoft Word document for each participant. First, I identified each participant by a participant number. Next, a two-column table was used in which the transcribed data were inserted on the right and the code word inserted on the left. Then, I coded the sentences of each participant with a sentence or collection of words used in the sentence. The following are some of the words and sentences I used in coding:

- The mother did or did not feel depressed, isolated, part of a community, economically advantaged or disadvantaged.
- "Aware that I am White."
- "More comfortable with African American friends."
- "Blacks accepted my child more than Whites."
- "Don't see color or race."
- "Never have I experienced racism out in public being a White woman with a biracial child."
- "White people perceive biracial as being worse than being one race."
- "Hard for Blacks in the United States."

- "I informed my child that people might see them differently because of being biracial."

- "If I had a Black son, I would be scared."

- Never experienced racism.

- Friends did/did not have an issue with the participant dating a Black man or having a biracial child.

- Participant's father did or did not have an issue with her dating a Black man or having a biracial child.

- Participant's mother did or did not have an issue with her dating a Black man or having a biracial child.

- Siblings did or did not have an issue with the participant dating a Black man or having a biracial child.

- The older generation had an issue with the participant dating a Black man and having a biracial child.

- The father's family was very involved or not involved.

- The father was not a part of the children's life.

- "Made a point for my child to know things about their heritage."

- Live in a diverse, biracial, all-Black, or all-White community.

I used this coding technique to minimize my assumptions as the researcher and ensure the findings were valid. I then created a master file Microsoft Word document with eight columns, representing the eight interviewees, and placed all the codes from each interview in their columns. This led to the last two steps described by Moustakas

(1994): (a) an individual structural description of the participants' experiences and (b) a textural-structural description of the meaning of their experiences. Using these columns forced me to organize and unify the coding of words. I also used color coding to help analyze the phrases and words that connected each participant's experiences. The themes that emerged from coding were (a) mother's insight, (b) racism, (c) attitude about a Black partner, (d) perception of biracial children, and (e) support system (see Table 2).

Table 2

Theme and Subtheme Matrix by Participant

Theme and subthemes	Participant							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Mother's insight	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Depressed	✓		✓					
Isolated		✓	✓			✓		
Part of a community					✓		✓	✓
Economically advantaged					✓	✓		
Economically disadvantaged	✓					✓		
2. Racism	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Public					✓		✓	✓
Family	✓	✓	✓					
Friends			✓					
Never experienced	✓			✓		✓		
3. Attitude about a Black partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Friend	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Mother	✓						✓	✓
Father	✓					✓	✓	✓
Other family members		✓						✓
4. Perception of biracial children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Friends	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Mother	✓				✓	✓	✓	
Father					✓	✓	✓	
Other family members	✓							✓
5. Support system	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Father of children								
Father's family	✓		✓				✓	
Community	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓

Most of the collected data agreed; however, some narratives or experiences of a participant contradicted those of the other participants, and these contradictions were used to improve and strengthen the accuracy of the findings. Therefore, I had to note such discrepancies or different perspectives regarding the findings (see Moustakas, 1994). For example, only one interviewee, Participant 7, reported her friends were not supportive of her and her biracial child.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research means the findings accurately represent the participants' lived experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Ensuring credibility is essential in qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Trustworthiness includes four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is based on the findings being plausible to the population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure the findings were credible, I recruited and interviewed participants who fit the aims of the study. These participants had to be single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children who lived in the southeastern United States. I documented the data collection process, audio recorded the interviews, and allowed the participants to review their transcripts to confirm accuracy. Saturation was achieved in the research results, and any discrepant data were noted. I also took reflective notes during interviews and while analyzing the data, as recommended by Ravitch and Carl (2020) and Palaganas et al. (2017).

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research means the findings may be generalizable to other populations, settings, or contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Therefore, I focused on the detail provided on the lived experiences of the single White mothers of Black-White biracial children. Findings may apply to individuals with a similar demographic. Using thick description allows the reader to understand the data presented of the participants' experiences and enables the reader to determine transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). All the participants lived in the southeastern United States; findings may or may not apply to other regions.

Dependability

Specific to qualitative research, dependability means the data are stable. Strategies to establish dependability included triangulation and audit trails. I used an audit trail, memos, and careful recording of the complete research process, providing transparency to the data collection and analysis. I audio recorded each interview, along with a line-by-line transcription. Although the study participants were homogenous in some regards, they varied in age and education level, contributing to a sort of triangulation. Additionally, I took notes during the interviews.

Confirmability

Qualitative findings have confirmability if other researchers can replicate the study and draw similar conclusions (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). As the researcher, I was aware of and mitigated biases and prejudices that could hinder the interpretation. I used identical procedures with each participant, as outlined in the methodology section. The

participants had the chance to review their transcripts, editing anything they felt was misinterpreted or unclear. I made sure I used audio recordings from the interview, transcription, and notes doing the interviewing process for data collecting and data analysis for accuracy. These steps allowed me to examine these documents for authenticity. Therefore, carefully examining my data, I have determined that the findings are valid and ready to be duplicated for future studies.

Results

In semistructured interviews, the eight participants narrated their lived experiences of being single White mothers with Black-White biracial children. The results are presented by theme. Subthemes are discussed within each theme.

