

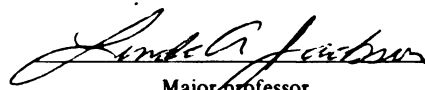


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**ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERRACIAL COUPLES**

**By**

**Donna Annemarie Gerard**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Department of Psychology**

**1995**



## **ABSTRACT**

### **ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERRACIAL COUPLES**

**By**

**Donna Annemarie Gerard**

**Research was conducted to investigate attitudes toward interracial couples and to determine if some interracial unions are more acceptable than others. Subjects received information about a married couple and indicated their impressions of compatibility, likability, marital success, desire for social distance, personal image, psychological adjustment, social orientation, intelligence, and social, professional and relationship success. The racial composition of the target couple was varied (e.g. Black male/White female). Subjects perceived White couples and Asian/White couples to be more compatible, likable and more likely to enjoy marital success than Black/White couples. Asian/White couples were not perceived differently than White couples. The hypothesis that in-group members who engage in interracial marriage are judged more harshly than out-group members who do (Black Sheep Effect) was not supported. Implications of the results and the importance of determining how information about interracial couples is processed are discussed.**

**This work is dedicated to my grandmother**

**Anne T. Lewandowski**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my most sincere appreciation to my advisor Linda A. Jackson who has been a consistent source of encouragement. You're the best blend of a mentor who is both supportive and "by my side" while at the same time teaching me to "stand on my own two feet".

To my committee members Galen V. Bodenhausen whom I greatly respect and admire and Norbert L. Kerr whose genuine love and enthusiasm for the field is contagious. I am indeed fortunate to gain my training from the three of you.

To my forth floor combat buddies who have become like family: Jen, Julie, Susan, Ruth, Carole, Ulrike, Todd, and Dale. Special thanks to my "whining" partners Lisa and Mike.

I am especially grateful to Ranald and Christine Hansen who introduced me to the wonderful world of social psychology. Without the two of you, I would truly not be here.

Most importantly, to my husband Wayne, whose love and support and genuine joy in my growth has made it all possible. Thanks for the many cups of tea served at my computer and your dependable "Can I get you anything?" while I worked on this thing.

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## INTRODUCTION

Personal relationships can be difficult to establish and sometimes even more difficult to maintain. They can be experienced as fragile entities in need of constant attention or as tenacious ones with virtual lives of their own. They are susceptible to fluctuations instigated by both internal and external forces. They are by their very nature complex. The same features that frequently make relationships difficult to experience also make them challenging to study. Thus, it is not surprising that the study of interracial relationships might present unique challenges.

For those who study interracial relationships, there is an additional hurdle; the absence of an adequate theoretical framework. Why can't the study of interracial relationships call upon the ever increasing body of research on relationships in general to answer its questions? In some respects it can. Questions such as how we relate to our loved ones, how we seek and encourage intimacy with our partner, and the stages a relationship passes through as it grows apply to all human relationships.

However, all of these aspects of relationships are internal to the couple. There are also external forces that impinge on the relationship. According to Duck (1988), in his book Relating to Others, there are "circumstances that impinge on the relationship from outside" that establish the external context of the alliance. Among these he notes the effects of belonging to a particular culture with its own set of rules and definitions, and the influence of being in a network of other people within which the relationship occurs.

There are strong social norms that dictate acceptable potential partners from the

field of possible partners. Winch (1958) suggested that we consider our "field of eligibles" as those potential spouse candidates who are both appropriate and probable. Rodin (1981) went further to say that we "disregard" those who don't meet our criteria and that this disregard renders them invisible for all practical purposes. So what comprises appropriate, probable or visible? There is a potent preference towards things (and people) that are familiar (Kerckhoff, 1974). We prefer to be with those similar to ourselves; it is perceived to be more comfortable and safe. As a result, we usually select marriage partners and friends who are of the same race, religion, social class, educational background and economic status as ourselves (Burchinal, 1962; Kerckhoff, 1974; Rubin, 1973; Udry, 1971). In fact, research has demonstrated that we often marry someone who lives very close to us (Fischer, 1982; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). There still exist very strong social norms regarding the selection of marriage partners with a bias towards choosing same-race partners (Klemer, 1970). These norms are internalized and are a result of living in a structured and racially stratified society. They influence and guide our behavior.

Why do we follow norms for prescribed behaviors? Weiss (1975) suggests that this is probably based on our need for inclusion and our desire to be members of a community. In other words, we often do "care what the neighbors think". Part of living in a community is living by its rules and most communities have rules regarding eligible partners. If these rules are disregarded, then the risk of being excluded from the community is a real one. Not only do we have to worry about what the neighbors think, we have to worry about what they might do. As Duck (1988) suggests, the accepted



norms of being a Capulet weigh heavily on one who finds herself in love with a Montague. Such norms may be internalized by people who therefore want to make homogamous same-race choices. Further, these internalized norms can be enforced by others through effective sanctions (Duck, 1981). In short, the pressures a society places on its members could be viewed as strong enough to influence one's choice of acceptable marriage partners.

Given that marriage to someone of a different race was a felony in the United States until as recently as 1967 (Porterfield, 1982), that marrying outside ones' own race is seen by many as breaching an important and basic social norm (Klemer, 1970; Spickard, 1989), and considering the conflictual nature of race relations in our country (Hernton, 1988), it seems fair to presume that interracial relationships compared to intraracial ones are subject to a different external context. Therefore, the framework developed to guide research of relationships in general is not completely applicable to interracial relationships; the external contexts are different.

If we accept that differences (e.g. in perceptions of partners, internal and external influences, etc.) between same versus mixed-race couples do exist, why have these discrepancies not been addressed in the literature? Why is there a lack of empirical research concerning interracial relationships? This may be due, in part, to what some authors see as a lack of interest in the subject (Bernard, 1980; Porterfield, 1978).

Researchers often investigate topics of personal concern or experience. It may also be that due to the controversial nature of interracial relationships, researchers of the past have hesitated to open the proverbial can of worms for fear of being censured (Jeter, 1982).

This controversy is particularly true of those marriages occurring between African-Americans and Caucasians. This combination still remains as the most unacceptable of all interracial pairings (Hernton, 1988; Porterfield, 1982).

Yet, the increasing incidence of interracial marriage (especially between Blacks and Whites) suggests that it is not just an historical artifact but rather a genuine and robust social trend worthy of study. According to the 1990 Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990) the number of Black-White marriages has tripled since 1970, from 65,000 to 218,000. This accounts for an average of 1.0 - 1.5% of all marriages. Some say this might be an underestimation due to the fact that many states no longer record racial information on marriage licenses. This makes attaining accurate numbers difficult. It is known from the most recent census, however, that interracial births in the United States have increased 26 times faster than the overall birth rate. This includes all interracial births, not just Black/White (Zack, 1993). Of course, there is no way to know if this is a genuine trend or rather reflects a reporting bias. If the current trend persists, interracial marriages will continue to increase in number. How people who engage in such unions are perceived, our attitudes toward them, and our willingness (or unwillingness) to accept interracial marriage among our own family and friends are issues that an increasingly larger portion of individuals may have to consider in the future.

### **Early Research**

Early research approached interracial marriage as a problem to be solved; a transgression to be controlled. Although some research attempted to understand this topic in terms of social conditions, psychological and psychoanalytic approaches were not

uncommon (Cretser & Leon, 1982). For example, interracial marriage has been explained in terms of inadequate repression of attraction to the opposite sex parent (Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Ho, 1984; Kelley, 1976). If the Oedipus/Electra complex (which centers on attraction to the opposite sex parent) is not successfully navigated as a child, he or she (as an adult) may choose a partner who is as different from their opposite sex parent as possible as a means of settling the issue. This is attributed to an "exaggerated phobia of incest" (Ho, 1984). Research conducted to investigate this theory has relied solely on individual case studies and proof is even more elusive since these conflicts are assumed to be unconscious and are therefore difficult to establish or falsify.

Biegel (1966) proposed that a lack of self-esteem or feelings of inferiority may cause someone to marry a member of a (perceived) lower social group because they feel they deserve no better. His research consisted of interviewing 19 interracial couples, each consist of one White partner. The other partner was Black (11), Japanese (2), Puerto Rican (2), Chinese (1), Native American (1) or Mexican (2). Seven of the couples were married, 6 had considered marriage at one time, 6 were intimate and committed but did not intend to marry. Biegel relates each subjects personal story and concludes with tables that summarize characteristics of the 19 couples as he perceived them. Partial motives for interracial pairings included feelings of inferiority, rejection of one's own race, sexual shortcomings of self and pathological characteristics (i.e. emotional instability, feelings of inferiority, homosexual tendencies, sadism and psychotic tendencies). Biegel concluded that "the differential status and prestige assigned to the different races in one cultural area offer opportunities to satisfy neurotic, psychotic or other maladjustive tendencies. It is

this maladjustive motivation that distinguishes so many hetero-racial sexual relations and marriages." Again, conclusions were drawn based on relatively small samples of people using subjective measures that are open to interpretation.

Thomas Brayboy (1961), a Black psychiatrist, stated that "deep seated psychological sickness of various sorts underlie the 'vast majority' of marriages between Blacks and Whites." He further explains that it is because of society's opposition that these marriages offer a place to act out one's personal problems and that "these marriages often have little to do with love and tenderness; instead they are arenas for hostility, control and revenge." Brayboy insists that all behavior is unconscious in its motivation. Unfortunately, this makes his position unfalsifiable. As with the previously mentioned explanations, this too draws only on case studies for its support (Porterfield, 1982).

Other positions include Whites marrying non-Whites for idealistic reasons (Osmundsen, 1965), as a show of rebellion against parental authority (Saxton, 1968) or because self-hate is sometimes being expressed by marriage to an "inferior" (Rubenstein, 1963). Attempts to support any of these theories empirically have failed. According to Porterfield (1982), the theories are "unsystematic, fragmentary, and speculative."

Although fewer in number, other, less volatile explanations have looked to sociological or geographic factors to explain the steady increase in interracial marriage. General propinquity was suggested as a partial determinant of intermarriage as early as 1946 (Barron, 1946). Desegregation in educational institutions, places of employment, residential areas (to some extent) and transportation have all led to increased contact between members of different groups. With an increase in contact comes an increase in

other-race friends, neighbors, co-workers and often, romantic partners. Propinquity is probably an even more valid partial explanation today than it was when it was first suggested because of the increased possibility of contact.

Some have looked at the patterns of interracial marriage for an explanation of the occurrence of interracial marriage. Considering marriages between Blacks and Whites, unions involving Black males and White females are by far the most prevalent since 1874 (when considering marriages versus matings) and continue to account for the majority of interracial marriages (Porterfield, 1982; Wade, 1991). In fact, the current ratio of Black male-White female versus White male-Black female marriages is 2 to 1 (Wade, 1991). Two reasons have been offered to explain the preponderance of this specific combination although both seem rather dated in light of current data. The first is based on "social exchange theory" and the second on "accessibility theory".

