Racialized Identity and Teacher Preparation: A Case Study of Teacher Candidates of Color

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Racialized Identity and Teacher Preparation: A Case Study of Teacher Candidates of Color

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

by

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Abstract

This study addresses the problem concerning the lack of Teacher Candidates of Color (TCOCs) in teacher education. It examines recruitment, support, and retention by identifying promises and pitfalls of diversifying the teacher pipeline through the voices of Students of Color (SOCs) who are already enrolled in teacher education. How race and racialization processes influence TCOCs was salient to the study. Through qualitative case study, the researcher explored the lived experiences of teacher candidates with racialized identities being prepared to teach within one Predominately White Institution (PWI). Using a Critical Race Theory framework, four research questions guided this study: (1) What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color? (2) How have racialized identities contributed to Teacher Candidates of Color’s interest in the teaching profession? (3) How are racialized identities afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts? and (4) What experiences coalesce across Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution? Purposeful sampling was used to select six Teacher Candidates of Color from three teacher preparation programs within the University of Arkansas. Data were collected through sixteen semi-structured interviews and one focus group that resulted in four overarching themes that align with the four guiding research questions, (1) Intersections of History and Biography, (2) Reckoning with Racism and Race-Neutrality, (2) Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces, and (3) Seeking Common Ground. The study uncovered myriad ways that negotiating racialized identity results in a persistent disquiet with normative experiences found in TCOCs’ backgrounds, K-12 experiences, and within PWIs. Through counternarratives, participants’ experiential knowledge was centered and yielded idiosyncratic and collective findings that revealed reverberating impacts of the persistent underrepresentation of Teachers of Color in K-12 and higher education. Recommendations are made for research to
develop a more inclusive praxis for the preparation of diverse teacher candidates as well as recommendations for practice for how Teacher Candidates of Color can be better supported in Predominately White Institutions.

*Keywords*: racialized identity, teacher preparation, Predominately White Institutions, Critical Race Theory, underrepresentation, diversification of the teacher pipeline
Dedication

It is with so much love that I dedicate this work to my family who supported me throughout this long and arduous journey.

This is for my “Granny” (Catheryn Smith) who was (and always will be) my compass for what is right.

This is for my beloved father (Bennie J. Wimbrey Jr.) and mother (Beverly K. Johnson) who have always been my biggest champions.

This is for my “Pops” (Horace Johnson) who I could always count on.

I am so blessed to be gifted with such loving, supportive, and unwavering grandparents and parents.

This is for my husband (Geno Bell) who owns my heart and my laughter.

This is for my babies (Mason, Nicholas & Lauren) who are my sunshine.

I hope to always make you proud.

I love you all so much!

May my journey model the reward of perseverance and resilience.
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I have read many dissertations throughout my professional life, and I never really understood the purpose of this optional section of the final paper. Years later, on the other side of the process, I finally get it; a lot of “life” is often entangled with writing a dissertation and no one gets through this process alone. As I share my formal acknowledgements in this section, if I have unintentionally overlooked anyone, please feel acknowledged by God’s Word that often comforted me throughout the last few years:

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up, but pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

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Chapter I: Introduction

National data show that there is a disproportionate representation of Teachers of Color (TOCs) in the profession at a time when K-12 Students of Color (SOCs) have emerged as the majority in the public school population (U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Educational Statistics, 2020). Because the teacher workforce remains largely White and female, 79% and 76% respectively, classroom teachers who reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds of their students are the exception and not the norm. A burgeoning body of research, however, suggests that to better meet the needs of more students, schools across the United States desperately need a cadre of teachers who are representative of the changing demographics. While teachers from all races can inspire student success (Gay, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009), education scholars confirm when the teacher workforce more closely mirrors the K-12 student population, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional outcomes are improved for all students. Positive associations of TOCs with SOCs are specifically improved (Dee, 2005; Howard, 2010; McGrady & Reynolds, 2012; Redding, 2019).

Are teacher education programs recruiting diverse teacher candidates to enter the teaching profession? Technically, many are. However, the demographics of their program completers reflect the lack of efficacy of national efforts. Preparation programs continue to churn out an emergent teacher workforce that comes from predominantly different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds than that of the K-12 students that they prepare teachers to serve (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Despite a variety of programs, policies, and practices that have been put in place with promise of bolstering a pipeline with Teachers of Color, minimal progress has been made toward shifting the teacher-student diversity gap. Building a healthy teacher pipeline from pre-service to in-service remains tenuous because barriers to recruitment, support and retention of Teachers and Teacher Candidates of Color
TCOCs are complex and dynamic. The stakes of continued underrepresentation are high, however, which warrants an examination of current practices that sustain the demographic gap, as well as the literature that speaks to how the current state of teacher education works to the detriment of K-12 students’ education (Howard, 2010; Sleeter & Thao, 2007).

According to national reports, university-based teacher preparation programs are the primary route to the classroom (King & Hampel, 2018), but Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) have passively responded (Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Davis 2007) to the needs of their racially and culturally diverse teacher candidate pool. Milner (2008) explains that, teacher education curricula and experiences are tailored toward a White female teacher populace. Pre-service teachers and teacher educators are overwhelmingly White, middle class and were also educated almost exclusively by White teachers themselves (Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). Unquestionably, the dominant narrative of the teaching profession and teacher preparation is thus centered on a White worldview. Shaped by their racialized identities and racialized experiences, however, People of Color (POC) bring different perspectives to the process of learning and learning to teach (Langer-Osuna, & Nasir, 2016).

Underrepresentation has simultaneously created an educational equity imperative that beseeches public education and teacher education to work together to mend. Inquiries into how to accommodate the vast and fast-paced changes are abundant. Raising racial, social and cultural consciousness of the teaching profession is multidimensional, however. Linda Darling-Hammond articulates this multi-layered challenge:

“Dealing with diversity is one of the central challenges of twenty-first education. It is impossible to prepare tomorrow’s teachers to succeed with all of the students they will meet without exploring how both students’ and teachers’ learning experiences are influenced by their home language, cultures, and contexts; the realities of race and class privilege in the United States; the ongoing manifestations of institutional racism with the
educational system, and the many factors that shape students’ opportunities to learn...” (Darling-Hammond, 2011, p. ix)

Preparing pre-service candidates for the challenging work of teaching within an increasingly global society facing persistent inequities is long-standing in the teacher education discourse (Banks, 1995; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005a; 2005b). At the core of this conversation within teacher education, lies the complexity of teachers and students themselves – how they understand, view, and respond to each other. Cochran-Smith (2010) acknowledges the centrality of identity in education and suggests that teacher education needs to attend to teachers’ identities as much as students’ identities. Although race is not an accepted biological concept, it remains a widely accepted powerful social construct (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Racialized identities in the larger society and in school environments specifically impact the interactions between racially, culturally, and/or linguistically diverse students and teachers. Given the history of race relations in the United States, focusing on the strong connection between schooling, racialized identities, and educational outcomes remains important especially for students who have been historically underserved (e.g., students from diverse nationalities and diverse racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds).

Fueling the exigency of filling the demographic divide begs a question for teacher preparation, What is the best path forward to prepare future teachers for classrooms that increasingly reflect the heterogeneity of America’s society? Scholarship on the preparation of teachers for diverse populations speaks to three broad areas, (1) understanding the ethnocentric experiential backgrounds of White teachers (Arsenault, 2018; Matias, 2013), (2) attending to diversity through multicultural education approaches (Gorski, 2009; Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001), and (3) increasing the representation of teachers from groups of color (Gist, 2019; Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2019; Sleeter & Thao, 2007). These three areas are complementary but differ in
what they emphasize. Of the three responses couched in the extant teacher preparation research, diversification of the teacher workforce has garnered much attention as a means to resolve many educational disparities (King & Hampel, 2018; Bireda, & Chait, 2011). This third response, increasing the representation of TOCs, was the focus of this study.

While it is important to answer the national call for more representation of People of Color (POC) in teacher education, a sheer increase in numbers is by itself insufficient (Picower, 2009). If the field of teacher education is to play a key role in dismantling inequitable outcomes faced by SOCs in U.S. public schools, then the issue of race and racialized identities must be addressed as part of the teacher preparation conversation. Exclusively focusing on quantifying representation of prospective Teacher Candidates of Color to diversify the teacher workforce but neglecting to acknowledge their lived experiences and needs in teacher preparation, will only result in incremental shifts toward filling the nation’s demographic gap in K-12 public education.

**Statement of the Problem**

The conversation regarding the disproportionate number of TOCs is commonplace in education scholarship and the discourse surrounding root causes and impacts of this national predicament spans decades (Sleeter, 2001; 2017). A research agenda focused on this ongoing pervasive problem of practice is not definitive, but the key role that teacher preparation programs play in constructing and (de)constructing the diverse educator workforce remains a locus for critical inquiry. Merely stating that the problem is underrepresentation oversimplifies a larger underlying issue. Recruitment and retention may be undermined by what some scholars call education’s “diversity paradox” (Harris, Hayes, & Smith, 2020; Juarez, Smith & Hayes, 2008; Shaw 2009). The term captures a consensus among some researchers that exclusively focusing on increasing representation to create a diverse teaching workforce fails to accomplish that end if teacher preparation programs fail to capture the value of difference. Recruitment without
cultivating any other changes in the way teacher preparation is conceived, developed, and organized becomes counterintuitive.

Scholars suggest that recruitment, support and retention efforts have unsuccessfully forged paths to fit POC into existing systems without transforming the educational systems themselves. The result is equity-oriented and good-intentioned diversification aims that are undercut by privileging Whiteness and marginalizing POC through policies, curricula, decision making and more. Carter Andrews, et. al. (2019) describes most teacher education programmatic experiences as “traditional” and “colonial” in their “unspoken and unwritten” opportunities provided to teacher candidates (p.7). Sleeter (2017) describes the field’s professed commitment to diversify the teacher workforce as a contradictory commitment where mission statements and realities misalign in teacher education. This suggests that one salient problem in teacher education is the diversity paradox. Rather consciously or unwittingly, teacher preparation programs promote normative patterns that stymie the advancement of racial/cultural diversity in the educator pipeline and workforce.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of teacher candidates with racialized identities who are being prepared to teach within one Predominately White Institution. The educational experiences of university SOCs who choose to pursue teaching and decide to attend PWIs, must be acknowledged for the additional challenges that race and racialized identities have historically presented in these particular educational settings (Frank, 2003). One way for teacher preparation programs to diversify their candidacy rosters, and ultimately the teaching workforce, is for teacher educators in PWIs to inspect curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher preparation structures that may support, deter, or impede program completion by listening to Teacher Candidates of Color enrolled in their programs of study.
Significance of the Study

Efforts to narrow the teacher-student demographic divide have been previously informed by research focused on the experiences of teacher candidates at multiple stages along the teacher preparation continuum, recruitment (program entry supports), preparation (institutional curriculum, pedagogy, and learning supports), and retention (sustaining mechanisms within the profession) (Gist, 2019). This case study sought to garner a multi-faceted understanding by inquiring about the experiences of TCOCs in each of stage of the preparation continuum; therefore, this study was significant in content, process, and outcome.

The content of the case underscored the significance of racialized identity in relationship to teacher preparation in a PWI. This understanding could only be informed by individual and collective narratives and counternarratives from an array of TCOCs within the institution about their varied educational programs. By design then, the methodology invited an idiosyncratic view of a complex existence and resisted essentializing race and racialized experiences of POC as a monolith. Through adopting a Critical Race Theory lens, my case study did not seek to merely document disparities, but also advocated for meaningful outcomes to redress any seen, unseen, and unforeseen inequities (due to racialized identities) presented in participants’ varied teacher preparation experiences (Dixson & Anderson, 2018).

The case study added empirical evidence about potential blind spots that traditionally-oriented curriculum, pedagogy, and support structures have on teacher candidates with racialized identities. This study contributed insights into how teacher educators can disrupt the normative canon of teacher preparation to better recruit, prepare, and serve this highly sought teacher population. To that end, the study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?
2. How have racialized identities contributed to Teacher Candidates of Color’s interest in the teaching profession?

3. How are racialized identities afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts?

4. What experiences coalesce among Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution (PWI)?

Definitions of Terms

I operationalized the following terms for this study. Other terms are clarified in the context of the literature review.

1. **Hegemony** – Dominion by the ruling class and unconscious acceptance of the state-of-affairs by the subordinate group (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012).

2. **Terms of Color** – “People of Color” is a global term primarily used to encompass all non-White groups. “People of Color,” “Students of Color,” “preservice Teachers of Color,” “Teacher Candidates of Color,” “Teachers of Color” and “Communities of Color” will be used to represent persons who identify as a traditionally marginalized group in the United States due to race or ethnicity. These terms emphasize common experiences and collective sociopolitical histories of marginalization by education institutions, policies, and practices. (Dilworth & Brown, 2008 as cited in Carter Andrews et.al., 2019). These groups will be capitalized throughout the writing to acknowledge their collective history.

3. **Race** - Race and races are products of social construction, thought, and relations; they do not correspond to biological or genetic realities. “Races are categories that society invents, manipulates or retires when convenient,” (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 8).
4. **Racism** – Racism is a power structure that has an “old” and “new” form. “Old racism” is an ideology of overt visible prejudice and supremacy (e.g., mean-spirited acts of discrimination). “New racism” is an ideology of covert, invisible sets of institutional and interpersonal patterns and practices that create advantages for people who are socially constructed as White. Racism is the corollary disadvantage for people defined as belonging to non-White racial groups (Kohli, Pizaro, & Nevarez, 2017).

5. **Racialization** – Racialization is the *process* through which racial meaning is attached to something. The racialization process plays a central role in the creation and reproduction of racial meanings.

6. **Racialized Identity** – “Racial identities” and “racialized identities” are used to explain how one interacts with the world and how the world interacts with him/her. These identities are framed by histories and experiences with “old” and “new” racism and marginalization. The term “racialized identities” is used as an effort to “honor the idea that race (and thus racial identities) is not inherent, but rather is made racial through social interaction, positioning, and discourse.” (Nasir, 2012, p.5). Racialized identities “are related to the complex process of racial socialization, which occurs in family and school contexts” (Nasir, 2012, p.25) and are complex and personal.

7. **Teacher Candidate** – A teacher candidate is an individual in a teacher preparation program prior to obtaining an initial teaching license who has also been formally admitted into a teacher preparation program.

8. **Whiteness** – Whiteness is a social concept (not a culture). Leonardo (2002) describes it as a “racial discourse” distinct from the socially constructed racial category of White identity (p.
Whiteness is a pervasive racialized worldview that is “supported by material practices and institutions” (p. 32).

Summary of Chapter I

Chapter I provided background, rationale, and focus for this study. The background of the K-12 teacher-student demographic divide, in conjunction with its implications for teacher education for the diversification of teachers, framed the research problem and set forth the purpose of this study. Definitions of terms to promote reader clarity were delineated. Chapter II examines the existing scholarship regarding Critical Race Theory, racialized identity, traditional teacher preparation and preparing TCOCs. Chapter III articulates the research design, methodological process, and specific details about how the study was organized and implemented. The remaining chapters focus on the actual research conducted. Results are provided in Chapter IV, followed by an interpretation of the findings in Chapter V.
Chapter II: Literature Review

As previously framed in Chapter I, educational researchers and practitioners have been responding to the challenges imposed by an increasingly diverse school population and a largely White teaching corps. Current estimates of the underrepresentation of TCOCs reflect the scale of the problem, but likely understate the impact of the crisis. Inequitable achievement test scores, rates of school graduation, disciplinary sanctions, and more, continue to cull significant lamentation over the state of U.S. public education (Pearman et al., 2019 e.g., Skiba et al., 2002). As the K-12 student population has tipped the scales from a White majority to a White minority, educating teacher candidates for diversity has become a renewed interest in teacher education programs across the United States. Teacher education literature offers many responses to prepare teachers to meet the needs of racially, culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse student populations, including, but not limited to (1) understanding the ethnocentric experiential backgrounds of White teachers, (2) attending to diversity through multicultural education approaches, and (3) increasing the representation of teachers from groups of color. The scholarship targeting the latter has the longest sustained conversation in the literature (and is the focus of this study) but changing the color of teaching remains elusive. The previously problematized “diversity paradox” within K-12 education and teacher education is a contributing factor in maintaining normative patterns. Thus, positioning diversification of the teacher workforce as a viable means to achieve more equitable outcomes for K-12 students, hinges on the inclusion of more TCOCs in teacher preparation programs. Equally important to achieve that end, however, is inspection of their racialized identities and experiences that invite them into or limit their participation in teacher education.

The intention of this review is to examine literature that informs the research questions
put forth in Chapter I. To anchor the study of the recruitment, support and retention of TCOCs, the literature review is organized in the following way: A discussion of Critical Race Theory as the primary framework in which the research problem of teacher education praxis is understood and investigated, the historical and contemporary education landscape is presented to provide context for the current state and implications of underrepresentation of TOCs. Next, an overview of racism and Whiteness, their meanings and manifestations, are presented to better understand the positioning and experiences of SOCs in predominantly White education settings. A discussion of racialized identity and preparing TCOCs in traditional orientations to teaching follows. Finally, TCOCs as pedagogical tools focuses on a range of beneficial outcomes for racial identity matching in K-16 education settings.

Theoretical Foundation

Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical and advocacy-centered framework provides direction for scholars to engage in scholarship and analysis around race, racism, and other forms of oppression (Dixon & Rousseau, 2005; Dixson & Anderson, 2018). In the 1970s, CRT emerged from legal studies, to examine the endemic nature of racism in the United States. Key legal scholars, Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Richard Delgado, Cheryl Harris and Kimberlé Crenshaw began to critique mainstream portrayal of meritocracy and failure to brandish systemic racism in the legal system that maintained economic and social oppression for People of Color (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012; Taylor, 2016). These scholars recognized a need for new methods and birthed CRT as an intellectual movement that incited the study of (and the transformation of) the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012).

Like most theories, Critical Race Theory continued to emerge and expand. This promising theory initially prioritized race and racism in legal scholarship and analysis, but later,
Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate, proposed that race was under-theorized and began examining Critical Race Theory as a framework to understand race and racism in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The transferability of legal theory to the study of education has resulted in empirical works framed in CRT to examine a range of educational problems of practice. Qualitative researchers have used CRT (and CRT methodology) to discuss myriad experiences of students and faculty of color in schools and universities (Davila, 1995; De-Cuir-Gunby, Johnson, Edwards, McCoy & White, 2020). For this paper, Solórzano and Yosso’s ideas about CRT methods were used.

**CRT Methodology**

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) extended the definition of Critical Race Theory and argued that CRT advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and “works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25). They proposed CRT in education as a framework with at least five elements (i.e., the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, challenge to dominant ideology, commitment to social justice, centrality of experiential knowledge, transdisciplinary perspective) to identify, analyze, and transform structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom.

As a research approach, critical race methodology is grounded in Critical Race Theory which Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define as a:

“...Theoretically grounded approach to research that (a) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process. However, it also challenges the separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing how these three elements intersect to affect the experiences of students of color; (b) challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts,
and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color; (c) offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; and (d) focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students of color. Furthermore, it views these experiences as sources of strength and (e) uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women’s studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 24).

Critical race methodology strategically uses multiple methods to draw on the knowledge of People of Color who are traditionally excluded as an official part of the academy (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT methodology then, requires researchers to be informed by CRT and engage in creative techniques of data gathering and analysis; specifically, storytelling to validate the oral tradition of many diverse communities and counter-story telling to create dialogue that critically illuminates concepts, ideas, that are grounded in the experiences of People of Color as expressed by People of Color (counter to any deficit or majoritarian narrative).

**Constructs of CRT**

Since CRT’s seminal authors, other researchers have outlined multiple sets of tenets (or constructs) that help frame understandings that differentiate CRT from other writings and frameworks about race and racism (Dixson & Anderson, 2018). See Table 1. The CRT framework is a bundling of tenets or constructs that have been taken alone or combined by education researchers.

CRT tenets (constructs) have a long history in multidisciplinary scholarship attempting to drive a critical analysis to understand persistent racial disparities. Though CRT began as a means to examine the Black-White binary, in recent years it has evolved to include the experiences and outcomes of other marginalized racial groups, including, but not limited to Latinx (LatCrit) Indigenous (TribalCrit), and Asian American and Pacific Islander or AsianCrit (Lynn & Dixson,
Each align themselves with the tenets of CRT while addressing issues and dimensions that are group specific (Cheruvu, 2014).

### Table 1

**Tenets of Critical Race Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRT Tenet</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race is a Social Construct</td>
<td>How race and races are defined and experienced results from social and political thought and actions that changes over time</td>
<td>Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Delgado and Stefanic (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanence of Racism</td>
<td>Racism is a permanent component of the American societal structure; conscious and unconscious racism is ordinary and endemic (not aberrational)</td>
<td>Bell (1992); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteness as Property</td>
<td>Due to America’s history of race and racism, Whiteness is a property of interest that has value that can be used, transferred, or withheld</td>
<td>Harris (1993); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Delgado (1989); Matsuda (1995); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Solórzano and Yosso (2002); Delgado and Stefanic (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Counterstorytelling</td>
<td>A method of storytelling that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises, especially ones held by the majority that perpetuate racial stereotypes</td>
<td>Delgado (1989); Matsuda (1995); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Solórzano and Yosso (2002); Delgado and Stefanic (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Knowledge</td>
<td>Minority status brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism; recognition that the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate and critical to understanding and analyzing racial subordination</td>
<td>Solórzano and Yosso (2002); Delgado and Stefanic (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Convergence</td>
<td>Large segments of White society have little incentive to eradicate racism; Progress of POC is achieved when their goals are consistent with the interests of the White majority</td>
<td>Bell (1980); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Dominant Ideology</td>
<td>Examine the system of education as part of a critique of societal inequality; challenge dominant social and cultural assumptions through research, pedagogy, and praxis</td>
<td>Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Solórzano and Yosso (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectionality</td>
<td>Consideration of the intersection of race with other identities; consideration of multiple over-lapping identities</td>
<td>Crenshaw (1991)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. This table is not an exhaustive list of CRT tenets.*
Of the five aforementioned constructs offered by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) to guide CRT methodology, none truly diverge from the ideas of CRT’s seminal authors. Methodology is explained as part of a larger CRT body. Although theoretical, the underlying idea is to move to action and to empower. The CRT tenets present in this study work to empower underrepresented groups (i.e., social justice). By investigating the lived experiences of POC, I focused on multiple and complex social interactions in education contexts. My study implicitly invited understanding any uneven opportunities with the explicit expectation to leverage and to challenge inequities for the purposes of action. These ideals propel pathways for advocacy that align with the emancipatory and transformative aims that Solórzano and Yosso (2002) posit for those interested in applying CRT methodology.

Though there are many options, three main CRT tenets (or constructs) were integral to the conceptualization and methodology utilized to explore my research questions, *Racism is normal, not aberrational* (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012; Taylor, 2016), *Whiteness as Property* (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and *Centrality of Experiential Knowledge/Counternarratives* (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Figure 1 provides an overview of how these tenets are directly applied to my study. From the CRT body, three tenets guided the development of research questions and research protocols to understand multiple concepts related to race and education experiences.

**Racism is Normal, not Aberrational.** Critical Race Theory (CRT) asserts that racism is a common part of the social fabric of American culture. It is a normal part of daily life experienced by most POC. It is so deeply embedded that it is invisible and normalized in structures like politics, law, and education. Despite racism’s pervasiveness and impact, Taylor (2016) highlights its irony in that racism is almost unrecognizable - except by its recipients.
Political, economic, and educational advantages are often imperceptible to White people and many have difficulty detecting and comprehending non-White experiences and perspectives.

In the corpus of literature that addresses the underrepresentation of Teachers of Color, race and racism are often minimized or evaded (Kohli, 2018), but significant progress in addressing the lack of TOCs in the teacher workforce is unlikely if race (and manifestations of racism) in education and teacher preparation is not explicitly addressed within the efforts to affect change (Kohli, 2018).

**Whiteness as Property.** “Whiteness as property” is the premise that there are assumptions, privileges, and benefits associated with identifying as White. According to Harris (1993), the concept is based on power relations, meaning White dominance and the subordination of POC. Whiteness involves culturally, socially, politically, and institutionally produced and reproduced practices that benefit White people while simultaneously marginalizing others. The reference to property rights highlights that White people have an *investment* in Whiteness as an asset. Whiteness understood as a form of property denotes that it has value that is systematically protected, both legally and intellectually. Based on this premise, CRT scholars further explain that property includes the rights of possession, use, transfer, disposition, and exclusion (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Harris, 1993).

School and university curricula are “culturally specific artifact[s]” designed to maintain a White script (Ladson-Billings, 2016, p. 24). Curricula are often considered a form of “Whiteness as property” because they reify the value of Whiteness by exalting the experiences of White people while muting the experiences of others (Ladson-Billings, 2016). In education, Whiteness is touted as universal and homogeneous and omissions and/or distortions of POC are rampant.
**Experiential Knowledge (Counternarratives).** By placing race at the center of analysis, the voices of POC help to transform the structures that produce and reproduce relationships of domination and subordination. Naming one’s own reality emerges in the work of CRT theorists as a three-prong ideal that suggests that (1) much of reality is socially constructed, (2) stories are vehicles for healing for those who are racially oppressed, and (3) stories by POC can catalyze self-examination of the dominant group (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings; 2016, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Accordingly, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) state that counterstorytelling provides voice for historically marginalized people. A counterstory, defined as “a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege,” elucidates the way that race impacts experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). These stories are lived and experienced counter to the prevailing (i.e., majoritarian) narrative.

Though there is a smaller representation of TCOCs in comparison to their White counterparts in teacher preparation, this CRT tenet recognizes that the lived experiences of POC are valuable, legitimate and critical forms of knowledge (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The overwhelming presence of Whiteness in education, including teacher education, make storytelling (e.g., family histories, biographies, chronicles, and testimonies) in educational research fundamental (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).
CRT As a Catalyst for Change

Educational researchers suggest inquiry that extends beyond preoccupation with quantifying the cadre of TOCs and taking up critical research that examines their experiences in teacher preparation programs to forage a better path to meet the current demographic gap (Haddix, 2017; Harris, Hayes, & Smith, 2019). CRT as a theory emphasizes the centrality of race and legitimizes the experiential knowledge garnered from People of Color and as a methodology offers a way to understand the experiences of People of Color along the educational pipeline. From developing research questions to collecting, analyzing, and presenting data, Critical Race Theory (and CRT methodology) is ideally suited as the frame for this study.

Using CRT to examine the racialized experiences of TCOCs, through their own narratives, who choose to attend Predominantly White Institutions, can provide an understanding of what the needs and conditions are within educational institutions and systems that bar or facilitate their entry and matriculation into the teaching profession. This understanding, in turn,
may result in more effective recruitment, retention and support strategies, and movement toward combatting the diversity paradox. But before one can incite change, it is important to understand the historical context of the problem. History is a tool to analyze and explain problems in the past and knowing history positions people to see patterns that might otherwise be invisible in the present.

**Historical and Contemporary Education Landscape**

From the inception of American public schooling, educational attainment has been valued as a primary avenue for achieving success. Widely accepted as “the great equalizer,” public education is touted as the vehicle to increase opportunity and to remedy inequality in American society. Yet, review of historical and educational literature brings Horace Mann’s “equalizer” ideal into question. Is public education designed for all to receive knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring about a common educated populace? Or is public education constrained by America’s deeply-rooted socio-cultural realities that create a binary of schooling that privileges some and marginalizes others? Stratified outcomes for Students of Color speak more to the latter. Nationally, SOCs underperform academically, relative to White students. Racial disparities are evident in early childhood and persist through higher education. Discrepancies are reflected in test scores that assess academic achievement, proportions of Students of Color involved in gifted and talented programs, rates of being disciplined, suspended, and expelled from schools, dropout and graduation rates, as well as matriculation to higher education (Dee, 2005; Redding, 2019). The belief that education can lead to success and is available to all Americans may be central to legitimizing inequitable outcomes for our nation’s SOCs. Brown and Brown’s conceptual article about useful and dangerous discourse about African American students specifically, makes an argument for how discourse can operate as a type of faulty meaning-
making about individuals, especially when social constructs like race are intertwined (2012). The “great equalizer” discourse may undergird a meritocratic ideology that explains away the dramatic racial differences in educational attainment as primarily the result of individual differences in ability and effort (Brown & Brown, 2012). Moreover, this belief ignores historical vestiges of racism experienced by POC in United States (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

There are many entry points to understand the demarcation of educational outcomes of students along racial lines, but education scholars often point to the aftermath of the pivotal Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in 1954 (Haddix, 2017; Love, 2004). This landmark case is a good beginning marker to discuss the Black-White binary in terms of student outcomes and TOCs underrepresentation in the field. Siddle-Walker’s (2001) highly referenced “historiography” of African American teaching provides a comprehensive look into the preparation, professional activities, and challenges of African American teachers in the South before desegregation (p. 753). Rooted in archival data and interviews, her work creates a positive portrait of Black teachers during the 1940-1960 era.

During segregated schooling, teaching became a main occupation among the African American workforce. Ethridge (1979) as cited in Haddix (2017) states that at the time of the Brown v. Board of Education decision to desegregate schools, there were 82,000 Black teachers, but in the decade following integration, Black teacher positions declined drastically. Black students were transferred into majority-White schools. However, teaching positions for African American teachers were transferred with far less frequency. The Brown legislation made provision for the integration of students, but not for the integration of school faculties and administrators. Public school systems failed to hire African American teachers proportionate to the number of African American students. Instead, the hiring practices of the newly minted integrated schools meant
assuming additional White teachers and administrators to handle the increased student population. African American teachers’ and school leaders’ careers were stymied by demotions or even position dismissals (Collier, 2002; Tillman, 2004).