Theme 1: Mother's Insight

Bell (2016) suggested the need for awareness, if not concern, of mixed-race issues because Western society has moved past the simple dichotomy and separation of Black versus White races. Regarding having biracial children, most mothers did not see race or color. However, mothers could experience issues in how they see themselves and their children and how others see them. Participant 1 stated that she knows who she is, and it will never change:

> I'm White. My DNA, I'm White; my ancestry, I'm White. That has not changed
> from being a single parent or from having a biracial child. I'm still White at 50,
> just like I was the day I was born, so being the single parent of a biracial child has
> not affected how I identify as a White person; I am a White person. And I identify
> as such; however, I am more comfortable, and I identify more, with my African

American or Black friends and community than I do White. So, I am White, I

identify as White, but I feel more comfortable with and identify more and more

comfortably with my Black or African American counterparts. I don't want to say

the wrong thing. I was like that before I had a biracial child, so nothing has

changed as far as that is concerned. I'm confident as a person. And within my, I

probably gravitate towards or love them more because they [Black community]

were way more accepting of my daughter than, say, the White community,

especially in the day and age that I had my daughter. But the main thing, I think it

made me lean even more to my Black friends than it did to my White friends

because I had a biracial child. And having her around Black people was easier

than it was around White people.

Several of the other participants described not seeing color. Participant 5

explained,

I remember as a child growing up, I see people—I didn't see color. Like, I've

never stereotyped or labeled people, although I knew that some people are Black,

some people are White, Hispanic, etc., but I've always been very open minded,

and people are human beings. They're not labeled, as a child, coming up. We're

just all humans, for one.

Participant 6 voiced her opinion on color with girls as opposed to Black boys or men:

I don't think about the color of someone, whether it be myself, or my child, or

someone I see; I've always just seen the person. I don't think any differently

about a White person or a Black person. In the time we're living in, I think it's

difficult, honestly. We're in a time in the history of the United States that it's difficult being a Black person. They get prejudged just from the color of their skin, and it's ridiculous. But from my standpoint, I feel like it's cliché to say, but I've never seen color. It's just if you're a good person or not a good person, based on my interactions with them. And I would say if I'd had a boy, I would be more scared for him. You know, growing up and when they started to drive and the possible interactions they'd come across once they're older. I wouldn't say my feeling have changed from that standpoint.

Depressed

Berger et al. (2019) found that depression, anxiety, general stress, and parenting stress were higher among single mothers. Interviewees were single mothers, and two described depression. Participant 1 responded to being depressed. Participant 3 talked about being depressed: "In the beginning of my journey of being a single mom, I would definitely say depression." However, Participants 4 and 5 did not feel depressed; they were happy being mothers. Participant 4 stated, "I am just happy I can be the best mama I can to her."

Isolated

Luke (1994) addressed the relationships of race and politics among a sample of White women with biracial children. The women depicted themselves as isolated and self-identified as being "less than White" (Luke, 1994, p. 60) for having children of mixed-race parentage. In addition, the women described by Luke considered themselves outcasts from their race because they had children with Black men. Participant 2 stated,

"Sometimes you're just kind of alone. I wouldn't really say—I'd just say I feel alone sometimes, and that's probably about it." However, Participant 6 said she did feel isolated because she felt that it was just she and her daughter:

> I do sometimes feel isolated because it is just me and my daughter. When I found out I was pregnant, I told the father that I was going to give him the choice to be involved or not be involved. I told him I did not want to pursue child support payments from him because I would support her and would want him to be in her life by choice rather than being forced to. In the beginning, he seemed invested and seemed like he was going to be part of her life. But as the pregnancy went on, he communicated less and less, and I didn't push for it. I didn't push for him to come to any doctor's visits or anything. So, I don't really know where I was going with this—but he has never met her. I told him when I was going in to have the baby, you know, what day I was going in, and he never said anything back. So, I don't have weekends off or every other, or anything like that. It's just her and I. Sometimes that can feel isolating. Now, I do have my family close. But during the week, it's just me and her, and then on the weekends, we'll spend some time at my parents' house.

Participant 3 spoke of being depressed and feeling isolated:

> In the beginning of my journey of being a single mom, I would definitely say depression and feeling isolated when she was younger, but now being older and content in what I do, I would say it's a pretty rewarding journey.

Participants 5, 7, and 8 did not feel isolated. Instead, they felt a part of a community. Participant 5 explained, "I do feel like I am part of the community. My kids have actually brought me closer into the community as far as school activities." Participants 7 and 8 stated because they are in a good community and have support from their community, they do not feel isolated.

Economically Advantaged or Disadvantaged

Regarding economic status, all the participants stated they did not respond to being economically disadvantaged or advantaged. Participant 1 did describe having a one-parent income:

> Economically advantaged or disadvantaged—I'd say there were some disadvantages, I would say, but not, I'm not sure that I would relate it to being a single mother, but I guess it would be a one-income family, so I guess so. Yes, at some point, there probably was a disadvantage because of that, because there was only one income, so yeah. Being a single mother never gave me an economic advantage, no.

Some participants did not feel the same way. Participant 5 spoke more on why she does not see herself as economically disadvantaged, even though the father of her children isn't in their lives: "Me and my family have provided for them." Participant 6 referred to not being economically advantaged or disadvantaged because she has a promising career. Still, sometimes, she does struggle:

> As far as economically, I'm in a different position, I think, than most single mothers. I was established in my career. I have a good career. I get paid well, and

I'm able to support us. Sometimes I do struggle from month to month—I

purchased a house because I wanted her to have a stable home environment and

not move from apartment to apartment or rental to rental. I wanted her to have

somewhere she could grow up, that she would feel secure and safe always. So,

economically, I am in a different position than most, and I don't receive any help

from the government because I don't qualify.