With regard to social exchange theory, some have suggested that in the case of Black males marrying White females, the Black male has exchanged his socioeconomic status for the social status gained by a White wife (Davis, 1941). In other words, he gains socially and she gains economically. This may have seemed especially compelling when occupational opportunities for women were even more limited than they are now and were in fact practically nonexistent. During the earlier part of this century a women's financial security was derived almost completely from her man's economic status. In fact, some have argued that a Black husband enhanced his economic-occupational status by having a White wife (Merton, 1964). However, with the rise in Black consciousness and solidarity that began in the 60's and has continued through present times, having a White wife might

make things more difficult for a Black male rather than easier. This may be true especially when it comes to the opinion of other Blacks who may view marriage to a White as "selling out" (Hernton, 1988).

The second explanation for the preponderance of Black male/White female marriages, is the notion of accessibility to females. It is based on traditional sex roles, with females the more passive partner and males the more active instigator. Historically, Black males have not had access to White females. White males have had access to Black females however. Since White males have long occupied a dominant position in society, there has been little public censure of their activities nor much social pressure to legitimize their sexual relationships. Black males have not enjoyed the same position and would be more prone to pressure from society to legitimize their unions via marriage.

The current limited data do not appear to support either the "social exchange theory" or the "accessibility theory" explanations. Nor do they seem to support the notion of interracial marriage as an expression of neurotic conflict. Instead, as related shortly, the findings suggest similarities in education, social and occupational status as being issues of consideration for those marrying interracially. In reality, the little empirical research that has been done has concluded that people who marry interracially do so for the same reasons as those who marry intraracially; for love, companionship and compatibility (Porterfield, 1982). They support a more tolerant view of people seeking a life partner with whom they can share love, warmth and intimacy (Jeter, 1982), and who marry for love, shared interests, values and ideas (Brown, 1987). Yet, given the types of explanations that have been advanced by many researchers, combined with historical

influences, it is not surprising that many misconceptions regarding these unions persist. Further, it is reasonable to assume these misconceptions might affect peoples' perceptions and attitudes toward interracial marriage even though overall disapproval has lessened (Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985).

### Asian-White Intermarriage

While the issues surrounding Black/White intermarriage will dominate this discussion subsequently, due to the complexities of the issues involved, some background information regarding Asian/Caucasian intermarriage is also necessary. Much of the research conducted on Asian out-marriage concerns primarily Chinese and Japanese occurrences (Kitano, 1982; Kitano & Yeung, 1982; Kitano, Yeung, Chai, & Hatanaka, 1984; Schwertfeger, 1982; Sung, 1990). Marriages between Asians and Caucasians are much more common than marriages between African-Americans and Caucasians in the United States. In 1979, 41.2% of Chinese and 60.6% of Japanese living in the United States, married outside their race (Kitano et al, 1984). While it is difficult to compare the racism and discrimination displayed towards a population held in slavery (i.e. African-Americans) to that directed towards a particular immigrant group (e.g. Japanese), it is safe to say that the sentiment towards Asians up until the second World War was negative (e.g. the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which forbade any Chinese immigration until 1943; Kitano & Yeung, 1982). The same miscegenation laws applied to both Asians and African-Americans. Miscegenation is defined as interbreeding between members of different races or marriage or cohabitation between a man and a woman of different races. As will be discussed later, Asians who "marry out" share many of the same characteristics

as Blacks or Whites who do so. There are however, two considerations unique to this group that influence the occurrence of interracial marriage; generation and acculturation.

The first, generation, refers to how long ago the family immigrated to the United States. The Chinese were the first Asian group to come to the United States with the initial migration occurring between 1850 and 1882. The Japanese immigration occurred later, between 1890 and 1924 (Kitano, 1982). Research demonstrates that the incidence of marrying outside ones' race increases with successive generations. For instance in 1979, Chinese and Japanese who married out did so at a rate of 15.2% and 26.1% respectively for first generations compared to 55.1% and 43.6% for second generations. By the third generation, 37.1% of Chinese and 50.0% of Japanese in the U.S. married out (Kitano et al, 1984).

The second influence, which is tied to the first, is acculturation. As individuals become more acculturated, they are less under the control of their families, are further removed from historical circumstances, are more familiar with American norms and roles, and are more likely to use personal motives for selecting a marriage partner than their cohorts who have not been acculturated to the same extent (Kitano et al, 1982).

### **Black-White Intermarriage**

When considering marriage between Blacks and Whites, the interaction of two factors seem to be important: cultural influences and historical events. It is difficult to understand the lack of acceptance of Black/White interracial relationships without knowing something of our country's unique history as it relates to race.

In spite of the fact that early colonists held rigid attitudes about sexuality,



particularly the sexuality of Africans, race mixing did occur. In fact, there was proportionately more interracial mating in the colonial era than at any later time in American history until the present (Jordan, 1974). The overall trend has been curvilinear, with a decline in the occurrence of interracial marriages between 1900 and 1940, at which point the number began to climb once again.

There are two important points to keep in mind when considering this curvilinear pattern. First, the early part of the trend refers to interracial mating while the later portion deals with interracial marriage; a very significant difference. Most of the early unions were informal or coercive with only a very small number resulting in marriage, which occurred primarily between White men and Black women.. These casual relationships, while not necessarily embraced, were overlooked as long as marriage was not the result. To acknowledge interracial relations via marriage was to admit equal status between partners and this was contrary to the whole racial system (Spickard, 1989). As early as 1630, courts began to condemn and punish those involved in interracial unions but it wasn't until almost a century later that specific laws against it emerged. In North Carolina for instance, a 1741 statute was enacted for the "prevention of that abominable mixture and spurious issue, which hereafter may increase in this government by White men intermarrying with Indians, Negroes, Mustees or Mulattos" (Spickard, 1989).

The second point to remember is that the relationships occurring during the early historical period often dealt with forced relations, mostly between men of power and their slaves (Hernton, 1988), whereas those occurring later were between consenting partners. While both legal and social sanctions were in place, census information attests to the fact

that relations between the races did not abate. In the 1850 census, 405,751 mulattos were counted. In 1860, the number rose to 588,363 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1850, 1860).

Certainly it is reasonable to argue that these early pairings were not really "relationships" in the usual sense. Most were probably not mutually satisfying or nurturing for both partners. While the pairings of interest for this research consist of consensual relationships, the cultural, legal and social past has set the stage for the current attitudes toward interracial relationships.

In the 20 years following the abolition of slavery, laws against miscegenation came to exist in almost every state. By 1920, 30 of the 48 states had outlawed interracial marriage. Even as recently as 1967, seventeen states still had such laws. It was then that the constitutionality of these laws was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court by a Virginian couple named Richard and Mildred Loving. The result was a decision that made such laws unconstitutional. Yet, while the written laws have been changed, the "unwritten" laws have not (Hernton, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993). Interracial couples may be protected from legal censure but they still battle social ostracism and castigation (Hernton, 1988). Both Blacks and Whites have their objections to interracial marriage, citing the destruction of family traditions as a result of race mixing, problems that the couple and their children will face, and the loss of purity of each race (Hernton, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993).

#### Characteristics of those engaging in interracial marriage

Some research has indicated that those who choose to intermarry tend to be, on average, older than those who do not (Burma, 1963; Cretser, 1967; Monahan, 1973;

Porterfield, 1982; Risdon, 1954). At the time of Porterfield's study in 1982, of 67 interracial couples in the United States, the average age was 22.5 for grooms and 20.5 for brides. The grooms in his study married at an average age of 27.5 and brides averaged 21.0 years of age. Most of the research also supports the fact that those intermarrying are more likely to have been married previously (Burma, 1963; Pavela, 1964; Monahan, 1973; Porterfield, 1982). The average number of children born to interracial couples was found to be similar to White/White couples but fewer than those born to Black/Black couples (Heer, 1974). Initially, research tested the hypothesis that only those of lower social classes engaged in interracial marriage (Calhoun, 1917). In fact, some believed that only the "vilest and most degraded" would intermarry (Reuter, 1918; Shannon, 1930).

Attempts were also made to show that only those of low occupational levels entered into interracial unions (Hoffman, 1896; Holmes, 1937; Stonequist, 1939) but it was disputed even at that time by others (Dubois, 1899; Schuyler, 1934; Roberts, 1956). Research conducted somewhat more recently (Monahan, 1976) found that all socioeconomic groups participate in interracial marriages and the whole spectrum of occupational levels is represented as well. Empirical findings demonstrate that almost all members of interracial couples share a similar social, educational and economic background with their partners (Aldridge, 1978; Blau, Becker & Fitzpatrick, 1984; Porterfield, 1982; Poussaint, 1983).

While occurrence of interracial marriage has increased greatly (Aldridge, 1978; Brown, 1987; Porterfield, 1982), attitudes towards it are ambivalent at best (Crester & Leon, 1982; Jeter, 1982). A survey conducted by NORC (National Opinion Research Center) in 1982 showed that 66% of respondents answered "no" to the following

question: Do you think there should be laws against marriages between Blacks and Whites? Thirty-four percent answered "yes". However, in 1983 when NORC asked "Do you approve or disapprove of marriage between Whites and non-Whites", only 40% indicated that they approved. Apparently, while many would not go so far as to make interracial marriage a felony, they still do not personally approve of it. Other questions pertaining to social distance (e.g. full neighborhood integration, acceptable Black/White student ratio for schools, having a Black dinner guest to your home) have shown considerable change towards less discrimination over the years (Schuman, Steeh & Bobo, 1985). However, as long as there remains a level of uncomfortableness in these areas, it seems safe to assume there will be a reluctance by some to accept interracial marriage.

#### **Ambivalence toward interracial relationships**

Surveys indicate that the attitudes verbally expressed toward interracial dating and marriage have become increasingly tolerant (Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985; Taylor, Sheatsley, & Grail, 1978). Yet other evidence shows that even though attitudes are becoming more positive, behavioral biases continue (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). In other words, people are willing to advocate tolerant ideals in principle but are reluctant to stand by them in practice. The potential discrepancies between attitudes and behaviors have been well documented (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

These findings serve to illustrate the discrepancy between our verbal support of abstract principles and our reluctance to see them actually implemented. This ambivalence has been demonstrated to apply to issues such as residential integration, educational desegregation and racial hiring quotas (Katz, Wackenhut & Hass, 1986).

Thus, while many Whites are willing to recognize that Blacks have been ill-treated in the past and deserve some assistance, they also question the motives and methods of Blacks in attaining these changes ( Kinder & Sears, 1981; McConahay, 1982).