In effect, African American children shifted from a system of teachers and structures focused on their “educational uplift” to a system that decentralized their needs in an all-White environment (Siddle-Walker, 2001, p. 774). Black students were taught by those less similar to their own identity, thus demographic disconnects between and among teachers and students were created. The influence on student achievement created by this restructuring cannot be ignored. A deep review of the historical literature around this case is beyond the scope of this inquiry, but this limited review is presented to document that the underrepresentation of Teachers of Color is very much a history of intentional exclusion. Who is permitted to teach and lead in K-12 public education has historically been a function of White hegemonic beliefs and actions (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). The history of the integration of American schools is steeped in the power relations described in CRT’s Whiteness as Property (Harris, 1993). In this, post integration, White teachers were permitted to go where they wanted, but Black teachers were relegated to specific places or ousted.

Since the landmark case in the 1950s, American society has gradually dismantled legal segregated schooling, but the continued existence of segregated schooling (or re-segregated schools) contradict that effort (Orfield & Yun, 1999; Gordon, 2000). Urban schools are largely attended by SOCs and more than 70% of White students attend schools with a minority population of 10% or less (Orfield & Yun, 1999). This reality supports why responsive teacher education reflects preparation efforts committed to the distinctive challenges presented by the teacher-student demographic mismatch with recruitment of TOCs to the field being prioritized.
In some ways, the current educational disparities and underrepresentation of TOCs can be viewed as a lingering consequence of desegregation that impacts the schooling for all Students of color nearly 70 years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case.

Aligning inequitable education outcomes for SOCs with segregation is not intended to lament racial progress made through school integration. Instead, it is intended to elucidate how public education has a historic contrivance for the establishment and perpetuation of Whiteness as Property to the detriment of SOCs. Desegregation is only one impetus for the underrepresentation of TOCs and for discrepant achievement of SOCs in America’s schools, but it provides historical context for existing discussions about what is lost for all students in the absence of teacher-student racial and cultural match.

While the uniqueness of Black people’s educational experiences in this country holds true, Indigenous Peoples, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities have also been subjected to predominantly White schooling conditions that contradict their needs and interests. General patterns across racial groups emerge, but there are also accentuated disparities among and within these groups (Gordon, 2000).

In her book, *The Color of Teaching*, Gordon (2000) explores underrepresentation of Teachers of Color in a comparative study that is composed through the voices of members from the four aforementioned racial groups. Her research documents (1) how underrepresentation was mobilized through White hegemonic practices (e.g., forced acculturation through Americanization schools for Indigenous Peoples, refugee and internment camps for Southeast Asian immigrants), (2) how the absence of TOCs equals a loss of cultural and linguistic resources for Students of Color, and most importantly (3) how underrepresentation may be protracted today due to community forces and negative racialized experiences of Students of
Color in predominantly White school settings. Gordon’s (2000) work focuses on racial identity and acknowledges that the “United States culture is founded on racial thinking that assumes the inferiority of peoples stigmatized through the lives of slavery and conquest…” (p. 7). Other scholars also affirm that U.S. educational institutions are racially charged contexts that remain susceptible to racism (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Both White students and SOCs learn significant messages about race and racialization when they enter the doors of education institutions. What is troubling is that little attention is paid to how schools and teachers can operate as “mechanisms of racial oppression” in the field of education (Kohli, Pizaro, & Nevarez, 2017, p. 183). Given the nation’s history and the realities of the nation’s current educational landscape (i.e., a growing demographic and equity divide between a predominantly White teacher force and a racially diverse student population), there is a need to closely examine ways racism and racialization are manifested in K-12 education and teacher education.

**Racism and Whiteness in Education**

Discussions about preparing teacher candidates for diversity that do not include the complexities and nuances of race, racism, and racialization in that examination are incomplete and help perpetuate Whiteness in teaching and teacher education (Kohli, 2018). Kohli, Pizaro, and Nevarez (2017) contend that until we pointedly name racism as a problem, we will be challenged to resolve the glaring racial disparities observed in the U.S. educational system. Critical studies have deepened our understanding of the mechanisms by which schools “systematically racialize, marginalize, and thwart the opportunities of students of color,” (Kohli, Pizaro, & Nevarez, 2017, p. 183). Yet, the challenge of examining how racism disrupts educational opportunities of Students of Color lies in making it visible when racism has become
so normalized that it is almost imperceptible (Taylor, 2016). This underscores the CRT tenet, that racism is normal, not aberrational. Racism, its manifestations and its effects, have different meanings, however, that must be clarified.

**“Old Racism” and “New Racism”**

Removing the cloak of invisibility begins by differentiating “old racism” from “new racism.” While both are power structures, they differ greatly. According to Fiske (1993) as cited in Cross (2005), “old racism” is an ideology held by some White people. Through this lens, racism is defined as an *overt* system of visible prejudice and supremacy. It is operationalized through individuals and through power applied to the physical body. “Examples of old racism include the hostile genocide of American Indians and spectator lynchings of African Americans,” (Cross, 2005, p. 267). Because such acts happen with less frequency today, people often become fallaciously unaware of racism or deny its existence. Conversely, “new racism” is generally experienced by People of Color. Defined as a more *covert* system of power and dominion than that of the past; it works best when invisible. New racism is built into institutions and through power applied to the social body (Fiske, 1993 as cited in Cross, 2005). “Old racism” and “new racism” ideologies may predominate within racial groups, but they are not posited here to create a binary nor to essentialize any group. According to Cross (2005), and for the purposes of this study, the distinction is made clear to show how they are manifested differently, but are similarly powerful in effecting realities, and thus unique in how they must be uncovered.

The post-Brown era bred “new racism.” Legislation made major structural changes to the nation’s education system, but laws did not mitigate the larger issue of racism in education (Fiske, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Integration only amended superficial issues created by
segregated schools. Embedded White privilege was left behind in classrooms. Education systems were then (and are now) particularly prone to “new racism” because they are the sites where people learn the attitudes and behaviors they are to live by and the consciousness by which they are to make sense of the world (Cross, 2005). Within the education system, Whiteness is the normalized ideology and way of being in the world (Picower, 2009). Cross (2005), who applies “new racism” to teacher education explains that this leads to racism being omnipresent, natural, and frequently unchallenged. It leads to predominately White schools, teachers, and university faculty acting as mechanisms to sustain “new racism.”

**Dysconscious Racism**

Other scholars have conceptualized racism in different terms. Understanding enduring racial inequity in America’s public schools may lie in understanding how racism is manifested in teacher candidates’ K-12 learning experiences before they choose to become teachers. King (1991), interrogated teacher education students’ perceptions about reasons for persistent racial disparities. Her work resulted in adding “dysconscious racism” to the literature. “Dysconscious racism” is “a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges” (King, 1991, p. 135). She states that it is an “uncritical habit of mind” that accepts the prevailing system of White dominance and justifies inequity by accepting the existing status quo without considering the possibility of alternatives (p. 135). Not to be conflated with unconscious racism that implies a lack of awareness of racism, dysconsciousness implies that racism is habitually uncontested acts and tacitly accepted dominant norms.

King (1991) asserts that “dysconscious racism” is a mindset continuum that results from the miseducation of students (who may later become teacher candidates). Students enter teacher preparation following an educational system that resists transformative views of racial inequality
(Anderson, Narum, & Wolf, 2019). This in turn produces students and teacher candidates (later teachers) who are indiscriminately unaccustomed to questioning White norms and privilege (King, 1991). As a result, students then are ill-equipped to engage in classroom discussions regarding issues of race in contemporary society. However, uncritical ways of thinking about racial inequity are the gateway to accepting deficit-thinking and racially sanctioned assumptions about POC that justify the advantages White people have as a result of subordinating diverse others (Anderson, Narum, & Wolf, 2019). Hence, “dysconscious racism” contributes to racial disparity in American schooling by failing to question. This lack of critical interrogation undeniably serves to maintain existing norms.

**Whiteness**

Strategies on how to minimize distancing phenomena between teachers and students is not straightforward in the literature, but strategies are nested in the knowledge that SOCs benefit from an education that analyzes the implications of Whiteness. Whiteness and White identity have nuanced meanings. Understanding them couches the conversation about the prevalence of Whiteness in education as an attempt to dismantle discourses of Whiteness without dismantling White people (Leonardo, 2002). White identity is a historical idea that Harris (1993) traces back as a rhetorical move to distinguish “free” from “slave” and later became polar constructs of “Black” and “White” based on skin color. Harris (1993a) states that this move was “an important step in the social construction of race” (p. 1718). Leonardo (2002) describes Whiteness as a social concept (not a culture). I reference Leonardo’s work about critical pedagogy that argues for educators concerned with equality (in schools and society) to prioritize a rigorous engagement with race at conceptual and practical levels. In his Whiteness studies, and globalization discourse, Leonardo makes the distinction of Whiteness as a “racial discourse”
distinct from the socially constructed racial category of White identity (p. 31). According to Leonardo (2002) Whiteness is a pervasive racialized worldview that is “supported by material practices and institutions” (p. 32). In other words, the terms Whiteness, White privilege and White identity are complementary, but not explicitly synonymous which suggests that while race may be a social construction, racialized experiences due to racial identification are real.

Whiteness as a worldview sets the standard by which all other groups are compared. Whiteness and the normalization of White racial identity throughout the nation’s history have created a culture where non-white persons are often seen as inferior or abnormal. As a collection of everyday strategies, people with White identity do not have to think about race. That said, White people are often the benefactors of Whiteness which characteristically has privilege and power over other identities. That is especially true in American institutions like law and education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

**Racialized Identities and Education**

Research underscores the significance of identity in relationship to education. In her book, *Racialized Identities: Race and Achievement Among African American Youth*, Nasir (2012) reconciles a decade of studies of identity processes and their relationship with learning and schooling. She specifically focuses on the identities and learning experiences of African American students in the context of nationally stratified achievement patterns between Black youth and their White counterparts. She seeks to both understand challenges to learning, but also to highlight possibilities when identity and learning are aligned.

According to Nasir (2012), the term “racialized identities” is used as an effort to “honor the idea that race (and thus racialized identities) is not an inherent category, but rather is made racial through social interaction, positioning, and discourse.” (p.5). A “racialized identity” in
many ways is how one interacts with the world and how the world interacts with a person. This implies that a racialized identity is collaboratively constructed. It is shaped by the exertion of influencing factors upon a person such as (1) interpersonal factors (e.g., family, community, and school), (2) historical factors (i.e., experiences with race and racism) and contextual factors (i.e., norms in a locale). Therefore, how one is racialized is complex and personal. Ideas of self are largely a reflection of others’ ideas about oneself; therefore, identity is subject to how one is thought about and treated by others in multiple environments. Nasir’s (2012) lens does not conflate learning processes with identity processes. Instead, she suggests that learning and identity development are cultural and social processes that are linked in fundamental ways.

American schooling, from K-12 to higher education contexts, are highly racially stratified sites that are often steeped in racialized thinking. Nasir’s (2012) posited description of the collaborative construction of a racial identity is of interest for this inquiry because it is the nexus of this study. What it means to be a Person of Color is fluid and dynamic depending on the interactions between people and the context of these interactions. In Nasir’s study with African American males, she observed that participants’ historical, interpersonal, and contextual influences informed their participation within different learning contexts. Depending on the positioning of their racialized identity (rather their identity was reflected or rejected), student engagement and participation differed. Engagement and participation with academic content was negotiated and renegotiated as participants navigated different learning spaces and interacted with others who positioned their racialized identities either positively or negatively. This has implications for the matriculation of TCOCs along the preparation continuum, recruitment (program entry supports), preparation (curriculum, pedagogy, and learning supports), and retention (sustaining mechanisms within a program or the profession). How learning is afforded
or constrained along the pathway may be dependent upon the congruency between and positioning of students’ racialized identities.

**Choosing to Teach Among Students with Racialized Identities**

Understanding TCOC’s experiences seems to require an understanding of how their identities may or may not align with the systems and structures that have been in place since they were K-12 students themselves. The literature suggests that for SOCs, the decision of choosing to teach may be highly context-based. Initial interest in teaching develops for students at different times. Some future educators recognize their interest before college, some while in college, and others even after beginning other careers. Research suggests, however, that pre-college interest and sustained interest in teaching may differ between Black students and White students. Mau and Mau’s (2006) longitudinal study showed that initial interest in teaching of 10th grade students was largely White and female, 85.8% and 79.4% respectively. Four years later, interest in teaching was even more homogeneous and higher (89% and 83%). Only 6% of the students who initially reported an interest in teaching were Black, and by the four-year follow-up, these students reported that they were more likely to switch to other careers. These data support the need for continued research to explore reasons for lowered initial and sustained interest in the teaching profession for SOCs.

Some research suggests that mechanisms to recruit and support entry of SOCs into the preparation continuum potentially begins before students enroll in college. When preparing TCOCs, teacher educators may have to contend with negative perceptions held by some SOCs in regard to teachers, the teaching profession, and/or the K-12 educational system. Graham and Erwin’s (2011) study of high school juniors reported that participants described teachers negatively and that many considered public schooling to be oppressive. Likewise, the high
school students in Marrun, Plachowski, Mauldin and Clark’s (2021) recent study undervalued the profession and viewed it as a White profession due to their experiences during secondary schooling. Though Black males make up a much smaller teacher candidate pool, Bianco, Leech, and Mitchell (2011) investigated the perceptions of teaching of Black male TCOCs and the ways their views were shaped by their K-12 schooling experiences. Through their mixed methods study, most reported that they had generally positive experiences in school, but all reported encounters with racism that involved White female teachers. Qualitative data revealed that they experienced both overt (treated harshly) and covert (condescension) expressions of power.

Gordon’s (2000) book, *The Color of Teaching*, was informed by her earlier study of 140 TOCs in which she explored reasons they were initially not attracted to a teaching career. Students’ negative K-12 educational experiences, limited representation of TOCs, and general low regard for the teaching profession in their communities were among the chief explanations (Gordon, 1994). Marrun, Plachowski, and Clark’s (2019) qualitative study, separated by almost three decades, revealed similar findings.

**Positive Motivations to Pursue the Teaching Profession**

Despite any negative perceptions or negative K-12 experiences, some SOCs choose teaching due to other motivations. Having a strong humanistic interest is commonly reported (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Miller and Endo’s (2005) qualitative study explored the motivations of a small sample of SOCs enrolled in a teacher preparation program. Most of the participants reported that they decided to become teachers after beginning college, but they were motivated by interest in helping others. Su’s (1997) highly referenced case study of TCOCs from three representative groups, Asian American, African American and Latinx communities, also looked at prospective teacher’s attitudes about teaching and motivations to pursue it as a career. Teacher
candidates of all three races suggested that a commitment to the success of students was highly motivating to enter the teaching field. An interesting finding, however, was that almost one-third of SOCs’ responses were also tinged with social justice. Participants reported feelings of responsibility to work to improve society and to inspire students from all backgrounds. Lewis (2006) rendered similar results when he surveyed almost 150 SOCs recruited to teach across three districts in Louisiana. The survey directly asked participants about mechanisms that positively impacted their recruitment into teaching. The responses frequently cited, helping young people and contributions to humanity as top contributing factors. 

Altruism, and its motives, permeate the teaching profession itself, and research suggests that teacher preparation programs aimed at recruiting and retaining more TCOCs may need to connect with POC’s humanistic motivations to teach. The literature also suggests that teacher preparation curriculum, pedagogy, and experiences may benefit from including opportunities for the service part of teaching. Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, and Freitas’ (2010) review of literature examines retention and turnover of novice TOCs and factors affecting the professional preparation of prospective TOCs. They note that teacher preparation programming that calls on SOCs’ commitment to serve advances their educational interests. While more research is needed into ways to access the humanistic commitments of SOCs, these studies have clear implications for how TCOCs can be enticed into teacher education programs.

**Predominantly White Institutions**

Most candidates’ pathway to teaching is through a state-approved teacher preparation program housed in an institution of higher education (IHE) often designated as a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). PWI is a widely accepted term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which White students account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment. These
types of institutions are historically understood as having policies, practices, and ideologies that center the White majority. Reports related to the recruitment of Students of Color to attend Predominately White Institutions, state that PWIs are confronted with educating students who have an intensified awareness of their racialized identities, may have different value systems than the majority student population, but also a need for inclusiveness (Astone & Nunez-Wormack, 1990). Research about the experiences of Students of Color attending PWIs has been shown to be distinctly different from that of majority students (Bennett, Cole, & Thompson, 2000; Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002; Libassi, 2018). Large and small scale quantitative and qualitative studies have focused on the experiences of different racial/ethnic groups while negotiating a PWI milieu with a variety of foci including access barriers, cultural mismatch and impacts to mental health (Addo, Houle & Simon, 2016; Carothers, Aydin, & Houdyshell, 2019; Crockett, Iturbide, Stone, Meginley, Raffaelli, & Carlo, 2007; Stephens et.al., 2012a; Stephens et.al., 2012b).

Research about a predominantly White context presents a challenge to the academy, particularly in creating PWI climates that are inclusive of and responsive to the demographic of students needed to diversify higher education institutions and teacher education specifically (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002).

Isolation and Marginalization

Considering that most of the nation’s SOCs will be professionally trained at a PWI. Teacher educators can benefit from insights into the perceptions of SOCs on these campuses. While there is much research about the experiences of POC in predominantly White higher education institutions, there is less research that focuses specifically on the voices of TCOCs in teacher preparation programs. What is known is informative for teacher educators, however. Frank (2003) conducted a small qualitative study with ten African American teacher candidates
within one PWI. Among many findings, her study reported that the transition from high school to college was typically difficult for African American students who described entering a “whole new world” and/or into a “white environment” (p. 706). Frank (2003) identifies racism as a recurrent theme that was surfaced by the informants of her study and suggested that the experience for the African American teacher candidates in her study was “An intense pursuit of their identities.” (Frank, 2002, p. 706). In their study, Guyton, Saxton and Wesche (1996) explored the experiences SOCs enrolled in an early childhood education undergraduate program. Participants reported that they experienced feelings of isolation when navigating courses and also during clinical experiences. Many SOCs reported feeling more comfortable with field placements in urban settings, where they perceived that their differences were less noticeable due to the diversity among the students.

Additional empirical evidence is provided by Canty (2006). The focus of the study was specifically on the experiences of TCOCs in a Predominantly White Institution. As part of the study, participants likewise reported feelings of isolation as they completed professional preparation coursework, and they also believed that they benefited from clinical placements in settings that reflected their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In her study of Vietnamese American teacher candidates, Nguyen (2008) noted that SOCs reported feelings of invisibility and felt opposition between their home languages and cultures during their preparation experiences. Challenges created by their racialized identities included perceived microaggressions related to their accented speech and their inability to fit a majoritarian image of an American educator. Critical Race theorists would reframe the teacher candidates’ described feelings of isolation and marginalization as POC’s ability to detect Whiteness that is often reproduced in teacher preparation (Haviland, 2008; Matias, 2013; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2001).
The literature suggests that being admitted into a teacher preparation program is only one obstacle that SOCs must overcome. The overwhelming presence of Whiteness in traditional teacher preparation programs may marginalize the lived experiences of TCOCs (Sleeter, 2001). Centering Whiteness serves to further alienate TCOCs and reinforces feelings of isolation and marginalization. Brown (2014) posits, “Teacher candidates of color report high levels of alienation, a disconnection from the larger program community and a sense of not ‘seeing themselves’ in their programs,” (p. 334).

Some research has found that teacher education students' feelings of isolation and marginalization are lessened by the presence of racially and culturally diverse faculty; however. According to Irvine (1992) as cited in Guyton, Saxton, and Weshe (1996), SOCs view their presence (i.e., racially and culturally diverse faculty) as a symbol of commitment to equity. Unfortunately, the teacher-student demographic gap found in public education is mirrored in higher education and teacher education alike. Statistics for the racial gulf between university students and faculty are not well-maintained in academia, but according to a recent National Center for Education Statistics report, among full-time professors, 55% percent are White males, only 6% are Black/African American and 5% of university faculty identify as Latinx (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2018). Overall faculty representation relative to the nation’s demographics falls short along ethnic/racial background and gender. In Teacher Education specifically, Ladson-Billings (2001) estimated that nationally, teacher education faculty is 88% White. National statistics highlight an under-researched area regarding the impact of underrepresentation in higher education and teacher education as it relates to minimizing feelings of isolation and marginalization among diverse teacher candidates.
Traditional Teacher Preparation – Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Structures

Currently many university-based teacher preparation programs address the issue of preparing teachers to work in schools with a diverse population by requiring their candidates to take independent courses with foci on multicultural education, differentiated instruction, English language (ELL) pedagogy, and the history of social and cultural foundations of education (Cochran-Smith, 2011), but the literature suggests that a more concerted effort needs to be made toward threading diversity and multicultural content throughout teacher education programming. According to Yaun (2017), given the national demographic landscape, it is critical to educate pre-service teachers in culturally responsive ways to facilitate the development of teacher candidates who can construct effective teaching pedagogies to meet the needs of the nation’s growing body of diverse students. The mismatch between a nearly homogenous teaching force and the increasingly diverse student population is a challenge that requires teacher educators to reconsider how to enhance the knowledge base, curriculum settings, and clinical practice for their preservice teachers to become fully prepared for a multicultural and diverse student population (Yuan, 2017).

Curriculum

As many educational institutions strive to diversify their composition in terms of race and ethnicity, they must also grapple with examining racial, cultural, and linguistic representation within their curricula. America’s hegemonic class and race shape the culture of schooling from the content of curricula, the organizational structure of schooling, to the pedagogical methodologies. All are embedded the in dominant culture of power (Delpit, 1998). The curriculum can operate as a specific mechanism to maintain the status quo (Cross, 2005; Howard, 2010). More specifically, a colorblind curriculum that primarily reflects the dominant
White culture signifies to SOCs that their racialized identities and ways of knowing are not significant (Howard, 2010). The literature confirms that TCOCs have expressed disappointment in the curriculum of traditional teacher preparation programs in Predominately White Institutions. Neal, Sleeter, and Kumashiro (2015) state that TCOCs are often subjected to feelings of marginalization due “Eurocentric curriculums” and “inadequate connections” to Communities of Color, (p.8). They add that the teacher preparation curriculum may serve as a push factor that ushers TCOCs out the profession. Following Nguyen’s (2008) study of Vietnamese teacher candidates, she issued a call to action for teacher preparation to question inclusive and exclusive practices (e.g., curriculum development) that may continue to contribute to the underrepresentation of TCOCs.

**Clinical Experiences**

The core experience in teacher preparation is clinical practice. Traditional teacher education programs are usually organized around a series of courses, accompanied by field experiences that eventually culminate with student teaching. In the traditional model, teacher educators introduce concepts via coursework and candidates are expected to internalize and apply concepts learned through practice in field settings. Student teaching or internship is the culminating clinical experience that relies on cooperation between universities and public school entities. Cooperating or mentor teachers then become co-teacher educators with university faculty.

Mentor teachers hold an important role in the development of prospective teachers. Research has shown that they exert a large amount of influence on their mentees who often pattern themselves after them (Anderson, 2007). Although they serve as cooperating teachers, most mentors do not receive coordinated preparation on how to serve as effective mentors.
(Russell & Russell, 2011). In their study, Russell and Russell (2011) sought the perspectives of cooperating teachers about the perceptions of mentoring relationships. Their work provided findings consistent with other literature in the areas of mentoring expectations, motivation, and role of mentoring. Their research suggests that the mentor and protégé relationship of learning is reciprocal and it is most effective when student teachers and mentor teachers are a “good match.”

Eby and McManus (2004) researched mentoring relationships in vocational spaces, but their work has implications for other enterprises like education. Their study describes the contributing factors and outcomes of dysfunctional mentoring and interpersonal relationships, but also posits that racial identity should be further explored when researching mentoring relationships.

Scholars have heavily researched clinical experiences, but research addressing how racialized identities may factor into mentor-mentee relationships in clinical experiences is highly underexplored. According to Anderson and Stillman (2013), inquiry on student teaching experiences is usually race-evasive. However, Rodriguez-Mojica, Rodel, and Ott (2020) recently investigated the student teaching experiences of preservice Teachers of Color. Through counterstories, researchers discovered that the participant SOCs experienced and witnessed racism and microaggressions during student teaching placements. SOCs had difficulty navigating the power dynamic between a mentor and protégé, but the most elevated problem was that there was no programmatic system to safely voice these experiences in their placements. Student teachers were not equipped to discuss or respond to witnessed or experienced racism. Though only one study, Rodriguez-Mojica, Rodel, and Ott (2020) illuminated the absence of race-conscious support systems for TCOCs as a possible blind spot for clinical experiences in the preparation of diverse teacher candidates. This dearth of research implores more formalized
inquiry into the experiences of TCOCs in clinical experiences to better understand supports needed.

**Teachers of Color as Pedagogical Tools**

Understanding some of the constraints of traditional orientations within teacher education curricula, pedagogy, and structures furbishes a case for examining the benefits of identity alignment. Education researchers have drawn on a range of data sources and have taken varied methodological approaches to provide empirical evidence that racial matching is related to improved student outcomes. Empirical evidence is suggestive of benefits of a more representative teaching force. These results add a sense of urgency to discussions regarding the most effective means of producing and retaining more TCOCs. Empirical consideration has been given to patterns of benefits in enhanced academic benefits, cultural ambassadorship, reduced disciplinary sanctions, and role modeling.

**Demographic Imperative**

Nearly two decades ago, informed by U.S. Census data and immigration patterns, James Banks projected the coming of a public school enterprise with a diverse student body and a mostly White teaching force. His contention was that the trending changes in the racial make-up of the nation’s public schools would exasperate disparities in educational experiences and achievement along racial lines (Banks, 2006; Cross, 2010). Demographic shifts reflect what James Banks (2006) referred to as the “demographic imperative.” The demographic imperative has contemporary relevance because it calls into question the “seemingly intractable” academic gap between White students and non-White students and whether racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic differences are the cause or effect of the current teacher-student demographic mismatch (Cross, 2010, p. 208). Fueling the exigency of the demographic imperative is that in
the decades that have followed Banks’ proclamation, research confirms demographic shifts have created an environment in which teachers often have incompatibilities with the students they teach (Howard, 2010; Sleeter & Thao, 2007). By and large, America’s Black and Brown children’s education experience is depended upon White female teachers who often lack understanding of their lived experiences.

**Teachers of Color Offer Academic Benefits**

To abet the demographic imperative, a major research area has been pointing to enhanced academic benefits that TOCs bring to the classroom. Evidence supports that SOCs who are in classrooms with teachers of the same race experience conditions that can foster their academic achievement. Diverse teachers’ higher performance expectations for these learners result in improved outcomes (Dee, 2005). This is important because SOCs, especially Black students, appear to be more sensitive to teacher expectations than middle-class White students (McKown & Weinstein, 2002). White teachers’ negative stereotypes can perpetuate lower achievement and overall poor performance of SOCs (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The advantages of same-race student-teacher matches also extends to higher placement rates into gifted education, which can strengthen students’ motivation and academic performance. These benefits can lead to higher graduation rates and improved desires to attend college (Grantham et.al., 2011). These encouraging outcomes illustrate the ways that a pipeline of more TOCs can support diverse learners’ public school academic achievement and aspirations for post-secondary learning.

**Teachers of Color as Cultural Ambassadors**

According to Villegas and Irvine (2010), another key argument for benefits of racial identity matching is that TOCs are particularly well suited for teaching SOCs due to cultural synchronicity. They bring an ability to connect home and school cultures that gives them an
advantage over their White counterparts. Schools need cultural ambassadorship in which teachers relate to their students, understand their upbringings and their cultures, and bridge both of these with the curriculum (Hammond, 2014). While all teachers are capable of meeting this end, diverse teachers who have shared experiences with students, both positive and negative, can bring a higher level of relevance to the classroom (Gay, 1997). Teachers of Native American and Native Hawaiian descents represent a smaller demographic among the underrepresented TOCs, but research shows that students from these populations benefit from culturally relevant pedagogy that only Native American and Native Hawaiian teachers can provide to their students (Hani, 2009).

**Non-academic Benefits**

Other researchers posit that racially and culturally diverse teachers pull from their own diverse contexts when determining and interpreting students’ behavior. Behavioral patterns exhibited by Black students in particular frequently differ from White norms and teacher expectations. Such disjunctions contribute to one of the most persistent trends as it relates to disproportionate disciplinary action. The literature is replete with studies that find that Black students are more likely to be disciplined and suspended from school than other students, even after accounting for the nature of students’ misconduct (Milner, 2012; Pearman et.al., 2019; Skiba et al., 2002). When Black students are in classrooms with Black teachers, the disparity in the severity of disciplinary referrals between them and their White peers is reduced. These disparities in disciplinary actions could be based in part on teacher interpretation of student behavior, which may be informed by negative racial stereotypes (McGrady & Reynolds, 2012). The consistency of this trend across time and location warrants continued inquiry into this area.
Scholarship on role modeling varies which provides a complicated picture of this benefit, but research is suggestive of role-modeling benefits in some ways. Representation communicates who has power and privilege in American society. Though indirectly, schools transmit non-academic knowledge to students that reify power structures. For example, representation in classrooms informs students from Communities of Color of future career paths. In a recent study, Jacinto and Gershenson (2020) investigated the intergenerational transmission or “inheritance” of teaching and found that children of teachers are more likely to become teachers than children of non-teachers. More specifically, the study found that children of White teachers (both sons and daughters) and daughters of Black teachers were 60% more likely to enter teaching as a profession. This teaching “inheritance” could explain the stagnant near 80% White and female status of the current teacher workforce. The inclination to become a teacher manifested even stronger among the daughters of Latinx mothers than seen for White and Black daughters. However, there was essentially zero transmission of teaching from Black mothers to their sons. Black males generally do not emulate their mothers by entering the teaching force.