Theme 2: Racism

Not all participants reported experiencing racism, at least with their child. Five

participants reported experiencing racism, and three said they did not. Subthemes are

described below.

Never Experienced Racism

Participant 1 stated she did not experience racism with her child (although, as

explained in a later section, she did experience racism from her father). She explained,

I really didn't, but I'm gonna tell you the trick to that and why I didn't. I choose

who I hang around with. I choose who my friends are. So, I have, I only associate

with people, always have, who have the same ideologies that I have, the people

that have the same morals, the same ethics, things of that nature. So, it really

doesn't matter what your race is or what your ethnicity is, or anything else. I bind

to people who are like me, so I'm not ever going to associate myself with racist

people. So, I've never really; honestly, I've been blessed in that respect. I've

never experienced that as a single, White woman with a biracial child, even out in

public. I've never had anyone say anything out of the way. I've never had anyone,

to my knowledge, say anything to my child out of the way, so I have been very,

very blessed in that respect. I honestly can't relate to that from my own

experience. I cannot.

Participant 6 stated,

No. Honestly, if they thought anything racist, they'd probably be afraid to say

anything to me. But no, anybody that's ever seen her just comments on how

beautiful she is. She is a gorgeous child. And they'll comment on her hair and

how beautiful her curls are. But racism, I've not experienced anything.

Participant 4 added, "No ma'am, I haven't. But I have heard personal things said, but not

about me or my daughter."

Friends and Public

Most of the participants did have some type of racism experience. For example,

Participant 2 experienced racism due to her liking Black men in high school, "but now

that I'm grown and have kids, it's different." The people from her high school years have

grown to accept it. However, Participant 5 stated,

A lot of times, I feel like, especially coming from White people, I mean, I don't

know what Black people experience as far as racism, but I feel like some White

people look at me in a way worse than they would at just the Black race, because

I'm White and I mixed with Black people. So, I feel I'm looked upon worse than

a Black person. You know, because I chose to be with someone that's Black. I

know a lot of White people look at that as even worse.

Participant 7 voiced her opinion:

Every day for instance, when we go into a store, there's always at least one

elderly person or a lot of the young generation now, when they see I have a

biracial kid, they say, "Your parents should've raised you a lot better" or "You

should be ashamed being a White lady trying to take Black men from Black

women."

Participant 8 described receiving dirty looks as the extent of racism: "I've gotten dirty

looks, like wanting to know why I'm White and have a Black baby with me. But other

than that, some words being said under the breath or anything like that, no."

Family

All the participants talked about people in general, but Participants 1 and 3

experienced racism from their own family. Participant 3 stated,

Yes, I have family members that, once I had biracial children, they would attend

my family's, like my sister's children who are fully Caucasian, they would buy

her kids gifts, take her kids places, and they keep her kids, and for my children,

never have they bought them anything and aren't really supportive of the whole

situation.

Participant 1 was beaten by her father for choosing a Black partner, as described in the

following section.

Theme 3: Attitude About a Black Partner

Several participants did receive problems mostly from family members when they

got involved with a Black partner. For example, Participant 3 stated, after she chose a

Black man as a partner, family members told her she had been "raised better than that."

Yet, five participants reported their friends were happy. Subthemes are related to response from different types of family members.

Father

Participants 1 and 6 noted their fathers disapproved of their choice of partner. Participant 1 explained how her father would not let her talk to Black people and could not be seen in public with her Black partner:

> I was in high school. My family, as a whole, didn't have an issue with it. My father had an issue with it. And he was not happy; that would be an understatement. I probably took a beating or two over it. Never was I allowed, ever, to be in public with him. Or my father probably would've killed me, literally. Back then, no, you could not have phone calls from Black friends; if you did, we had to hide it. They had to call when my dad wasn't home. My mom wasn't like that so much, but my father, yeah, wasn't having any part of it. My siblings, yeah, they didn't care.

Participant 6 had the same situation because her father did not grow up in a family that accepted Black and White mixing.

> My parents were not as receptive, I guess, as people of my generation had been. All of my friends don't even think twice about it. We were together for several years, 6 years, and it was just normal for us. My parents, on the other hand, did not feel the same way. I think my mom would have accepted him more if he'd been a more stable influence in my life because he did not have a steady job when we first got together. I think she would've been more receptive had that been the

case. But my dad grew up in a type of family that did not accept that. So, he was less receptive, and he just didn't talk to me about it.

Mother

Participant 5 explained her mother and her mother's best friend ended their relationship formed over many years. This rippled down and ended the relationship Participant 5 and her brother had with the children of their mother's now former best friend. However, Participant 5 stated her mother did not approve:

Oooh, so, OK, it was probably around, I was probably 13 when I started being attracted to boys. When that happened, I was always attracted to the Black race. My mom and her best friend, she has kids that were my brother and my age, and we grew up together since babies. They went to nursing school together. So when it came out that I liked Black boys, that ended my mom's relationship with her best friend, for years. I mean, for years, and then that ended my brother, myself, and her two kids—my mom's best friend—like, we didn't talk to them no more. I remember my mom saying she'd rather me be a lesbian than me be with a Black person. I remember that on the way to school one morning. It was really rough.

Other Family Members

Participant 2 said her friends did not care, but her family kept silent, which let her know how they felt.

My friends, it didn't really bother them. I don't have a lot of friends. And my family did not like it; I'm not gonna lie. And, they didn't say much. You could just tell they didn't really approve of it, but it happened.