The "lip-service argument", so dubbed by Katz et al (1986), describes a type of prejudice that differs from the old-fashioned, overt type. It refers to the discrepancy between the egalitarian principles a group endorses (e.g. Whites) and their reluctance to see them implemented. These relatively new expressions of prejudice have been called "symbolic racism" (Kinder & Sears, 1981), "modern racism" (McConahay, 1986) and "aversive racism" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). While the terms used to describe the phenomenon may differ, certain general similarities exist. This new type of subtle prejudice is expressed by citing ambiguous or non-racial grounds for opposition to issues (e.g. Blacks probably prefer to live where they feel more comfortable) rather than the more blatant, overt racist positions (e.g. We don't want you here) of the past. In the present study we expected that subjects would cite non-racial grounds for an interracial couples' perceived incompatibility where possible. They might, for instance, note educational differences between the partners and base their low ratings of potential marital success on that. This prediction holds for subjects overall and is predicted by both the aversive racism notion (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986) and the modern racism theory (McConahay, 1986).

Given that there has been a shift toward a more tolerant view toward interracial marriage, why have attitudes toward these relationships remained ambivalent? A partial answer to this question lies in what we know about relationships in general.

### Related research bearing on interracial relationships

Perhaps the most prominent literature to lend itself to this topic is that which deals with in-groups and out-groups. Often, interracial couples we encounter are comprised of one in-group member (a member of our own racial group) and an out-group member (someone of a race other than our own). The differentiation we make between the groups we belong to and those we don't has been the topic of much research (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1969, 1970; Billing & Tajfel, 1973).

The most often cited result of the studies investigating in-group/out-group distinctions is that we tend to evaluate our own group more favorably than other groups; the in-group bias. This bias may manifest itself in many ways such as indicating greater liking for in-group members, judging them to be more intelligent, more attractive and more deserving of special consideration. Further, out-group members are seen as demonstrating less variability amongst themselves than are in-group members; the out-group is considered to be homogeneous (Diehl, 1990; Messick & Mackie, 1989), less complex, and less individuated (Judd & Park, 1988; Linville & Jones, 1980).

The theory of in-group/out-group differentiation would therefore predict that if presented with an interracial couple, we would show a favorability bias towards our own group member. But would we? Recent work by Marques (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, Yzerbyt & Leyens, 1988; Marques, Robalo & Rocha, 1992) suggests we might not always show in-group favoritism.. Marques et al (1988, 1992) maintain that likable in-group members will be judged more favorably than likable out-group members, but unlikable in-group members will be judged more unfavorably than unlikable out-group

members. The authors refer to this concurrent process of in-group favoritism and in-group derogation as the "black sheep effect" (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). Based upon social identity theory, Marques et al suggest that evaluations of in-group members are more extreme than evaluations of out-group members. Further, extreme negative evaluations will be expressed toward in-group members whose deviant behaviors involve an issue deemed important to the group's social identity. As discussed earlier, the presence of potent internalized norms dictating appropriate romantic partners could be viewed as important to a group's social identity. Hence, someone deviating from this expected behavior could be subject to extremely negative evaluations.

Another literature relevant to the present study is the research on group attitudes (Eagly, Mladinic & Otto, in press; Esses, Haddock & Zanna, 1993; Jackson et al, 1995). For instance, recent work by Jackson et al (1995), suggests that Asian-Americans enjoy a more positive overall evaluation by Whites than do African-Americans. For African-Americans, less positive affect (feelings and emotions) evoked by the group accounted for less positive ratings by Whites. Asian-Americans evoked more positive affect than did African-Americans.

However, to make predictions based only on the members as individuals ignores the powerful social context they are presented in: marriage to one another. We have not only two individuals but also a potent social relationship that usually views the two people as one unit (Heider, 1958). Sedikides, Olsen & Reis (1993) demonstrated that relationships offer a basic and natural category that is utilized when organizing information about two people. Their work showed that when a bond or relationship was perceived to

be quite strong, such as that between married partners, it served as an aid in organizing information about the partners. Additionally, Fiske & Cox (1979) demonstrated that relationships are a common way of categorization.

Research has demonstrated that we form social judgments of couples almost automatically and that these judgments are based on our unobtrusive observations and brief contact (Levinger & Snoek, 1972). Further, such judgments are made based on our "implicit understanding of prototypical relationship types" (Forgas, 1993). In other words, do they look like a couple? Do they look like they belong together? Often, these superficial judgments are made utilizing salient characteristics such as physical attractiveness. Along these lines, balance and a sense of "good match" are very desirable characteristics (Forgas & Dobosz, 1980). Balance theory and social exchange theory support this also (Byrne, 1971; Heider, 1958). According to some researchers (Forgas & Dobosz, 1980; Levinger, 1990) we possess very well-defined, consensual notions about appropriate relationships for our culture. In essence, we make comparisons among the two partners and decide if they are ill- or well-matched even when we have only physically observable information.

Even anecdotal evidence tells us we often evaluate couples for "goodness of fit" and that this evaluation considers the couple as a unit. Consider that sometimes we know one of the partners but have never met the other, for example, a co-worker's spouse. If this co-worker is someone we get to know, we probably have an opinion of their relationship based on knowledge of one member of the pair only. Often, what we know about someone's choice of a marriage partner can tell us something about them. Meeting



the spouse of this co-worker frequently gives us insight into a side of him or her we didn't know. If the woman you work with is always very serious and business-like at the office, but her husband (whom you just met) has a wonderful sense of humor, it might influence your perception of her; maybe she is not quite as staid as you once thought. It is this perception of the members as a unit that will act to qualify the attitudes held about the individuals involved. In other words, as stated earlier, the two people will be viewed relative to the relationship (Forgas, 1993; Forgas & Dobosz, 1980; Levinger, 1990; Levinger & Snoek, 1972).

Additionally, there are influences impinging upon perceivers having to do with the interaction of race and sex. Specifically, White males and Black females would be expected to exhibit the greatest disapproval of interracial marriages involving White females and Black males although for different reasons. Historically, White males have attempted to keep their White females "pure and unspoiled" by controlling White female/Black male relations (Spickard, 1989). Due in part to the belief in the superiority of the White race and the necessity of keeping it pure, and in part to preventing sexual competition when White females were few in number (Hernton, 1988; Jordan, 1974), relations between Black males and White females were considered the most repugnant. It is suggested that these beliefs have endured until the present for many, resulting in continued disapproval of this type of interracial relationship.

Black women, on the other hand might have different reasons for disapproving of this particular interracial combination. For instance, due to the high rate of death and incarceration among Black men (Jones, 1986), the pool of potential mates for Black

women is shrinking (Brown, 1987). Each defection of a Black male to an interracial relationship further limits available partners.

Given the early explanations advanced by researchers, combined with historical influences, it is likely that many misconceptions regarding interracial unions still exist. Further, it is reasonable to assume these misconceptions might affect peoples' perceptions and attitudes toward interracial marriage even though overall disapproval (at least as measured by survey data) has lessened.

In summary, attitudes toward interracial couples are proposed to emerge from a combination of historical events, internalized norms which dictate appropriate marriage partners, evaluations of in-group versus out-group members, and specific attitudes held towards particular racial/ethnic groups. The present study examined attitudes toward interracial couples and ascertain whether some interracial combinations are more acceptable than others. The following predictions were offered.

**Hypothesis 1:**

It was predicted that ratings of likability, compatibility and anticipated marital success would be higher for same-race couples than mixed-race couples.

**Hypothesis 2:**

Mixed-race couples consisting of Asian-American/Caucasian partners would elicit higher ratings of compatibility, likability and anticipated marital success than African-American/Caucasian couples.

This hypothesis was derived from two sources. The first was research discussed demonstrating that Asian-Americans enjoy a more favorable overall evaluation as a social

group than do African-Americans (Jackson et al, 1993). Asian-Americans, because they are perceived by Caucasians to uphold the same values as themselves, will be viewed as less different and therefore more acceptable as potential partners. The second source was historical conflict between African-Americans and Caucasians, a conflict that persists today. Specifically, White male's historically long standing objection to White females involvement with Black males.

### Hypothesis 3:

In Black/White and Asian/White couples, especially low ratings of likability and compatibility will be observed for the White partner (the deviant in-group member) compared to the Black or Asian partner (the deviant out-group member).

## METHOD

### Subjects

Subjects consisted of 284 Michigan State University undergraduates recruited from introductory level psychology classes<sup>1</sup>. Subjects participated in exchange for course credit. They were recruited by means of sign-up sheets posted in classrooms and outside the main psychology office.

### Design

A between subjects design consisting of seven conditions was used with 32-34 subjects in each condition. Conditions were identical with the exception of the racial composition of the dyad. Three of the seven conditions were of same-race partners; both partners are either Asian-American, African-American or Caucasian. The remaining four conditions consisted of mixed-race dyads: Asian-American male/Caucasian female, Asian-

American female/Caucasian male, African-American male/Caucasian female and African-American female/Caucasian male.

### **Materials**

**Couple Descriptions:** The couple information was ostensibly written by a research assistant who had interviewed the couple. Information was presented on one page and included the date and time the interview supposedly took place, each partner's name, age, and race, and a handwritten description giving neutral information about the couple to enhance the cover story (Appendix B).

### **Dependent Measures:**

#### **Couple Compatibility/Likability**

Fourteen questions were designed to measure subjects' perceptions of the compatibility of the target couple (e.g. perceived equality of the members, probability of marital success, likability of the partners as individuals). All questions were measured using either a 7-point likert scale or a multiple choice format (Appendix D).

#### **Modified Social Distance Scale**

A six question measure based on Bogardus' Social Distance Scale was used. The items were ordered to reflect an increasing willingness to associate with the target couple in a variety of social situations. Responses were collected using a 7-point Likert scale (Appendix E).

#### **Person Perception Questionnaire**

Thirty characteristics were presented to subjects on likert scales. The characteristics were selected to measure the following dimensions for each partner:

competence/intelligence (uneducated, intelligent, capable, dependable, wise), professional success (ambitious, hardworking, lazy, prosperous, successful), relationship success (warm/loving, trustworthy, romantic, committed and understanding), personal characteristics (masculine/feminine, attractive, likable), psychological adjustment (self-esteem, well-adjusted, moody, depressed,), social orientation (traditional, rebellious, old-fashioned, and religious) and social success (sociable, friendly, isolated/lonely and outgoing). Presentation was counterbalanced so that subjects rated either the wife first followed by the husband or the husband followed by the wife. (Appendix F).

#### **Potential Partner's Qualities Measure**

Subjects were asked to indicate what they considered to be the most important quality/characteristic in a potential mate. Subjects were then asked to rate how important it was that their own marital partner (present or future) possess each of the 20 qualities/characteristics. Responses were collected on a 7-point likert scale (Appendix G).