Considering the trend of African American male teachers is troubling. African American male teachers represent a dismal 2% of the teaching workforce (Strachan & Davis, 2020), but the positive effects of their representation have been documented. Statistics inform us that having just one African American male teacher in elementary school reduces the drop-out rates among Black boys by nearly 40% and increases their representation in Gifted and Talented education (Thorne, 2019). More research needs to be done in this area. As such, increasing the representation of Black and Latinx men and women in teacher preparation programs is likely to increase the future supply of Black and Hispanic teachers overall (Jacinto & Gershenson, 2020;
Strachan & Davis, 2020). “In this way, diversifying the cadre of teachers may actually be instrumental to increasing the number of future teachers of color” (Bireda & Chait, pp.1-2).

Researchers have set out to suggest varied ways that TOCs and TCOCs benefit students. It is important to note that some scholars maintain that TOCs can serve as role models (Villegas & Clewell, 1998), but others argue that the value of TOCs must go beyond the role model designation, citing that racial identity matching automatically assumes similar worldviews that merit emulation (Irvine, 1989). According to Shaw (1996), positioning TOCs as role models is pejorative in that SOCs are viewed as deficient and needing exemplars of success. While the research shows the benefits of demographic matching in the classroom, these outcomes do not imply that mismatches between students and teachers will always hinder success for SOCs. Race does not determine the quality of teacher, but race, ethnicity, and language shape the nature of experiences teachers can bring to the classroom (Sleeter & Thao, 2007). The findings from the research presented serve as rationale for Teacher Education’s interest in boosting efforts to recruit and better support the preparation of TCOCs given the current educational landscape of student outcome disparities in American schools.

**Conundrums of Racial Parity**

Some researchers take issue with the conjecture of preoccupation with racial identity matching between teachers and students (Haberman, 1996; Haddix, 2017). Scholars contest that TOCs should not be expected to undertake the burden of solving the nation’s social disparity gaps created by the teacher-student demographic divide. They assert that achieving racial matching is simply not enough. Haberman (1996) is noted in the literature as a leading advocate for focusing on TOCs impact as well as racial/cultural matching versus just matching alone. Haberman (1996) supports that TOCs should be highly sought, but he argues that teacher
preparation programs’ recruitment efforts should prioritize selecting candidates whose knowledge, experiences and dispositions will enable them to teach diverse student populations. Haddix (2017) also offers suggestions for ways to increase teacher diversity by centering the needs and experiences of TOCs. Diverse teachers may not necessarily fare better with SOCs than White teachers if they are ill-prepared through teacher education practices. Haberman (1996) advocates for teacher preparation programs to acknowledge, enhance, and develop TCOCs’ strengths as pedagogical tools. However, the continued focus in most teacher preparation programs at PWIs is on preparing White teacher candidates to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse schools, while ignoring the cultural assets of TCOCs. This is further evidence of having one’s lived experiences ignored or disregarded (Achinstein et al., 2010). One conclusion from the research on the benefits of TOCs suggests that it makes little sense to bemoan underrepresentation in teacher education if traditional teacher preparation remains unresponsive to the potential strengths of TCOCs.

Summary of Chapter II

Communities of Color are one of the most rapidly growing segments of the American population. The lack of licensed professionals who represent Communities of Color extends beyond an ethical commitment to diversity in career opportunities. The salience of recruiting and retaining more Teachers of Color is deeply researched and well-reported, yet progress in recruitment and retention is marginal at best. Despite an increasingly diverse K-12 student population, the profiles of the newly minted teacher workforce remain largely White and female.

Research confirms that traditional teacher preparation pathways within Predominantly White Institutions are challenged to energize and infuse the current teacher workforce with a new talent pool of educators who are both rigorously prepared to teach diverse student populations and who bring an unprecedented amount of needed cultural wealth. The literature speaks to
historical and contemporary impacts of racialized identities. The scholarship on the intersections of racialized identity and K-12 learning environments, structures of teacher preparation programs, and K-12 student outcomes is replete with positive implications for cultural revolution across these multiple contexts. This study specifically sought to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color as they prepare for licensure in a PWI. Findings will add to the knowledge base about recruitment, retention, and support of TCOCs with the goal of closing the expanding teacher-student diversity gap. A systematic analysis of context-specific experiences of TCOCs can inform teacher educators, program leaders and developers who operate in similar institutional environments.

Chapter I provided an introductory context and outlined the research problem, purpose, and significance of the study. Chapter II proposed the theoretical framework and discussed empirical and theoretical evidence to support inquiry into the lived experiences and teacher preparation of TCOCs. Chapter III will explain the methodological process to explore the research questions through the lens of critical race methodology and case study methodology. Results will be provided in Chapter IV, followed by an interpretation of the findings in Chapter V.
Chapter III: Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the lived experiences of teacher candidates with racialized identities who are being prepared to teach within one Predominately White Institution. Chapter III describes the research design and rationale for this qualitative study. Ethical considerations, the selection of participants, setting and contexts, instrumentation, and data analysis strategy are presented. Methods to establish trustworthiness are also explained. The rationale for the integration of critical race methodology and qualitative case study methodology is discussed to answer the research questions:

1. What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?
2. How have racialized identities contributed to Teacher Candidates of Color’s interest in the teaching profession?
3. How are racialized identities afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts?
4. What experiences coalesce among Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution (PWI)?

Research Design and Rationale

The aim of quantitative research is to measure specific variables with a focus on statistical values. Thus, quantitative research does not offer a means to understand the depth and nuance of the human condition. Qualitative research, however, focuses on how people experience and make sense of aspects of their lives. Qualitative inquiry makes use of designs to guide researchers toward collecting and analyzing data and producing findings to answer research questions designed to explore, describe, and understand the experiences and meanings that people have about concepts embedded in the guiding research questions.
(Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Because the focus of my study is on lived experiences, I applied a qualitative research design, case study specifically, to gain in-depth understanding of a situation and meaning for those involved (Merriam, 1998) and to create an understanding of people in comprehensive ways (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative case study research is widely defined and applied, but Yin (2014), a renowned proponent of case study research and design, posits a central purpose for its use, stating that it should be used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Yin, 2014). Creswell and Poth (2017) add that case study should function as an exploration of a bounded system over time through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. Both conceptualizations make case study well suited for locating the meanings people place on events, processes, and structures of their lives and for “connecting those meanings to the social world around them,” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p.11). Due to the myriad definitions, a “case” can be the object to be studied (Stake, 1995) or a process of investigation (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002) and a “case” can have a variety of foci (e.g., individual, group, community, program, events, process). As such, the term “case study” is operationalized as a mode of inquiry, a method of inquiry, and a unit of inquiry.

Though case studies can include single or multiple cases, for this study, I selected a single case study design. The strength of the single case study design lies in the fact that researchers can describe and understand the context in which the phenomenon being investigated occurs (Yin, 2014). Single case studies have some limitations regarding the generalizability (Yin, 2014), but these studies can also be powerful tools for researchers seeking to describe complex or idiosyncratic phenomena as captured in this study.
For Students of Color who choose to pursue a teaching career and decide to attend a predominantly White university, their experiences must be examined for the uniqueness it often presents. A critical race methodology, initially positioned as a qualitative methodology giving voice to historically marginalized communities, offers space to conduct and present research grounded in the experiential knowledge of People of Color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2016). Critical race methodology as an analytical framework integrates CRT in all parts of the research design from conceptualization of the problem to data analysis. Its utility as a methodological framework allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of People of Color's lived experiences and acknowledges the strength of sharing those experiences through counternarratives. Critical race methodology then has complementary ontology, epistemology, and methodology with case study research design.

I blended CRT methodology and case study research traditions by using interviews and a focus group to understand the milieus of Teacher Candidates of Color within one PWI. My intention was to produce a single case study that included narratives and counternarratives to provide additional impetus to uncover and address truths as expressed through the voices of an often-marginalized teacher candidate population. For the purpose of this study, the group of participants were one “case” or unit of analysis. They were bounded by context and time as Teacher Candidates of Color within the same Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) during one academic year. I was interested in the participants for both their uniqueness and commonalities; therefore, each participant operated as a fulcrum to understand nuanced and holistic lived experiences at different points along the preparation continuum (i.e., recruitment, preparation, and retention). The case provided a view into a context-sensitive account about the salience of racialized identity in TCOC’s backgrounds and K-12 educational experiences, motivations to
become teachers, and program/university teacher preparation within one Predominantly White Institution (University of Arkansas).

**Researcher Positionality**

As the sole researcher for this project, I acknowledge that I served as an interpretive and analytical tool; therefore, positionality must be accounted for in this case study. Bourke (2014) states that researchers’ beliefs, political stance, and cultural background are variables that impact the qualitative research process. In fact, one of the strongest influences on the research process and its outcomes begins and ends with the researcher. Additionally, scholars engaging in a critical race approach must recognize that their race, other identities and lived experiences inform the research and research process.

In preparation for this study, I consulted Milner’s (2007) “Framework of Researcher Racial and Cultural Positionality” which guides scholars in a process of racial and cultural consciousness by way of three interrelated features: (1) researching the self, (2) researching the self in relation to others, and (3) engaged reflection and representation. His framework rebuffs CRT scholars from rejecting their “racialized and cultural positionality” (p. 388). Instead, Milner (2007) supports education researchers by structuring how they can inspect how their racialized identities, experiences, and systems of knowing influence education research in meaningful ways.

I adopted an emic (insider) point of view and approached this work through the lens of a teacher educator who works within the shared institutional context of the study participants. I am a participatory actor within some of the participants’ programs of study and within the university’s overall teacher education programmatic construction. The topic of this study is of personal and professional interest. As an African American person, female, former classroom
teacher, and teacher educator who was schooled in predominantly White contexts and who currently teaches in a Predominantly White Institution, my educational history and ideological beliefs have been shaped by my own experiences as a person with a racialized identity (and the intersectionality of many social “-isms” related to race, class, and gender). Like all of the study’s participants, I have experienced navigating varied education contexts while being “othered.” As a classroom teacher and teacher educator, I have been privy to countless undocumented counternarratives of many K-12 students and TCOCs who have also been marginalized.

Professionally, after twenty plus years in the field, I am fueled to teach for the same humanistic reasons that my literature review speaks to and I am propelled to diversify the teacher workforce for SOCs (and all students) for the benefits that the scholarship also confirms. I believe if universities (and teacher education programs within them) profess to be proponents of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, the experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color must be intentionally sought to better understand the salience of racialized identities as part of teacher preparation. Those of us who prepare teachers at PWIs are terribly important stakeholders in this charge. We are responsible for producing the most teachers and for developing knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions of all teacher candidates. Only through more inquiry about TCOC’s lived experiences can we better recruit, serve, and retain this highly desired future teaching population in PWI educational contexts, however.

I view my positionality as an asset to the study. Having a similar educational history and racialized identity sensitizes me to the study’s participants and gives me license and expertise to conduct and present this research. Informed by Milner’s (2007) framework, I am better equipped to listen to the voices and perspectives of the study participants and to present unfiltered
accounts. The provision to preclude my voice as the researcher from “overshadowing the voice of the researched,” (p. 396) is essential in studies involving People of Color.

Research Setting and Contexts

The study was conducted at the University of Arkansas, a public, land-grant, four-year institution located in the Midwestern United States. The university reflects a racial composition where White students make up greater than 50% of the student demographics. As defined by the Higher Education Act, this designates the university as a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Beyond the racial composition, PWIs may also be understood as institutions whose history, policies, practices, and ideologies have historically centered the institution’s White majority (Bourke, 2016).

Participants were recruited from the pool of Teacher Candidates of Color enrolled in any of the programs of study for initial teacher licensure. At the time of the study, the University of Arkansas’ teacher candidate demographics mirrored the national underrepresentation of pre-service Teachers of Color. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the year for which this study was proposed, 87% percent of teacher candidates at the University of Arkansas identified as White and only 13% identified as a Person of Color or two or more races. Program completers were 80% female and were concentrated in childhood and elementary education programs of study (U of A Teacher Education Bi-Annual Report, Fall 2020).

At University of Arkansas, teacher candidates are placed in partnership schools from early field experiences to the culminating field experience (internship) to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to be involved in varied settings. Clinical experiences are situated in area public schools that reflect homogeneous and diverse student populations. Partnership schools are categorized based on demographic divisions: special education, limited English proficiency,
students receiving free or reduced lunch, and overall underrepresented groups (U of A Teacher Education Bi-Annual Report, Fall 2020). Because the university’s EPP programs develop school-university partnerships that center clinical practice, it was important to understand how participants interpret and make meaning of their racialized identities in all learning contexts that are inherently embedded in the university’s teacher education curricula. I planned to query participants about their field placements; therefore, sites for clinical practice were considered secondary contexts for the university’s teacher preparation programs.

Data collection commenced during the first academic year following remote delivery of most campus courses and suspension of clinical experiences in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Fall 2021 courses returned to face-to-face delivery, but most clinical experiences continued to be curtailed. Because the case study interview protocols were inclusive of questions related to experiences in clinical practice, the timing of the interview sequence was shifted to the spring 2022 semester.

**Ethical Considerations**

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix A), all practices associated with maintaining the highest ethical standards for all phases of the research project were followed (e.g., access to participants, data management, accuracy in writing, and presenting findings). I gained voluntary participation through informed consent (See Appendix B). Participants were provided with a description of the study, including the purpose, procedures to be used, potential risks and benefits, expected duration, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Though the risks to human subjects associated with this study were minimal, I disclosed sufficient information and assurances to ensure that individuals understood implications of participation without pressure or coercion.
I honored ethical considerations to protect data from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft. I safeguarded privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity by using participant numbers and pseudonyms instead of participants’ names. The study did not include any identifying information nor did it in any way link responses to participants. The study did not include any identifying information nor did it in any way link responses to participants. Data was collected, organized and stored in a cloud-based platform that was password protected.

**Sampling Strategy**

**Access to Teacher Candidates of Color**

I needed to know racial identifiers for potential participants. These data are not part of directory information as defined by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); however, they are maintained by the University’s Office of Teacher Education (OTE). Access to the sample group was gained with assistance of OTE personnel who were authorized to identify potential participants for this study. I disseminated a recruitment letter via e-mail to potential participants and allotted a two-week window for responses. I sent follow-up e-mails at the beginning of each week. See Appendix C for the recruitment e-mail that introduced the research purpose, procedures, risks and benefits, assurance of confidentiality, participants’ rights, and a brief demographic questionnaire. Submission of the questionnaire signaled interest in participation and initiated the purposeful sampling strategy. See Appendix D for an example of the digital demographic questionnaire. Participants selected for the study received a confirmation e-mail that expressed that written informed consent would be discussed, signed and submitted before the first data collection cycle.

**Purposeful Sampling**

Purposeful sampling is more widely used within qualitative research to maximize
opportunities for identification and selection of information-rich participants (Patton, 1990). It allows researchers to consider the availability, willingness to participate, and the ability of informants to articulate their experiences via the chosen research instruments (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Collins, 2016).

The “purposeful” part of my sampling strategy implies that I intentionally selected specific participants that had characteristics needed for my sample. To best address my research questions, I sought individuals who: (1) had been accepted as a teacher candidate, (2) self-reported as a member of one or more community of color as defined by the University of Arkansas (i.e., African American or Black, Asian American/Asian, Mexican, Mexican American or Chicano, Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native, Other Hispanic, Latino or Latin American, Pacific Island American/Pacific Islander, Puerto Rican, Southeast Asian American/Southeast Asian, two or more races), and (3) reflected a range of classifications, thus varied positions along the teacher preparation continuum, in varied programs of study (i.e., undergraduate to graduate status within and across licensure programs).

**Sample Size and Participant Demographics**

Choosing a suitable sample size in qualitative research is an area of debate. Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people nested in their contexts to support in-depth case-oriented analysis. Though opinions vary, provisions for sample size are often not contingent on the number of interviews nor focus groups. Instead, two criteria are often suggested, (1) sufficiency, sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants that make up the population (Siedman, 2019) and (2) saturation of information, when new information ceases to be discovered or redundancy begins to occur in perspectives or information (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seidman, 2019).
Due to the purpose of the study, I followed Siedman’s (2019) sufficiency provision and selected six participants from the ten total respondents to my recruitment e-mail. With careful sampling and collection techniques, a surprisingly small number of participants can yield fruitful data to answer the research questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The sample for this case study began with six participants who were enrolled in three different teacher preparation programs within the University of Arkansas [i.e., Childhood Education (CHED), Secondary Education (SEED), and Birth through Kindergarten Education (BRKD)] and ranged in classification from junior candidates to graduate candidates. Participant demographics are reflected in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Participants’ Program Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Classification</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>CHED</th>
<th>SEED</th>
<th>BRKD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior Candidate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Candidate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Teacher Candidate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sampling Questionnaire**

As part of the recruitment e-mail, participants submitted a demographic questionnaire that provided their contact information, hometowns, self-selected race/ethnicity, program of study, and classification. Responses to the questionnaire were used as part of purposeful sampling at the onset of the study. Age and gender were not compulsory considerations, but the study sample included one male and five females who identified as Black/African American or Mexican, Mexican American or Chicano on the demographic survey. Participants’ gender and racial identity demographics are identified in Table 3.
Table 3

Participants’ Race and Gender Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican, Mexican American or Chicano</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The timing of the study limited but did not eliminate opportunities to question participants about their experiences in field placements and clinical practice. Exposure to secondary contexts for teacher preparation (i.e., sites for clinical experiences) varied among the participants. See Table 4 for a summary of participants’ clinical experiences.

Table 4

Summary of Participants’ Clinical Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Clinical Experience</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited – Some</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Methods

Multiple sources of evidence allow researchers to corroborate data and findings. According to Yin (2014), without multiple data sources, an invaluable advantage of case study research will be lost. The case study was informed by the following sources: sampling questionnaire, three semi-structured interviews, one focus group, and my researcher journal, but semi-structured interviews provided the primary source of data collected. By comparing and
examining the data from the different sources, I was able to engender a fuller more multidimensional understanding of the participants. Participation varied across the four data collection cycles, however. One participant elected to withdraw from the study for undisclosed reasons after the first semi-structured interview and one participant elected not to participate in the focus group. Participants’ participation is summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Participants’ Participation in Data Collection Cycles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Cycle</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interview #1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interview #2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interview #3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semi-structured Interviews**

An underpinning of qualitative research is that rich data (nested in real context) can only be captured through interactive processes between the researcher and the research participants (Siedman, 2019; Yin 2014). CRT further argues for the use of experiential knowledge and voice by allowing People of Color to name their reality (Ladson-Billings, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016). To capture an in-depth understanding of experiences, data collection was carried out in a series of multiple interviews. I elicited detailed narratives and counternarratives to develop thick descriptions which is characteristic of case study and critical race methodology (Parker & Lynn, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016).

I developed semi-structured interview protocols outlined in Appendices E-H. Open-ended questions operated as guides, while synchronously granting the freedom for participants to share
their experiences in their own terms. Interview protocols featured introductory questions, transition questions, key questions, and closing questions. When interviewing participants, I provided them with a brief introduction of the focal point of each data collection cycle, followed by the established protocol questions, but I also extended probing questions to support the interview and to encourage participants to further elaborate on ideas that they offered. The interview questions and subsequent probing questions helped participants to provide comprehensive descriptions of their lived experiences.

Elwood and Martin (2000) emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate sites for interviews. I allowed participants to select a “neutral” location to minimize power relations between me and the participants and to minimize any influence that the university campus (e.g., classroom spaces or in my office) may exert. Due to concerns of the global pandemic, participants were permitted to choose face-to-face interviews or virtual interviews via Zoom videoconferencing technology platform. All participants elected to be interviewed using Zoom.

I followed a 3-series structure of in-depth interviewing from qualitative phenomenology tradition (Seidman, 2019). The first semi-structured interview captured a focused life history of each participant to answer research question #1. The second and third interviews worked together to answer research questions #2 and #3 by extending participants’ focused life histories to concentrate on details about their present lived experiences as people with racialized identities (i.e., its salience in the decision to become a teacher and its prominence as part of their experiences at the University of Arkansas).

I conducted sixteen one-on-one participant interviews that were scheduled from January to March. Each participant and I chose an interview setting that was as free as possible from
background noise and interruptions. Five participants interviewed from their homes and one participant chose to be interviewed in a quiet location on the university campus.

**Focus Group**

By design, focus groups include dynamic participant-to-participant interaction that can showcase potential communal experiences. Critical Race scholars have found promise in focus groups in that they can function as a collective form of testimony about lived experiences about race and racism. These scholars argue that participants can become empowered by hearing stories of others who have experienced marginality (Parker & Lynn, 2016; Solorzano & Yosso, 2016). A focus group can be effective in eliciting more nuanced data of lived experiences within and across racial groups represented in the study. Then, understanding lived experiences of Communities of Color must also account for both uniformity and heterogeneity of experiences within shared racial identities.

According to Seidman (2019), the final interview is intended to task participants to reflect about the meaning and impact of the experiences described in the previous two interviews. To complete the series, I invited each participant to convene for a focus group to answer research question #4 following the interview protocol outlined in Appendix G. One participant elected to not participate (but to remain in the study), one elected to join virtually, and three participants elected to meet face-to-face on the university classes.

At the request of the four participants, a hybrid focus group was scheduled in March. I requested access to a university conference room where my laptop, audio-recording device, seating, and interview protocol documents were set-up and positioned to ensure that in-person and virtual participants had proximity to each other and so that everyone could see and hear each other with masks.
Audio Recording and Transcripts

Recording devices included a Sony ICDUX560 digital voice recorder and the Zoom audio recording tool to record all interviews and the focus group held with the study participants. Each interview was assigned a data collection number that identified the participant by an interview number and the interview date and time. Pseudonym identifiers were added after the close of the third interview. The focus group was assigned a data collection number with the interview date and time. Each interview lasted on average 58 minutes and the duration of the focus group was two hours. The total interview time with all participants was approximately seventeen hours. See Table 6 for a summary of the duration of audio-recorded data.

Audio Transcription. Following each interaction with participants, audio recordings were transcribed using a combination of Otter.ai.com online technology and hand transcription. While Otter’s transcription AI technology can generate highly accurate transcriptions of audio recordings, its speech-to-text function is not as accurate as a professional transcription service. The technology, however, allowed me to optimize transcript accuracy by permitting me to enter the written record (when needed) to edit the text by listening to timestamped audio files embedded in each written record and hand transcribing audio files.
Table 6

Summary of the Duration of Audio-recorded Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>11:00 am CST</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>11:00 am CST</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>11:00 am CST</td>
<td>88 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>4:15 pm CST</td>
<td>51 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>4:15 pm CST</td>
<td>46 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>4:15 pm CST</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>4:00 pm CST</td>
<td>41 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>4:00 pm CST</td>
<td>56 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>6:30 pm CST</td>
<td>61 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>6:30 pm CST</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>6:30 pm CST</td>
<td>82 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>2:30 pm CST</td>
<td>65 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>2:30 pm CST</td>
<td>57 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>2:30 pm CST</td>
<td>94 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>6:30 pm CST</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>58 minutes per interview</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>Mar. 2</td>
<td>7:00 pm CST</td>
<td>120 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Interview Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1056 minutes (17 hours)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflexive Journal**

Maintaining a reflexive journal is a traditional qualitative strategy that can serve a variety of purposes throughout data collection. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggest weekly journaling of thoughts and ideas about the research process from design to the written report. They add that journal entries can accumulate as records about concepts and their relationships and provide additional data for analysis. I used the synchronized audio feature of Otter.ai.com online technology during the data collection and data analysis. Immediately following each interview and after reviewing the set of participant transcripts for each data collection cycle, I orally dictated my impressions, expectations, unexpected reactions, and lingering questions. Otter.ai
then transcribed the content to create two types of written records that resulted in (1) sixteen individual participant reflexive journal entries and (2) four data collection cycle reflexive journal entries shown in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Summary of the Duration of Audio-recorded Researcher Reflexive Journal Entries*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant/Protocol</th>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Researcher Journal Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Protocol #1</td>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Protocol #2</td>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>16 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>9 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Protocol #3</td>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>17 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>Mar. 2</td>
<td>23 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total Journaling Time* 190 minutes (3 hours, 16 minutes)

**Data Analysis Methods**

The scholarship addressing data analysis offers a range of procedures that allow researchers to move from collection, into explanation, understanding, and ultimately interpretation of the people and situations that have been investigated (Ratvich & Carl, 2016,
Saldana, 2021, Yin 2014). While there are many highly-accessed analysis techniques, there is not a standard praxis. The process is arguably subjective (Creswell, 2017). Analysis methods are more pragmatic and individualized. I applied the analysis process outlined by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). They suggest filtering qualitative data through three interactive streams, (1) condensation of the data, (2) creating data displays, and (3) drawing and verifying conclusions from the data. See Figure 2.

**Data Condensation**

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) describe data condensation as the process of simplifying the corpus of the data collected from multiple sources. In other literature it is commonly referred to as “data reduction.” My data collection occurred into four cycles (i.e., three semi-structured interviews and one focus group). Following each interaction with participants, I engaged in episodes of data condensation by reviewing the transcripts of the empirical data sources (and my reflective journal and research memos) to write summations, to develop codes, and to build themes and categories. Deciding what is included or excluded, what is emphasized or minimized is a transformative analytic process that will make the data stronger by sharpening the focus on the lived experiences of each individual, as well as looking at the interplay of statements between all the individuals within the case study.

**Inductive and Deductive Coding Analysis.** Coding is typically part of a qualitative analysis scheme. While qualitative data analysis is characteristically inductive, approaches to coding often involve both inductive and deductive analysis processes. Ratvich and Carl (2016), state that, “Inductive and deductive codes are not mutually exclusive, and in many studies, the strategic combination happens through multiple readings for each kind of coding,” (p. 249). Findings required employing both inductive and deductive schemes. Plano and Clark and
Ivankova (2016) contend that mixing strategies helps researchers to achieve convergence. That is, researchers can gain a greater depth of understanding than by using one method on its own. Inductive analysis helped me organize and connect ideas by building codes derived directly from the participants’ words. These emergent codes can be modified throughout the coding process. Deductive analysis allowed me to formulate a pre-set coding scheme by defining codes according to other sources like my literature review and CRT theoretical/conceptual framework.

Creating a Data Display

Qualitative data easily results in unstructured, sequential extended text. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) caution that extended text can overload information processing and result in oversimplifying patterns, overweighting extraneous information, and making hasty or partial conclusions. The use of data displays (e.g., matrices, charts, graphs), however reduces these tendencies. The second stream of analysis for the study was creating organized assemblies of my data. These displays abetted robust analysis, for the decision-making process required to create them is an analytic activity in and of itself (e.g., deciding content and format to construct a matrix). Data displays of compressed data eased my ability to take an iterative stance by either drawing conclusions from the data as understood at the time or taking additional actions toward further analysis. Data analysis is discussed more in Chapter IV and displays are offered in Appendices H-K.

Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) identify a third stream for data analysis that emphasizes the fluidity between data collection and data analysis. Since qualitative data analysis is continuous and iterative, initial conclusions do not always become final conclusions. Following the model requires conclusions to be verified by re-entering the data. All data sources
used as part of the analytical process will be subjected to initial analysis and secondary analysis. The three-stream strategy can be viewed as a before, during, and after process, but as seen in Figure 2, the actions are more cyclical in nature. Data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing/verification are revisited successively as analysis episodes follow each other. Meanings from the data are continuously tested for plausibility and confirmability (i.e., trustworthiness).

**Figure 2**

*Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model*

Note: Figure 2 is a modification of network Display 1.1 from Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

In summary, I integrated data from multiple sources and applied multiple coding schemes. The research questions and theoretical framework that guide the study also guided the...
analysis. Understanding experiences emerged slowly and non-linearly. Analysis and representation of data was ongoing and not reserved as a summative act.

**Trustworthiness Strategies**

I planned to achieve qualitative rigor (trustworthiness) through credibility, transferability, and reflexivity as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

**Credibility**

Credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the plausibility of the research findings, that is whether they represent accurate interpretation drawn from the study’s participants’ original data. This is a two-fold task that lies in (1) thoroughness of the data collection and (2) the use of multiple analytical perspectives.

**Prolonged engagement.** Complexities of a phenomenon within one case should be analyzed in depth, which requires time to observe/describe and analyze. The process of data collection spanned three months which included three in-depth interviews and one focus group. Individual participant interactions averaged three hours per person and approximately two hours for one group interaction. All interactions helped me gain a better understanding of participants’ histories, learning contexts, and lived experiences as related to their racialized identities and teacher preparation. On-going and in-depth data analysis spanned six months. Prolonged time warranted more depth and helped minimized occurrences of misrepresentation in the data due to established trust and rapport with participants. The multiple interview construct permitted opportunities for me to monitor and validate each participant’s statements over time.