Participant 7 stated, "My family disowned me, and they still don't talk to me. My parents and my siblings said, as long as I'm happy, they're happy for me." Participant 7 also stated, "They didn't really try to judge me or confront me to only dating a White partner. Some of the older generations of my family disapproved of having a Black partner." Participant 8's story was similar. Participant 8 explained her mother, father, siblings, and friends accepted her choice of partner, but her grandparents did not: "Family and friends accepted, and the ones that didn't accept was family. It was just a few of them, the older ones, like grandparents. The younger ones, my age and right above me, were OK with it." Participant 4 kept her relationship with her Black partner a secret so no one could agree or disagree: "To be honest, nobody knew about it."

Theme 4: Perception of Biracial Children

Mothers with biracial children experience some challenges. The children of Black-White families also tend to be the target of negativity due to how people view biracial children. However, the U.S. population of people who are the product of two or more races is increasing (Rauktis et al., 2016). Caballero et al. (2008) contended that people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and their mixed-race children have become more visible in society. However, participants in this study described the challenges their biracial children experienced related to family and friends.

Father

Participants 1 and 5 had a similar story. Both participants' fathers did not accept their biracial children at first. Participant 1 said,

Almost carbon copy, same answer. Family, friends went absolutely nuts, with the exception of my father. He did not accept in the beginning, did not fully accept my daughter. He accepted her because she's a child or whatever, but he still wasn't happy about the biracial part, and that lasted probably for about 4 or 5 months because we had a huge blow-out, because I was at the house this particular day, because I felt like he was holding my child like she was a sack of potatoes. Like, he was just holding her because he had to, and I basically told him that we're a package deal. You can either accept both of us, or you don't accept either one of us, and we had a huge family blow-out over it. It didn't take him long, my mother got involved, and he kind of came to his senses, and we didn't have a problem after that. But, the only person who had an issue with it, per se, was my father. He didn't even believe I was pregnant until I brought my daughter home.

Participant 5 told the following story:

So, they [parents] were upset. I was 19—so that was one thing they were upset about, me being young. And then the fact that the father was Black, my dad had my mom take me to three different locations during my pregnancy to terminate my pregnancy. Like, each location I was pretty far along and they couldn't do it. I ended up going all the way down to [another city], and they couldn't do it because I was so far along. So then, it was my dad, my dad was going to talk me and my mom into giving the baby up for adoption. Her sister wanted my child because she was in her 40s and could never conceive, and here I am pregnant. So they

wanted my child, but I was like, "No, no." They found out a couple months later she was pregnant, but either way, I wasn't giving my child up. And then, I was living in the house with my parents, and my dad gave my mom a certain amount of money as was like, "Here, y'all go find her somewhere to live. I can't even look at her. So, my mom and I went and found me an apartment."

However, in the end, Participant 5's father had a change of heart, saw her daughter, and fell in love with her. Participant 5 explained,

But it all worked out, you know, I had my son, so, and he didn't lay eyes on—my child was born in October—he didn't lay eyes on until Christmas Eve of the same year. And once he laid eyes on him, it was like his whole life changed. His whole perception of things changed. And he loves, loves, loves my child. Like, he ended up basically raising my child. My child learned everything from my dad. It was really beautiful.

Participant 6 told a story similar to that of Participant 5; her father was not happy with her getting pregnant with a biracial child, but he did come around. Participant 6 stated, "That is when everything changed for my dad because my daughter is the light of his life now. He has changed completely, I would say."

Mother

Participants 5 and 6 stated their mothers approved of them having a biracial child. Participant 6 said, "My mom was ecstatic; she loves all of her grandbabies. I don't think anybody's really, you know, pointed out that she's not like us." As noted, Participant 5's mother had to leave with her daughter to get an apartment. Participant 5 explained,

> Yeah, it was—my mom had kind of accepted it. She was against termination of the pregnancy because she doesn't believe in any of that. So that was kind of hard on her. I feel bad for even putting her in that situation.

But their mothers did what a good mother would have done and supported their child.

Friends

Seven of the participants reported their friends were supportive. Typically, friends are a source of support when family is not. However, Participant 7 described a different experience:

> When I first had my child, there is a good bit of my friends that quit talking to me. Wasn't really based on his race—more because I couldn't really go out and party with them. My family, they didn't really—they were excited and happy. They didn't really have any different response out of them than I had before.

The loss of friends' support was not due to race but rather the new status as a mother.

Other Family Members

Participants 3 and 8 reported other family members were not supportive. Participant 8 noted grandparents took longer to be supportive, but after meeting the new baby, changed their attitude. Participant 2 explained her family's concern was not race but rather her age and lack of financial stability.

Theme 5: Support System

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), the percentage of women without spouses increased from 12.2% in 2000 to 13.1% in 2010. In addition, individuals identifying as being of more than one race also increased, from 2.4% in 2000 to 2.9% in

2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Single mothers need a support system, whether from friends, community, family, or the father of the child.

Child's Father

Two of the eight participants said their child's father was not involved in the child's life. Participant 6 stated her child's father was notably absent:

When I found out I was pregnant, I told the father that I was going to give him the choice to be involved or not be involved. I told him I did not want to pursue child support payments from him because I would support her and would want him to be in her life by choice rather than being forced to. In the beginning, he seemed invested and seemed like he was going to be part of her life. But as the pregnancy went on, he communicated less and less, and I didn't push for it. I didn't push for him to come to any doctor's visits or anything. . . . He has never met her. I told him when I was going in to have the baby, you know, what day I was going in, and he never said anything back.