#### **Strengths and Weaknesses Questionnaire**

Subjects were asked to list their perceptions of both the strengths and weaknesses of the target couple's marriage in an open-ended format. On the next page, subjects were provided with 10 possible reasons why this couple might enjoy a successful marriage, and 10 possible reasons for an unsuccessful union. Subjects were asked to indicate which, if any, might apply to the couple they read about by placing a "1" in front of the most likely reason, a "2" in front of the second most likely reason, and so on. (Appendix H).

#### **Racial Identity**

Three questions asked subjects to indicate how strong was each partner's racial

identity (Appendix I).

### **Demographic Information and Manipulation Check**

The final page of the booklet requested demographic information about the subject ( age, sex, race/ethnicity and marital status). To check the manipulations, subjects were presented with multiple choice questions asking them to recall information about the target persons. Of primary importance was the race of each of the target partners (Appendix J).

### **Additional Measures:**

#### **Mood Measure**

The first page of the dependent measures booklet asked subjects to indicate the extent to which they were feeling each of twenty-seven affect terms (e.g. sad, angry, joyful). A 1-5 rating scale was used in which 1 = not at all and 5 = very much. The affect terms tapped 6 dimensions: positive affect, negative affect, tense, disgust, fear and anxiety (Appendix C).

### **Modern Racism Scale and Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale:**

McConahay's Modern Racism Scale and Marlowe-Crown's Social Desirability Scale were administered as the final measures just prior to debriefing the subjects ostensibly as part of a different study (Appendix K).

### **Procedure**

Subjects participated in groups of approximately 4-8. The experimenter welcomed subjects and familiarized them with the experiment by reading the introduction and cover

story (see Appendix A). At this time, subjects were asked to indicate their willingness to participate by reading and signing the consent form. Subjects were then separated into different partitioned cubicles to enhance their sense of anonymity and confidentiality. The experimenter then distributed the booklet of dependent measures to each participant. Inside the cover of the booklet was a separate sheet containing the couple description (see Appendix B). Subjects were instructed to copy the number from the upper right hand corner of the couple description sheet to the front of their booklets. This number coincided with the subjects condition. Different handwriting and various page layouts were utilized to strengthen the impression that many different couples were being tested. Subjects were instructed to read carefully their couple description and then to begin working their way through the booklet, answering every question. Participants were reminded to proceed through the questionnaires in the order in which they were presented. Further, it was explained that they might return to their description sheet at any time during the experiment to assist them in answering the questions. Subjects were asked to place their materials face down on the desk when they were finished.

Next, subjects were asked to complete a short questionnaire, ostensibly unrelated to the present study. A different consent form naming a different experimenter accompanied the Modern Racism Scale and Social Desirability scale (see Appendix K). When all subjects had completed the experiment, the experimenter asked subjects to deposit all materials in a large box, debriefed the subjects by reading the debriefing form (Appendix L) and distributing a copy of the debriefing form to each participant. Subjects were then given an opportunity to ask any questions, were thanked and dismissed.

## RESULTS

### Preliminary Analyses

Reliability analyses established the reliability of the 7 person perception dimensions: Competence/Intelligence (5 items,  $\alpha = .86$ , e.g. intelligent), Professional Success (5 items,  $\alpha = .84$ , e.g. ambitious), Relationship Success (4 items,  $\alpha = .81$ , e.g. warm/loving), Personal Image (3 items,  $\alpha = .70$ , e.g. attractive), Psychological Adjustment (3 items, e.g. depressed,  $\alpha = .80$ ), Social Orientation (3 items,  $\alpha = .84$ , e.g. traditional,) and Social Success (4 items,  $\alpha = .83$ , e.g. friendly). The traits rebellious, well-adjusted and understanding were dropped from their respective dimensions of Social Orientation, Psychological Adjustment and Relationship Success due to low inter-item correlations.

Four questions (How compatible do you think this couple is, How likely is this to be a successful relationship, How much do you like them as a couple and What chance of success from 0% to 100% do you give this marriage) were combined to measure overall couple compatibility ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

Social Distance: The six social distance questions were combined to form a composite measure ( $\alpha = .78$ ). Higher scores indicated a greater willingness to interact with the target couple.

Traditionality: The social orientation of both husband and wife were combined to give an overall sense of how traditional the couple was perceived to be. Higher scores indicated a more traditional position (6 items,  $\alpha = .87$ , e.g. old-fashioned).

Racial Identity: A composite score was computed to measure how strongly the husbands'



and wives' ties to their own racial in-group were perceived to be. This measure combined responses regarding how comfortable each member of the target dyad was with members of their own race, how rejected they felt by their own race, and the strength of their racial/ethnic identity. Reliability analyses indicated  $\alpha = .55$  and  $.57$  for husbands and wives respectively.

Hypothesis I: Ratings of compatibility, likability, and anticipated marital success will be greater for same- than for mixed-race couples.

Oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed no differences on the "Compatibility" composite measure were performed on the three same race couples. Five planned comparisons were made using Student-Newman-Keuls range tests. White-M/White-F<sup>3</sup> couples were seen as significantly higher than White-M/Black-F or Black-M/White-F couples, ( $M_s = 5.77$  vs  $5.29$  and  $5.45$ , respectively,  $t(222) = 2.315$ ,  $p < .022$ ). White-M/White-F couples were perceived to be higher on Compatibility than Black-M/White-F couples particularly, ( $M_s = 5.77$  vs  $5.29$  with  $t(222) = 2.358$ ,  $p < .019$ ). There were no significant differences found between White-M/White-F couples and Asian-M/White-F or White-M/Asian-F couples ( $M_s = 5.77$  vs  $5.65$  and  $5.75$ , respectively,  $t(222) = .424$ ,  $p < .672$ ).

Additionally, White-M/White-F and Asian-M/Asian-F couples, when compared to Black-M/White-F and White-M/Black-F couples, were viewed as more compatible  $t(222) = 2.747$ ,  $p < .007$ . A trend, ( $t(222) = 1.842$ ,  $p < .067$ ), was observed demonstrating White-

M/White-F couples ( $M = 5.77$ ) and Asian-M/Asian-F couples ( $M = 5.75$ ) to be higher in compatibility than all four interracial couples ( $M = 5.53$ ).

Subject's expressed a trend toward desiring more social distance from couples in mixed-race ( $M = 5.79$ ) compared to same-race ( $M = 6.04$ ) marriages ( $F(1,227) = 3.32$ ,  $p < .069$ ) as measured by the composite social distance variable.

Two social distance questions demonstrated significant differences between same- and mixed-race couples. Subject's reported they would feel more comfortable being in same race marriages ( $M = 5.83$ ) compared to mixed race marriages ( $M = 4.91$ ) ( $F(1,227) = 17.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Subjects also reported feeling more comfortable supporting a family member's involvement in same- ( $6.01$ ) than mixed- ( $5.49$ ) race marriages ( $F(1,227) = 5.98$ ,  $p < .015$ ).

Table 1: Compatibility and Ease of Imagining self in relationship means by condition.

Condition	w male' w female	b male b female	a male a female	a male w female	w male a female	b male w female	w male b female
Compatibility <sup>1</sup>	5.77 <sub>a</sub>	5.59 <sub>a</sub>	5.75 <sub>a</sub>	5.65 <sub>a</sub>	5.75 <sub>a</sub>	5.29 <sub>b</sub>	5.45 <sub>b</sub>
Imagine <sup>2</sup>	2.73 <sub>a</sub>	3.23 <sub>a</sub>	3.20 <sub>a</sub>	4.00 <sub>b</sub>	3.20 <sub>b</sub>	4.63 <sub>b</sub>	3.82 <sub>b</sub>

<sup>1</sup> Composite of 4 questions described in the text. Higher numbers indicate greater compatibility.

<sup>2</sup> Measure of how easy subjects could imagine being in the target relationship. Higher numbers indicate greater difficulty.

All are significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>3</sup> a = Asian, b = Black, w = White

Hypothesis II: Ratings of compatibility, likability, and anticipated marital success will be greater for interracial couples with Asian members than interracial couples with African-American members.

Oneway ANOVA's compared interracial conditions that included an Asian

members to those including an African-American member. Asian-M/White-F and White-M/Asian-F couples were viewed as more compatible, likable, and more likely to enjoy marital success than Black-M/White-F or White-M/Black-F couples ( $M_s = 5.70$  vs  $5.38$  respectively  $F(1,125) = 5.20$ ,  $p < .024$ ). Husbands in Asian-M/White-F and White-M/Asian-F marriages were viewed as more competent/intelligent than those involved in Black-M/White-F combinations ( $M_s = 5.51$  and  $5.02$  respectively,  $F(1,125) = 12.41$ ,  $p < .000$ ). This was not true for the wives ( $F(1,125) = 1.52$ ,  $p < .219$ ).

There was a trend towards husbands involved in Black-M/White-F marriages to be viewed as lower on the Psychological Adjustment dimension than those in Asian-M/White-F unions ( $M_s = 2.66$  vs  $2.93$ ,  $F(1,125) = 3.22$ ,  $p < .074$ ). Again, this did not occur for wives.

Both partners in each of the Black/White combinations were perceived as less traditional, religious and old-fashioned than Asian/White combinations on the Social Orientation dimension (husbands involved in Asian/White marriages averaged  $3.94$  compared to  $3.21$  for those in Black/White unions ( $F(1,125) = 11.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ) while for wives, data show the means to be  $3.90$  vs  $3.31$ , respectively ( $F(1,125) = 7.53$ ,  $p < .007$ ).

A trend in the predicted direction demonstrated that wives in Asian/White marriages were perceived to enjoy more Relationship Success than wives in Black/White marriages ( $M_s = 5.65$  vs  $5.39$ ,  $F(1,228) = 3.52$ ,  $p < .062$ ).

Additionally, there was a trend suggesting that subjects found it easier to imagine themselves in Asian/White marriages than in Black/White marriages ( $M_s = 3.56$  vs  $4.20$ ,  $F(1,228) = 3.31$ ,  $p < .071$ ) (see table 1).

**Hypothesis III: Deviant in-group members will be rated more harshly than deviant out-group members.**

This hypothesis was tested by comparing deviant in- and out-group partners to non-deviant in- and out-group partners on the seven person perception dimensions (e.g. White-M/Black-F and Black-M/White-F to White-M/White-F and Black-M/Black-F). Two 2x2 factorials were conducted; one with White and Black combinations and one with White and Asian combinations. Analyses were conducted using 2-Way ANOVA procedures (Race of partner by deviance/non-deviance). ANOVA's were performed twice; once for the seven male person perception dimensions (e.g. Competence/Intelligence) and once for the female's. This resulted in 14 possible analyses of interest for each 2x2 factorial (24 total).. Significant interactions in the predicted pattern were the crucial test of this hypothesis. A significant must indicate that the deviant in-group member was rated more harshly than deviant out-group members.