**Member checks.** Milner (2007) posits that when using a critical race underpinning “dangers” can emerge in the research process when researchers fail to engage in “processes that can circumvent misinterpretations, misinformation, and misrepresentation of individuals,
communities, institutions, and systems” (p. 388). Follow up questions about the previous interview were posed at the beginning of each subsequent interview. Having findings approved by the data constructors helped demonstrate the credibility of the findings. Member checks strengthened the data by allowing participants to verify the accuracy of the transcripts for the purpose of clarification and to ensure the fidelity of documented statements.

**Transferability**

My intent in selecting the case study tradition was not for the purposes of generalizing, but transferability which is the degree to which the results of my case study can be transferred to other contexts or settings with different participants. I facilitated the transferability judgment by presenting thick description in the findings and results.

**Thick description.** Thick description begets stronger interpretation, thus leading to richer meaning for me, the research participants, and readers of my study. Thick description was a derivative of providing a detailed account of participants’ experiences where patterns and themes within and across each data collection cycle were put into meaningful context. Rich description demonstrated how my study’s findings can be applied to similar teacher education contexts and settings.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation reduces the risk of faulty conclusions that reflect limitations of a specific source or method. According to Yin (2014), the use of multiple sources of evidence in case study research allows the researcher to develop converging lines of inquiry, achieved when multiple sources lead to corroboratory findings within the same study. Findings based on data from a variety of sources and methods is more convincing. I established data triangulation by using semi-structured interviews, a focus group, a reflective journal to confirm
emergent findings, to deepen my understanding of the phenomena under study, and to maximize credibility and transferability of the findings.

**Reflexivity**

Qualitative inquiry requires reflexivity, a process of continual critical self-reflection about the research process. Qualitative rigor is enhanced when the chance of introducing researcher bias in the study is reduced. Heightened self-awareness about oneself as researcher and the researcher’s relationship to participants is at the heart of reflexivity and critical race methodology praxis.

**Positionality.** To minimize the effects of investigator bias, I carefully considered and stated my research positionality (chapter 3). Crafting this statement allowed me to become aware of and declare influential personal and professional factors that I brought to the research study.

**Structured reflexivity.** The importance of positionality goes beyond just making the statement, however. My experiences shape what is understood from my study’s participants. The subjective nature of qualitative methodology invites multiple ways researcher bias could enter the study. I engaged in structured reflexivity in two ways, first by journaling as soon as possible following each participant interaction and then journaling again after reading each transcript/set of transcripts. This process was not separate from the my data analysis, but was embedded into it. My social group identities aligned with and diverged from the participants within the case study. I carefully scrutinized how my experiences, gender, age, racialized identity, status and linguistic differences shaped the participants’ responses and/or my understanding of their perspectives. Interview data was ongoing and emergent thus interpreting the qualitative data required reflection on the questioning process itself. I used my researcher journal to monitor the developing research relationship and response to questions for each participant. Using structured
reflexivity helped provide a mechanism to review, revise and/or reframe interview protocols to mitigate any observed relational issues or to better address the research questions as the inquiry unfolded.

**Summary**

Chapter III outlined how the research process aligned case study and critical race research methodology to answer the research questions. A discussion of the design and rationale, ethical considerations, selection of participants, context and setting, instrumentation, and data analysis strategy was presented. Methods to establish trustworthiness were explained. Chapter IV will provide the study’s results and will serve as demonstration of the planned methodology described in chapter III.
Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this case study was to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color who are being prepared to teach within one Predominately White Institution. Participants’ lived experiences were illuminated using a Critical Race Theory framework to better understand how racialized identities mediate their perspectives and experiences during their K-12 and teacher preparation journeys. Key findings were obtained from sixteen in-depth one-on-one interviews and one focus group. Chapter IV presents four key themes that emerged from analysis of their narratives. As delineated in chapter 1, the collected data addressed these research questions:

1. What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?
2. How have racialized identities contributed to Teacher Candidates of Color’s interest in the teaching profession?
3. How are racialized identities afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts?
4. What experiences coalesce across Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution (PWI)?

Review of Coding Process

The sample for this case study included six candidates who were enrolled in three different teacher preparation programs within the University of Arkansas [i.e., Childhood Education (CHED), Secondary Education (SEED), and Birth through Kindergarten Education (BRKD)] who ranged in classification from junior to graduate candidates. Age and gender were not compulsory considerations, but the study sample included one male and five females. All participants self-identified as a member of a Community of Color as defined by the University of Arkansas, Black/African American (n=3) and Mexican, Mexican American or Chicano (n=3).
Participants’ K-12 schooling backgrounds included both public and private education systems. Table 8 reflects a summary of participant demographic information provided through the recruitment questionnaire. Self-reported race identifiers, delineated *differently* through the interview process, are noted in parenthesis. A pseudonym was assigned for each participant (self-selected or assigned by me).

**Table 8**

*Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Racial Identity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>K-12 Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
<td>Chicano (Latino)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BRKD</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Mexican (Latino)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>SEED</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>Black (Mixed)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CHED</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CHED</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SEED</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>Mexican (Mixed)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CHED</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I followed the interactive streams outlined by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) - (1) condensation of the data, (2) creating data displays, and (3) drawing and verifying conclusions from the data. An inductive and deductive approach was used for coding transcripts generated from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group. Starting with the transcript from the first participant and ending with the transcript from the focus group, I began analysis with open coding to identify concepts that emerged from the data corpus. After reading each transcript multiple times, I segmented data into meaningful expressions and ideas by describing data in single words or phrases and in vivo coding. I then reread the transcript to establish codes. As
each subsequent transcript was generated, I applied the same open coding process and codes from the first data cycle but added codes, deleted codes and re-coded transcripts as needed in response to new data. This initial coding and analysis included identifying both the content of what participants stated, as well as re-listening to audio recordings for how the content was presented (i.e., language use, laughter, tone, pauses). Next, I collapsed the codes to identify categorization labels. Subsequently, I reviewed the categories and codes to determine themes and subthemes. Data was organized into matrices that were modified in a cyclical analysis process. Appendices I-L reflect the sample coding and data displays.

**Participant Profiles**

The case study’s interview sequence followed the three-part series as posited by Siedman (2019). According to Siedman (2019), the first interview is intended to put the participants’ experience into context by asking them to reconstruct and narrate a range of formative past events related to family, school, work, etc. CRT methodology also emphasizes contextualizing POC’s experiences in the past and present through counter-story telling to magnify narratives and truths of underrepresented communities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Participants reconstructed their family and community experiences and traced their K-12 educational journeys. Understanding the uniqueness of each participant’s racialized identity was central to the narrative analysis aspect of case study and to critical race methodology (Solórzano and Yosso, 2016). From their initial narratives, I generated the following participant profiles.

**Isabelle.** Isabelle is a female non-traditional, bi-lingual (Spanish and English) candidate who identifies as Chicano/Latino. She is from an immigrant family and described herself as “a first-born child of Mexican parents.” She is a “super super senior” in the Birth through Kindergarten Education program. She is originally from the Western US where she completed
grades K-11. She described her hometown as an ethnically/racially, culturally, and religiously
diverse area. “I grew up around a lot of religions and ethnicities...I always have shared a lot of
experiences with different types of people. I mean [the Western US] is basically like a melting
pot and I really enjoyed that.” She moved to Arkansas in grade 12 and graduated from a
predominantly White public high school that has proximity to the university. “I came out of
Parker High (pseudonym) that was “all Anglo...and moving here to Arkansas, I honestly felt
distant...” Before transferring to the University of Arkansas, she completed an associate degree
from a community college. Isabelle is a part-time commuter candidate who is actively involved
in multiple international student clubs within the university. She has future aspirations to teach
young children with disabilities.

Maria. Maria is a female bi-lingual (Spanish and English) candidate who identifies as
Mexican/Latino. She is the oldest daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico and is the first to
graduate high school and college in her family. Maria attended K-12 in an area minority-majority
school district. “I grew up here...I went to school with a lot of people that looked like me
because I live on the side of Fairfield (pseudonym) that has a more Latino population.” In
elementary school, she participated in ESL programming. “I started off elementary school not
knowing any English, but I don’t remember not knowing English.” Maria participated in
Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programming in high school. She was a
member of the Fairfield marching band and later was a member of the university’s marching
band as well. Before becoming a teacher education candidate, she graduated with an
undergraduate degree in History with Spanish and Latin American and Latino Studies minors
from the University of Arkansas. As part of her undergraduate studies, she was an Honors
student and at the time of the data collection, she worked as a Graduate Assistant within a
campus department. At the time of the study, Maria was a full-time graduate teacher candidate who commuted to the university campus. She aspires to teach secondary social studies in a minority-serving public school.

**Avery.** Avery is a female candidate who identifies as Black/African American and “mixed.” She described her hometown as, “not like a big city, but there’s still a lot of things to do, but I lived most of my life in a small neighborhood in a cul-de-sac It’s my community base...We did everything together...” She sees herself as a southern girl that can, “see both sides of things” and being southern has influenced the way she, “thinks about things, food and community.” She attended an area public elementary school for grades K-2 and then transferred to an area predominantly White parochial school for grades 3-12. She described that her mother’s decision to change her schools was in response to the public’s school’s unwillingness to attend to her higher reading achievement. “It wasn’t much of a priority. I still loved my teachers, but my mom didn’t want me to fall behind or anything else.” Avery described her private school as, “definitely different from public school. All the teachers were over preparing you for high school and college.” She began higher education by attending an out-of-state public institution for one year before transferring to the University of Arkansas to begin her sophomore year. At the time of the study, she was not a member of any student organizations. Avery was a junior studying Childhood Education with a concentration in Reading and planned to teach early elementary students.

**Candace.** Candace is a female candidate who identifies as Black/African American. Candace attended a north Texas public elementary school for grades K-2, but then transferred into private elementary, middle, and high schools. She graduated from a small predominantly White private high school in the north Texas area. She described her hometown as a suburb like
other suburbs around Union, Texas (pseudonym). It was “predominantly White so I’m not necessarily shocked or uncomfortable with the fact that I’m going to be the only Black person in a classroom full of 200 students here...That’s not a fact that makes me uncomfortable or doesn’t make me sad, but it does make me wish that there were more Black people in my area...” She is from a family of teachers. Her grandmother and mother were both public school educators. 

Candace described that she was the only Black student in her class for grades K-2. Her mother’s decision to move her from her neighborhood elementary school after second grade into a system of small private schools was in direct response to Candace’s treatment by peers and teachers in her public elementary. She described her private schools as places where she and her family became “close knit” with other Black families involved in a Black social organization. She considered herself part of a “smaller Black community that exists in Union, Texas.” Candace accepted a non-resident scholarship and began her undergraduate studies at the University of Arkansas immediately following high school. Candace is a member of a historically Black sorority and was a graduating senior majoring in Childhood Education with a concentration in English as a Second Language and minoring in Spanish. She intends to teach ESL students in elementary settings.

Davis. Davis is a male candidate who identifies as Black/African American who is “semi-fluent in Spanish for a non-heritage speaker.” He is from a small town over 200 miles away from the University of Arkansas where he attended racially diverse public schools for grades K-12 and participated in band and was (is) a talented trumpeter. He described his hometown as “...not really urban, not really rural either. Suburban, maybe? Small kind country town-ish. It’s really fun, really nice, but really small.” He shared that Panola (pseudonym) kept him “grounded.” In the university environment, “I think when I see something. I see it from bigger
picture. I don’t have to gravitate to this group or that group. I can sort of (pause) I can still remember that I’m still a Panolian...I get to be an outsider. Stay grounded, you know.” Davis’s mother was a Special Education teacher and his dad is former military and a minister which Davis still considered as teaching, “Preaching is really teaching.” Davis was identified as a Gifted and Talented student beginning in early elementary school. He attended specialized GT programming in high school which is an experience that he described as, “a place where finally I didn’t have to hide my academic achievement to not make anybody feel lesser…and at the same time, many of them [attendees] looked like me or different shades of brown and some White really cool people and differently-abled. I didn’t know that could exist…” He was a junior secondary education teacher candidate who is majoring in English Education with a minor in Spanish. Davis is an honor student, and member of a historically Black fraternity within the university.

Crystal. Crystal is a female candidate who identifies as Mexican and “mixed.” Crystal is from the north Texas area where she attended affluent predominantly White parochial (Catholic) schools for grades K-12. She attended schools that her father attended. Her mother is a parochial schoolteacher in the school system from which she graduated. Crystal was schooled with a core of the same students for grades K-8. “There were some that left and some that came, but we had the core same, like 50 kids from kindergarten until eighth grade...” She added that, “I definitely think that I was pretty sheltered growing up coming from a small religious school.” Most Students of Color in her high school setting were from the associated church’s refugee programming. Her overall reflection of her K-12 schooling environments was positive, “I had great teachers and great experiences there...We were a close knit group of people because we were together so long.” Crystal completed an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education
with a concentration in STEM education before becoming a graduate teacher candidate in the Childhood Education program. As part of her undergraduate studies, she was an Honors student. Crystal is a member of a university sorority and was active in the university’s Greek Life. Her future aspirations are to teach elementary school in a public or private school.

**Presentation of Findings**

The study’s findings are organized by the research questions and presented by themes and subthemes that emerged from participants’ narratives. Six related themes and subthemes are detailed within this chapter. Table 9 shows how each theme and set of subthemes are aligned to the four guiding research questions of this study. Appendix I provides more details about their relationships. In alignment with the CRT tradition of anti-essentialism of racialized experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2013), excerpts of narratives are presented to include participants’ lived experiences unique to each, but the coalescence of intersecting participant descriptions are also offered. Extracted portions of narratives are presented as transcribed from the audio recordings with minimal editing (only for clarity and/or to protect anonymity). In alignment with CRT methodology, presenting unedited transcription offers authenticity of the narratives and licenses participants’ storytelling processes.
### Table 9

**Theme and Subthemes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ#1: Intersections of History and Biography</th>
<th>Overarching Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ#2 Reckoning with Racism and Race-neutrality</td>
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<td>Cultural Guardians</td>
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<td>Guideposts for Success</td>
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<td>Connecting with All Families</td>
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<td>Being an Advocate</td>
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<td>Underrepresentation as a Limiting Factor</td>
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<td>RQ#3 Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces</td>
<td>Racial and Cultural Parity</td>
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<td>Culturally Responsive Content</td>
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<td>“The Only” Status</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Positive and Negative Reception</td>
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<td>RQ#4 Seeking Common Ground</td>
<td>Chameleon Experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fear of Marginalization</td>
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<td>Performative DEI</td>
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<td>DEI as a Continuum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nested Needs</td>
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**Theme #1 - Intersections of History and Biography**

To answer research question #1, *What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?* participants began by articulating descriptions of their communities and provided detailed narratives about their racial (cultural) backgrounds, upbringings, and educational journeys (K-12). They talked about ways that they identified with multiple communities based on racial identity, gender, ability, and/or religious affiliation. Their descriptions encompassed commonalities and differences centering around feelings, relationships, and positive and negative interactions with people in their environments. From participants' narratives of “self” emerged an overall theme, Intersections of History and...
Biography, that highlights how TCOCs’ biographies have been forged by the history of race in the United States. Each subtheme captures critical incidents and statements that were coded to highlight the salience of racialized identity as part of participants’ backgrounds and educational histories.

**Insider-Outsider Epistemologies.** An epistemology is a theory of knowledge. It’s what we know and how we know it. Although it is widely accepted that race does not have genetic or scientific merit, the concept of race and racial identity is real in a society like the United States. Due to the history of racialization in this county, race underlies what people think, what they believe and how they apply new information. Being a Person of Color begets an intricate understanding of where one belongs or does not belong. Participants’ narratives were riddled with descriptions of their feelings of and experiences with acceptance and belonging. Failing to see oneself and one’s own culture represented cannot be understated because it reduces the sense of belonging. For four of the six participants’ positive feelings of and experiences with acceptance and belonging stemmed from contact with others with shared racial and cultural traits (e.g., language, physical appearance, etc.). Candace, Isabelle and Maria captured it well.

“...church and Christianity was a value that my parents instilled in me from a very, very, very young age...I have been part of the exact same church since birth...So being part of that itty bitty tiny community of Black Christians within that area [Union, Texas] gave me a sense of community and belonging, especially if I felt like ‘Oh, I don’t belong here’ or like I don’t have a right to be here because people don’t look like me here...” (Candace)

Isabelle’s and Maria’s narratives also focused on their interactions with other Latino people as a collective sensibility that they experienced when navigating their environments.

When asked to explain what it meant to be Chicano, Isabelle stated, “…*When we greet, we just*
like, even if we don't know each other, we just like kind of greet like, like hugging, like very just welcoming, very open...Yeah, we protect each other a lot...” Maria added,

“I never have to worry about what other people are thinking about me if I go into a Mexican store. I feel comfortable. I don't have to worry about people looking at me funny. Even in the Walmart here [near her neighborhood], I don't have to worry so much about what I'm doing. But when I go to maybe a Walmart in [neighboring towns] and there's predominantly more White people, I do find myself thinking about how I'm acting, how I look, or what I say, or what I'm saying is right. I feel like they're judging me for doing something...[When I am at a Mexican grocery store], maybe when I walk in, they greet me, they smile at me. Oh, it's just a random person. Sometimes they say, ‘Hey’, or they greet you. I just feel like there, you get the sense of a more welcoming environment.” (Maria)

Participants’ narratives revealed the ways in which they have experienced feelings of community within their communities (insiders). These feelings extended from shared experiences and a sense of (not necessarily the actual experience of) shared history, but my findings also revealed that feelings of being an insider or outsider were not always internally perpetuated. For some, the lack of belonging stemmed from interactions with members of the White majority. This outsider feeling was experienced in academic settings for five of the six participants. This was evidenced in responses from Isabelle and Maria. Isabelle shared that when she moved from [the Western US] to Arkansas to an “all Anglo” high school that she, “...felt very lonely and very empty. Teachers did not attempt to meet me in the middle...So I felt like out here it was just academics, academics, academics, and they didn’t know you personally...I just didn’t want to be here. I did not feel welcome.”

Maria provided a poignant description of two high school experiences that disrupted the sense of belonging and acceptance she had previously enjoyed in Fairfield, Arkansas.

“...We would have clinics at Fairfield High School, and students from all over [the] area schools come, and there were these girls from Brooks (pseudonym) that were talking in the bathroom of my school. ‘Oh, my gosh, look at these bathrooms. They're so ghetto. They can they not afford to get new bathrooms.’ They were just talking trash about our bathrooms, and I was just in the other stall. And then another instance is when we were having the concert the next day, and I overheard parents saying, ‘Is it safe here? Are
you sure? Are we sure we’re not gonna hear gunshots?’ And I’m like, ‘Guys, are you serious?’ Those were the two main experiences that stuck with me. They made me think badly about myself, my school, about my safe place.” (Maria)

**Racial and Cultural Assimilation.** Participants’ narratives also uncovered ways that TCOCs sought acceptance and belonging within their K-12 schooling environments. All participants expressed some degree of experience with a perceived need for racial and cultural assimilation. This was evident in both diverse and predominately White education settings. Isabelle and Maria shared descriptions of how their families framed assimilation as a strategy to support their positive participation in academic environments.

“Like I never spoke Spanish in school. I avoided it. I think all throughout elementary. But I remember people around me would speak to me in Spanish, but I would answer them in English. Because that was in my brain. That was the right thing to do. And also I think my parents influenced that because they were like, ‘We don’t want you to use Spanish anywhere except home.’ So to them I think English is best was also part of the Americanization, of just believing that the more Americanized you are, the better you are.” (Maria)

“Growing up in [the Western US], there were a lot of Chicanos just like me. You know, most of my friends were all like first born Americans, but we still considered ourselves Chicanos. We speak Spanglish because we understand both languages and we understand it. It has a lot of elements to it; the words sometimes have different meanings too... But there aren’t many Chicanos here, but I speak a lot of Spanglish with my mom. It’s like we have a deeper understanding of each other. I am protective of our Spanglish, so I don’t speak it to other Latino people around here... In my high school here, I hardly ever spoke Spanish because my mom did not want me to be seen as somebody different among you know, (pause) White people.” (Isabelle)

Maria’s and Isabelle’s narratives also reflected how their family’s socialization practices or “lessons” led to internalized beliefs about their racialized identities.

“Yeah, I was always with my peers; they all look like me, but if I looked at my teachers, I never had a Latina or Latino teacher until college. So for me, I think growing up there was always I think a part of me though, that thought that the Whiter I am, the better because I never saw anyone in my position. I mean, any Latino in a higher position. So I think I in certain ways, I tried to be more, more White, tried to Americanize myself more. I felt like I needed to do that in order to succeed.” (Maria)

“So my best friend growing up was African American. I had other best friends that were like Vietnamese, Filipino, you know (pause) American... I went to Parker High
Beyond safeguarding academic prospects, findings suggested that experiences of racial and cultural assimilation may be more nuanced for those with multiple racial identities. During our first interview, Avery described herself as “different” multiple times in quick succession. She attributed her “mixed” parentage for the ways that she is “different.” Her use of the term “different’ normed the White majority and othered herself, however. Avery’s narrative uncovered early attempts to assimilate to seek acceptance and belonging with her White peers. She shared a defining story of when she became aware of her racialized identity in early elementary school.

“My mom is White and my dad is Black...I didn’t know that I was different. I didn’t think of myself as being different, except for my hair when I went swimming. But sometime in elementary school, my friends would be like ‘You’re brown.’ and I wondered ‘What does that mean? Does that do anything?’ That is when I started realizing there are other races and ‘Oh, I am different in that way.’” (Avery)

Avery’s narrative also uncovered the impacts of her failed attempts to assimilate as well.

“As I grew up honestly I started realizing more like who I am...I grew up going to Oaks Christian (pseudonym) most of my life with only one other Black girl in my grade and one other mixed boy in my grade. People would say things like ‘Oh you’re not acting White’ and stuff like that. Like, what does that mean?...My mom would always make me feel like, other kids would say that I look different, but I wasn’t different inside...My aunt on my dad’s side would always ask if I had any questions and would say, ‘If you ever have any questions, if you ever want to talk to somebody, you don’t have to talk to somebody who doesn’t look like you about things.’ She would always give me things to read and to watch, so that I would feel like, valid, I guess. That gave me the attitude of, I don’t really care what people think.”” (Avery)

Crystal’s family, who by her self-report, did not emphasize her “mixed” racialized identity, stated that being Mexican, had “just never been like part of how [she] lived her life.” Interestingly, the entirety of her extensive description of “self” reflected a minimization of her
racialized identity to assimilate with the White majority. Her narrative revealed the complexity of having and negotiating identity, especially one of multiple racial backgrounds.

“...I only really remember one time having a negative connotation behind like it [being mixed]. And it was in eighth grade, and it was some jerk boy, and he called me a beamer. That really, like stuck with me ever since then, but like, other than that, it's always just been a curious thing and so it's never bothered me. Technically, you would say like I'm Hispanic. But I've always identified as Mexican because that's where my grandma's from and my grandpa's from. There's so many, like different types of being Hispanic or Latino or anything like that. But I've always said that I'm Mexican and I've been told before, when I say I'm half white, half Mexican. People will be like, ‘Well, you're Hispanic’ and I'm like, ‘No.’ I know, technically, if I were to put on like a census or something like that I put Latina but like, I've always identified as like I say, mixed. I mean, half white, half Mexican, because that's where my family's from, where both sides of my grandparents are from, and that's what I identify with. You know?...” (Crystal)

Despite her description that reflected acceptance of her Mexican nationality, but distanced herself from the Hispanic ethnicity identifier, she shared how her “mixed” racialized identity had been an experience of assimilation into the dominant culture that left some aspects of her racial identity indistinguishable to herself and others.

“In high school, there were some Hispanic kids and I do remember (pause) I wonder. I remember this, but I wonder how much of it was like I really felt this way or like, how much I kind of felt like I was supposed to feel this way. But yeah, I was definitely feeling like because I don't know Spanish and I wish I did and feeling like I think the most conflict I've ever felt is just like wishing I was more connected with like, my Hispanic heritage...And so I would say the only time it's ever caused, like, any, conflict in me is just feeling like, I'm not (pause) almost like a poser, because people can tell that I look like something and then they start to ask me questions like do I speak Spanish. And I'm like, ‘No,’ and just questions like that. I feel like, that's the only time I've ever felt any conflict, but wouldn't say it's been like, severe just a wish to be more connected. But I've never felt like a tear in my identity from it, you know?” (Crystal)

**Encounters with Racial Tension and Racism.** Participants were asked open-ended questions to share how they remembered their learning experiences in elementary, middle, and high school. These open-ended questions generated positively framed educational journeys for all six participants, but some participants expressed experiences with racial tension and formative encounters of overt and covert racism.
Avery and Davis alluded that they had not seriously considered the impacts of their racial identities on their schooling experiences prior to our discussion. As they reflected, neither acknowledged or identified any specific instances in their schooling experiences as overt or covert racism, but they did present descriptions of racial tension they felt between who they were and their K-12 schooling experiences. Davis spoke of his experiences of segregation in an integrated school.

“I went to an integrated school, but my school experience was different. I don’t think was aware of it to sixth grade, but looking back on it, it was odd. I was segregated from other Black students because I was in Gifted and Talented. We sorta branched apart and I only knew them [other Black students] in passing. I had to make White friends, but I felt like there was this kind of divide...Later I had AP classes and they had regular track. I was like the only Black boy there...” (Davis)

Avery discussed how she had not previously thought about how race was addressed in her high school curricula but remembered how she felt in history classes.

“I’m kind of like thinking maybe my teachers could have gotten more my interest or buy in in history because like, whenever in history, we talked about slavery and like that. They would only ever, lightly talk about it. They were kind of careful to talk about it. They wouldn’t really go like into depth with it. But I’d always like, go and do like more research on it. And try to like understand more. Because I felt like that’s like part of me, so I wanted to like understand more.” (Avery)

Maria talked about a microaggression she experienced in junior high. As part of member checking, in the week following her first interview, I asked Maria if there was anything that she’d like to share that she did not mention in our first interview. She provided an anecdote not previously shared,

“I forgot to tell you. I pretty much had a positive experience through grade 12, but one memory that I’ve thought about since we talked is when we went to Williamsburg in junior high. I think it was like 10 students per junior high and I got picked to go. I was the only Student of Color from my school, but there were more Students of Color and more Latino students from other schools. I remember we were on the bus and I was sitting there minding my business and then one of the teachers comes up to me and points out one Latina girl and says, ‘Hey, calm down your friend.’ Um, like I didn’t even know her. Who is she? It never dawned on me until like years later that he said that just
because we were both Latina. He thought that we knew each other. Now I know that is a microaggression, but I didn’t at the time. It was just weird.” (Maria)

Candace described experiences of overt and covert racism and the negative impacts that it had on her schooling. Candace’s encounters spanned from her elementary to secondary contexts and her descriptions were the most egregious within the group of participants.

She attributed her “abrupt transfer to private schools” was due the racism that she experienced in her predominantly White public elementary school. She shared detailed narratives about teacher and student experiences who “confused her” about her Black identity. Instances including running for a class senator position in second grade against a “White girl who I thought was my best friend,” but who told her that “Black people can’t be the boss of White people” and her second grade teacher who told her parents that she “Didn’t do a good job” with a cultural heritage presentation because her parents refused to make her wear a culturally appropriated dashiki. Later instances included high school administrator labeling her (and the small group of Black students) within in her private school as “bullies” after a, “a mother went and complained to our principal, that the Black students were excluding other people because we were sitting with each other at lunch...But then I think about there were 49 tables of all White students, but one table of predominantly Black students sitting with each other is bulling?...That is a very strong word... Those types of words, still very much affect me...”

**Colorism as an Extension of Racism.** An unexpected finding from my case study was that none of the protocol questions were explicitly directed toward the construct of colorism, yet half of the participants discussed the impact of colorism (i.e., a complexion-based standard of privilege where better treatment or achievement was equated to lightness or Whiteness).

“I don’t think we were ever told that we were mixed, like it was never a thing. I just chose the term to answer people’s questions. My dad’s White and we’re Hispanic. My oldest brother is the fairest of us, but me and Jacob (pseudonym) very much resemble my
mom. And so it’s always been a thing. I think I identify as mixed because it’s like, I get that question...What are you? because they don’t know, but they know that I am something. They [White people] can tell you’re like, you have dark hair and dark complexion. I say mixed to tell them something...” (Crystal)

“...My family comes from a line of being Spanish and being Turkish way back. So we are fairly like light skin, but my baby brother, he’s like freakin dark, darker than all of my cousins. My mom is dark; she’s kind of your skin color. I have seen the differences and how they have been approached and how they have been treated unfairly, you know, either here or like in the community. My brother has gotten punched by a White guy because he was dark skinned and that shook us...I noticed how different my family was treated so I just tried to blend in.” (Isabelle)

“...It’s across all cultures, where people just have different beliefs of I’m better than this race because of my skin tone or I’m better than this person because they are darker than me and I’m lighter...” (Candace)

**Theme #2 - Reckoning with Racism and Race-neutrality**

The second interview extended participants’ focused life history by concentrating on details about their lived experiences as people with racialized identities and its influence on the decision to become a teacher. From participants’ narratives, the overall theme, Reckoning with Racism and Race-neutrality, emerged. Each participants’ decision to teach varied, but narratives revealed myriad ways K-20 racialized experiences framed their decisions to teach as an intentional action to disrupt (reckon with) their past racialized experiences and potential racialized experiences for their future SOCs.