Participant 5 stated, "Their dad completely cut the boys off when we separated because he wasn't with me; he was mad at me because I left for other reasons, and he completely cut the boys out of his life." So, two fathers of the participants' children are not in their lives; one father decided to leave his children because the mother did not want anything to do with him, and one was never in the child's life.

Father's Family

Three of the eight participants, Participants 1, 3, and 7, talked about how the family on the father's side was involved. Participant 8 said the child's family on the

father's side was never involved in her child's life. Participant 2 says her child does not communicate a lot with her father's family. Finally, Participant 4 did not speak about her child's father or family.

Participant 1 stated, "My daughter's father's family was very involved with her, so I did not feel challenged to make sure that she would connect with her Black heritage." Participant 3 stated her children's "other family is involved with them—their dad's family." Participant 7 was specific of which paternal family members her child was involved with: "I tend to take him to his great-grandmother's and let her interact with him and show him different things, and same with his grandpa."

Participants 8 said the family of her child's father were not that involved:

Her family on the Black side of her family have never really been involved. Not because we're far away or anything, they've just never, I don't know if they didn't care or they were worried I'd have negative things to say, or what.

Participant 2 stated, "I don't really communicate with them [father's family] that much. They come around sometimes but not really enough to be that involved, I guess." Participant 4, as noted, did not talk about the father or father's family being involved or not involved.

Community

The experience of the community for six of the eight participants was great. Participant 1 described "a very strong village" of "Black people." Participant 1 also talked about her adult daughter:

Oddly enough, speaking today, about today, she's grown now and has her own home, and I live in the country by myself. She lives in the quote, unquote "Black neighborhoods." She lives on the south side of our city, and she lives right in the middle of the south side community. And, anytime I go into that community, they know her, they know me, they know that we're mother and daughter, and I actually don't worry about my kid, because they know one another and they know her. I really feel like they look out for her. They call us by name. We're both very comfortable in her neighborhood. I only have one neighbor, on one side of me, but when she comes home, they know who she is, and they speak and talk with no problem. So, in that respect, we have a pretty good community, both hers and mine. And it was that way growing up. I always was particular about where we lived, just for that reason. I wanted her to live in a diverse area, community for that reason; more so because she is biracial.

Participant 2 stated, "Our neighborhood is pretty good with the kids. No, like, violence or anything around here. Pretty calm." Participant 4 stated her belief that her neighbors do not treat her or her child differently: "They don't treat us any differently. . . . When we do go out, everybody talks to her, and they just say that she's cute and everything. They don't really treat us any differently." Participant 6 stated, "We have a great community. I have a village helping." Participant 7 said, "And they don't see my child as any different as theirs." Participant 8 explained, "The community we live in, I was raised here; she's been raised here. Most of the entire community, she's kin to, one way or the other." Yet Participant 8 also noted the challenges of a small community: "It's

good to know everybody and be kin to them, but it doesn't always have a positive impact, you know?"

The other two participants described a less supportive community. Participant 3 said of her community,

I would definitely say it hasn't impacted me, personally, negatively. . . . But, I'm also not blind to the fact, to the people in this community who it has—even from the littlest things they post on Facebook, to me knowing somebody in high school and witnessing what they had to say.

Participant 5 at first had the same feeling as Participant 3 but saw a brighter side to her community:

The way they would look at my kids. I know they were treated differently years ago. But today, I know there's still some issues, but it's really not that bad anymore. . . . I see they've been accepted by White and Black people as well. So that's a good thing that I'm grateful for.

Composite Textural Description

The composite textural description focuses on the participants' experiences as single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children and their challenges with kinships and social networks. Using the themes, the participants voiced their challenges with kinships and social networks.

Regardless of the participants' challenges with kinships and social networks, all of the participants knew who they were and reportedly did not see color. All of the participants were happy with who they were as White women. Regardless of how these

challenges could affect these participants, only two felt depressed, and only three felt isolated. Overall, they are in good communities and have support from their communities. All of the participants believed that they were not economically disadvantaged or advantaged, but living in a one-parent household can be challenging.

Regarding racism, five of the participants reported experiencing racism, and three reported they did not experience racism. For the participants who experienced racism, it stemmed mostly from their family expressing themselves and the public dirty looks they received. The friends of these participants were more supportive than anyone else they knew.

In regard to how the participants felt about their Black partners, several of the participants' fathers disapproved of their daughters having a Black partner. These participants had other family members who disapproved of their Black partners as well because of how they were raised. The public's reaction was not better. Their mothers were supportive of them along with their friends, however one participant's mother lost the relationship with her best friend of many years.

Regardless of how everyone felt about the Black partners of these participants, the biracial children of these participants were not accepted by the participants' fathers at first. Over time, the participants' fathers did accept their biracial grandchildren. However, some of the family members and the public were still not supportive.

With regard to the support system of these participants, eight of the mothers said their children's father was not in their lives. Three of the eight participants talked about how the family of the children's father was involved. One of the participants stated how

the father does not come around at all and mentioned his family comes around sometimes but not enough to get involved.

Whether these participants experienced challenges, they all agreed that being a mother bought them joy. They did not care if their children were White and Black; they were just happy to be mothers. They would protect their children no matter what.

Composite Structural Description

The composite structured description focused on the background of how these women became mothers to Black-White biracial children and the challenges of racialized identity with their kinships and social networks. All the participants talked about liking Black men at a young age and not seeing color. One of the participants talked about feeling more comfortable with her Black or African American counterparts and how she was like that before having a biracial child. However, some of the family members of the participants did see color and expressed their feelings when it came to Black and White mixing.