**White couples and Asian couples compared with Asian-M/White-F and White-M/Asian-F couples**

White-M/White-F and Asian-M/Asian-F couples (non-deviant) were compared to Asian-M/White-F and Asian-F/White-M couples (deviant). Mean responses were used across subjects within each condition. When considering perceptions of Asian-M/White-F and White-M/Asian-F couples, no significant differences emerged on any of the 14 measures (7 female and 7 male) to support the Black Sheep hypothesis; there were no significant interactions. Deviant in-group members were not judged more harshly than

deviant out-group members.

White couples and Black couples compared to Black-M/White-F and White-M/Black-F couples

When considering the responses of all subjects, no differences emerged to indicate that deviant in-group members were judged more harshly than deviant out-group members on any of the 7 dimensions, for either the wives or husbands.

**Additional Analyses:**

Analysis of the mood measure failed to show any significant differences between same- and mixed-race target conditions. There were no significant differences between male and female subjects<sup>4</sup>.

Overall, subjects found it much easier to imagine themselves in same- versus mixed-race unions ( $M_s = 3.05$  vs  $3.88$ , respectively,  $F(1,228) = 10.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, there was also a trend such that subjects found it easier to imagine themselves in marriage with an Asian-American partner than with an African-American partner ( $M_s = 4.43$  vs  $3.80$  respectively,  $F(1,125) = 3.31$ ,  $p < .07$ ).

Subjects viewed couples, as a unit, lower in Traditionality when they were in interracial vs intraracial marriages ( $M_s = 4.55$  vs  $3.58$ ,  $F(1,228) = 47.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Husbands and wives were each perceived to have a weaker Racial Identity when involved in interracial unions. This pattern was demonstrated for both wives in mixed- vs same-race marriages ( $M_s = 5.13$  vs  $5.70$ ,  $F(1,228) = 21.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and husbands ( $M_s = 5.27$  vs  $5.71$ ,  $F(1,228) = 14.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Further, traditionality was perceived to be particularly low when the couple included an African-American partner compared to when it included an Asian-American partner ( $M_s = 3.26$  vs  $3.92$ ,  $F(1,228) = 10.77$ ,  $p < .001$ ). A woman involved with an African-American partner was viewed as having a weaker Racial Identity ( $M = 4.93$ ) than one involved with an Asian-American ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $F(1,228) = 6.27$ ,  $p < .013$ ). For men, the same pattern held true such that they were perceived as having a weaker Racial Identity when involved with an African-American woman compared to an Asian-American woman ( $M_s = 5.07$  vs  $5.47$ ,  $F(1,228) = 5.78$ ,  $p < .017$ ).

Table 2: Racial identity and Traditionality

Condition:	w male <sup>3</sup> w female	b male b female	a male a female	a male w female	w male a female	b male w female	w male b female
Racial identity <sup>1</sup>	4.10 <sub>a</sub>	4.20 <sub>a</sub>	4.00 <sub>a</sub>	4.12 <sub>a</sub>	4.41 <sub>c</sub>	4.50 <sub>b</sub>	4.52 <sub>b</sub>
Traditionality <sup>2</sup>	4.65 <sub>a</sub>	4.43 <sub>a</sub>	4.57 <sub>a</sub>	3.83 <sub>c</sub>	3.99 <sub>c</sub>	3.05 <sub>b</sub>	3.44 <sub>b</sub>

<sup>1</sup> Comprised of 3 questions (for both the husband and wife) concerning comfort with members of their own race, extent to which the target is perceived to feel rejected by members of race, and strength of racial identity. A measure of the couples racial ties.

<sup>2</sup> A combination of the husband's and wife's social orientation.

<sup>3</sup> a = Asian b = Black w = White

### White couples and Asian couples compared with Asian-M/White-F and White-M/Asian-F couples

A number of differences emerged on the person perception dimensions (see Table 3). Subjects perceived differences in the level of Professional Success (e.g. ambition, hard working) same-race couples possessed relative to mixed-race couples. There was a trend such that wives were perceived to have less professional success when they married outside their race than when they married within ( $M_s = 4.52$  vs  $4.71$ ,  $F(1,129) = 2.79$ ,

$p < .09$ ). For target husbands, the same relationship held true and reached significance ( $M_s = 4.86$  for same race vs  $4.58$  for intermarried,  $F(1,129) = 6.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Not surprisingly, subjects reported differences in the Social Orientation of those who would marry across race lines compared to those who married within them. For women, members of interracial pairings ( $M_s = 3.90$ ) were perceived as less religious, old-fashioned and traditional than members of intraracial unions ( $M_s = 4.63$ ,  $F(1,129) = 14.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ). For husbands in inter- vs intraracial unions the same pattern emerged ( $M_s = 3.95$  vs  $4.60$ ,  $F(1,129) = 11.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In addition, subjects believed women who were in interracial marriages were lower in psychological adjustment than women in intraracial marriages ( $M_s = 2.98$  vs  $2.82$ ,  $F(1,129) = 3.85$ ,  $p < .052$ ).

#### White/White and Black/Black couples compared to Black-M/White-F and White-M/Black-F couples

A number of differences were found for target couples comprised of Black and White members (see Table 4). Subjects reported large differences between interracial (Black-M/White-F and White-M/Black-F couples) and intraracial couples (Black/Black couples and White/White couples) with regard to their Social Orientation, both for the wives ( $M_s = 3.32$  vs  $4.49$ ,  $F(1,129) = 41.66$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and for husbands ( $M_s = 3.21$  vs  $4.59$ ,  $F(1,129) = 49.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Husbands who married out were perceived as lower on the Competence/Intelligence dimension than those who married in ( $M_s = 5.03$  vs  $5.45$ ,  $F(1,129) = 9.29$ ,  $p < .003$ ) and were also believed to demonstrate lower levels of Professional Success ( $M_s = 4.47$  vs  $4.80$ ,  $F(1,129) = 8.94$ ,  $p < .003$ ). Wives, on the other

hand, were viewed as having less Relationship Success when involved with a same-race partner ( $M_s = 5.40$  vs  $5.75$ ,  $F(1,129) = 4.72$ ,  $p < .032$ ).

Descriptive analyses of the reasons subjects cited most often as the basis for the potential marriage failure revealed that "Money concerns" ( $n=72$ ), "Unlucky" ( $n=71$ ), and "Differences in having children" ( $n=78$ ) were most frequently cited. Other patterns emerged when responses to same-race couples were compared to responses to mixed-race couples. Of those subjects who mentioned "Different backgrounds", 94% of the 67 responses were with respect to mixed-race couples. Of subjects who mentioned "Family pressures" ( $n=63$ ), 83% were in reference to mixed-race couples.

The three most commonly mentioned reasons for potential success of the marriage were "Partners remained faithful" ( $n=176$ ), "Work well as a team" ( $n=124$ ), and "Compatible from the beginning" ( $n=108$ ). Table 5 presents the frequencies and percentages of each response by condition.

On the potential partner's questionnaire, subjects were first asked to indicate what the most important quality was that they would like their potential spouse to share with themselves. Twenty-seven (11%) of subjects who responded mentioned "similar values and morals". Other top responses included "common interests" ( $n=13$ ; 5%), "personality" ( $n=11$ ; 4%), "understanding" ( $n=10$ ; 4%) and "common goals" ( $n=10$ ; 4%).

Twenty other items were subjected to ANOVA procedures and analyzed by subject sex, same- vs mixed-race targets, and condition. (see Tables 12-14)

**Table 3: Subjects' mean scores for the 7 Person Perception dimensions for targets comprised of Whites and Asians.**



**Perceptions of wives:****Competence/Intelligence**

WIFE: W A

N	5.28 <sup>1</sup>	5.40 <sup>3</sup>
Y	5.23 <sup>4</sup>	5.23 <sup>5</sup>

**Relationship Success**

WIFE: W A

N	5.63	5.38
Y	5.60	5.72

**Professional Success**

WIFE: W A

N	4.67	4.74
Y	4.51	4.54

**Social Orientation**

WIFE: W A

N	4.65	4.61
Y	4.04	3.74

**Personal Image**

WIFE: W A

N	5.38	5.14
Y	5.27	5.15

**Psychological Adjustment**

WIFE: W A

N	2.93	2.71
Y	3.17	2.75

**Social Success**

WIFE: W A

N	5.37	5.23
Y	5.18	5.63

**Perceptions of husbands:****Competence/Intelligence**

HUSB: W A

N	5.44	5.48
Y	5.47	5.55

**Relationship Success**

HUSB: W A

N	5.56	5.52
Y	5.59	5.61

**Professional Success**

HUSB: W A

N	4.92	4.80
Y	4.57	4.58

**Social Orientation**

HUSB: W A

N	4.66	4.54
Y	3.94	3.95

**Personal Image**

HUSB: W A

N	5.44	5.21
Y	4.95	5.30

**Psychological Adjustment**

HUSB: W A

N	2.91	2.62
Y	2.65	2.68

**Social Success**

HUSB: W A

N	5.48	5.25
Y	5.31	5.51

**NOTE:** N=not deviant Y=deviant W=White A=Asian

Table 4: Subjects' mean scores for the 7 Person Perception dimensions for targets comprised of Whites and Blacks.