Four subthemes emerged through exploring **RQ#2: How have Teacher Candidates of Color’s awareness of their racialized identities contributed to their interest in the teaching profession?** Five participants shared detailed stories about their decision to become a teacher. None chose Teacher Education as his/her initial career pathway and three candidates made late decisions to change majors after completing or finishing half of their initial programs of study. Participants’ pathways to teaching are presented in Table 10.
Table 10

Participants’ Career Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Career Pathway</th>
<th>Teacher Education Program</th>
<th>Year Switched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
<td>Communications Disorders</td>
<td>BRKD</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Undecided – Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>SEED Graduate Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History</td>
<td><strong>Minor Spanish - Latin American &amp; Latino Studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>CHED</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
<td>International Business</td>
<td>CHED</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>SEED</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked why they decided to become teachers, influences for their decisions, and their aspirations as future Teachers of Color, each participant’s impetus to transition into teaching varied, but more commonalities were found within their discussions of their desired and perceived roles in the lives of K-12 learners.

**Cultural Guardians.** My inquiry found that my participants positioned themselves as cultural guardians. They expressed an interest in ensuring that who they are and who students are as racialized beings would not be co-opted by the dominant culture in their future K-12 learning environments. Their personal narratives connected back to their own marginalization in K-12 schools and beyond.

“I don’t know you if you know Dr. Ganino (pseudonym), but he was my first Latin American Studies professor and I love the way he taught history and how he was so confident and was just like so connected to the students. Like, I want to give people, our [Hispanic] students, the same experience. Yeah, I want them to have that experience too...I learned so much Latino history that I didn’t know when I was in school. And I was like, okay, I need to let other students know that this information is out there and not wait until they get to college like me.” (Maria)
“I would like to have like a safe space for children from marginalized groups. Like, all of our classroom spaces are diverse...I will try to celebrate traditions and customs of different cultures in my classroom. I mean, as a child, my parents drug me to this and to that and I was tired of more Spanish music. But now that I'm older, I am like, dude, those moments are really, really, really valuable and really important to me and how I understand my culture. So I feel it will be important to share and embrace celebrating those special, you know, traditions or like, just very specific cultural norms in my classroom; I think is very important.” (Isabelle)

“I want to be in their lives. This may be weird to say but I will be a Black guy who likes Hamilton and isn't the super into sports type Black man. Maybe they've [Black students] never have seen that before, but I want to be that for them. I want them to see Black men who are into school.” (Davis)

“Yeah, I feel like it [being a Teacher of Color] could be helpful because I didn't really ever have like any teachers that looked like me. So, I feel like that could be a thing that could maybe make a student feel more open to sharing which makes me feel good. But I still want every student, regardless of what they like, or where they're from, to feel like they can talk to me and share their experiences. But I think it [being a Teacher of Color] does kind of give me like a certain perspective on certain things that could be helpful in teaching, especially because I know, today, the students we're getting are very diverse. They're from all over the place so I think it [being a Teacher of Color] kind of gives me a different way to look at teaching.” (Avery)

Participants discussed honoring and valuing students’ home lives by embedding culture and language into their future classrooms. In doing so, these TCOC recognized that they can bring something different into the classroom by expanding the curricula to include multicultural materials and culturally relevant pedagogy that recognizes and honors the legacy that their future students bring into the classroom.

“Having inclusive books in the classroom is important, books that look like all of your students. And like, even if, they don't speak English, having books, even if they can't read yet, in their language in the classroom. That could make a student feel included and safer in the classroom.” (Avery)

“My role in the students’ lives would be introducing them to various cultures, not just my culture, but like a little bit of this, a little bit of that...I learned about world through literature, like stuff all over the world. And for me, when I begin to teach, it will be like way I learned about a whole another culture - through its books...” (Davis)

“I will make sure that there's books with, like, all different types of students represented. I think that I'm going to make sure to include things like that. Even things with like the
classroom decorations and stuff like that. Asking students about, you know, certain cultures and trying to include that also. I just think that like little things like that are effective.” (Isabelle)

**Guideposts for Success.** The participants’ narratives extended beyond interest in being role models. Their narratives expressed their desires to impart how their life successes could be interpreted by K-12 students as a model for their own successes. My findings indicate that as role models, Teacher Candidates of Color believed that they could motivate and inspire K-12 students. They believed that their position in classrooms can contribute to their future students’ education aspirations. Serving as an example for Black and Latinx students was a common reason many of these participants transitioned into teacher education.

“I think I just want to show them [Hispanic students in her internship site] that if they want to keep on pursuing anything outside of high school, they can. Just sort of represent so that maybe when they think about their community, they’re not just thinking about the lower-level positions, but maybe the higher-level one’s too…” (Maria)

“Students and children are so impressionable...I want to mold them to love reading and writing and all the other subjects that I want to teach but as a Black woman, I want to remind the little Black girls and boys that you too, can be here. You can be beyond anything that you can even fathom. And my parents always instilled in me that Candace, you can do better than what I did because of the resources that they're able to give me. And so I want to instill that in my students.” (Candace)

“...I feel like I personally want to be their number one support, you know, like, I want to motivate these kids [marginalized kids], that they can do anything, you know, just because of my life experience. I feel like my personal experience of like, you know, starting off like really, really, really low and being able to accomplish all of these things. I can, hopefully impact those children to do the same thing, because we all have strengths. We all have strengths; we just have to support them and encourage them.” (Isabelle)

**Connecting with All Students and their Families.** Participants in my study felt that they will be able to use their racialized and cultural similarities to create classroom environments where students feel welcome, comfortable, and even familial. I found that these teacher
candidates wanted to build relationships with all students regardless of their race/ethnicity. They expressed interest in using relationships to make connections that bridge across racial lines.

“Um, I just want to be a support. Obviously teaching them and stuff like that, but also, I want to, emphasize the relationships in the classroom and like with the families. I want students to feel comfortable and safe...I just want my students hopefully to feel like they can talk to me, and talk to each other, and just have an environment that is learning from each other and learning from each other’s experiences...I want children who come from different communities to know that they belong.” (Avery)

“Well, first of all, I want it [my future classroom] to be really inviting for families as well. You know, like, watching these classrooms you know, some parents just like, drop off their kids, and then they just like leave, right. But I would like to invite parents to feel free to explore the space to explore the materials that I have to feel welcome.” (Isabelle)

“As a non-heritage speaker of Spanish, I can be an interpreter between, you know, Latino students and Black students. The relationship between them, to me is important. Because they (we) go through pretty much the same things...Yeah, that means being a different part of myself.” (Davis)

“I am a Spanish minor...I almost majored in Spanish because that is something that I saw my parents go through, because my dad traveled to many, many, many different countries and just really immersed himself in the language and put himself in language and I feel like as an adult, then it's really, really hard to learn different languages. So, kind of seeing him doing that and struggle with that also made me wonder how students deal with that, which is why I chose ESL...I want to be a support for my students, if they're a first-generation student, or if they just don't speak English in their household. I want them to know that they're accepted.” (Candace)

**Being an Advocate.** When asked about what they felt are the most important things they wanted to impart upon their students, they envisioned creating empowering spaces for students and their families. Their descriptions of serving as agents of racial and social mobility through some form of student advocacy was rooted in their own life experiences. Their descriptions included altruistic characteristics like generosity, empathy, and concern for the welfare of others. Isabelle planned to champion for students with disabilities because of her personal background.

“I saw the need for children. Because me as an adult, or you know, someone that is already 18, I could ask for services. I could ask for these accommodations that I needed, I could tell a teacher, how I was feeling. But children, they don’t have the same capacity as that. Right. They're still like trying to learn how to express themselves, and they're trying to learn how to just do things in life. Right. And if you have another
challenge, like a physical disability, or any other kind of learning disability, you know, that just really breaks my heart. And I just feel like I could really relate to these children. And that could be their advocate. Yeah. So that’s why I choose to work in the birth of kindergarten license.” (Isabelle)

Candace reflected on experiences of racialized aggressions during their K-12 schooling that resulted in their desired to be a voice and protector of their future students.

“…There's plenty of teachers that I had, where they labeled me as bad because I don't know if you know, this, I like to talk and that was not always accepted, especially in elementary school...I was not able to be talkative and was labeled as disruptive...and that really had an effect on me that I didn't even really realize until that K through sixth development class, where I realized I wasn't even really talking or participating in class. And that's probably the reason why my participation grade was so low compared to my peers. And I think it was because I was almost scared due to my experiences in school...I will not do that as a teacher.” (Candace)

Maria’s sense of advocacy connects to her family’s first-generation immigrant background. Part of her decision to teach is with the intent to help others navigate through systems and obstacles that may thwart the advancement of other first-generation immigrant students.

“...I’m the oldest and I am the first to experience everything in my family. My parents don’t know anything about the education system, So really, I was a teacher for my siblings. And I knew how hard it was to experience everything the first time and to not understand the process of how everything works. I knew that I did not want my siblings to go through that same experience...I think really being a teacher for them is what influenced me to be a teacher for others too.” (Maria)

**Underrepresentation as a Limiting Factor.** When asked if there is any experience or encounter in their K-12 schooling that participants thought would have influenced them to think about teaching sooner, five of the six participants named having representative teachers in elementary to high school. Findings suggest that underrepresentation of TOCs in K-12 schooling had a restrictive effect on the initial decision to choose teaching as a profession, but underrepresentation was also a salient factor is choosing to teach later. Of the six candidates, Crystal was the only participant who began college with intentions to become a teacher. Her
mother was a teacher, and she cited this experience as, "one of the reasons that I wanted to become a teacher growing up."

Most participants however, pointed to the salience of race of their teachers as part of career selection process. Avery and Davis, speak about the impacts of underrepresentation explicitly.

“I think having representative teachers would probably have made me feel more like (pause) like I wouldn’t have struggled for so long to figure out, ‘Oh, I don’t have to be a certain way or like act a certain way just because of how I look. I probably would have been more (pause) I probably would have felt more supported and know who I was more? I don’t know. I think I would have felt like I belonged and was accepted rather than just being there. Yeah.” (Avery)

“I had a lot of Black male role models, but you go through 12 years of school, and I didn’t have any Black male teachers. I had some for band, but I didn’t think of it as teaching. I didn’t see many men...”

Theme #3 - Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces

The third interview focused on the intersection of participants’ racialized identities and the university context of the case study by addressing RQ#3: How are racialized identities of Teacher Candidates of Color afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts? While participant critique was valid and relevant to this study, I did not seek my participants’ voices explicitly for that intent. Instead, my interest was to gain a sense of their integration by understanding ways that they felt afforded and constrained by their minority status, within interpersonal relationships and by institutional structures.

To answer RQ#3, participants were queried about affordances and constraints within the predominantly White contexts of their teacher preparation programs. Participants reflected on their previously articulated visions of themselves as future teachers and their intended roles in their future classrooms. In relationship to meeting that end, participants were asked to articulate any affordances and/or constraints experienced imposed by faculty/staff, courses, clinical
experiences, peers and the university/programs of study. From participants’ narratives, the overall theme, Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces, emerged. Participants’ narratives highlighted how TCOCs brought antecedents (related to race/culture) to their shared PWI that heightened their race-consciousness. Subthemes capture how racialized identities informed engagement and sense of integration.

Interpreting a sense of integration can be highly subjective and participants’ narratives did not parse out as explicitly as intended because my three initial focus areas were more interconnected than separate as I anticipated. Candidates discussed their sense of integration with different boundaries than I planned (i.e., university core classes versus teacher preparation classes, undergraduate program versus graduate program, university classes versus clinical experiences). Their minority status and interpersonal relationships were co-mingled in the discussion of these university boundaries.

It is important to note that the timing of the study exerted limitations on participants’ ability to inform research question #3. All participants experienced remote learning in the year prior (spring 2020-spring 2021) to this study. Though participants referenced affordances and constraints related to the remote-learning environment, I have not included that content in chapter IV, for it is not the focus of my study. Due to their “super” senior and graduate statuses, Maria, Isabelle, and Candace had more prolonged exposure to the university campus before the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were applied to face-to-face university classes and the suspension of student life and clinical experiences. Avery and Davis were both junior candidates who have had more limited exposure to the university campus in the year prior to this study. Despite these limitations, the following four themes emerged from the data.
Racial and Cultural Parity. When asked to describe their learning experiences at the University of Arkansas, participants immediately described characteristics of their professors as both educational affordance and constraint. They described how certain characteristics of professors impacted their learning behaviors in a PWI context. Participants associated professors who were able to traverse and engage with their racial and cultural identities with positive learning experiences within the university. Their narratives suggest that TCOCs prefer culturally conscious professors whether the professors share their racialized identity or represent the majority.

Davis discusses multiple positive encounters that he has had with Black male professors.

“They’ve been nice. Some of them came from like Big Spring, AR (pseudonym) or close to where I live, where I’m from and they’re Black guys...It was nice knowing that they have whole lives outside of this. Asking them questions let me know they are so freakin’ cool. Dr. Jackson (pseudonym) is an academic and student-friendly, so he is like wielding two swords in a really cool way, like a helpful way...”

He also discussed the impact of one culturally conscious White professor on campus.

“I love Dr. Combs’ class. He was into literature and he also was into comics. He was able to combine those two...He really spurred me on. He makes me want to read. We read the Outsiders. I read it in seventh grade and I didn’t want to read it again, but I read it again because of this guy. He made me love Black and White literature...He had been a high school teacher for years before doing this. I’m pretty sure he taught a lot of minority students. So he just had that energy...” (Davis)

Avery reflected fondly about her education program faculty specifically.

“I think I’ve been a lot of my whole self because a lot of the teachers. They’re very open about their interests and who they are and have activities for us to share our experiences and stuff like that. It’s kind of like you don’t really like to block off certain parts of you, kind of putting your whole self into it. In a lot of my classes, I am one of the only people of color, so it’s interesting...All, every education teachers I’ve had here so far has been good so far. They are very energetic, excited about it, which makes me more excited about it...” (Avery)

Isabelle reflected positively on professors that align with her cultural identity and some of her cultural values. When discussing her experiences with White professors, she shared:
“In my culture, you know, Latinos, we respect our elders a lot...So having a teacher that was a senior was really easy for me to form a strong relationship with. I trusted him. He gave me a lot of advice and a lot of suggestions. He did not disrupt me or interrupt me whenever I was talking...Dr. Martin (pseudonym) was also a senior professor. I am not saying that in a bad way. I’m just saying because of her age. She is just like ball of energy and she is like so welcoming and compassionate. She motivates me...

About one Latino faculty member she added:

“One of my Spanish professors, I actually think she would be considered Chicana and I feel like maybe that’s why I instantly felt that like instant connection to her because she taught a way that I could understand. We had some Anglo students. I’m just saying it because, you know, because of culture differences, right? I mean White students in the classroom, but she never isolated anyone...” (Isabelle)

Maria and Candace spoke specifically about the positive and negative impacts of the racial identity of their professors. They segmented their narratives between pre-program university professors and in-program university professors. Their descriptions are incongruous with each other, however. Maria who completed a more minority-serving undergraduate degree experienced racial parity with her university professors. She speaks fondly about her undergraduate experiences.

“I think undergrad was pretty good. I think it’s because I took a lot of Spanish courses and Latin American Studies courses that crossed over into my history. So I had pretty diverse professors... In my undergrad, I had Dr. Lopez (pseudonym). Amazing teacher, but he was a third generation Mexican American so I could not relate to him much because he doesn’t know the struggles of first generation. But he tries really hard to understand students. He was pretty forward with telling us that he doesn’t speak Spanish, but I’ll try to have a conversation with you and you can teach me. So he was one of the people that I really liked...Dr. Ganino was from Columbia, so from a different part of Latin America, but I was still able to make a connection with him even though he was from a different region. He was open to understand all of his students and it didn’t matter who they were.”

But she describes the racial identity of her professors in her graduate teacher education studies as a constraint but attempts to explain her conflicting feelings with some uncertainty.

“The least diverse is when I got into the Master’s program. That’s whenever I think all of professors are White males. It’s like the least diverse I’ve had in my entire college
experience. The professors don’t really understand me…I’ve never had a deep connection with any of my professors. I don’t talk to them that much either…”

She adds,

“I don’t know what it was that just pulled me to go to their [her undergraduate professors] office hours? I don’t do that now. I think it’s because I loved so much the ways they were teaching that I wanted to figure out more about them and more about what they were teaching. I would talk to them. I knew that that connection was there. I don’t know? ”

Candace’s pre-program experiences differed, however. When reflecting on pre-program faculty, Candace shared a vivid narrative about the university climate experienced by Black students.

“I think it has been my learning experience, along with a lot of other Black students on campus. We have been affected by a lot in the past couple of years with the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Navigating that has been challenging. I’ve had a couple of professors who are like ‘I’m not on that woke stuff.’ And to me, I’m thinking is that okay, so you got respect for me as a human being? Can I have an honest opinion with you? Can we not have honest discourse with each other? And these are sociology classes, Yeah…”

As part of her university core courses and former degree coursework, she provided detailed accounts of professors who were insensitive. She was particularly alarmed by her biology professor who “watered down” course content about chronic illnesses that afflict communities of color, but not for other genetically passed diseases that afflict the White majority. She described her former White professors collectively as “not well versed nor interested in becoming well versed on [all] diseases.” She discussed feelings of being “uncomfortable” and “not belonging” in “a sea of 300 students.” These feelings were not solely attributed to the predominantly White populace of university core classes, but more to the characteristics of the course professors.

“I felt uncomfortable at times, like noticing it…At times I’m walking in a classroom in order to feel off and I don’t belong here because there’s no one here that looks like me,
like putting imposter syndrome on myself. But mostly depending on my professor and their energy in class would determine if I continued to have those feelings...”

She contrasts this experience with a formative encounter with a White faculty member in her education program, however.

“But then it’s like the complete opposite being in the teacher education program...I still would get those feelings at the beginning of the semester, but they fizzled out in every single semester...Dr. Sword’s class was just amazing. She was really good at making us feel like we were immersed. Her class was one of the first classes that I started talking openly from. ‘This is my perspective as a Black woman’ and I was comfortable saying that in her class and that really meant a lot to me because ever since then, I’m fine with saying, ‘Yeah, obviously y’all know I’m Black, but I need you to know that I have had this experience because of the fact that I’m Black and I have these feelings because I’m Black’...”

About another White education faculty member, she added:

“...We read and had small group discussions about police brutality. She made me feel so comfortable for when talking about a subject like that. I’m the only Black person there and she didn’t make me feel like I was the voice of all Black people, which I really valued. (Candace)

**Culturally Responsive Course Content.** When asked to share experiences with faculty and staff that aligned with how they envisioned their role and practices in their future classrooms, four of the five participants’ narratives indicated that intercultural course curriculum that acknowledges their cultures and prior experiences is an educational affordance experienced (and welcomed) within the university context. Findings suggest that culturally responsive course content promotes higher engagement for Teacher Candidates of Color.

A general interpretation of participants’ narratives is that they felt their contributions were more devalued as POC in university core classes than in teacher educator courses. Findings also included mixed descriptions of teacher educators conscripting TCOCs into educating their White peers around topics related to race.

“...All of my [teacher education] professors use diverse authors and text. They do a really good job in talking about diverse schools. One day, I remember we each had a
diverse school in Northwest Arkansas to look at. We looked at statistics, the numbers, to learn how to teach diverse students. I think they do a pretty good job in that... When I came to the [teacher education program] my professors would include Mexican American history and once we started reading texts that were about Spanish speakers or Latin American history, I felt like I was more engaged with the material.” (Maria)

“In one of my courses, we talked about AAVE [African American Vernacular English]. I felt so validated and I felt like she was doing it like in the right way. It was the way she was wording it. She asked me to define it and to share my experiences with it. If you want your student who is the only Black to have ownership in a course, ask them to talk about their experiences.” (Candace)

“...We learned a lot about things that I could actually relate to, like the books we talked about. You know about the beginning of the mixture of cultures in Mexico. I like how we read symbolic books and watched films that spoke true to me and then had to write about them. I was very passionate about this class...” (Isabelle)

“In [one course], we kind of just talked about like everything, like how race can affect education and sort of how race impacts kids as they grow up. We have talked about that a lot and in another class that I’m taking right now, we have a book club. We are reading a book and a play and I feel like they [the education faculty] definitely try to educate all of us on kind of the importance of inclusivity and I like that...” (Avery)

“The Only” Status. When asked about their experiences with peer students and teacher candidates, participants reported interest in having peer relationships as an important aspect in adjustment to university life. Findings suggest, however, that being a person with a racialized identity requires TCOCs to grapple with the reality of being “the only” representative in university spaces and to grapple with ways to build authentic relationships with the White majority student population.

Maria highlights a specific challenge experienced by her commuter status, “I wouldn’t spend much time on campus, but I think it’s because I was a commuter.” But when she shares her experiences with establishing peer relationships, being the only race representative is a factor. She provides a narrative of one friendship she made when she was part of the university marching band.

“One of the few friends that I did make was from band. She and I were the only Latinas. So somehow, we like were kind of just standing there. We made eye contact and then we
just started hanging out and became friends from there. I never really talked much to anyone else in band except for I think a couple of other people, but it was usually the two of us together.” (Maria)

Isabelle and Davis both shared detailed narratives about the constraint that being “the only” places on building relationships and how being “the only” has impacted how they navigate their peer relationships in university courses.

“I have tried to form a little bit of a strong relationship with peers in my program, except I am the solo Latina. I feel like I am the only one in my program you know. I like to gather, like to party. It’s such a big part of my family and my Chicano culture...I feel a little bit separated from my peers in my program because I’m like, ‘Come on girls let’s party’ and they’re like, ‘We have to do that next week or we have to read this’ or whatever. And I’m like, ‘That’s okay. That’s fine’...I wish that I could study with them because I would feel more confident about my grades, getting ready for projects or getting ready to start writing a paper. I would feel like more confident and more comfortable approaching that. But I just feel like out upbringing is different and so like, that totally reflects on how we are as people...” (Isabelle)

“The weird thing was that in engineering, I saw plenty more minorities than there are in my education classes. I realized in the first month or so that the first semester I took any of these education courses, I was gonna have to deal with it. It’s not a bad thing to deal with. It’s really not different from my AP classes. In my classes, Group Me has been good because it is not as awkward as asking somebody for your number, which is super, super, super awkward when you are the only Black male in a classroom full of women...” (Davis)

Candace spoke more generally about her “only” status and compared her peer relationships pre and post her teacher education program.

“I’m used to being potentially one of out of two Black students, so I never really had the culture shock of being the only Black person in any environment. That was something I grew up with and I was used to that, but before being in the program, I never really had people that I consider friends outside of class. I saw them in class. We used each other for notes and that was the extent of it, especially in [other] classes. It was a competitive environment, and it was so cutthroat at times...I think being in classes that I’m more passionate about and I’m speaking up more because I’m comfortable. Doing that has also allowed me to have more friendships, but also not being too afraid to ask people questions and just bonding with people ”(Candace)

**Positive and Negative Reception.** Clinical experiences operate as proxy university settings for teacher education programs, and they were considered secondary contexts for this
case study. An immediate response to the pandemic was to remove teacher candidates from clinical experiences; therefore, most participants had limited narratives to share about their field placements. At the time of the data collection, Davis had not had any clinical experiences. Candace, Isabelle and Avery had had observation-only clinical experience that did not include a mentor-mentee relationship, but Maria was in her internship year. Maria provided a poignant narrative about how her racialized identity fostered a positive and negative reception in two different clinical sites. Though she is only one voice, her truth is elevated here as a key finding that impacts TCOCs in field placements but is underrepresented in the literature. When asked about her interactions with mentor teachers and students in clinical experiences, Maria shared a tale of two different schools. About her spring semester internship mentor and experience, she described:

“She really cares about her students so much...One day, she was talking to me, and she was telling me, ‘I'm so happy that you're bilingual’. And then she, she started crying. And she was like, sometimes I feel like I'm giving these kids a disservice for not being bilingual, because she has an ELL class. And I went to start crying to my surprise...And I was like, I can't believe that these kids have this teacher. Oh, my gosh, I'm glad to have this teacher.” (Maria)

Contrarily, she described her fall internship experience quite differently.

“I don't even know where to start...My mentor teacher from last semester wasn’t so great. I introduced myself through email and through text. I was like, Hey, I'm Maria. And then on the first day, I see her she's like, Hey, Lupe. And then a couple weeks in, she starts talking about like, how she was scared for her life when the group of Black boys would always get huddled up by the door of the cafeteria. And then I would be like, in my head, I wish I would have said something, but in my head, I was like, Why? Why, and why not the White boys that are huddled up in the cafeteria?...And there were other Latino students in her classes and she would mix up their names too and this still occurred toward the end of the semester...She talked about how she hated critical race theory. And I was like, that sends a strong message about like, what you believe in and it just made me uncomfortable... And looking back, I wish I would have said something...” (Maria)

**Theme #4 – Seeking Common Ground**

The final interview was a participant focus group. According to Seidman (2019), the final
The interview is intended be a reflection on meaning where I ask the participants to revisit their ideas shared from the previous interviews and ask what it means to them. To this end, all study participants were invited to participate. Four of five elected to attend (three face-to-face and one virtually via Zoom). The focus group extended an opportunity for participants to reflect on their life histories as people with racialized identities, the meaning of their racialized identities and racialized experiences in teacher preparation, and the meaning of their racialized identities and racialized experiences within the university context.

Participants were initially asked to reflect on who they are as people with racialized identities and to discuss their interactions with peer students and teacher candidates, with their teacher educators and with and K-12 students in university courses and clinical experiences within the University of Arkansas contexts. Finally, they were asked to reflect on how their university experiences and teacher preparation program experiences aligned or diverged from published diversity, equity, and inclusion statements published by the university and their respective colleges. From their group discussion, I sought to understand beyond expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. I created a space for the participants to reconstruct some of their previously shared experiences with others who have similarly racialized identities. The intent was that they could/would make meaning of factors in their lives that have interacted to bring them to where they are in their current teacher preparation journeys (e.g., why they chose teaching, their perceived roles in teaching, what they need as part of their teacher preparation experiences, etc.) Given their responses from the previous semi-structured interviews, the center of my attention for the focus group narratives was to extract collective experiences that coalesced among them that may have been absent or more restrained in one-on-one interviews but were
newly introduced, elevated, or even contradicted with a reference group of other Teacher Candidates of Color.

From participants’ narratives, the overall theme, Seeking Common Ground emerged. TCOCs revealed commonalities and differences, optimism and dismay, restatement, revision, and extension of previously posited ideas, but more importantly collective interest in solutions to identified opportunities. Subthemes are products of condensed in vivo codes that emphasize repetitive/shared verbatim words, statements, and ideas offered by the participants during the focus group.

It is important to acknowledge that when analyzing the data corpus, the impacts of remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic coalesced as a thread of concern among all participants, but the bearing of the global pandemic on teacher preparation is beyond the purview of my study. Those findings are not included nor considered in chapter IV or Chapter V. However, five overarching themes emerged from participants’ narratives exploring RQ#4: What experiences coalesce across Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution (PWI)?

**Chameleon Experiences.** Research question #1 inquired about participants’ backgrounds. During individual interviews, only three candidates explicitly discussed ways in which they had engaged in assimilation processes to fit into the White majority. However, during the focus group, when asked to reflect about their interactions with peers, university faculty and staff, teacher educators, and students in coursework and clinical experiences, all four study participants immediately described having chameleon experiences (i.e., attempting to fit in with other racial groups). While my initial finding of assimilation was restricted to the context of TCOCs’ K-12 schooling experiences, findings from the focus group suggest that participants
intentionally engage in assimilation processes in every educational context. From their dialogue about the nature of their interactions with people in educational settings in general, blending in language was pervasive - “attempting to be racially ambiguous,” “camouflaging myself,” “holding back,” “make myself invisible in the room,” and “watering myself down.” Maria responded first and divulged her contrasting internship experiences of teaching within a predominately White junior high in the previous semester and teaching within a predominately Hispanic high school during the current semester.

“At Fairfield High, I feel so comfortable, but when I was at Brasswood Junior High (pseudonym) which is a 90% White school, I felt very different…Through that experience I tried to be Whiter and I did not use Spanish. I tried not to show my culture because I just didn’t feel as comfortable doing it there…Everything was so Eurocentric…” (Maria)

She summarized her teaching experiences by stating, “I learned to teach both ways. I modified how I taught based on my environment. I wish it wasn’t like that, but that’s how it was.” Her statement explicitly highlighted an instance where she felt compelled to negotiate her racialized identity to gain acceptance into the dominant group.

Her honesty gave license for the flurry of confessionals that ensued by each participant. Candace reported that, “For me, I think within each of the communities you described, that I feel like I am kind of, not kind of, but filtering myself, especially around my peers.” Isabelle concurred, “I just try to blend in. Just like not to be so known.” Davis then added a musical metaphor to describe his experiences, “Going off that, I’ve always tried to make myself smaller in a room. I still find myself struggling, like a musical note that starts out small, but I know I need to be able to encourage myself to grow like a crescendo instead of waiting for somebody to say go ahead and play.” As participants discussed their interactions with peers, faculty, in-service teachers, and K-12 students among each other, it became more apparent in the focus
group than from their personal interviews, that in addition to social acceptance, another driving reason for TCOCs engaging in assimilation processes may be due to fear.