Textural-Structural Synthesis

These participants had a long history of challenges as single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children with regards to radicalized identity and their kinships and social networks. These participants can recall negative challenges and how they were isolated and experienced racism with their kinships and social networks. Some participants recalled the positive experience with their kinship and social networks by having a supportive community, which linked them to a strong village. Some of these participants' lived experiences were similar and some were not, but all together their

challenges did not break them. Their experiences made them fight more for their children and against the challenges of racialized identity with their kinships and social networks.

Summary

The focus of the transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of single White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children to understand their racialized identity and kinship and social networks. Eight single White women with Black-White biracial children took part in this study with one-on-one, semistructured, open-ended questions during the interviewing process. As noted, due to COVID-19 guidelines, the interviews occurred via Zoom, Skype, or phone, with all interviews audio recorded and transcribed. Five themes emerged to describe experiences of the single, White birth, mothers of Black-White biracial children. To answer Research Question 1 regarding racialized identity, two themes emerged, Themes 1 and 2. Theme 1 is mother's insight, and Theme 2 is racism. To answer Research Question 2 regarding challenges to racialized identity by kinship and social networks, three themes emerged, Themes 3–5. Theme 3 is attitude about a Black partner, Theme 4 is perception of biracial children, and Theme 5 is support system. Results are interpreted in detail by research question in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I will present the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the results, and conclude the study with implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendation

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into the lives of single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Researchers use the phenomenological design to explore an individual's meaning related to their essential descriptions of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the phenomenological approach offers descriptions of experiences rather than explanations; consequently, I used this approach to aid in developing a picture of the participants' lived experiences of being single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children.

The U.S. population of single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children has grown, according to the 2005–2017 American Community Survey that showed that more than 1.88 million single-parent families were headed by single, White women with children of two or more races (Guzman, 2018). As of 2020, no scholarly literature had been published specific to the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. The population of single women is growing, as is the population of White women having biracial children (Rauktis et al., 2016). I conducted this study to address the gap in the literature by soliciting the voices of eight single, White women with Black-White biracial children regarding their experiences and how their kinship and social networks have changed due to racialized identity.

In Chapter 1, I presented the limited research specific to the experiences of single, White women with biracial Black-White children who found their racialized identity challenged by their kinship and social networks. Chapter 2 included an overview of the

foundational research on this topic. In the chapter, I reviewed the limited research on the phenomenon of single White women with Black-White biracial children in alignment with the theoretical framework of racialized identity theory. Chapter 3 included a discussion of the research methodology, design, rationale, and the researcher's role. I presented the processes of sampling participants, developing the interview protocol, collecting and analyzing the data, and addressing ethical concerns. In Chapter 4, I presented the results. Five themes emerged to describe experiences of the single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children. Research Question 1 was the following: What are the experiences of racialized identity among single, White women with Black-White biracial children? To answer Research Question 1, two themes emerged: Theme 1, the mother's insight, and Theme 2, racism. Research Question 2 was the following: How is the racialized identity of single, White women with Black-White biracial children challenged by their kinship and social networks? To answer Research Question 2, three themes emerged: Theme 3, the attitude about a Black partner; Theme 4, perception of biracial children; and Theme 5, the support system. The findings indicated 80% of the participants reported some type of negativity related to Themes 1, 3, 4, and 5. Related to Theme 2, Participants 4 and 6 never experienced racism. All participants described the children's fathers as not being supportive.

The results of the study are interpreted in detail in this chapter. In this chapter, I present an interpretation of the findings, the limitations related to the results, and conclude the study with implications for positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

Interpretation of the Findings in Context of Previous Research

The participants provided positive insights into the experiences and challenges of racialized identity. Their reported experiences (addressing Research Question 1) did not confirm the findings of Berger et al. (2019), who reported high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among their sample of single mothers. Out of the eight participants in the current study, only two mentioned depression. Additionally, most of the participants in the Berger et al. study were on welfare and not working, whereas participants in the current study had college degrees and jobs. The results of Berger et al.'s study did not agree with the findings of this study.

In this study, I found that most of the participants did not feel isolated when they had children of mixed-race parentage, as described by Luke (1994). In a similar study, Rauktis et al. (2016) showed that having Black-White biracial children placed mothers in a position of being neither White nor Black, which caused isolation. Out of the eight participants in the current study, five did not see themselves as isolated; therefore, these women believed that they were not alone. They felt like they were indeed a part of a community. Notably, Participant 1 stated she felt more comfortable with her Black friends and community, likely because of their acceptance of her biracial daughter.

The findings of the current study also disagreed with the results of Bell (2016), suggesting the need for awareness, if not concern, of mixed-race issues because Western society has moved past the simple dichotomy and separation of Black versus White races. Six of the participants in this study did report experiencing racism. However, the findings

of this study do agree with a prior finding that racism remains a challenge for White women raising biracial children (Rauktis et al., 2016). Three out of the eight participants experienced racism from public and friends, typically from members of their race (i.e., White). These participants demonstrated how they received dirty looks and verbal criticism by others. For example, Participant 7 reported remarks such as, "Your parents should've raised you a lot better," or "You should be ashamed of being a White lady trying to take Black men from Black women."