**Perceptions of wives:****Competence/Intelligence**

WIFE: W B

N	5.28 <sup>1</sup>	5.31 <sup>2</sup>
Y	5.07 <sup>6</sup>	5.05 <sup>7</sup>

**Relationship Success**

WIFE: W B

N	5.63	5.83
Y	5.39	5.41

**Professional Success**

WIFE: W B

N	4.67	4.58
Y	4.47	4.50

**Social Orientation**

WIFE: W B

N	4.65	4.33
Y	3.54	3.06

**Personal Image**

WIFE: W B

N	5.38	5.38
Y	5.34	5.03

**Psychological Adjustment**

WIFE: W B

N	2.93	2.85
Y	3.04	2.92

**Social Success**

WIFE: W B

N	5.37	5.64
Y	5.23	5.31

**Perceptions of husbands:**

HUSB: W B

N	5.44	5.46
Y	5.07	4.99

**Relationship Success**

HUSB: W B

N	5.56	5.59
Y	5.42	5.27

**Professional Success**

HUSB: W B

N	4.92	4.68
Y	4.61	4.34

**Social Orientation**

HUSB: W B

N	4.66	4.53
Y	3.04	3.36

**Personal Image**

HUSB: W B

N	5.44	5.42
Y	5.33	5.23

**Psychological Adjustment**

HUSB: W B

N	2.91	2.95
Y	2.83	3.02

**Social Success**

HUSB: W B

N	5.48	5.53
Y	5.62	5.14

**NOTE:** N=not deviant Y=deviant W= White B = Black

Table 5: Subjects' responses of the top attributions for failure of the target couple's marriage across conditions

**Reasons for Failure**

<b>CONDITION:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Total:</b>
Differences in education	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	8
Family pressure	3.2	4.8	9.5	17.5	11.1	25.4	28.6	63
Money	19.4	19.4	12.5	9.7	15.3	8.3	15.3	72
Unfaithfulness	25.0	20.5	15.9	11.4	15.9	2.3	9.1	44
Different backgrounds	0.0	3.0	3.0	22.4	16.4	26.9	28.4	67
Incompatible from start	19.0	19.0	14.3	19.0	9.5	9.5	9.5	21
Lack of common interest	5.6	13.9	27.8	16.7	16.7	5.6	13.9	36
Unlucky	15.5	16.9	19.7	8.5	14.1	12.7	12.7	71
Differences in having kids	20.5	21.8	23.1	6.4	10.3	10.3	7.7	78
Differences in raising kids	23.9	17.4	19.6	6.5	17.4	6.5	8.7	46

**Table 6: Subjects' responses of the top attributions for success of the target couple's marriage across conditions**

**Reasons for Success**

<b>CONDITION:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Total:</b>
Similarities in education	12.5	25.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	12.5	8
Family support	0.0	21.4	17.9	7.1	14.3	21.4	17.9	28
Faithful	13.1	15.3	14.8	11.9	13.1	13.6	18.2	176
Work well as a team	14.5	16.1	16.9	11.3	12.1	12.9	16.1	124
Compat. from the beginning	14.8	11.1	18.5	10.2	15.7	16.7	13.0	108
Shared interests	15.9	21.6	11.4	12.5	14.8	8.0	15.9	88
Similar background	7.1	28.6	35.7	7.1	7.1	0.0	14.3	14
Lucky	22.2	0.0	0.0	11.1	22.2	11.1	33.3	9
Similarities in having kids	12.5	12.5	37.5	12.5	0.0	12.5	12.5	8
Similarities in raising kids	100.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2

**NOTE:** Numbers in boxes are percentages of the number in the total column. Total column refers to the total number of responses made by subjects. Responses were counted only if the item was ranked "3" or higher by a subject.

**Table 7: Subjects' responses of the top attributions for failure of the target couple's marriage**

**Reasons for Failure by Target**

<b>By Target</b>	<b>Same Race Couples</b>	<b>Mixed Race Couples</b>
Differences in education	50%	50%
Family Pressure	17%	83%
Money	51%	49%
Unfaithfulness	61%	39%
Different background	6%	94%
Incompatible from start	52%	48%
Lack of common interests	47%	53%
Unlucky	52%	48%
Differences in having kids	65%	35%
Differences in raising kids	60%	40%

Note: % refer to percentages based on the total number of responses as listed in Table 5.

Table 8: Subjects' responses of the top attributions for failure of the target couple's marriage

**Reasons for Failure by MixA**

<b>By MixA</b>	<b>A/W &amp; W/A Couples</b>	<b>B/W &amp; W/B Couples</b>
Differences in education	25%	25%
Family Pressure	29%	54%
Money	32%	24%
Unfaithfulness	27%	11%
Different background	38 %	55%
Incompatible from start	29%	19%
Lack of common interests	33%	19%
Unlucky	23%	25%
Differences in having kids	17%	18%
Differences in raising kids	24%	15%

Note: % refer to percentages based on the total number of responses as listed in Table 5.

Table 9: Subjects' responses of the top attributions for success of the target couple's marriage

**Reasons for Success by Target**

<b>By Target</b>	<b>Same Race Couples</b>	<b>Mixed Race Couples</b>
Similarities in education	63%	37%
Family support	39%	61%
Faithfulness	43%	57%
Work well as a team	48%	52%
Compat from the beginning	44%	56%
Shared interests	49%	51%
Similar backgrounds	71%	29%
Lucky	22%	78%
Similarities in having kids	63%	37%
Similarities in raising kids	100%	0%

Table 10: Subjects' responses of the top attributions for success of the target couple's marriage

**Reasons for Success by MixA**

<b>By MixA</b>	<b>A/W &amp; W/A Couples</b>	<b>B/W &amp; W/B Couples</b>
Similarities in education	25%	13%
Family support	39%	61%
Faithfulness	25%	39%
Work well as a team	23%	29%
Compat from the beginning	26 %	30%
Shared interests	27%	24%
Similar backgrounds	14%	14%
Lucky	33%	33%
Similarities in having kids	13%	13%
Similarities in raising kids	100%	0%

Note: % refer to percentages based on the total number of responses as listed in Table 5.

Table 11: Subjects' responses to how they would like their potential spouse to be most similar to them and their ratings of 20 other items of potential similarity rated for importance.

**Potential Partner's Questionnaire****Most important similarity (open-ended):**

Response:	Number of responses:	Percentage:
1. Values/Morals	27	11
2. Interests	13	5
3. Personality	11	4
4. Understanding	10	4
5. Goals	10	4

**NOTE:** 70 Ss (30%) left this question blank. Other top answers included trust, respect, commitment, intelligence, honesty, communication.

**Table 12:** Differences between male and female subjects on what similarities they would value in a potential spouse.

**Taken from Twenty Questions:**

Question:	Males	Females	F	p level
Education	5.7	6.0	4.5	.034
Income	3.5	4.4	20.1	.001
Physically fit	5.6	5.0	15.7	.001
Occupation	3.1	3.7	4.6	.032
Social class	3.2	3.7	4.2	.040
Respect	6.8	7.0	6.1	.014
Morals	6.0	6.5	10.4	.001
Physically attr	5.6	4.9	15.1	.001
Ideas a/b kids	5.4	6.3	25.7	.001
Family appro	4.1	5.1	15.0	.001
Love	6.7	7.0	4.1	.042

**Note:** Numbers represent mean scores for each sex across conditions

Table 13: Subjects' ratings of 20 items of potential similarity rated for importance.

**Twenty Choices by Condition**

Question:	Differences between:	F	p level
Income	B/B (3.2) vs A/A (4.7)	2.9	p< .009
Conversation	A/W (5.4) vs W/A (6.3)	3.11	p< .05

Table 14: Subjects' ratings of 20 items of potential similarity rated for importance.

**Twenty Choices by Target**

Question:	Differences between:	F	p< level
Same race	Same race (4.5) vs mixed (4.0)	3.16	p< .07
Same religion	Same race (3.4) vs mixed (2.9)	3.53	p< .06
Same social class	Same race (3.3) vs mixed (3.7)	2.87	p< .09

## DISCUSSION

Recent surveys suggest that more people are engaging in interracial marriage (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990) and that a greater percentage of the population is more tolerant of it (NORC, 1982, 1993; Schuman, Steeh, & Bobo, 1985). One purpose of this study was to see how interracial couples are perceived compared to intraracial couples. Given the complex race relations in this country (Jordan, 1974; Klemmer, 1970; Porterfield, 1982; Spickard, 1989), coupled with strong social norms to marry within one's race (Kerckhoff, 1974; Rodin, 1981; Winch, 1958), it was expected that mixed marriages would not be viewed in the same way as same-race unions. As predicted, they were not.

The hypothesis that subjects would perceive same-race couples as more compatible, more likely to enjoy marital success, and more likable than interracial couples received partial support. Subjects did not differentiate between any of the three same-race couples on the compatibility measure; all were perceived to be equally compatible. It might be that subjects, by rating interracial couples as lower in compatibility, were reflecting their awareness of the potential obstacles mixed couples might face in our society. However, other data suggest that subjects hold perceptions of interracial couples that reflect a disfavor of the couple rather than a concern them.

Yet this perception of lower compatibility among interracial couples did not apply to all interracial pairings. Couples that included an Asian member were not perceived differently than White couples. Further, it made no difference which partner was Asian. In contrast, couples that included a Black member were perceived as lower in compatibility compared to White couples. Those target couples comprised of a Black male and a White



female were perceived as the least compatible. This is consistent with the historical account related earlier that suggests that this combination remains the least acceptable pairing (Herton, 1988).

In addition, couples who engage in interracial marriage were perceived to possess weaker racial identities and to be less traditional. This could be interpreted as support for the prediction that subjects are less supportive of interracial marriages because they violate a very important social norm. Those who would marry interracially are not perceived to be following the rules. Further support arises from the fact that subjects found it easier to imagine themselves in any kind of same-race marriage, be it White, Black or Asian, than in an interracial marriage even though all subjects were themselves White. Those couples comprised of a Black male and a White female were perceived as the least compatible is consistent with the historical account related earlier.

The social distance composite also demonstrated that subjects are not as comfortable in social situations with interracial couples as they are with intraracial couples. If the lower ratings of compatibility were merely reflecting the potential hardships faced by interracial couples rather than disapproval of them, there would be little reason for differences on the social distance scale.

Yet, the preference for same-race couples over mixed-race couples is only part of the picture. It seems that all interracial couples were not perceived in the same way: some were more acceptable than others. It was predicted that subjects would rate interracial couples involving an Asian-American member as more compatible, more likable and more likely to succeed in their relationships than those involving an African-American member

for two reasons. First, prior research has demonstrated that Asians and Asian-Americans are seen to value work, education and family traditions even more than Whites, and evoke more positive affect in White subjects than do African-Americans (Jackson et al, 1995). Second, our unique history with regard to slavery and the struggles of African-Americans to overcome that legacy continues to influence many Whites' attitudes towards Blacks. As expected, our subjects did find those involved in Asian/White intermarriages to be more likable, better suited to each other, and more likely to stay married than marriages involving a White and African-American partner. Further, the majority of harsher judgments made against interracial marriages were made against those involving Blacks and Whites. Of the distinctions subjects made between couples on the seven person perception dimensions, the majority judged couples involved in mixed-race marriages more harshly than those in same-race unions. In other words, couples who were judged to be engaging in deviant behavior (marrying out) were perceived more negatively than non-deviant couples (marrying within one's race). But, nearly twice as many main effects found for deviance pertained to couples including a Black partner compared to those with an Asian partner.

In fact, on an open-ended question, when subjects were asked to suggest potential downfalls of the target marriage, of the 27% that mentioned the interracial nature of the union, 21% pertained to those with a Black member. It seems possible that many people don't even think of intermarriage with an Asian partner as truly interracial. While the Social Orientation measure showed all interracial couples to be less traditional than interracial couples, marriages involving Blacks and Whites were seen as the most non-

traditional.