**Fear of Marginalization.** In interview #2, I inquired about candidates’ racialized identities and the intersections of their identities with their decision to teach and with their teacher preparation experiences. It was during that exchange that Maria initially shared her narrative about her experience with a “racist” mentor teacher at Brasswood Junior High. In her initial interview, she discussed concern about reporting her experience, but attributed the delay to fear in more benign ways (i.e., she and her family’s fear of her “getting into trouble” and fear of having a lack of support from university faculty). As the only candidate in the study with internship experience, her expressions of fear presented as idiosyncratic, but in the context of the focus group. The words “fear” and “scared” emerged repeatedly and was discussed beyond consequences and in less benign ways. In the first three interviews, some participants shared encounters with racism and others acknowledged ways in which they have and have not experienced a sense of community in their K-higher education journeys, but together TCOCs collectively discussed fear of marginalization in predominantly White environments. During the focus group, Isabelle who had not initially shared this anecdote during her one-on-one interviews, spoke up about feelings of fear experienced during her clinical experiences,

“I do notice at Garrett (pseudonym), when we go in to work with students in the classroom, I kind of was always scared to approach students...I always felt like everyone, all the teachers are predominately White, you know, just always watching you. So I kind of never did anything besides what I was instructed.” (Isabelle)

In anticipation of her next semester internship experience, Candace was candid about her fears. “Well, I kinda get fearful about meeting White people I am unfamiliar with, and I say that because I’m going into internship and I’m aware that students’ parents are most likely going to be White too, and I can kind of relate to what you are saying...” As Candace continued to share,
what unfolded were more specific fears about racial stereotypes and racial tropes assigned to Black people. She added:

“Whenever you're in a predominantly White setting, you do have to essentially, for lack of a better term, like water myself down, because they're not always going to take my passion as passion. They [White people] can take it as disrespect... I can get really, really, really passionate about some things or get fired up. And I'm very much aware of that...But that’s also something that scares me because I don’t know what to do with that. Um and I don’t know necessarily how to defend myself in a passionate way without coming off as the stereotypical angry black woman.” (Candace)

Davis acknowledged his fears of being marginalized due to racial tropes as well.

“...Because of stereotypes of Black men being aggressive, I tend to water it down, to leave it alone and not cause an uproar because I don’t want people [White people] to think the standard things and then no one is gonna want to help me with homework or if I really, really needed something...Sometimes when it’s not awkward in class I talk when the professor brings forward things, so I have to, but I know right off the top of my head, what it’s like? Black men teachers make up what 2% of the United States teacher voice, so I try the whole holding back thing...” (Davis)

Candidates’ discussion reminded Maria of her experiences as an undergraduate. The concept of “the only” status emerged in findings from previous interviews, but it surfaced again in Maria’s narrative as an identified fear because being “the only” is one way to be marginalized in predominately White spaces.

“Going off that I've always tried to make myself smaller in a room. I think just like recently, I've been trying to speak out a little bit more in class. But all undergrad I just stayed quiet. When they [White students] started talking about something controversial, I wouldn't put in my opinion. When they [White students] started talking about Latino Latina history, I let the White girl next to me answer the question instead of me. I was afraid of being that one voice for the entire community. But sometimes when I did want to say something, there was just something in me that was like ‘Don’t speak up’... But I wish like I would have been like that in undergrad because I just tried to make myself invisible in the room.” (Maria)
Findings suggest that TCOCs’ silence and various assimilation processes within predominately White education settings may be a shielding behavior to prevent marginalization. TCOCs fear being rejected, devalued or powerless due to their racialized identities.

**Performative DEI.** When the study participants were asked to reflect on how their university experiences and teacher preparation program experiences aligned or diverged from published diversity, equity, and inclusion statements, the close inspection promoted a collective discussion about social justice and provoked participants’ questioning and critique of the university’s and their respective program’s commitment to action-oriented social justice.

To answer research question #3, participants were previously questioned about their course and clinical experiences to uncover ways that predominately White contexts positively and negatively impacted them. Initial findings suggested that the TCOCs favored faculty and teacher educators who are culturally conscious and who offered culturally responsive curricula. The focus group narrative did not diverge from these initial assertions, but I noticed the use of more emotionally charged and negatively associated language in reference to their course experiences and professors when juxtaposed with the published statements. I extracted terms such as “performative,” “forceful,” and “whitewashed.”

When reflecting on evidence of diversity, equity and inclusion in their course experiences, the participants immediately critiqued their courses that were explicitly titled to address topics in DEI or whose course delivery addressed topics related to DEI. Though from different programs, Candace and Davis had taken the same course and offered parallel stories that disapproved of the practice of having difficult conversations using online discussion boards. They also questioned the authenticity of the responses of their White peers to racially and culturally charged questions posed through online forums.
“I hate whenever I hear people say with courses that have to do with culture that they are too easy or ‘Oh, it's all common sense.’ If it was common sense, then why does it need to be taught? Obviously, something is not that common, obviously…I feel like for some professors it’s easier to hide behind a discussion board. I feel like for me, it's like, how do I know if especially in these classes centered around culture, how do I know that what these girls are saying, isn't performative? Or just something to get a participation grade? Because it all sounds really good coming in...It feels robotic. It’s a discussion board and let's be honest, at the end of the day, no one's discussing on the discussion board.” (Candace)

Davis concurred,

“Doesn't it all sound the same? Like in that class you're talking about...I don't really have a lot of my education classes now, but that one, the responses we give, I don’t know if it's the way the questions are worded or the way the grading is. I don't know what it is, but the responses we all give are so similar. They all sound the same for all kinds of things that are more complex. They all sound the same because there's not really any other way to answer...” (Davis)

Isabelle’s and Maria’s reflections on their course experiences in their respective programs focused less on the course delivery format or their peers, but more on who delivered the course content related to racially and culturally diverse topics. Isabelle lead with,

“Yeah, I feel like right now there's, I mean, in the Birth to Kindergarten, I don't know about you girls, but diversity and inclusion, right? I feel like it's too forceful. It feels cuz they're White, and they're teaching it like, on how to include, it’s just off. I like it better when I read articles from Latinas from or from like African Americans, you know, like that feels more comfortable to me. For sure.” (Isabelle)

Maria’s co-signed her experience and discussed the implications of White faculty teaching about diversity.

“Yeah, one of my professors, I feel like in those classes, they're still coming from a whitewashed point of view. We talked about, understanding cultures. We dabbled a little bit in every single culture that you could approach, but what I noticed, at least because I can speak from Latino standpoint is whenever we got to that, what they really only talked about was language in the classroom, but I'm like, ‘Let's not water down your Latino students to that’...Who the professors are is a factor though.” (Maria)

As the group reflected, they searched for ways to understand their experiences and feelings that diversity, equity and inclusion was performative within their course experiences.
Isabelle acknowledged that she felt that faculty were “trying” and shared, “I think they just don’t know how to approach it because, you know, we have first-hand experience. But people that are doing the research that are teaching these things, they’re all mostly Anglo. They just don’t have the same perspectives.”

**DEI as a Continuum.** As part of the focus group’s discussion of social justice and performative DEI, participants’ narratives began to center on DEI as a continuum from campus to classroom. The yearning for advocacy that I detected from their second interviews, reemerged in the focus group, but it was turned toward themselves as current teacher candidates and for future Teacher Candidates of Color who will attend the University of Arkansas. The participants’ narratives revealed tacit understanding of the role that race plays in their teacher preparation which resulted in explicit ideas to propel DEI pathways forward for change. Candace spoke directly to the language of the published statements and suggested that professional development about microaggressions may be best way for the university and programs to start.

“In the statement, they say something about moving beyond ‘norms, stereotypes, and expectations.’ I almost feel like norms and stereotypes is where you need to begin with professional development because that’s where like death by 1000 cuts can occur. [Microaggressions] are more of a detriment to me than almost you being blatantly racist…To me it’s almost more important to address microaggressions…” (Candace)

In their individual interviews, TCOCs previously problematized the lack of racial and cultural parity in different ways, but the lack of racial and cultural congruence with mentor teachers and students in clinical experiences was more pronounced during the focus group. TCOCs were concerned about how (or if) the university’s and colleges’ diversity, equity and inclusion statements extended from the university campus environment into the clinical experience environment. In direct response to her mentor experiences during internship, Maria stated,
“They are teaching future teachers and I think about the White student interns that were with my mentor before me and I have to wonder, ‘Are they going to pick up on how she taught things? And what she said? Are they going to follow in those footsteps?’ And I’m thinking like, mentor teachers should be looked at a little bit harder than they actually are.”

Given the published statements, Maria also questioned programs’ practices of placing a TCOCs in predominantly White clinical sites like Brasswood Junior High when there are more diverse schools near the university. She specifically compared the demographics of Brasswood Junior High with another junior high within the same school district. She wondered,

“I don’t know why they don’t put more of us [TCOCs] over there. I think it would be very beneficial and maybe an even better experience. There are students there who look like me. There are teachers there who look like me. I probably would have had a better experience over there over than Brasswood.” (Maria)

Davis who had not experienced any field placements yet, revisited the idea of professional development and offered an idea targeting mentor teachers,

“I wish there was something for mentor teachers, at least a class or something for them to know how to act or what’s appropriate [when working with diverse teacher candidates]. I hope. I wish there was place where people who want to learn about this kind of thing, but never experienced it firsthand could learn...I hope the problem is just that people don’t want to have it just explained. They want it explained in the clearest way possible without all the big fancy words. There are informal, more approachable ways to do that like watching shows, movies, and books, like graphic novels...No flowery language. Make it plain.”

**Nested Needs.** Participants neared the end of the focus group by framing problem-solution narratives around their experiences within their shared predominately White university context, one resonating idea threaded their words and interactive discussion with each other during the two-hour focus group. The TCOCs in my study wanted to and needed to share marginalized experiences with marginalized others. None of my study’s participants ever described the University of Arkansas as a hostile environment, but what congealed in the focus group was that they all expressed some level of feeling excluded from the university as an
institution, excluded from their peers within the university and excluded from teacher educators that represent the university. When describing the climate of the university campus, Isabelle who previously shared her experiences with assimilating the appearance and language of the White majority, shared her dismay when she observed assimilation among friends in her international culture club she participates in.

“I'm friends with a lot of the international students here, with like a lot of Panamanians and Africans. But I always notice the same thing. Whenever they come here, first of all, they're totally still 100% their culture, but come a year and they're dressing more like (pause) they assimilate...It hurts me, because I'm like, ‘You should still try to maintain your identity, like be authentic to your identity.’ I feel like me as a person, I'm pretty proud of who I am. Going back to the others’ statements of how much we filter ourselves. Yeah, I feel like I have like some sort of filter for like each situation, but I’m always kind of myself because I am proud of who I am. I’m proud to be Chicana...I hate that they feel like that have to do that…” (Isabelle)

Davis discussed his transition to the university community and described an opportunity that he detected as an opportunity for the enhancement of his university and teacher preparation experience.

“I didn't really think about the whole race thing when I was applying to Fayetteville. My uncle made a joke about how there weren't a lot of Black people there and it completely sailed over my head until I got here rather until a year after I got here. Over the three years, I've noticed because there aren't a lot of us here and there probably won't be for a pretty good while, that pretty much there isn’t any Black organization type thing that is thriving. It seems like it's perpetually on its last leg. There is nothing specifically for teaching. So it's always felt like, ‘Hey, here's this thing you can do and here's this thing you can do, but that's just with extracurriculars’... (Davis)

Candace who previously shared her fear of racial tropes and stereotypes of Black women, later added that she recently had to seek an off-campus professional development to learn ways to respond.

“Well, I just attended a professional Black Women event. One of the women discussed taking a beat, holding the breath and she was saying it might suck, because you don't necessarily see women or men of other races having to take a beat, or hold their breath, but they're projecting the exact same way that you are, but because of the color of your
skin, and because of you being a woman, anything that you say, can be taken in the complete wrong way, which I completely agree with so I think that's something that I really want to try to practice.” (Candace)

Maria and Candace explicitly expressed wanting a space to build awareness of their cultural heritages and to develop meaningful student-faculty relationships within the university context.

“I think Black people have to build a safe space for themselves. Not to be exclusionary, but a space that highlights our culture.” (Candace)

“That transition from going to a predominantly Latino high school, to going into the U of A was just so shocking to me, because even today, I usually don’t walk around campus, but today I did, and I didn’t see anybody who looked like me. That just made me a little bit uncomfortable. I need a space to go.” (Maria)

and talked about her experiences with overt and covert racism in student teaching a second time:

“For me, personally, there are no professors of color in the MAT program. I would teachers of color. I don’t know how many of us [students of color] there are here, but in the MAT there are only two students of color in the entire program, the secondary MAT program. I wish there was a way to advocate for students of color to join and a way to help them stay in the program. I feel like they’re alone in the program. Because right now I feel like I’m by myself...I don’t have anyone to go to. All of my professors are White males, except for one White female and I can’t, I don’t feel like connection. I feel more connection with you than I ever did with them [her program faculty]. I wish there was more [People of Color].”(Maria)

She later cautioned and Candace affirmed, “But then I think the issue that people then take is, especially nowadays, with People of Color in general, is uplifting themselves within their own communities, is automatically seen as putting White people down.” (Maria)

Perhaps the theme of “Seeking Common Ground” emerged less from what participants did say about the university context and more from what the participants could not say about the university context. The theme lies between the lines more than within them. The focus group setting allowed participants to relate their experiences and reactions to their experiences among peers (and myself) with whom they presumed were likely to share some common ground. The
camaraderie of talking with others with racialized identities and experiences helped participants more fully develop and extend ideas previously shared with me individually. Findings from the focus group suggest that TCOCs in this PWI are aware of the ways in which they feel isolated or marginalized due to their racialized identities. They are equally aware of what they need and want (1) to develop a sense of belonging and community, (2) to maintain their cultural integrity, and (3) to validate of their experiences within predominantly White teacher preparation programs, but the institutional space to build this common ground does not exist within this PWI.

Summary

In this country POC, have been defined by their “race,” which affects how they relate to social structures and institutional systems such as education. The participants in my study, while all POC, came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, different geographical locations, schooling backgrounds, unique lived experiences, and different connections with their racialized identities. Their counternarratives showed how TCOCs enter predominantly White spaces with these unique histories that must be considered when recruiting them and certainly when supporting them after they are admitted to programs. To effectually enlarge the pool of diverse candidates, it is teacher educators’ professional responsibility to examine the role of race and racialized identities in teacher preparation by understanding candidate’s backgrounds and candidacy experience within program pathways along racial lines. Findings from my study uncloak how race is evident in K-12 climates and in higher education through coursework and clinical experiences.

Chapter IV presented the findings of the case study and presented themes supported by the data that emerged from an inductive and deductive coding process. The participants’ narratives uncovered a range of individual and communal experiences of Teacher Candidates of
Color who are prepared to become educators within one Predominantly White Institution. While participants’ counternarratives reveal that they are aware of their motivations, passions and an array of knowledge, skills, and strengths they have, in PWIs they have unmet needs as pedagogical tools. Chapter V will revisit the themes of Chapter IV and the study’s theoretical framework and literature review to provide additional insight into how the study’s participants can both be understood from a CRT perspective and how their lived experiences can frame future practices for the preparation and the recruitment and retention of Teacher Candidates of Color at PWIs. Implications and recommendations will be discussed.
Chapter V: Discussion

The literature is replete with discussions of how shifting public school demographics have ratcheted up outreach to attract a higher percentage of Teachers and Teacher Candidates of Color. Public schools and teacher preparation programs are on a talent quest to address this specific staffing deficit to funnel diverse candidates into K-12 classrooms, but building a healthy teacher pipeline from pre-service to in-service is complex, dynamic, and not fully understood.

This case study explored the experiences of TCOCs to understand their backgrounds, educational histories, and the salience of having racialized identities before and during teacher candidacy. Findings illustrate multidimensional factors to consider for the preparation of TCOCs. The influences of race are made visible through the lens of CRT to offer insights that can bolster recruitment, support, and retention of a highly sought-after teacher candidacy pool. Framing recruitment, support and retention around experiential data gathered through counter-story praxis is utilized to reduce normative thinking and decision-making that often results in a mismatch between Predominantly White Institutions and candidates whose racialized identities and racialized experiences (though often unaddressed) precipitate race-conscious engagement in their programs of study.

Discussion of Findings

Chapter V provides interpretation of major findings from chapter IV. The discussion is organized around the study’s four overarching themes, (1) Intersections of History and Biography, (2) Reckoning with Racism and Race-Neutrality, (2) Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces, and (3) Seeking Common Ground. Conclusions and implications for teacher educators, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future practice and future research directions are offered.
Intersections of History and Biography

In response to research question #1, my study’s participants provided detailed narratives of their racial (and cultural) backgrounds, upbringings, and educational journeys. When trying to understand participants’ personal histories, it could not be understood as a single story based on the collective identity of “Teacher Candidates of Color.” The TCOCs in my study came from different geographical, familial, community, and public versus private and academic settings. Participants expressed their heterogeneity by discussing their immigration statuses, their nationalities, their hometown communities, and their linguistic and racial diversity. Because TCOCs are not a monolithic group, understanding differences among them is a critical first step for any recruitment, support, and retention initiative. To reduce tendencies of conflating or essentializing the uniqueness of Black and Latinx communities, initial findings were organized into individual participant profiles that reflected distinct experiences of racial groups within the broad category of “Teacher Candidates of Color.”

There was no unifying reality within the participant profiles of individuals within the same or different Community of Color, but from their varied narratives of “self,” emerged four common threads (themes) that highlight how similarly their biographies have been forged by the history of race in our country. Findings aligned with all three assertions of CRT that guided this study, but the endemic nature of racism was most highly detectable in responses to research question #1. CRT argues that racism has always been entrenched in American structures (including schooling) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Findings show that beginning as early as elementary school, race and racialization processes were primary determinants for how TCOCs in my study experienced schooling differently than the White majority.
Findings suggest that TCOCs carry *insider-outsider* epistemologies. Most of the TCOCs in my study used racial/cultural factors (e.g., race, language, religion, etc.) to determine the location of their social identities. The first important thing to understand about this finding is why it exists. This belief/feeling/sense of insider-outsider stems directly from the history of how people are racialized in the United States. The designation of White, functions as the norm and those from the White majority maintain the authority to name and categorize (racialize) “others.”

In the United States, White identity is rendered invisible (Taylor, 2016), but as evidenced in the findings, POC are subjected to differential feelings of acceptance and belonging related to their race and measuring themselves against a White norm in predominately White spaces. What is important for teacher educators to consider about TCOCs’ insider-outsider epistemologies is (1) to know that they exist and (2) to decide how their words and actions can shift the posture of diverse candidates. Findings were unclear about the insider-outsider boundaries, but participants’ statements imply that boundaries may be more blurred than fixed, meaning that there is room to establish positive interracial and cross-cultural connections and to build community with TCOCs, but efforts must be informed and intentional.

Participants’ descriptions of their feelings of and experiences with acceptance and belonging, coupled with multiple reports of *racial and cultural assimilation* to fit into the predominantly White culture of schools is another nod to the lingering history of access and limitations imposed by “race.” TCOCs’ discussion of assimilation to establish “membership” in the dominant group is of particular significance to the study. Findings showed how overt and covert pressures to racially (and culturally) assimilate compromised a sense of self and required selective abandonment of heritage in school settings. TCOCs’ biographies also showed evidence that academic capacity was another measure against a White norm. There are many reasons to
assimilate, but participants described assimilation as a way to lower barriers and thus enhance academic benefits. Though these life lessons were initiated at home, they were reinforced in schools that also function as agents of socialization and influence concepts of self.

One nested finding within reports of assimilation was language assimilation explicitly found in the biographies of the two Latinx TCOCs. Rather their academic experiences occurred in integrated or de facto segregated schools, their education journeys were marked with restrictive feelings related to English-only impositions made by their families and schools. This is not a surprising finding, but it is important to note, for it speaks to a reverberating impact of the persistent underrepresentation of bilingual Latinx teachers in K-12 education. The cultural gap of language begets Latinx students whose heritage language is perceived to have less currency than English in schools.

Findings align with Nasir’s (2012) previous research that asserts that the achievement of SOCs with racialized identities is often tied to their agency to align themselves with the social processes of schooling. As a collective group, TCOCs’ personal biographies showed how the majority culture can regulate both feelings and actions. This invariably renders a perception among TCOCs in PWIs that success requires skill in negotiating (or contracting) parts of their racialized identities to secure their academic prospects which results in minimizing some sense of self. It is important to consider the consequences for SOCs who are unable to detect normative processes or who are unwilling to reorient themselves to fit into normative expectations.

Because racism manifests in a variety of ways, individual and collective evidence was considered when presenting encounters with racism and racial tensions. In an effort to not minimize schools’ legacy of racism, I allowed the participants’ voices to name their personal contours with racism as part of their personal biographies. Participants’ encounters were more
interpersonal and ranged from subtle microaggressions to egregious acts imposed by students, teachers, and administrators. But no matter what “type” of racism or racial tension the TCOCs in my study reported, racism operated as a tool of subordination. For some, racism had a cumulative impact with lasting and damaging effects on them (Kohli et al., 2017).

I fully expected to hear reports of racism and racial tension, but TCOCs’ biographies unexpectedly revealed the constraints and affordances of light skin versus dark skin, an ideal entrenched in the history of an American society built on this fundamental principle of racism. While race may be a constructed classification system, it continues to be irrefutably visualized as a person’s skin color (irrespective of one’s racial or cultural background). My study’s participants reported perceived biases and privileges extended to people based on this specific race-based signifier of their identities (i.e., light versus dark dichotomy). Candidates’ unsolicited discussion of their varying skin hues is not simply a conversation about the aesthetics of “race”; it is construct of colorism.

The topic of colorism is a global, cross-cultural dialogue that has been previously problematized in education, but it is outside of the purview of this study. Though it was an unexpected finding, it is important to acknowledge it in the preparation of TCOCs. The notion of light versus dark skin is not just a Black vs. White community ideal. It is a societal ill that is felt among those from various descents. My study’s findings show that explicit and implicit teachings about colorism exist in Black families, Latinx families as well as interracial ones. Because colorism seeps into racialized identity development and negotiation, it is important to recognize it when it is detected by POC. Colorism can be a factor in how TCOCs negotiate the world around them by influencing TCOCs’ perceptions of the degree to which they are included in or excluded from social situations and the varied academic contexts required for teacher
preparation (i.e., university and clinical experience environments). Though described differently among participants, skin color was detected as a criterion for perceived acceptance or rejection among the TCOCs in my study. Participants’ use of language to suggest how their shades of brown skin gave them more or less agency in predominantly White academic settings, speaks to a need for a heightened awareness and discourse surrounding the impacts of colorism.

The varied contexts of America’s K-12 schools that the participants in my study represented (i.e., public, private, majority-minority, predominantly White) provide opportunity to uncover idiosyncratic ways that race and racialized identity collide and converge before TCOCs arrive at PWIs. It is important for teacher educators to understand the extent to which TCOCs define and guide themselves with regard to race. Personal biographies may require more thoughtfulness and deliberation when Teacher Candidates of Color are accepted into preparation programs so that teacher educators can consider how the orientation of their programs of study explicitly and/or implicitly reinforce or diminish candidates’ racialized pasts.

**Reckoning with Racism and Race-Neutrality**

To answer research question #2, I queried participants about their decision to become educators to know if an awareness of their racialized identities contributed to their interests in the profession. The unequivocal answer to my research question is, “Yes,” racial (and cultural) identity was a significant factor in the decision to teach. Findings align with the third CRT assertion that guided this study, *Centrality of Experiential Knowledge* (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Each participant had his/her unique journey to teaching. When I considered the stories that contributed to their decisions, four subthemes emerged, but this section of the discussion will focus on the unifying theme that binds them.
Whether the participants were from first-generation immigrant families or from families that have been in the U.S. for generations, TCOCs’ decisions to teach were steeped in their perception of the added value that their racial and cultural wealth can bring to K-12 students, a reason that aligns with the literature (Gay, 1997; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). What’s significant about these findings is that it debunks what some researchers have deemed as a “role model hypothesis” that refers to a dominant belief that there should be a push to acquire more racialized teachers because they will be role models for racialized students (Hopson, 2014). My findings suggest that this is not a hypothesis, but a fact. Most of the TCOCs in my study were driven to teach because they found merit in serving as role models. Participants viewed themselves as agents to serve Students of Color by advocating for students and their families with similar backgrounds and challenges. Their experiential knowledge as SOCs welcomed the role of being informed ambassadors who, as classroom teachers, can better frame schooling contexts to support diverse students.

A more nuanced insight from these findings, however, was when the TCOCs in my study selected the teaching profession. Most of the candidates made “late” decisions to teach. While I didn’t anticipate that most of the participants would be those who were culled into teaching as a second career pathway, I believe that this distinction only enriched my findings. Their vivid narratives about their conscious choices to leave a different vocation and opt to become educators, drew from their personal biographies, but their articulation of wanting to minimize racism and race-neutrality as experienced in K-12 and within the university setting was pronounced. Participants’ depictions of exclusivity in school curricula and underrepresentation of TOCs aligned with another core assertion of CRT, Whiteness as property in which exclusivity is a fundamental precept (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). TCOCs in my study
entered teaching following elementary schooling to higher education where prevailing Whiteness manifested in vivid descriptions of formative experiences that rendered non-satisfactory feelings of minimization, lack of connection and invisibility.

From their narratives of grappling with challenges of multiracial and multicultural existences, inaccurate depictions of their “race” in classrooms, the absence of who they are as POC in classroom curricula, lack of opportunities to think critically about their racialized identities, impacts of growing up in predominantly White communities versus race/culture-centered learning environments, and lack of access to Teachers of Color, it became clear that the TCOCs in my study were influenced to position themselves as teachers to disrupt personal histories of racism and the race-neutrality. Findings suggest that TCOCs in my study, and others with similar backgrounds, may chose teaching as an intentional act of reckoning with their race-tinged K-12 schooling pasts and present. Evidence from this study reveal that there simply is no neutral with race. In fact, race-neutrality is a fallacy that neglects history and is dismissive of TCOCs’ realities. Findings suggest that POC do not experience schooling in the same ways as the White majority. Understanding TCOCs’ motivations to teach has significance for recruitment, support, and retention. Leveraging candidates’ personal reasons to become teachers may have more staying power than ignoring them.

**Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces**

Armed with racialized (and cultural) experiences and fueled by the promise of forging connections with students from the same racial/cultural heritage, TCOCs in this study brought antecedents that resulted in a group of teacher candidates whose racialized identities impacted their engagement with their PWI contexts. Guided by the research that supports that a racial minority experience is distinctly different from that of majority students at PWIs (Bennet, Cole,
& Thompson, 2000; Libassi, 2018). I sought to uncover alignment (or misalignment) between TCOCs’ racialized identities and the locales of their teacher preparation. Through my inquiry, I sought to understand what is predominant within one Predominately White Institution beyond the numbers of White students as compared to numbers of students from minoritized groups. I was interested in understanding the extent and characteristics of any affordances or constraints in the university environment that enhanced (through affordances) or inhibited (by constraints) my study’s participants’ ability to navigate the university (i.e., courses and clinical experiences).

An unanticipated finding for research question #3, was how TCOCs in my study experienced their shared PWI in more variable than similar ways. Their overall engagement within the same PWI was filtered through their sense of belonging as it related to the intersectionality of their racialized identities and specific institutional statuses (e.g., Black or Latinx transfer student, commuter student, Honor student, etc.). This additional layer of race-conscious “otherness” created an unexpected way that TCOCs described their integration (or lack of integration) into the climate of the institution.

Research has indicated that having a minority status bestows additional burdens on racially minoritized students that can be associated with increased risks for negative outcomes beyond that which is attributable to just being a university student. Possible hazards of minority status have been cited as tokenism, isolationism, and emotional toil (Bennet, Cole, & Thompson, 2000; Guyton, Saxton & Wsche, 1996). This was reflected in TCOCs’ discussion of “The Only Status.” Participants discussed the singularity of their existences exclusively as a hazard in developing interpersonal relationships with predominately White peers and teacher candidates. Descriptions of their social interactions were shaped by race. When TCOCs in my study scrutinized their interracial friendships, findings suggested that they have had more experiences
with feeling unwelcome and unwanted than invited by their peers. It is important for teacher educators to recognize that learning environments where TCOCs are “the only” constrains POC, but generally affords White students a benefit of a more pronounced sense of belonging. When TCOCs feel unwelcome, it may activate stereotype threat, a predicament that occurs when there is an opportunity/risk for one individual to conform to a negative stereotype of an entire social group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The pressure of stereotype threat can be emotionally triggering and have detrimental consequences for student engagement (e.g., lack of confidence, low social support, self-doubt) as expressed by the participants in this study.

Other discourse about their affordances and constraints, centered on their perceptions of university faculty. Narratives parsed into descriptions of candidates’ interactions with faculty at three distinct points along the teacher education pipeline (i.e., pre-program, teacher preparation courses, and clinical experiences). One collective finding was the positive impact of racial and cultural parity. Where this occurred for participants varied by their programs of study, but TCOCs’ descriptions aligned with the research that cites positive outcomes on diverse students when they are exposed to faculty from Communities of Color in Predominately White Institutions (Irvine, 1992).

One specific affordance that participants elaborated on was culturally responsive course content when they had same-race or shared culture with university faculty. They specifically noted that the incorporation of more cultural representation of diverse students’ backgrounds and knowledge enhanced their learning’ experiences. TCOCs described racial or cultural parity as a type of parcel that lead to greater academic commitment. Participants also positively referenced racially and culturally adept White faculty for the same positive influence. Findings suggest that TCOCs’ detection of faculty’s race-consciousness is an important factor for fostering student
motivation and sense of belonging. Racial and cultural parity is needed to maximize TCOCs’ learning in PWIs, but also to retain them in spaces where they may already feel marginalized by their peers.