In the current study, three participants described racism by family members toward their biracial children. This finding relates to Britton's (2013) conclusion, "Whiteness is presented in everyday social practice, process, and intervention, yet there is an assumption . . . that it is unimportant to the identity development of mixed parentage children" (p. 1320). Participants 1 and 3 described their experiences related to Britton's finding, with Participant 1 describing being beaten by her father for choosing a Black partner and Participant 3 explaining her family demonstrated racism because her children were Black-White. Participant 3 described family members ignoring her children, unlike White children in the family. The experiences of Participants 1 and 3 also can be linked to those reported in Verbian's (2006) study, in which White mothers felt pulled between a desire to connect with their White families and the need to protect their biracial children's self-esteem. These two participants revealed that they have never experienced any racism from the public or friends, describing no issues with social networks but racial identity issues within their family.

Participants also reported challenges (i.e., Research Question 2). In the current study, five participants explained their friends were satisfied with them having a Black partner; however, the responses from family members were different. The family members of these White women were not happy with their choice to have a partner of another race. This finding confirms what the participants in Caballero et al.'s (2008) study described, that White women in relationships with Black men have been judged as sellouts to their race. Participant 3 noted her family said she was "raised better" than to choose a Black partner.

Several of the participants experienced rejection from family when having Black partners. For example, the families of five participants did not accept their partner, and the family of one participant permanently disowned her. The experiences of Participant 7 being disowned support the views of Edwards and Caballero (2011) regarding traditional social rejection of women in interracial relationships. Participant 4 decided to keep her Black partner a secret. Edwards and Caballero clarified that participants reported being criticized for entering relationships doomed to fail and single, White mothers faced judgment as having loose sexual morals or standards.

Friends of seven out of eight participants did embrace the idea of their friend having a biracial child. The friends of Participant 7 did accept her biracial child, but the lack of socializing was a problem for the participant. Participants 1 and 5 reported their fathers did not accept their biracial grandchildren, confirming the findings of previous research (i.e., Helms, 1997; Rauktis et al., 2016). White mothers of biracial children may undergo particularly complex struggles with racialized identity as they lose White

privilege or observe racism toward their children (Rauktis et al., 2016). Participant 1's father eventually accepted the child but was not happy that the child was Black-White, confirming Rauktis et al.'s finding due to the observed racism toward the child.

All participants reported lack of support from the child's father. Two participants revealed that their children's fathers were absent from their lives. This finding agrees with Edwards and Caballero's (2011) conclusion that "White women with biracial children face challenges with loneliness and lack of support from their children's father and others" (p. 533). The father of Participant 6's child had never even seen his child. The father of Participant 5's child cut them off after the mother did not want anything to do with him. Despite their actions, these mothers still did not ask the fathers for anything. The participants still went out and supported their children, which did not confirm feelings of being socially isolated as noted by Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2017).

The fathers' families did play a role in the lives of the children, according to three participants. Three other participants did not communicate with their children's father's side of the family. Participant 8 said the family of her child's father were not that involved but seemed unsure as to why.

Six out of the eight participants endeavored to rear their children in multicultural neighborhoods in which they found a degree of social support, which is supported by the findings of Edwards and Caballero (2011). Only Participant 3 believed that her community impacted her negatively. Several participants noted their friends and community as a source of support.

Interpretation of Key Findings in the Context of Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework comprised Helms's (1990) Black and White racial identity theory. Racial identity theory focuses on the abandonment of personal racism and racial privileges, including the avoidance of life options that would cause participation in racial oppression. In this study, racism referred to the personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that White individuals use to convince themselves of the superiority of their race while promoting the inferiority of non-White racial groups. A White person might face racial identity issues if a Black person were to intrude into the White individual's environment in ways that could not be ignored or controlled.

The findings in this study supported Helms's (1990) Black and White racial identity theory. In the results of this study, the participants described the challenges that some single, White mothers of biracial children experienced. These single, White women with White-Black biracial children explained why their kinships and social networks were a positive or negative force on their lived experience when they decided to choose a Black partner and have Black-White biracial children. These women were brought up in a White racial heritage. The participants knew they were White and did not try to deny their White heritage but connected with Black people. The positive side of the findings is that most of the participants felt happy despite how their family tried to abandon them due to personal racism and take away their racial privileges. They still felt a part of a community and had their White and Black friends as their support system, even when the fathers of their children were not present. However, the negative side of the findings was that at least one single, White mother felt isolated and depressed and did not connect to

her White heritage; this resulted from how White individuals treated her, especially her family members.

Furthermore, one participant described her life as sad because her family would interact with her sibling's children because they were White and fit the profile of the dominant group. The participant's children were biracial and did not identify with a racial group. This finding ties in with Helms's (1990) Black and White racial identity theory in that racial privileges are taken due to the mother stepping outside her race. Having biracial children causes the family to become torn apart because of society's stereotypes of a group. This also causes the family to be looked upon as dirty and worthless and Whites as clean and valuable. These families were looked upon differently because these women had Black-White biracial children. According to Helms (1990), "Blacks and Whites are not considered equals, and negative social consequences besiege the White person who does not respect the inequalities" (p. 58). So, when a single, White woman partners with a Black man and has Black-White biracial children, the children are not equal to their other White family members and will be disowned. This can have a negative impact on the single, White mother with Black-White biracial children.