It seems reasonable to assume that Whites do not perceive Asians as being that different from themselves. One obvious point is physicality; Asians don't look as different from Whites as Blacks do. Further, as research has demonstrated, Asians are perceived to be more similar to Whites than are Blacks on beliefs, values, and work ethics. It seems Whites might not consider marriage to someone who is Asian as much of a deviation.

Very little support was found for the third hypothesis; that of the Black Sheep Effect. Since subjects reported no differences between White/White couples and those couples involving an Asian member on the compatibility composite measure, it follows that they would not judge their in-group members who chose to marry someone who was Asian more harshly; they weren't perceived as particularly "deviant". The lack of support for the Black Sheep Effect as it relates to marriages involving an African-American member is a bit more puzzling.

It may be that information about interracial couples is processed differently than information about intraracial couples. Perhaps the former is not as "natural" a category as the latter (Sedikides, Olsen & Reis, 1993). People involved in interracial relationships might retain more individuality or may not be yoked in the same way as intramarried couples are in the minds of subjects. Therefore, there would be less confusion or overlap in judgments made about either partner. In other words, even though they are married, partners in an interracial relationship may be treated as separate units more so than those in traditional marriages.

Alternatively, the lack of evidence for the Black Sheep Effect might be related to

the cover story subjects were given. Subjects were told that married couples had volunteered to participate in a study about leads to successful marriages. Subjects may have assumed that those couples who participated were interested in learning about their relationship, and in improving it. Although subjects were told the couples would not read their experimental booklets, they were told that the couples would receive feedback from the objective source (the subjects). It might be that subjects wanted to be constructive in their ratings. They may have wanted to be more supportive since the couples were being so open and vulnerable by participating. In essence, they may have felt placed in the role of marriage counselor or armchair psychologist.

People are engaging in interracial marriages of all types with increasing frequency. The present study attempted to begin considering how interracial couples and the partners involved are viewed. The data seem to support the hypothesis that mixed-race couples are still viewed more negatively than same-race couples. What is difficult to determine from the present study is what portion of the data reflects disapproval of interracial marriage and what portion reflects perceptions of the potential obstacles these marriages face. Although this study speaks somewhat to the issue, it is important that future research attempt to differentiate more carefully between subjects personal beliefs and their reflection of societal beliefs.

In addition, a design that does not put subjects into the pseudo-counselor position might reveal data more in line with their personal beliefs. Perhaps subjects could offer their opinions on a marriage that had "ended in divorce", and offer their perceptions of why that occurred.

Another compelling question that needs to be addressed concerns how information about interracial couples is encoded and recalled compared to information about intraracial couples. Do we process information about them in the same way as for same-race couples? Sedikides et al(1993) found that subjects made more mistakes recalling information about married couples compared to unmarried couples. Would we make the same mistakes if we compared same race couples to mixed race couples? Interracial couples are often not perceived as a couple (e.g. waiting to be seated in a restaurant, making purchases in a store). Does this same failure to perceive the couple as a “unit” extend to how we process information about them? Would subjects fail to intermix partner information as they seemed to do for the married or “yolked” couples Sedikides et al(1993) presented? If so, what are the ramifications of this the couple?

One direction for future research would be to consider more specifically how information processing about the couple differs from that of individuals. Does it matter when we find out that someone is in an interracial relationship? What is the difference between meeting an interracial couple first, compared to getting to know one member first (e.g. your in-group member) and then finding out he/she has married outside his/her race? Does the impression of the in-group member change or does the impression one holds influence how the out-group member (their spouse) is perceived?

The study of relationships in general has many questions to address. The study of interracial relationships brings with it different and challenging questions; questions that may interest an increasingly larger segment of the population.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Forty-one subjects who indicated their race to be other than Caucasian were dropped from the analyses. Another 11 subjects were excluded due to either failing the manipulation check (asking them to recall the race of the husband and wife); 8 subjects or because they indicated suspicion (3 subjects). Consequently, 229 subjects' responses ( 101 males and 129 females) were analyzed

Subjects were probed for suspicion by being asked "In your own words, what do you understand the purpose of this experiment to be?" Any response that indicated that the subjects doubted they were reading about an actual married couple was coded as suspicious and not used in the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Additional analyses revealed no differences between the 3 same race couples on any of the seven person perception dimensions with one exception. An Asian-American woman was perceived to have a higher level of relationship success than an African-American woman ( $t(99)= 2.14, p<.03$ ).

<sup>3</sup> The race and sex of the target dyad are indicated throughout the paper by race of male/race of female (e.g. Asian-M/White-F would indicate a couple comprised of an Asian husband and a White wife).

<sup>4</sup> Several other questions that failed to show any significant differences are not discussed. These include questions 2-4, 7,& 8 from the compatibility questionnaire, and questions 1-3 on the strength/weakness form. The Potential Partners' Qualities measure is also not discussed as it relates more to what subjects look for in a marriage partner and is not

directly related to perceptions of the target dyad.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

Welcome to the RELATIONSHIP PERCEPTION STUDY. Please listen carefully as I tell you a little bit about our study and describe what your contribution to it will be.

The field of personal relationships has grown considerably in the last ten years as an area of active research. Because we live in a world where we are called upon to be many things to many people (i.e. child, spouse, parent, friend, etc.) relationships are a very real issue and one that even non-researchers are interested in. We are all concerned with improving our ties with loved ones, being a better partner or parent and resolving the conflicts that arise between people we care about. Among these, lies a renewed interest in marriage and monogamous relationships. Peoples's intensified commitment to forming lasting relationships has led researchers to try and better understand the dynamics of successful versus unsuccessful relationships, especially marriage. In fact, sometimes the very ones that seem doomed from the start last forever and the matches made in heaven end quickly. What is it that makes a relationship successful? How can we improve our chances of having a happy, healthy partnership?

In order to investigate these questions, we have interviewed a large number of married couples. They differ on many, many qualities including age, race, religion, how long they've known each other and how they met. Some have children, others do not. Some have been married recently, others for a number of years. In other words, we've collected lots of data to examine the similarities and differences among married couples. We will be following up on each couple periodically to track their relationship.

Therefore, what we have so far, is the perspectives of the couples themselves about what they view as their strengths and weaknesses. What we'd like from you today is an "objective observers" perspective on these relationships and some information regarding your own ideas of marriage.

If you are interested in participating please indicate this by reading and signing the consent form in front of you now.

**After consent forms are completed and materials are distributed:**

We are interested in general factors that make a relationship work or not work. To that end we asked our researchers to write a short description of couples that they interviewed. Because we did not want to influence what they wrote we did not ask them to follow any specific format. Any identifying information has been removed from these descriptions to protect the anonymity of our couples. Any information that revealed how long they had been together was also removed as it might be too biasing. Before you begin, copy the number marked on your couple description sheet to the front of your booklet so we know which couple you considered. Then begin by carefully reading the couple description sheet. Start working your way through your booklet. Feel free to refer back to the



description sheet whenever you'd like. Please be frank and honest in your responses. They are completely confidential and anonymous; the couples will **not** see your responses. They will receive general feedback from them however. Please do not skip any questions and answer each in the order it is presented. You may begin.

## APPENDIX B

Couple # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interview # \_\_\_\_\_ Time of interview \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewer initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Duration of interview \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do we have correct address? Y N  
 Do we have correct telephone (hm & wk) Y N

<b>HUSBAND:</b>	<b>WIFE:</b>
Name: _____	Name: _____
(last) (first)	(last) (first)
Age: _____	Age: _____
Race/ethnicity:	Race/ethnicity:
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American
<input type="checkbox"/> African-American	<input type="checkbox"/> African-American
<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian/White	<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Previously married? Y N	Previously married? Y N

Provide a short description of the interview and enclose this form with the questionnaires administered to each partner.

Couple # 117 live in a suburb of Detroit where they have recently purchased an older home they intend on remodeling. The interview took place there shortly (1 month) after they moved in.

"Michael" is 5'10" tall with dark hair and is Asian-American. He is 27 years old. His wife "Julie", a White Caucasian aged 26 is 5'5" tall and has shoulder length brown hair. Michael and Julie met through mutual friends who introduced them at an event held downtown in the summer time. They indicate that they "hit it off" immediately. Neither remembers who asked whom out first. They do agree that their first date consisted of dinner and a movie. Michael related that after the movie they stopped for coffee and talked for several hours. Both admit that after meeting each other they stopped dating other people. Michael and Julie dated for almost two years before marrying. It is a first marriage for both of them. They have no children at present. They do have a new dog, a mixed breed named Spig. Although both partners work full time, they indicate that they still manage to fit in activities they both enjoy.

The interview ended with their agreement that they could be contacted in 6 months for the first follow-up interview.

## APPENDIX C

Sometimes the way you are feeling can influence your responses. In order to account for this in our experiment, we ask you to fill out the following. Using the scale below, indicate **HOW YOU ARE FEELING RIGHT NOW** by placing a number in front of each feeling.

- 1 = NOT AT ALL  
2 = A LITTLE  
3 = MODERATELY  
4 = QUITE A BIT  
5 = VERY MUCH

**RIGHT NOW I FEEL:**

___ sad	___ joyful	___ scared
___ relaxed	___ disgusted	___ angry
___ attentive	___ lonely	___ excited
___ revolted	___ nervous	___ hostile
___ interested	___ frightened	___ calm
___ depressed	___ peaceful	___ contempt
___ delighted	___ anxious	___ loving
___ jittery	___ happy	___ loathing
___ irritable	___ fearful	___ downhearted

## APPENDIX D

1. How compatible do you think this couple is?  
Not at all compatible    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very compatible
2. How "well-matched" do you think this couple is?  
Very well-matched    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not at all well-matched
3. How suitable would you say the **woman** is for the man in this relationship?  
Not at all suitable    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very suitable
4. How suitable would you say the **man** is for the woman in this relationship?  
Very suitable    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not at all suitable
5. How likely do you think it is that this will be a successful relationship?  
Not at all likely    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very likely
6. How happy do you think this couple is?  
Very happy    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not at all happy
7. How much do you like the **male** in this couple?  
Not at all    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very much.
8. How much do you like the **female** in this couple?  
Very much    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not at all
9. If 100% is "til death do us part" and 0% is "it won't last 6 months", what percentage best describes the chances you give to this marriage surviving?  
"Won't last six months   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   "til death do us part"
10. Often one partner is perceived as "having made a catch" or as "lucky to have gotten him/her". Which of the following best describes the couple you just read about?  
A) I'd say she is the lucky one  
B) I'd say he is the lucky one  
C) I'd say neither is very lucky  
D) I'd say both are equally lucky
11. Which of the following do you believe to be true?  
A) The woman is of a higher social class than the man  
B) The man is of a higher social class than the woman  
C) They seem to be of equal social class

12. Which of the following do you believe to be true?

- A) The woman has a higher occupational status
- B) The man has a higher occupational status
- C) Their occupational status is equal

13. Which of the following do you perceive to be true?

- A) The woman has a higher educational status
- B) The man has a higher educational status
- C) Their educational status is equal

14. Please indicate your best guess as to the highest educational level attained by each partner. Select only one for each partner.