For the purpose of this study, sites for clinical practice were considered extensions of the university context. Findings suggested that the unacknowledged credential of Whiteness can afford or constrain TCOCs’ engagement in clinical experiences. TCOCs perceived that they were less incorporated into K-12 classrooms when they lacked racial and cultural parity with mentors and students. Whiteness must be named for the power it exerts on the sense of (or lack of) integration in clinical experiences. Though Maria is only one voice, her account must be elevated to illuminate how racialized identity may be met with positive and negative reception during field placements. Maria’s counternarrative of the “tale of two schools” invites critical discourse about the orientation of field experiences in PWIs. The pinnacle experience of teacher preparation is student teaching/internship, yet findings reveal the juxtaposition of a TCOC opposite two mentors with two different sets of beliefs and actions toward students with racialized identities. First, Maria’s encounter with racism brings into question the orientation of clinical experiences (i.e., logistics, locations, and supervision responsibilities of faculty). What are teacher preparation programs’ responsibilities to prepare diverse candidates to enter a second predominantly White space? To prepare mentor teachers to co-educate diverse candidates? What are programs’ responsibilities to ensure the emotional safety and well-being of TCOCs in clinical experiences? Second, Maria’s account reminds teacher preparation programs that the development of candidates with socially just beliefs and efficacy to act in socially just ways is less unattainable when they experience racial (and cultural) discontinuity between what they learn in preparation courses and what they actually experience in clinical practice.
Seeking Common Ground

Findings from this study show that TCOCs are settled in a Predominately White Institution where they find themselves negotiating tides of inclusion and exclusion, episodic acceptance and bias based on their racialized identities, yet they demonstrate persistence and willingness to enter uncomfortable and potentially antagonistic academic contexts to become teachers. The dissonance between TCOCs’ experiences and what they want to give (and get) is not particularly perplexing; the question is how can the dissonance be abated? Information generated from counternarratives about TCOCs’ perceptions of courses, field placements, faculty encounters, and overall program experiences often goes uninspected, but some answers may lie in asking TCOCs for viable remedies. Teacher Candidates of Color bring racialized (and cultural) knowledge to predominately White spaces that when accessed can enhance the preparation experiences for themselves. It is important to acknowledge the well-documented practice of expecting People of Color to bear responsibility for matters related to race, but as part of our prolonged engagement, the participants in my study shared that they wanted to be engaged in such work. TCOCs in my study viewed themselves as untapped wells and wanted to be drawn upon for their unique perspectives and expertise as POC.

The final overarching theme, Seeking Common Ground, was drawn from the focus group by asking participants to collectively reflect over the intersection of their preparation experiences and the university’s public stance on diversity, equity and inclusion to offer ways that teacher educators can better mediate their teacher preparation experiences as TCOCs at the University of Arkansas. A significant finding from the focus group was their reiterated references to chameleon experiences and an emergent idea of fear of marginalization. These emphasized findings speak to participants’ intentional suppression of their full and authentic selves in
predominantly White academic settings. This realization is unsettling for multiple reasons. The first is that universities and preparation programs do not want to promote this type of institutional acquiescence for their TCOCs. The second is because of the causal relationship that has been established in the literature between the increase of children of color and the need for more Teachers of Color (Banks, 1995; Dee, 2005; Granthan, et.al., 2011; McKown & Weinstein, 2002). If TCOCs are positioned to potentially function in critical roles that benefit children of color (i.e., cultural guardians, mentors, activists, home-school mediators, etc.) how can they fulfill this obligation when they cannot express themselves in un-tempered ways? Representation can foster a sense of inclusiveness among marginalized groups in K-12 classrooms, but the fullest impact of representation can only achieved when People of Color are developed as pedagogical tools. The literature is clear, and participants’ counternarratives confirm, that TCOCs possess valuable racial (and cultural) resources, but these strengths must be acknowledged and enhanced during the teacher preparation process for TCOCs to transfer their experiential knowledge into classrooms after their teacher preparation process.

Findings from the focus group, indicate that TCOCs detected multiple disassociations between institutional words and institutional actions. As a collective, they called out well-intentioned multicultural education courses as being performative due to their focus on preparing their White peers to teach diverse students but omitting the specific needs (and assets) of Teacher Candidates of Color to teach diverse students. It is important for teacher educators to recognize that one way to sanction Whiteness in teacher education curricula is to acknowledge and promote the skills and capabilities of diverse candidates to serve diverse candidates. Ignoring the racial (and cultural) assets of POC may constrain opportunities for underrepresented groups to engage in the very thing they have been recruited to do. Without implementing these types of
meaningful actions, race-based discourse may be interpreted as insincere by TCOCs. Participants also called attention to White university faculty’s well-intentioned actions to establish allyship with those who have been historically marginalized. Overall, they reported feeling that institutional language promoted the organizational brand more than it translated into socially aware course content and culturally conscious professors and teacher educators. Performative allyship can be exceptionally damaging and offensive to historically marginalized groups when engaged by parties unaffected by racialized issues.

Findings were not all critiques of their experiences and university faculty, however. Participants proposed ideas to address, and redress needs explicitly expressed by the group to better serve candidates with racialized identities from campus to clinical experiences. Establishing a *Continuum of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* is two-fold, (1) It suggests that TCOCs in my study viewed their teacher educators to be inclusive of higher education faculty, as well as school-based practitioners who mentor and supervise their clinical experiences and (2) They implored for race-conscious professional development of both sets of teacher educators, as well as targeted race-conscious support for themselves.

Research has shown that developing race-consciousness is process that requires critical reflection about race and intentional consideration for students’ racial and cultural needs (Martell, 2015). Developing race-consciousness may take years to influence discourse, curriculum choices, and actions, however (Martell & Stevens, 2017). Informed by their positive and negative experiences in their preparation programs, the focus group participants expressed interest in the commencement of teacher educators building a shared understanding of concepts related to race, racism, and culture which can ultimately lead to anti-racism. The significance of this finding from the focus group is the consideration (inclusion) of clinical experiences.
Learning to teach in Predominantly White Institutions often includes learning to teach from predominantly White university faculty and from predominantly White mentor teachers, meaning that TCOCs are impacted by the insularity of the university campus and public school partners. The mission of developing teacher educators’ race-consciousness must be unifying and mutually inclusive of the needs of TCOCs in both settings. Without a continuum of professional development opportunities related to race, racism, and culture, teacher educators may be stifled in their race-conscious practices and lack the efficacy to adequately support TCOCs from campus to classroom.

While the ideas that teacher educators may first interact with through a continuum of professional development may take years to come to fruition in institutions and clinical sites, the needs of TCOCs are imminent. The participants in this study cited their most powerful experiences as those that validated their racialized (and cultural) identities. From the focus group, findings suggested that they have an individual and collective sense that they can, as part of a community, influence their environments and support each other. Most of the TCOCs in my study already participate in university organizations (e.g., Greek life, student organizations, etc.), but were still seeking an additional nested community to specifically support their teacher candidacy experience.

PWIs can intentionally or unintentionally obscure the ways that race and racialized identity impact learning experiences. Keels (2019) defines counterspaces as micro-communities that facilitate POCs’ inclusion and integration into the broader campus community. As an effort to be more identity affirming, many PWIs institute various orientations of identity-conscious counterspaces where marginalized students can learn adapting strategies from others who are navigating similar struggles. In predominantly White contexts where racial parity is lacking,
establishing this type of community, specifically related to racialized identity and teacher education, may be essential to create a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and caring for TCOCs.

Conclusions

This study makes several contributions to our understanding of racialized identity in teacher preparation. First, it highlights the impact of personal biography. The narratives of the Teacher Candidates of Color in this study reveal early development of racialized identities that have been informed by their families, communities, and education settings. Personal biographies help develop TCOCs into preservice teachers who view their identity as an important component, yet under addressed, part of their teacher preparation. TCOCs’ racialized experiences exert influence on what they want and need and therefore, is an important factor to consider when TCOCs are accepted into teacher preparation programs, specifically those in PWIs that often have race-neutral orientations.

Second, this study builds on previous studies about SOCs’ attraction to teaching (Miller & Endo, 2005; Su, 1997; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). While I did not seek to connect TCOCs’ reasons for choosing the teacher profession with what previous scholars have substantiated as reasons to justify an increased presence of TOCs (e.g., cultural ambassadors, role models, etc.), findings aligned with the literature. Evidence from the study suggests TCOCs’ views about their roles in teaching are related to their racialized identities. TCOCs in my study perceive that they embody similar attitudes, needs, and values of K-12 Students of Color. This perception is an inducement for becoming teachers. Findings suggest that they want to serve as community resources, advocates, role models, and educators, to create empowering spaces to strengthen educational opportunities for all students and families, but specifically for K-12 Students of Color. Findings also suggest that the lure into the teacher pipeline may not be time restricted.
University SOCs’ career intents may be swayed by one formative encounter that affirms their racialized identities, even after they have matriculated to higher education. Evidence from the study suggests that when SOCs find mirrors they are willing to navigate the doors into the teaching profession with interest in providing the same for other Students of Color.

Third, findings suggest that TCOCs detect the ways in which curricula, environments, and the people they interact with within environments are and are not racially (or culturally) affirming. Though they access their cultural wealth (i.e., aspirational, linguistic, familial, navigational, social, spiritual, and resistant capital) (Yosso, 2005) to sustain themselves and to create a sense of belonging, evidence also suggests that these actions do not result in acceptance of the status quo. Constraints invite a negotiation of their racialized selves that often leads to minimization of who they are and results in attempts to be racially (and culturally) ambiguous during their teacher preparation process. In the interest of ensuring teacher preparation experiences with more affordances than constraints in PWIs, teacher educators can better understand the connections between TCOCs' personal and education experiences and their race-conscious engagement.

Finally, in an ever-changing landscape, all teacher preparation providers must become exceptionally nimble to increase the number of Teachers (Teacher Candidates) of Color. Effective recruitment, support, and retention initiatives will require more than making marginal adjustments. Sustained efforts to close the demographic gap means removing the comfort of race-neutral cloaks to understand TCOCs in PWIs. This study overall illuminates the need for more curiosity about TCOCs and preservice supports for teacher candidates with racialized identities.
Implications

Given the national (growing) demographic gap in public education, educators and teacher educators are at a precipice to shift from rhetoric to intentional actions that evolve into sustainable shifts in teacher education. An important factor then for accessing this pool of future teachers resides in knowing more about the colleges of education that serve them and knowing more about candidates who choose them. Given that the findings show a tidy alignment between the reasons TCOCs want to teach and reasons for recruitment, the benefits of gaining an in-depth understanding of the experiences of TCOCs and how institutions contribute to successful teacher candidacy is clearly necessary. Close examination of candidacy experiences for TCOCs may help to fine tune recruitment, support, and retention efforts.

The findings of this case study advance the understanding of teacher candidates with racialized identities across multiple preparation programs within the University of Arkansas. Findings related to TCOCs’ lived experiences, motivations to choose the teaching profession, and supports accessed and needed to successively navigate teacher candidacy have the most implications for the refinement of teacher education practices within one PWI. However, findings will also be applicable to other traditional teacher preparation programs. This case study will be of interest to teacher educators seeking to answer these questions about their diverse teacher candidates, “Who are they? Who are they preparing to be? and Why their racialized identities matter?”

Limitations of the Study

As with all studies, this case study is subject to limitations, some of which are related to common critiques of qualitative research in general and some of which are inherent in this
study’s research design. Though careful consideration was given to ways to minimize their impact, the findings must be seen in light of the following limitations.

**Researcher Subjectivity**

Generally, qualitative studies are limited by researcher subjectivity. Data collection and analysis rests with the researcher in qualitative inquiry. An overriding concern then is researcher bias that frames interests, assumptions, perceptions, and ultimately all researcher choices. The first issue of subjectivity and potential bias is my own lived experience as a Person of Color, being a teacher/Teacher Candidate of Color prepared at a PWI and my current teacher educator faculty status in one of the educator preparation programs within the study’s university context. Recognizing these limitations, I included a positionality statement in Chapter III – Methodology. In this statement, I acknowledged my racialized identity and the intersection of other social identities. I also acknowledged that my background provided the study with a lens through which I see the world that may be more similar than divergent from the study’s participants. By providing a positionality statement, I recognize that the same data could have produced different findings or meanings from a researcher of a different identity. To mitigate researcher subjectivity however, I engaged in multiple trustworthiness strategies, specifically member checking with the study’s participants after each individual interview and using patterns of structured reflexivity explained in chapter III to systematically refine the iterative qualitative data collection and analysis research process.

**Self-reported Data**

Interviews and the focus group were essential to the research design of the study, but both rely on self-reported data. Though easy to obtain, these types of data pose a limitation when they are used exclusively as they were in this case study design. Participants were asked to remember
and report experiences or events that occurred in recent and distant past. Memory recall can be selective, misattributed, and/or exaggerated without any way to be verified against other data sources.

Critical Race methodology specifically promotes the use of collective forms of data collection to empower POC to share their experiential knowledge with others from similar social locations. In the interest of fulfilling this tenet and seeking additional self-reported data, I employed one focus group. Subject conformity can be problematic within focus groups, however. Social desirability (or participants’ motivation to give socially agreeable answers to align with the group) may be higher than with one-on-one interviews. To diminish the impact of subject conformity, I scrutinized focus group data for coalescence among participants’ narratives but also for discrepant self-reported data offered during semi-structured interviews.

**Sampling Strategy**

At the time of the study, the total population of Teacher Candidates of Color enrolled at the University of Arkansas was only 13% of the total candidacy pool. Imposing a purposeful sampling strategy reduced an already small sample population. Thus, the study’s participants did not include the full range of possible racial backgrounds within the university’s pool. The six selected participants evenly represented two Communities of Color as defined by the University of Arkansas (i.e., African American or Black and Mexican American or Chicano). Applying this methodological constraint on the sample population may have affected the final outcomes and results obtained because some representative voices and experiences went unheard. The possibility exists that racialized identity may be more salient for the represented Communities of Color or that the educational histories and lived experiences from teacher candidates from different Communities of Color would have provided additional information to inform the
study’s findings. Findings garnered from the participants in this case study represent a melding TCOCs from different geographical K-12 contexts. Similar studies conducted with TCOCs within other PWIs may result in different stories.

**Timeline Constraints**

Studying a research problem is always constrained by time. A longitudinal study has potential to advance knowledge by following participants beyond the bounds established by this case study. A timeline constraint was that participants were interviewed at single points of reference along the teacher preparation pipeline (i.e., newly accepted, junior, senior, graduate candidacy). Capturing progressive, long-term programmatic experiences for each candidate could have produced different findings from a longitudinal study of the participants. Through a series of intentionally sequenced interviews and focus groups, programs of study within an Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) could follow their Teacher Candidates of Color in real-time and timestamp developments or changes along specific program preparation pathways.

**Recommendations**

I conceived this study to address the diversity paradox problematized in chapter I (i.e., the existing need to widen participation in teacher preparation is met with few changes to the normative ways teacher preparation is conceived, developed, and organized). This is especially evident in Predominantly White Institutions that offer the most state-approved teacher preparation programs, nationally produce the most teachers, and where candidacy experiences are characteristically more race-neutral. Based on the findings of this case study, I offer recommendations to PWIs with similar characteristics as the University of Arkansas, specifically those that have (1) low numbers of diverse candidates and diverse teacher education faculty, (2) clinically centered programs where TCOCs typically experience racial/cultural mismatch
between themselves and K-12 students/mentor teachers, and (3) a lack of explicit race-conscious support systems and resources. Two recommendations for practice are offered to shift preparation experiences by increasing the professional capacity of teacher educators and fostering more supportive learning environments for TCOCs. Two recommendations for research are also offered to address a topic in need of further study and a promising methodology to leverage more voices of TCOCs.

**Recommendations for Future Practice**

**Establish an Un-siloed Professional Development Continuum.** Despite recently ignited interest in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, programmatic and systemic change, must be preceded by first changing how we think and speak about DEI topics (e.g., race and culture). Public schools and universities are irrevocably linked in the preparation of teachers. Neither agent can unshackle themselves from curricular and structural traditions that negatively impact SOC/TCOCs in the name of DEI without expanding what we know and understand about racially and culturally minoritized groups. Then, professional development focused on addressing and redressing longstanding education inequities is naturally a joint enterprise.

Drawn from the explicit statements and experiences described by TCOCs in my study, I recommend developing an un-siloed professional development continuum, where university faculty and public school partners collaborate to engage in concerted, mutually beneficial aims. “Un-siloed” is the operative word of this recommendation for practice. Institutional classroom settings within PWIs are not representative of the racial and cultural diversity of the broader context of K-12 schooling, but neither are most public school faculties. Allocating shared resources to provide DEI-focused professional development has the potential to change and improve traditional teacher preparation for TCOCs by integrating their racial and cultural
realities into ongoing work. Making space to deconstruct topics such as the history of racism and racialization, racial stereotypes and tropes, etc., contributes to the development of race-consciousness, anti-racist skills, and informed critique of curriculum, policies, and practices. As a commitment to understand and elevate race-consciousness, this learning and development process has potential to develop the individual expertise of university faculty and the collective expertise of university faculty and public schools who work in tandem to prepare TCOCs (Hauge, 2021).

Create Teacher Education Counterspaces. My data corpus speaks to TCOCs’ interest in having a group of other teacher candidates of who share a collective ethos. As a Predominantly White Institution, the University of Arkansas has two signposts that signal potential chasms between TCOCs and their teacher preparation experiences, (1) a predominately White teacher education faculty and (2) a predominately White teacher candidacy pool. The racial/cultural mismatch between teacher education faculty and peer teacher candidates with diverse candidates, if let unaddressed, could usher would-be Teacher Candidates of Color out of the teacher pipeline where they are so desperately needed.

While most universities have established campus-wide support groups and enrichment services, based on the findings of my study, I recommend that teacher preparation programs establish teacher education-specific counterspaces or affinity groups (i.e., a group of faculty, staff, community stakeholders and students linked by a common purpose, ideology, or interest). TCOC counterspaces will enable diverse candidates to come together and build connections based on shared characteristics, experiences, and interests. In teacher preparation programs, methods courses can be important sites develop TCOCs as pedagogical tools, the TCOCs in this study did not have these experiences, however. Evidence of course experiences specifically
connected to their racial and cultural backgrounds was lackluster. This need may be undermined by the lack of racial and cultural parity found in PWIs.

When racial parity cannot be afforded, counterspaces offer a viable option to help support TCOCs. Findings indicate that TCOCs need and want (1) to discuss issues in teacher preparation that reflect their specific backgrounds, (2) access to teachers who identify similarly as themselves, and (3) opportunities to examine experiences they encounter in other parts of campus, in their education courses, and as part of clinical experiences. Providing TCOCs with this resource extends an untapped part of their professional development as future educators and ultimately supports their persistence in their educative journeys in PWIs.

Tailored counterspaces can also acknowledge the distinct experiences of racialized groups within the broad category of Teacher Candidates of Color so as to not conflate the uniqueness that exists within and across different identities of People of Color. Members of race-based affinity groups often experience esprit de corps that leads to improved feelings of inclusion in the broader community (Keels, 2019). Creating teacher-education specific counterspaces for all TCOCs within an institution can play a vital role as part of recruitment initiative, for these spaces can ensure an inclusive environment where TCOCs feel valued, supported, included, and empowered to succeed.

Recommendations for Future Research

Engage Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Clinical Experiences.

For institutions committed to clinically centered preparation (i.e., positioning the field-based or practicum experience as the focal point of teacher preparation rather than on its periphery) (Hoppey, 2016), an overlooked but important consideration is interrogating TCOCs about their clinical experiences. Due to the timing of the study, participants had limited access to K-12
classrooms, but two participants provided powerful accounts about clinical experiences that should not go unchecked in teacher education research, however. Teacher educators cannot profess to be concerned with equitably preparing TCOCs without taking seriously their self-reports.

The literature speaks to the impactful nature of mentor teachers and student teachers (Anderson, 2007; Russell & Russell, 2011). Prioritizing the diversity demographics of clinical sites without scrutinizing the effects of school culture and teachers within them may leave some TCOCs vulnerable to more instances of microaggressions and racism. While there are some accreditation standards for the selection clinical sites, none exist for consideration of schools’ organizational cultures nor the selection of mentor teachers. Often institutions’ identification processes for mentors include a list of criteria based on years of experience, level of education, teacher effectiveness ratings, the ability to meet the responsibilities of the mentor role, etc. None of these measures demonstrate in-service teachers’ race-conscious ideologies. Given the findings of this case study, this is especially important when placing diverse candidates under such close tutelage.

Many institutions have recently incorporated DEI statement policies as part of their hiring process and often require faculty to discuss and demonstrate their commitments and ideological perspectives of DEI related to identity characteristics before hired. Perhaps this is also an adjacent path forward for future considerations in the establishment of clinical experiences. At its best, counter-storytelling not only critiques and raises consciousness but it also spurs action. From a CRT perspective, scholarship must not simply be an endeavor of passively producing knowledge, but it must also be active in the struggle for transformation (Bell, 2003). I recommend organizing systematic inquiry to establish selection criteria informed by TCOCs experiences in schools and
classrooms. From the limited findings that I could construct from this case study and the related research about race and clinical experiences, there is warranted speculation that some hidden issues or insights can be revealed by conducting more research in this area.

Construct Composite Narratives. While I only selected six participants from a larger pool of interested TCOCs, the semi-structured interviews and the focus group produced a large data corpus. Still, collecting more stories could provide additional richly textured information about racialized identity and teacher preparation. More narratives and counternarratives have the power to affect change by enhancing the transferability of research findings. As an extension of this study, findings could be expanded by increasing the participant population, but because the potential exists for TCOCs to have idiosyncratic racialized identities, then the question becomes, how do researchers best share more experiences without essentializing Teacher Candidates of Color?

As part of their explanation of Critical Race Methodology, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) give agency for researchers to (1) use counter-storytelling as an analytical framework, but also to (2) create composite characters from the dialogue that emerges through interviews to critically “illuminate concepts, ideas, and experiences” while using the elements of Critical Race Theory (p. 36). Expanded data (more candidates’ accounts) could be developed into composite characters grounded in real-life experiences that CRT legitimizes as empirical data.

Though developing composite narratives is a relatively new method for conveying research findings, researchers across disciplines have already applied composite narratives to convey interview research findings (Johnston, Wildly & Shand, 2023; Wertz, Nosek, McNiesh & Marlow, 2011). With a larger pool of Teacher Candidates of Color, composite narratives could be skillfully constructed using multiple participant accounts to represent their woven experiences
to tell a single story (Willis, 2018). Findings from this study uncovered the existence of subgroup experiences occurring within teacher education programs in PWIs for TCOCs (e.g., Black or Latinx commuting students, transfer students, male vs. female, traditional vs. non-traditional, etc.). “Racialized identity” may be too broad of a stroke to capture TCOCs’ intersectionalities that also assert unique dynamics and effects on their teacher preparation. It is important to also lift these voices to examine how racialized identity and institutional structures impact candidacy trajectory, however.

Education researchers have offered processes and practices to assist with creating composite narratives to ensure that findings are accepted by readers as rigorous and credible (Willis, 2018). Composites have potential to extend the reach of future studies by presenting more nuanced research findings by including more lived experiences of TCOCs in a way that is relatable for readers from a range of backgrounds and offering findings that are engaging and memorable for consumers of future studies about racialized identity and teacher preparation.

Summary

If there ever was a time for teacher educators to better understand the experiences and needs of Teacher Candidates of Color, that time is now. As outlined in Chapter I, the United States continues to diversify, and the education landscape continues to transform accordingly. One of the greatest resources to help teacher educators and school leaders navigate shifting K-12 demographics are more Teachers of Color in classrooms due to the positive academic and non-academic outcomes they create for K-12 students. Chapter II delineates clear and significant benefits of creating a more diverse teacher pipeline, but the extant literature also presents a host of challenges to meet this end.
My case study sought participant voices within one PWI context to understand how TCOCs’ racialized identities shape and impact their K-12 and post-secondary education trajectories. Their narratives offered counterstories that highlight the ways they experienced K-16 education as a racialized enterprise with a longstanding assemblance that prioritizes the dominant racial group and negatively impacts them. Their voices challenge institutions to consider how well-matched their preparation programs are for the backgrounds, needs and desires of the TCOCs they currently serve or hope to serve. Leaning unto stores of majoritarian narratives that center on the number of disproportionate barriers POC face to matriculate to and through college but excluding the impact of the national portrait of K-16 racial (and cultural) mismatch has not and will not usher more diverse candidates into the profession. Discussions about race and racialized identity are often difficult. Silence and reluctance to discuss the realities of racialized identity and racialized experiences hurts everyone, however. It breeds disconnection and misalignment between intent and positive outcomes for recruitment, support, and retention of TCOCs.

The findings presented in chapter IV and the discussion of those findings in chapter V, highlight the salience of racialized identities in the preparation of Teacher Candidates of Color in PWIs. Ultimately, a CRT epistemology acknowledges that higher education can be both the problem and the solution, however. Teacher education programs and the institutions that house them have the potential to oppress and marginalize Teacher Candidates of Color, but they also have the ability to empower them (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Scholars situated in any academy can become better agents of change in institutional steering when they unmask and examine contextualized racialized and potential ideological disconnects commonly experienced between
predominantly White teacher preparation programs and their racially diverse Teacher Candidates of Color.
References


https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487107310751


Ratvitch, S. M. & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.


Appendix A

To: Karmen V Bell  
From: Justin R Chimka, Chair  
IRB Expedited Review  
Date: 11/15/2021  
Action: Expedited Approval  
Action Date: 11/15/2021  
Protocol #: 2110360690  
Study Title: Racialized Identity and Teacher Preparation: A Case Study of Teacher Candidates of Color  
Expiration Date: 11/02/2022  
Last Approval Date:  

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution’s IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator’s responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

Adverse Events: Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: Charlene M Johnson, Investigator
Appendix B
Informed Consent

Racialized Identities and Teacher Preparation: A Case Study of Teacher Candidates of Color
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Karmen V. Bell
Faculty Advisor: Charlene Johnson Carter

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color at a Predominantly White Institution. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are Teacher Candidate of Color enrolled in a teacher preparation program at the University of Arkansas.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?

Karmen V. Bell
Instructor of Childhood and Elementary Education
kvbell@uark.edu

Who is the Faculty Advisor?

Dr. Charlene Johnson Carter
Associate Professor of Childhood and Elementary Education
cjohnson@uark.edu

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color to understand their educational histories and how their awareness of race and ethnicity affect them during teacher preparation at Predominantly White Institutions (University of Arkansas). The intent of collecting their stories and worldviews is (1) to facilitate further development and empowerment of Teacher Candidates of Color and (2) to aid teacher preparation programs to create more diverse and inclusive curriculum, pedagogy, and structures that support learning by listening to Teacher Candidates of Color within them.

Who will participate in this study?

Teacher Candidates of Color within the University of Arkansas’s teacher preparation programs are being asked to participate. Participants must be accepted into a program. Age and gender are not compulsory considerations.
**What am I being asked to do?**

Participants will engage in three individual semi-structured interviews and one focus group (2-4 participants). To enhance the safety of researchers and participants and to minimize the spread of COVID-19, these interactions may be in-person or via web conference.

If there are any in-person interactions, participants will be permitted to choose the interview locations, but the researcher and participants will follow any restrictions or requirements that exist for a given interview location. The researcher and participants will follow social distancing guidelines and will wear personal protective equipment.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts?**

There are no inherent risks in participating in this study, other than discomforts that may arise from racial identity dialogue related to personal and educational experiences.

**What are the possible benefits of this study?**

Potential benefits of the study include implications for better-informed curriculum, pedagogy, and structures for the preparation of Teacher Candidates of Color in Predominantly White Institutions. Engaging Teacher Candidates of Color in racial identity dialogue may foster positive individual and communal experiences among students who may feel isolated because of their underrepresentation in the University’s teacher preparation programs.

**How long will the study last?**

The study will span one academic year. Data collection will span over five months during the fall 2021 – spring 2022 term. Participants will be asked to participate in three semi-structured interviews and one focus group. Each will be a minimum of 60 minutes.

**Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants will not be compensated.

**Will I have to pay for anything?**

There are no associated costs with your participation.

**What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?**

Participants' teacher candidacy will not be affected in any way if they refuse to participate. Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any point without penalty. They have the right to cancel permission to use and disclose further information collected about themselves by sending an electronic request to the principal researcher, Karmen V. Bell (kvbell@uark.edu).

If participants cancel permission to use their information, the researcher will stop collecting additional information, however, the researcher may use information gathered prior to the cancellation.
**How will my confidentiality be protected?**

All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Participants’ names will not appear on any data documents associated in any publication or presentation of the information collected for this study. The study will not include any identifying information that will link responses to participants. Pseudonyms and/or codes will be assigned instead of participants’ names.

The researcher will safeguard privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity by controlling other people’s access to information about research participants. All data will be kept and secured on the researcher’s password protected laptop. The researcher is the only person who has access the laptop which will protect data from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss, or theft.

All interviews must be audio recorded, but audio data will be destroyed immediately upon completion of transcription.

**Will I know the results of the study?**

Participants will be formally offered opportunities to member-check collected data (review content written about them) throughout the collection and analysis process.