The support system of most of these participants did help when their family, community, friends, and the family of the child's father were involved. However, without this support, the lived experiences of these participants were negative. The negative lived experiences changed these participants, causing them to avoid life options related to racial oppression and leading them to search for answers to their questions of racialized identity, such as "Who am I racially?" "Who do I want to be?" and "Who are you

really?" (Helms, 1990, p. 62). Therefore, the challenges of racialized identity regarding the participants' kinship and social network impacted their lived experiences.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study were based on interviews with eight single, White mothers of Black-White biracial children. The study had some limitations related to sampling. To meet COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, I conducted the interviews via Zoom, Skype, and the phone, as face-to-face interviewing was not an option. The participant population was homogeneous: They were never-married, single, White mothers with Black-White biracial children. The participant pool was small ($N = 8$). However, a small number of participants is preferred in in-depth, qualitative research, with Giorgi and Giorgi (2008) recommending as few as three participants. In qualitative research, rather than having a large sample, rich, in-depth data are gathered from fewer participants. However, more participants could help with the data process by developing a larger sample size. Meanwhile, the data do not represent all single, White mothers of Black-White biracial children.

A limited amount of literature exists on single, White mothers with Black-White biracial children. However, I am an African American woman with a Black-White biracial child. I reflected on and used bracketing to identify my personal feelings and biases prior to data collection (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). As the researcher, I could not verify the participants were trustworthy in the interviewing process while sharing their experiences regarding racialized identity. Since the nature of this study was described as a preliminary investigation and described as a

phenomenological study of racialized identity among single, White, birth mothers of Black-White biracial children, further studies need to be conducted on the topic.

Recommendations

Due to the fact this research had limited resources, further research is recommended. Single White women were the target population of this study, in terms of what they have experienced and how they perceive their racialized identity. Racialized identity focuses on how individuals see themselves (Cole & Levine, 2002). Racial identity deals with such challenges as bullying, prejudices, and bias. Still, future research could address issues of race and identity among single White mothers of biracial children. White women are becoming more interracially involved with Black men and men of non-White races (Bell, 2016). More research needs to be focused on single White women with biracial children, expanding to include White-Hispanic children. Another recommendation is to replicate this study of single, White mothers with Black-White biracial children in the northwestern United States. The small sample size of the qualitative study and the reexamination of current findings would be helpful to determine whether the results can be generalized to the most significant representative population. Finally, research could compare racial identity experiences of single White mothers with the racial identity experiences of their grown biracial children.

Implications

Study findings promote positive social change by demonstrating awareness of the experiences of single, White women with Black-White biracial children. Since the population of single, White women with Black-White biracial children is growing,

positive social change is significant for a better society. Also, changes in laws, societal movements, and societal attitudes have resulted in more White women becoming interracially involved with Black men and men of non-White races (Bell, 2016). This study did illustrate the challenges of racialized identity among single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children.

Addressing this study may help counselors and therapists provide better multicultural counseling and therapy to single, White mothers of Black-White biracial children. Individuals of other races need to understand the lived experience of these single, White women with Black-White biracial children to help them positively embrace the challenges and promote the well-being of these mothers. Mentoring programs or social networks could allow single, White mothers with Black-White biracial children to support and advise new White mothers of Black-White biracial children. Even nonprofit, community-based mentoring programs could provide educational, financial assistance, and emotional support to single women with biracial children; dismantle negative stereotypes and prejudices; and enlighten positive social changes when dealing with racial identity. Helms (1990) stressed that Black and White racial identity shows racial identity theory, focuses on the abandonment of personal racism and racial privileges, and includes the avoidance of life options that would lead to participation in racial oppression organizations. Allowing these single, White women with Black-White biracial children to bond with other single, White women with Black-White biracial children with the same challenges could provide support to the women. Further, research in this study should

increase the knowledge and awareness about single, White birth mothers of Black-White biracial children and the impact of racialized Identity.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental, descriptive, phenomenological study was for these single, White women with Black-White biracial children to tell the stories of their lived experience as a means to understand the challenges of racialized identity with their kinship and social networks. Eight participants vividly described their lived experiences. The study allowed me to understand the challenges, positive and negative, that these participants endured. This study fills in the gap of understanding the challenges of racialized identity with the kinship and social networks of White, single mothers of Black-White children. This study provides insight on how these mothers perceived racialized identity and how racialized identity can result in negative or positive effects. These single, White women with Black-White biracial children were seen as sellouts, and some suffered the consequence due to their racialized identity and their family members' understanding of race. Those single, White mothers who had the support of family, friends, the family of their children's father, and a strong community in their life had a better experience than those who did not. In the absence of family acceptance, the support of friends and community was invaluable for the mothers and their biracial children.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. First, I would like to review the informed consent form. Your identity will be kept completely confidential. Also, you can discontinue this interview at any time or choose not to answer a question. Your input is valuable to this research study.

Research Question 1: Racialized Identity

1. Let's talk about being a single mother. Explain your feelings and circumstances. Probes: Do you feel depressed, isolated, part of a community, economically advantaged, or disadvantaged?

2. What are your ideas of being White or being Black after having biracial children? Did those ideas change, and how? Probes: What are your feelings of being White, or do you connect with your children's biracial status? What are your experiences of racism, if any? How would you describe your experience of being a White mother of a biracial child? How well connected do you feel to your child's biracial status?

3. What sort of reactions do you face in public with your biracial children? Prompts: from health care providers, police, educators

4. How do you try to protect your children from racism?

Research Question 2: Challenges of Kinship and Social Networks

5. What was the response of your family and friends when you chose a Black partner?

6. What was the response of your family and friends when you had biracial children?

7. Discuss ways that you feel challenged to provide your children with a multicultural upbringing or to connect them with their Black heritage.

8. Describe your community or neighborhood and how it impacts your biracial children and yourself.