	HIM	HER
Some high school	___	___
High school	___	___
Some college	___	___
College degree	___	___
Graduate work	___	___
Ph.D. or professional degree	___	___

## Appendix E

Keep in mind the couple you just read about. Answer the following questions frankly and honestly. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer every question.

1. I would be comfortable being in a similar relationship.  
Definitely no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely yes
2. I would be comfortable supporting a family member's involvement in a similar relationship.  
Definitely yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely no
3. I would be comfortable with my best friend being in a similar relationship.  
Definitely no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely yes
4. I would be comfortable having this couple as friends  
Definitely yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely no
5. I would be comfortable having this couple as neighbors  
Definitely no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely yes
6. I would be comfortable working with this couple  
Definitely yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Definitely no

Recall the information you were given about the female (male) in this couple. Indicate the extent to which you believe the following dimensions describe her (him). Rate her (him) frankly and honestly; your responses are confidential. We are interested in your best judgment.

Very uneducated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very educated
Very ambitious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very ambitious
Very cold/unloving	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very warm/loving
Not very feminine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very feminine
Very high self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very low self-esteem
Not very traditional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very traditional
Very sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very sociable
Not very intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Intelligent
Very hardworking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very hardworking
Not very attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very attractive
Very well-adjusted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very well-adjusted
Not very rebellious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very rebellious
Very friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very friendly
Not very capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very capable
Very lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very lazy
Not very trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very trustworthy
Very likable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very likable
Not very moody	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very moody

Very old-fashioned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very old-fashioned
Not very isolated/lonely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very isolated/lonely
Very dependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very dependable
Not very prosperous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very prosperous
Very romantic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very romantic
Frequently depressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Rarely depressed
Not very out-going	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very out-going
Very wise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very wise
Not very religious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very religious
Not very successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very successful
Very understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not very understanding
Not very committed to relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very committed to relationship



## APPENDIX G

Naturally we consider the whole person when selecting a marriage partner and we take many things into consideration. Usually though, it is important that the potential partner be similar to ourselves in at least some ways. First, in the space below, tell us what you believe to be the most important dimension of similarity you'd share with your partner. Then, rate the following considerations by how important each one is or would be to you in choosing a marriage partner. Read each one carefully then select the number that best reflects your opinion.

It is **most** important that my mate and I be similar in the following way: \_\_\_\_\_

How important is each of the following characteristics in your choice of a mate?

## 1. EDUCATION

Not very important    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very important

## 2. INTELLIGENCE

Very important        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Not very important

## 3. INCOME

Not very important    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very important

## 4. SAME RACE

Very important        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Not very important

## 5. PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

Not very important    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very important

## 6. SAME RELIGION

Very important        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Not very important

## 7. NATIONALITY

Not very important    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very important

## 8. OCCUPATION

Very important        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Not very important

## 9. SOCIAL CLASS

Not very important    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very important

**10. RESPECT EACH OTHER**

Very important      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Not very important

**11. SEXUAL COMPATIBILITY**

Not very important   1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**12. POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

Very important      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Not very important

**13. VALUES/MORALS**

Not very important   1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**14. GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST**

Very important      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Not very important

**15. PHYSICALLY FIT**

Not very important   1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**16. SENSE OF HUMOR**

Very important      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Not very important

**17. SHARED INTERESTS**

Not very important   1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**18. LOVE**

Very important      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Not very important

**19. SAME IDEAS ABOUT CHILDREN**

Not very important   1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**20. FAMILY APPROVES**

Very important      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**APPENDIX H**

**In your personal opinion, what do you see as the potential downfalls or weaknesses of this marriage?**

**In your opinion, what do you see as the potential strengths or strong points of this marriage?**

**In your own words, what do you understand the purpose of this experiment to be?**

Try to imagine that you are the "old" boyfriend or girlfriend in this relationship.

1. How comfortable would you be with your old boyfriend/girlfriend talking to their spouse about your past relationship?  
 Very comfortable    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very uncomfortable
  
2. How jealous would you be of their relationship?  
 Not very jealous    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very jealous
  
3. How easy is it for you to imagine yourself in this relationship?  
 Very easy                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not very easy
  
4. If I were to tell you that this couple divorced after three years of marriage, what would you imagine the most likely cause to be? Indicate any that apply. If you think it is more than one, put a "1" by the most likely, "2" by the next likely, etc.
  - ☐ Differences in education
  - ☐ Family pressures
  - ☐ Money problems
  - ☐ Unfaithfulness
  - ☐ Differences in background
  - ☐ Incompatible from the beginning
  - ☐ Lack of common interests
  - ☐ Unlucky
  - ☐ Differences about having children
  - ☐ Differences about raising children
  
5. If I were to tell you that this couple has been happily married for 16 years, what would you imagine the most likely reason to be? Indicate any that apply. If you think it is more than one, put a "1" by the most likely, "2" by the next likely, etc.
  - ☐ Similarities in education
  - ☐ Strong family support
  - ☐ Faithful and loving to each other
  - ☐ Work well as a "team"
  - ☐ Compatible from the beginning
  - ☐ Many shared interests
  - ☐ Similar backgrounds
  - ☐ Lucky
  - ☐ Similarities about having children
  - ☐ Similarities about raising children

## APPENDIX I

Once again, consider the husband when answering these last few questions.

How comfortable would you say he is with other members of his own race?

Not very comfortable    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very comfortable

To what extent do you think he feels rejected by members of his own social group?

Very much                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not at all

To what degree do you think he has a strong sense of racial/ethnic identity?

Not very strong            1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very strong

Now consider the wife when answering these last few questions.

How comfortable would you say she is with other members of her own race?

Not very comfortable    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very comfortable

To what extent do you think she feels rejected by members of her own social group?

Very much                    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not at all

To what degree do you think she has a strong sense of racial/ethnic identity?

Not very strong            1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very strong

**AT THIS TIME PLEASE TURN YOUR "COUPLE DESCRIPTION" SHEET  
FACE DOWN ON YOUR DESK.**

## APPENDIX J

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER:

What was the wife's name in this couple?

- a. Carol
- b. Jennifer
- c. Lisa
- d. Julie

What was her age?

- a. 18
- b. 19
- c. 22
- d. 25

What was her race/ethnicity?

- a. African-American
- b. Asian-American
- c. Caucasian/White
- d. Hispanic
- e. Native American
- f. Other

What was the husband's name in this couple?

- a. Carl
- b. John
- c. Michael
- d. Peter

What was his age?

- a. 19
- b. 20
- c. 25
- d. 27

What was his race/ethnicity?

- a. African-American
- b. Asian-American
- c. Caucasian/White
- d. Hispanic
- e. Native American
- f. Other

What is your sex? \_\_\_\_ MALE \_\_\_\_ FEMALE What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your race/ethnicity?

- a. African-American
- b. Asian-American
- c. Caucasian/White
- d. Hispanic
- e. Native American
- f. Other

Your marital status?

- a. Single
- b. Married
- c. Divorced
- d. Widowed

## APPENDIX K

PLEASE INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. PUT THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

5 = STRONGLY AGREE

4 = AGREE

3 = NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

2 = DISAGREE

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE

\_\_\_ OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, THE GOVERNMENT AND NEWS MEDIA HAVE SEEMED MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUPS THAN THE MAJORITY GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETY.

\_\_\_ MINORITY GROUPS SHOULD NOT PUSH THEMSELVES WHERE THEY ARE NOT WANTED.

\_\_\_ IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND THE ANGER OF MINORITY GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETY.

\_\_\_ DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MINORITY GROUPS IS NO LONGER A PROBLEM IN AMERICA.

\_\_\_ OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, MINORITY GROUPS HAVE GOTTEN MORE ECONOMICALLY THAN THEY DESERVE.

\_\_\_ MINORITY GROUPS ARE GETTING TOO DEMANDING IN THEIR PUSH FOR EQUAL RIGHTS.

Please read each statement and decide whether you feel, in general, that it is mostly true as applied to you or mostly false. Please circle the appropriate letter (T=True, F=False) directly to the left of each statement.

T F 1. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

T F 2. Before voting, I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.

T F 3. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune that they only got what they deserved.

T F 4. I like to gossip at times.

T F 5. On occasion I have doubts about my ability to succeed.

T F 6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

T F 7. I have never intensely disliked anyone.

- T F 8. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
- T F 9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
- T F 10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
- T F 11. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
- T F 12. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
- T F 13. When I don't know something, I don't at all mind admitting it.
- T F 14. I never resent being asked to return a favor.
- T F 15. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.
- T F 16. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
- T F 17. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.
- T F 18. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
- T F 19. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
- T F 20. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
- T F 21. I always try to practice what I preach.
- T F 22. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
- T F 23. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
- T F 24. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
- T F 25. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
- T F 26. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
- T F 27. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
- T F 28. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
- T F 29. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
- T F 30. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
- T F 31. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
- T F 32. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud-mouthed, obnoxious people.
- T F 33. I would never think of letting someone else punished for my wrong-doings.

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR SEX: \_\_\_\_ MALE \_\_\_\_ FEMALE



## Appendix L

At this time we'd like to thank you for participating in the Relationship Perception Study. Psychological research can be conducted in many different ways. One thing that is common to all research however is an interest in learning how people actually think, act and feel in a variety of situations. Because we want true and frank answers, researchers will sometimes not explain everything about the experiment until it is over. That way we can better gather your genuine opinions without subjects trying to "give us what we want".

Because of this, it is sometimes necessary to use deception in an experiment. For instance, in this experiment there are not true married couples that participated in an interview. We tried to make them real for you, in order to gather your opinions on their compatibility as couples. If we were to tell you here is a pretend man and a pretend woman, pretend they're married, the information we collected would probably be different than if you accept them as real people. Are there any questions at this point as to why this deception was necessary? We try very hard to make the situation as real as possible.

This particular experiment is interested in influences our perceptions of a couple's compatibility. Further, we believe that this is influenced by a number of factors including race. Specifically, we are interested in how couples comprised of different races are perceived compared to couples of the same race. So all of you read the same couple description except we switched the race of the man and woman. This way we can compare all the different responses for each combination. Are there any questions?

If you will bring your credit cards up I will stamp them and give you a copy of this debriefing form to take with you. Although I can't discuss results at this time (since we don't have them yet) I'd be happy to talk in greater detail to any of you interested in this topic. Again, thank you for participating.