**What do I do if I have questions about the research study?**

Participants have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor with any concerns that they may have. Participants may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Integrity and Compliance office listed below if they have questions about their rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP  
Institutional Review Board Coordinator  
Research Integrity and Compliance  
University of Arkansas  
109 MLKG Building  
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201  
479-575-2208  
irb@uark.edu
I have read the above statements and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

_________________________________________  _________________________
Participant’s Signature  Date
SUBJECT: Greetings Future Educator!

Welcome back to campus and congratulations on making strides toward becoming a K-12 educator! My name is Karmen V. Bell. I am a Childhood & Elementary Education faculty member and a doctoral candidate in the department of Curriculum & Instruction in the College of Education and Health Professions.

I am contacting you today because I am seeking the voices and experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color for my dissertation study. I am interested in exploring the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color to understand their educational histories and how their awareness of race and ethnicity affect them during teacher preparation at Predominantly White Institutions (University of Arkansas). The intent of collecting your story is to provide voice and recognition of your experiences to aid teacher preparation programs to create more inclusive curriculum, pedagogy, and structures that support learning by listening to underrepresented teacher candidates within them.

Participants must identify as a Person of Color and must already be accepted into one of the University’s teacher preparation programs. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to engage in three individual interviews and one focus group interview. To enhance the safety of researchers and participants and to minimize the spread of COVID-19, these interactions may be in-person or via web conference, whichever format is safest. Your identity will be completely anonymous. I, as the principal researcher, will be the only one who will know your name. Your identity will never be revealed or published.

I have been a teacher educator at the University of Arkansas for eleven years and I am interested in the continuous improvement of our teacher preparation programs. I identify as African American and my identity continues to play a role in the way that I learn and in the way that I teach. If you also believe that identifying as a Person of Color has had some effect on your K-12 learning experiences and your current learning experiences, click the link HERE to complete a short questionnaire to express your interest in my study. I will confirm study participants by _______________ (date). My participant confirmation e-mail will provide the next steps to set up our first interview and to gain your written consent to participate in the study. You can contact me before that date if you have additional questions.

Kindest regards,

Karmen V. Bell
Appendix D

Recruitment Demographic and Program Questionnaire

This questionnaire will be linked within the recruitment e-mail. Teacher candidates who have interest in the study will complete the electronic survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Response Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1: What is your first and last name?</td>
<td>Open Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: What is your university e-mail address?</td>
<td>Open Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Q3: What race/ethnicity do you identify with?  | Drop Down Items and Open Response  
  ▪ Asian American/Asian  
  ▪ Mexican, Mexican American or Chicano  
  ▪ Native American, American Indian or Alaskan  
  ▪ Other Hispanic, Latino or Latin American  
  ▪ Pacific Island, American Pacific Islander  
  ▪ Puerto Rican  
  ▪ Southeast Asian, American Southeast Asian  
  ▪ Two or more races ______________________|
|                                               | *University of Arkansas EPP designations|
| Q4: What is your program of study?             | Drop Down Items  
  ▪ Agricultural Education  
  ▪ Art Education  
  ▪ Birth to Kindergarten  
  ▪ CATE BSE  
  ▪ Childhood Education MAT  
  ▪ Elementary Education BSE  
  ▪ Music Education  
  ▪ Physical Education  
  ▪ Secondary Education BAT  
  ▪ Secondary Education MAT  
  ▪ Special Education BSE  
  ▪ UA Teach  
  ▪ Other|
| Q5: What is your academic classification?      | Drop Down Items  
  ▪ Sophomore  
  ▪ Junior  
  ▪ Senior  
  ▪ Graduate Student |
Appendix E
Semi-structured Interview Protocol #1

Research Question #1:
What are the backgrounds educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?

Interview Introduction:
Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. As you know, I seek to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color to understand their educational histories and how their awareness of race and ethnicity affect them during teacher preparation experiences. The study also seeks to understand the experiences of being a Teacher Candidate of Color at a Predominately White Institution (University of Arkansas).

In my participant confirmation e-mail, I stated that our interviews would be recorded so that I could focus on you during our conversation. Are you still comfortable with me recording our conversation today? I also shared that during your first interview, you would sign an Informed Consent form. Let’s review the document together. (Review the form and have the participant sign it.)

Our interview will last approximately one hour to an hour and a half, during which I will be asking you about your educational history. I may take notes during our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?

Introductory Questions

1. How would you describe where you grew up? In answering this question, you can focus on your neighborhood, city/town, family, any activities, organizations, or anything else that stands out to you the most when you think about your upbringing.

2. How do you think that growing up in/with _______________________ influenced who you are today?

Transition Questions

3. Sometimes a common experience, language, or way of being leads a group of people to identify as a community. What does this mean to you? Is there a specific community with which you identify? Which community is that?
   ○ What makes you identify with that community?
   ○ Is there some common experience, language, or way of being that defines (name of community) as a community? What are they?

4. Sometimes there are differences in the way people are viewed or treated within a community. The differences could be based on lots of things. How do you think that being a member of the ____________community influences the way others within your community view you or interact with you? Tell me more about that.
5. How you think being a member of the ________________ community influences the way people outside of your community view or interact with you? Tell me more about that.

Key Questions

6. I am going to ask you go back in time to your K-12 learning experiences. Tell me about your elementary school. How do you remember your learning experiences during this time? Tell me about your interactions with your teachers and social peers, your academic achievement, etc.

7. Tell me about your middle school/junior high school. How do you remember your learning experiences during this time? Tell me about your interactions with your teachers and social peers, your academic achievement, etc.

8. Tell me about your high school. How do you remember your learning experiences during this time? Tell me about your interactions with your teachers and social peers, your academic achievement, etc.

9. When growing up, how were you taught or influenced to think about your own racial identity or race in general by your family?

10. When growing up, how were you taught or influenced to think about your own racial identity or race in general by your K-12 teachers and school communities? Was this differently conceived in school?

11. How do you think your lived experience as a Person of Color and K-12 learning experiences have impacted how you view your racial identity/your community and learning overall?

Closing Question

Thank you for meeting with me today and giving me an opportunity to get to know you better. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I have not asked you already? Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix F

Semi-structured Interview Protocol #2 – Research Question #2

*How have racialized identities contributed to Teacher Candidates of Color’s interest in the teaching profession?*

**Interview Introduction**

Welcome back. Thank you again for being willing to participate in my study. Let me remind you that my study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color to understand their educational histories and how their awareness of race and ethnicity affect them during teacher preparation experiences. The study also seeks to understand the experiences of being a Teacher Candidate of Color at a Predominately White Institution (University of Arkansas).

I shared in the recruitment e-mail that our interviews would be recorded so that I could focus on you during our conversation. Are you still comfortable with me recording our conversation today? Our interview today will last approximately one hour to an hour and a half, during which I will be asking you about your decision to become a teacher and journey to becoming a teacher. I may take notes during our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?

**Introductory Question**

1. Is there anything that you have reflected upon or want to share more about in terms of your educational history that we discussed last time?

**Transition Question**

2. I noticed in your survey response that you are majoring in _______________. Tell me about your interest in the content or age-group.
3. I noticed in your survey response that you are currently a _______________ (classification). Tell about where you are in your journey to becoming a teacher? What have you already learned? What are you looking forward to learning in your preparation program?

**Key Questions**

4. Why and when did you decide to become a teacher? Tell me about some life experiences or factors that influenced that decision?
5. What do you perceive as your role(s) as a future teacher?
6. What practices or experiences do you feel like you want to or need to enact in your classroom to fulfill those roles?
7. As a future Teacher of Color, what do you feel are the most important things you want to impart to your students?

8. In what way(s) does your racial identity influence the teacher you want to become?

Closing Question

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I have not asked you already? Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix G

Semi-structured Interview Protocol #3

Research Question #3:
How are racialized identities afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts?

Interview Introduction

Welcome back. Thank you again for being willing to participate in my study. Let me remind you that my study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color to understand their educational histories and how their awareness of race and ethnicity affect them during teacher preparation experiences. The study also seeks to understand the experiences of being a Teacher Candidate of Color at a Predominately White Institution (University of Arkansas).

I shared in the recruitment e-mail that our interviews would be recorded so that I could focus on you during our conversation. Are you still comfortable with me recording our conversation today? Our interview today will last approximately one hour to an hour and a half, during which I will be asking you about your teacher preparation courses and clinical experiences and your overall experiences while attending this university. I may take notes during our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?

Introductory Question

1. Before we begin, is there anything that you have reflected upon or want to share more about in terms of your reasons for becoming a teacher?

Transition Questions

2. We have talked about your K-12 learning experiences and your reasons for deciding to become a teacher. Today, we will focus on your teacher candidacy experiences at this university. Why did you choose to be prepared to teach at the University of Arkansas? What factors went into that decision and what were some things you thought about or did before making the final decision to attend this institution?

3. How would you describe your learning experiences at this university in relation to your identity as a Person of Color?

4. How have your university learning experiences been different or like your K-12 learning experiences in relation to your identity as a Person of Color?
Key Questions

5. Last time, you shared some of your perceived roles as a future Teacher of Color as well as practices and experiences that you want to or need to enact in your classroom to fulfill those roles? (Re-state participants’ responses). How has your vision as a future educator been furthered by your experiences with university faculty and staff? Tell me about any experiences with university faculty and staff that have brought you closer to how you envision your future role and practices when you become a teacher?

6. Tell me about any experiences with peer students and teacher candidates that have furthered or contributed to how you envision your future role and practices when you become a teacher?

7. Tell me about any courses/course experiences that have furthered or contributed to how you envision your future role and practices when you become a teacher? Is there a class that helped you envision who you want to be as a teacher?

8. How have clinical experiences (school placement/mentor teacher) furthered or contributed to how you envision your future role and practices when you become a teacher?

9. Tell me how course experiences or course content has reflected or been inclusive of your racial identity and/or the racial identity of others.

10. Tell me how clinical experiences have reflected or been inclusive of your racial identity and/or the racial identity of others.

11. How has your teacher preparation program prepared you to teach diverse learners? From your lived experiences as a Person of Color, what are you satisfied with or dissatisfied with as it relates to your preparation to teach diverse learners?

12. From your lived experiences as a Person of Color, what would you change about or suggest to your preparation program as it relates to (1) preparing Teacher Candidates of Color and (2) in preparing teachers to teach diverse learners?

Closing Question

Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I have not asked you already? Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix H

Interview Protocol #4 - Focus Group

Research Question #4:
What experiences coalesce across Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution (PWI)?

Focus Introduction
Welcome everyone. I hope you have had a wonderful semester. Thank you all again for being willing to participate in my study. Let me remind you that my study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Teacher Candidates of Color to understand their educational histories and how their racialized identities affect them during teacher preparation experiences. The study also seeks to understand the experiences of being a Teacher Candidate of Color at a Predominately White Institution.

I shared in the recruitment e-mail that our interviews would be recorded so that I could focus on you during our conversation. Are you still comfortable with me recording our conversation today? Our focus group today will last approximately one hour to an hour and a half, during which I will be asking you about your teacher preparation courses and clinical experiences and your overall experiences while attending this university. I may take notes during our conversation. Before we begin the focus group, do you have any questions?

Establishing Norms
Before we begin, I would like to establish some norms for the focus group. These are in place to ensure that all everyone feels comfortable sharing experiences and to ensure that I can capture everyone’s contributions during our conversation.

- **Confidentiality** – Let us all be respectful of each other. I will audio-record our session, but I will not discuss the content of our conversation with anyone outside of this space. To safeguard privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, I request that you all do the same
- **Respectful Turn Taking** – Only one person should speak at a time to ensure that we can all hear everyone’s experiences. Try not to interrupt one another and be mindful of the length of your contributions so that one person does not dominate the conversation.
- **Open Discussion** – This focus group is a venue for everyone to share their experiences and perception of those experiences. Viewpoints may be common or nuanced. You will not be asked to reach consensus on anything discussed.
- **Participatory Engagement** – It is important that everyone’s voice is heard to ensure that the focus group is as revelatory as possible. Please be an active contributor to the conversation.

Opening Question

1. How has your semester been?
Transition Questions

2. Everyone knows and understands the purpose of my study and the aim of today’s focus group. Tell me about some successes you have had as part of your teacher preparation courses and clinical experiences.

3. Tell me about some challenges you have had as part of your teacher preparation courses and clinical experiences.

Key Questions

4. Tell me about experiences where your identity as a Person of Color has impacted your interactions with (1) other students/peer teacher candidates, (2) university faculty and staff, (3) mentor teachers in clinical experiences, and/or (4) with K-12 students/K-12 communities?

5. Tell me about any microaggressions you have experienced during your teacher preparation courses and clinical experiences. How have those experiences impacted you?

6. Participants will be presented with official statements from the university and the two colleges that house teacher preparation programs. They will be posed with, Tell me how your university experiences, and teacher preparation program experiences (coursework and/or clinical experiences) align or diverge from these official statements?

- **The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
  
  The University of Arkansas envisions a world committed to inclusivity, where diversity, equity, access and civility are valued as a part of our culture, climate and everyday lives. We strive to make this vision a reality by reinforcing inclusive excellence in everything we say and do. We have a responsibility as engaged citizens to consistently incorporate behaviors and practices that support an inclusive environment on campus, in Arkansas and everywhere.

  Diversity, equity and inclusive measures are true assets to any flourishing educational community. As an institution of higher learning, the U of A understands the value in preparing our students to interact, learn and thrive in a diverse world. In turn, we are ready to equip our faculty and staff with the tools they need to instill these lessons across our campuses in the classroom, in scholarly research and through service to our regional Arkansas communities.

- **The College of Education and Health Professions’ Office of Diversity & Inclusion**

  Fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for scholars and students is a top goal of the College of Education and Health Professions. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion moves beyond norms, stereotypes and expectations because the college is atypical. Degrees in education or health professions, for example, are generally more attractive to women, so encouraging male students to apply to its programs is a focus. Our goal is to not only further diversify our college but to diversify the professions that our students will eventually enter.
The college’s stance on diversity is not just focused on gender and race but includes disability status, sexual orientation, age, social class, language, and geographic location as well as a world view on cultures and religions. The inclusion of faculty, staff and students from all groups is key. We seek to reduce stigmas, break barriers and encourage equality and fairness.

- **Bumpers College – School of Human Environmental Science**
  The School of Human Environmental Sciences (HESC) in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences strives to be nationally recognized for its efforts in strengthening diversity, recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, building cultural competency, and most importantly serving as a resource for faculty, staff and students within the units of HESC as it seeks to enhance our land-grant mission of teaching, research, service and extension to Arkansans.

7. What do you feel would be essential supports and experiences for Teachers Candidates of Color in a teacher preparation program at this university?

8. What do you want teacher educators and teacher education administrators to understand about you as Teacher Candidates of Color? About you as Teacher Candidates of Color at a Predominately White Institution?

**Closing Question**

Thank you again for participating in my study. Today will be the last time that I meet with each of you. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that I have not asked you already? Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix I

Relationships Among Themes & Subthemes

(Created for each research question, following all coding cycles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersections of History and Biography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Insider- Outsider Epistemologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Racial &amp; Cultural Assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Encounters with Racism &amp; Racial Tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Colorism as an Extension of Racism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To answer RQ#1, participants articulated descriptions of their communities and provided detailed narratives about their racial (cultural) backgrounds, upbringings, and educational journeys (K-12). From participants’ narratives of “self” emerged an overall theme, Intersections of History and Biography, that highlights how TCOCs’ biographies have been forged by the history of race in the United States.

Each subtheme captures critical incidents and statements that were coded to highlight the salience of racialized identity as part of participants’ backgrounds and educational histories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reckoning with Racism and Race-neutrality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Cultural Guardians</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Guideposts for Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Connecting with All Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Being an Advocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Underrepresentation as a Limiting Factor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To answer RQ#2, participants focused on their life histories by concentrating on details about their lived experiences as people with racialized identities and its influence on the decision to become a teacher. From participants’ narratives, the overall theme, Reckoning with Racism and Race-neutrality, emerged.

Each participants’ decision to teach varied, but narratives revealed myriad ways K-20 racialized experiences framed their decisions to teach as an intentional action to disrupt (reckon with) their past racialized experiences and potential racialized experiences for their future SOCs. Subthemes both capture TCOCs’ motivations to enter the teaching profession.
To answer RQ#3, participants were queried about affordances and constraints within predominantly White contexts. Participants reflected on their previously articulated visions of themselves as future teachers and their intended roles in their future classrooms.

In relationship to meeting that end, participants were asked to articulate any affordances and/or constraints experienced imposed by faculty/staff, courses, clinical experiences, peers and the university/programs of study. From participants’ narratives, the overall theme, Race-conscious Engagement, emerged.

Participants’ narratives highlighted how TCOCs brought antecedents (related to race/culture) to their shared PWI that heightened their race-consciousness. Subthemes capture how racialized identities informed engagement and sense of integration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race-conscious Engagement in Predominantly White Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Racial and Cultural Parity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Culturally Responsive Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ “The Only” Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Positive and Negative Reception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answer RQ#4, participants participated in a focus group. They collectively reflected on previous interview topics and the alignment of their experiences with published diversity, equity and inclusion statements. From participants’ narratives, the overall theme, Seeking Common Ground emerged.

TCOCs revealed commonalities and differences, optimism and dismay, restatement, revision, and extension of previously posited ideas, but more importantly collective interest in solutions to identified opportunities.

Subthemes are products of condensed in vivo codes that emphasize repetitive/shared verbatim words, statements, and ideas offered by the participants during the focus group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeking Common Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Chameleon Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Fear of Marginalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Performative DEI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ DEI as a Continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Nested Needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix J

**Sample Open Coding Applied to Semi-structured Interview #1**

*RQ#1: What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Community described as city, town/state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Choosing a racial identifier (challenged by the language-meaning of racial identifiers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Community described as neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>“American” friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Community described as school locale or other locale within the city/town/state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>High academic achievement - “Good at school”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Described as shared language – Spanish/Spanglish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Being more White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Spanish at home, English at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Culture shock - transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>“People who look like me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Enjoying school – “School came easy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Comfort and acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>High-achieving friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Lack of representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Group membership as a support system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Concern of judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Church Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>“Americanization”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Influence of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Diversity of peer circles (White or Diverse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Lack of comfort and self-consciousness when outside of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>“Lighter” skin vs. darker skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Comfort in community places disrupted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>“More American” - citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Feelings of isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Positive experience with a teacher/leader of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Being an outsider (non-Spanish speakers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Lack of teacher/leader representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Creating safe spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Camouflage – Blending in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Turning points in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Identity conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Messages of perseverance from family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>“Invisible”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Messages about identity from family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Southern – safety, close knit friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Pressures from family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Lack of challenge/recognition by teachers, “not a priority”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Expectations of success – “Work harder”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Rigor in private school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Straddling identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Positive interactions with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Messages of “Enough”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Race noticed by others – Being “different”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K

Sample Data Condensation Table

**RQ#1: What are the backgrounds and educational histories of Teacher Candidates of Color?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Codes</th>
<th>Condensed Codes</th>
<th>Coded Extractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 3 5 31</td>
<td>[C] Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 13 16 18</td>
<td>[SB] Sense of Belonging &amp; Acceptance</td>
<td>[IOP] Insider versus Outsider Postures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 23 25 27</td>
<td>[O] Outsider Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 15 20 30</td>
<td>[R] Representation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 7 9 29</td>
<td>[L] Language</td>
<td>[A] Awareness of Assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 19 26</td>
<td>[A] “Americanization” (Nationalism)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 12 14 42</td>
<td>[AA] Academic Achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 33 44 45</td>
<td>[TM] Teacher Messaging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 34 38 46</td>
<td>[SM] Peer Messaging</td>
<td>[RA] Racialization Actions &amp; Actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 40 41 44</td>
<td>[ScM] School Messaging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 35 37 39</td>
<td>[FM] Family Messaging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 24 32 43</td>
<td>[ST] Skin Tone (Racial Phenotyping)</td>
<td>[COL] Colorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note – Similar tables were created for research questions #1, #2, and #3 in multiple iterative cycles.
Appendix L

Sample (Initial) Deductive Coding Scheme & Data Summary Table

**RQ#3: How are racial identities of Teacher Candidates of Color afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts?**

To address RQ#3, participants reflected on their previously articulated visions of themselves as future teachers and their roles in their future classrooms.

In relationship to meeting that end, participants were asked to articulate any affordances and/or constraints experienced within university contexts imposed by the following:

(a) faculty/staff
(b) courses
(c) clinical experiences
(d) peers
(e) university/programs of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>[FSP]</td>
<td>[FSN]</td>
<td>[CP]</td>
<td>[CN]</td>
<td>[CLP]</td>
<td>[CLN]</td>
<td>[PIP]</td>
<td>[PIN]</td>
<td>[PEP]</td>
<td>[PEN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix M  
Segment of Deductive Coding for Research Question #3

*RQ#3: How are racial identities of Teacher Candidates of Color afforded and constrained in predominantly White learning contexts?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Coded Extractions</th>
<th>Final Code</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[FSP]</td>
<td>“They’ve been nice. Some of them came from like Big Spring, AR (pseudonym) or close to where I live, where I’m from and they’re Black guys...It was nice knowing that they have whole lives outside of this. Asking them questions let me know they are so freakin’ cool. Dr. Jackson (pseudonym) is an academic and student-friendly, so he is like wielding two swords in a really cool way, like a helpful way...” (Davis)</td>
<td>[RCP]</td>
<td>Racial and Cultural Parity (of Faculty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When discussing university faculty, parity and/or lack of parity was identified as an affordance and a constraint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I love Dr. Combs’ class. He was into literature and he also was into comics. He was able to combine those two...He really spurred me on. He makes me want to read. We read the Outsiders. I read it in seventh grade and I didn’t want to read it again, but I read it again because of this guy. He made me love Black and White literature...He had been a high school teacher for years before doing this. I’m pretty sure he taught a lot of minority students. So he just had that energy...” (Davis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think I’ve been a lot of my whole self because a lot of the teachers. They’re very open about their interests and who they are and have activities for us to share our experiences and stuff like that. It’s kind of like you don’t really like to block off certain parts of you, kind of putting your whole self into it. In a lot of my classes, I am one of the only people of color, so it’s interesting...All, every education teachers I’ve had here so far has been good so far. They are very energetic, excited about it, which makes me more excited about it...” (Avery)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“In my culture, you know, Latinos, we respect our elders a lot... So having a teacher that was a senior was really easy for me to form a strong relationship with. I trusted him. He gave me a lot of advice and a lot of suggestions. He did not disrupt me or interrupt me whenever I was talking... Dr. Martin (pseudonym) was also a senior professor. I am not saying that in a bad way. I’m just saying because of her age. She is just like ball of energy and she is like so welcoming and compassionate. She motivates me... (Isabelle)

“One of my Spanish professors, I actually think she would be considered Chicana and I feel like maybe that’s why I instantly felt that like instant connection to her because she taught a way that I could understand. We had some Anglo students. I’m just saying it because, you know, because of culture differences, right? I mean White students in the classroom, but she never isolated anyone...” (Isabelle)

“I think undergrad was pretty good. I think it’s because I took a lot of Spanish courses and Latin American Studies courses that crossed over into my history. So I had pretty diverse professors... In my undergrad, I had Dr. Lopez (pseudonym). Amazing teacher, but the was a third generation Mexican American so I could not relate to him much because he doesn’t know the struggles of first generation. But he tries really hard to understand students. He was pretty forward with telling us that he doesn’t speak Spanish, but I’ll try to have a conversation with you and you can teach me. So he was one of the people that I really liked... Dr. Ganino was from Columbia, so from a different part of Latin America, but I was still able to make a connection with him even though he was from a different region. He was open to understand all of his students and it didn’t matter who they were.” (Maria)
"The least diverse is when I got into the Master’s program. That’s whenever I think all of professors are White males. It’s like the least diverse I’ve had in my entire college experience. The professors don’t really understand me…I’ve never had a deep connection with any of my professors. I don’t talk to them that much either…” (Maria)

“I don’t know what it was that just pulled me to go to their [her undergraduate professors] office hours? I don’t do that now. I think it’s because I loved so much the ways they were teaching that I wanted to figure out more about them and more about what they were teaching. I would talk to them. I knew that that connection was there. I don’t know?” (Maria)

“I think it has been my learning experience, along with a lot of other Black students on campus. We have been affected by a lot in the past couple of years with the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Navigating that has been challenging. I’ve had a couple of professors who are like ‘I’m not on that woke stuff.’ And to me, I’m thinking is that okay, so you got respect for me as a human being? Can I have an honest opinion with you? Can we not have honest discourse with each other? And these are sociology classes, Yeah…” (Candace)

“I felt uncomfortable at times, like noticing it...At times I’m walking in a classroom in order to feel off and I don’t belong here because there’s no one here that looks like me, like putting imposter syndrome on myself. But mostly depending on my professor and their energy in class would determine if I continued to have those feelings…” (Candace)

“But then it’s like the complete opposite being in the teacher education program…I still would get those feelings at the beginning of the semester, but they fizzled out in every single semester...Dr. Sword’s class was just amazing. She was really good at making us feel like we were immersed. Her class was one of the first classes that I started talking openly from.
‘This is my perspective as a Black woman’ and I was comfortable saying that in her class and that really meant a lot to me because ever since then, I’m fine with saying, ‘Yeah, obviously y’all know I’m Black, but I need you to know that I have had this experience because of the fact that I’m Black and I have these feelings because I’m Black’…” (Candace)

“...We read and had small group discussions about police brutality. She made me feel so comfortable for when talking about a subject like that. I’m the only Black person there and she didn’t make me feel like I was the voice of all Black people, which I really valued. (Candace)

| PIP | “The weird thing was that in engineering, I saw plenty more minorities than there are in my education classes. I realized in the first month or so that the first semester I took any of these education courses, I was gonna have to deal with it. It’s not a bad thing to deal with. It’s really not different from my AP classes. In my classes, Group Me has been good because it is not as awkward as asking somebody for your number, which is super, super, super awkward when you are the only Black male in a classroom full of women...” (Davis) |

I think being in classes that I’m more passionate about and I’m speaking up more because I’m comfortable. Doing that has also allowed me to have more friendships, but also not being too afraid to ask people questions and just bonding with people” (Candace) |

| ONS | The ‘Only’ Status

When discussing peer interactions and feelings of integration, the concept of being the only racial representative emerged. Participants communicated instances when they detected being the “only” as a constraint, but their narratives also included conditions in which this status was less problematic. |
“One of the few friends that I did make was from band. She and I were the onlyLatinas. So somehow, we like were kind of just standing there. We made eye contactand then we just started hanging out and became friends from there. I never reallytalked much to anyone else in band except for I think a couple of other people, but itwas usually the two of us together.” (Maria)

“I have tried to form a little bit of a strong relationship with peers in myprogram, except I am the solo Latina. I feel like I am the only one in myprogram you know. I like to gather, like to party. It’s such a big part of myfamily and my Chicano culture...I feel a little bit separated from my peers inmy program because I’m like, ‘Come on girls let’s party’ and they’re like,‘We have to do that next week or we have to read this’ or whatever. And I’mlike, ‘That’s okay. That’s fine’...I wish that I could study with them because Iwould feel more confident about my grades, getting ready for projects orgetting ready to start writing a paper. I would feel like more confident andmore comfortable approaching that. But I just feel like out upbringing isdifferent and so like, that totally reflects on how we are as people...”(Isabelle)

“I’m used to being potentially one of out of two Black students, so I neverreally had the culture shock of being the only Black person in anyenvironment. That was something I grew up with and I was used to that, butbefore being in the program, I never really had people that I consider friendsoutside of class. I saw them in class. We used each other for notes and thatwas the extent of it, especially in [other] classes. It was a competitiveenvironment, and it was so cutthroat at times...”(Candace)
Appendix N

Segment of Open Coding/In-vivo Coding for Focus Group

Exploring *RQ#4: What experiences coalesce across Teacher Candidates of Color within one Predominately White Institution (PWI)*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd Cycle Open Coding</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefit of clinical experiences</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism in clinical experiences [FOM- Fear of Marginalization]</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Use of Spanish (fear)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Interactions with racist mentor teacher (fear)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microaggressions [FOM - Fear of Marginalization]</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Experienced with peers</td>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Experienced with mentors</td>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of safety in clinical experiences (fear) [FOM - Fear of Marginalization]</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort of racial (cultural) parity in clinical experiences</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Among students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ With mentor teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurocentric history in schools</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being “racially ambiguous” [CE - Chameleon Experience] “Filtering myself, especially around my peers.”</td>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fears [FOM - Fear of Marginalization]</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Diminished capabilities</td>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Retaliation</td>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Deferring to the majority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ impact on identity &amp; identity expression</td>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotype threat [FOM - Fear of Marginalization]</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Racial/ Tropes (fear)</td>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Gender Tropes (fear)</td>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort of parity among peers [NN - Nested Needs]</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Same and with other racial minorities</td>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Comfort with an ally [NN - Nested Needs]</td>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort with an ally [NN - Nested Needs]</td>
<td>Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Holding back” [CE - Chameleon Experience]</td>
<td>Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Deflecting with humor (during tough conversations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making self “smaller” to not overwhelm the majority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Make myself smaller in the room.” - [CE - Chameleon Experience]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Blending in” [CE - Chameleon Experience]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attracted to diverse students [NN - Nested Needs]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeking Support Systems [NN - Nested Needs]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other SOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Watering self down” [CE - Chameleon Experience]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being “Whiter”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>