ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: INTERRACIAL COUPLES: THE IMPACT OF
                        RACE AND GENDER ON ONE'S
                        EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION BASED
                        ON THE RACE OF THE PARTNER

                        Erin M. Walker, Master of Science, 2005

Thesis Directed By: Associate Professor Leigh A. Leslie
                        Department of Family Studies

Interracial marriages are on the rise in the United States. This study examined whether race and gender influenced the way partners in interracial marriages perceive discrimination and if a difference in perception of discrimination would negatively impact their level of marital quality. Results showed that there was no significant effect for race, gender, or their combination on perceived discrimination, and no relationship was found between individuals' perception of discrimination and marital quality. However, couples that had shared perceptions of the level of discrimination they experienced were less ambivalent about their relationship than were couples that did not have shared perception. This finding is discussed in light of previous research and clinical implications.

INTERRACIAL COUPLES: THE IMPACT OF RACE AND GENDER ON ONE'S

EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON THE RACE OF THE PARTNER

By

Erin M. Walker

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Advisory Committee:

      Associate Professor Leigh A. Leslie, Chair/Advisor
      Instructor Carol Werlinich, Committee Member
      Assisstant Professor Jaslean La Taillade, Committee Member

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In 1967, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional and put an end to all of the legal restrictions that were in place against interracial marriage (Kalmijn, 1993). Until 1967 when anti-miscegenation laws were deemed unconstitutional and in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, 16 states had laws on the books that forbid interracial marriage (Davidson, 1992). Since that time there has been a marked increase in interracial marriages in the United States (Lewis & Yancey, 1997), and the number of interracial couples has doubled every decade since 1960 (Killian, 2002). In 1960, less than 4 in 1,000 married couples were categorized as interracial; however, those numbers have grown to 24 in 1,000 as of 1998 (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000). Statistics show that currently there are approximately 3 million interracial marriages, which constitutes 5% of all marriages in the United States, and another 2.5 million interracial couples that are dating (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002).

The rate of growth of interracial marriages is increasing. Between 1980 and 1995 the number of interracial marriages has more than doubled (Dainton, 1999). In particular, the state of interracial relationships involving Blacks and Whites has been constantly changing. The number of Black-White interracial relationships increased immediately following Emancipation, peaked during 1900, and subsequently declined until 1940. Since the 90's, Black-White intermarriage has been on the increase (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990), however this combination is still the least frequent type of interracial union (Davidson,

1992).

Many explanations have been given for why there has been such a dramatic increase in the number of interracial marriages of all forms. Kalmijn (1993) attributes the increase to three factors. The first, as previously mentioned, is the 1967 Supreme Court decision that made anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional. The second is that the income, occupational, and educational gap between Blacks and Whites has been substantially narrowed. Third, the data used by Kalmijn (1993) from the National Center for Health Statistics suggests that there has been a stable decline in Whites' prejudice against Blacks. Similarly, Davidson (1992) linked the increase in interracial marriage to the progress made by the Civil Rights movement, the increase in opportunities afforded Black people, and the increase in social contact between the races.

Although the number of interracial marriages is increasing each year, the topic is still understudied in social science literature (Davidson, 1992; Hendricksen & Watts, 1999; Kalmijn, 1993; Killian, 2002; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990). The majority of the literature in the field focuses on mate selection criteria, the characteristics of those who date interracially, and why people choose to marry outside of their own race (Lewis & Yancey, 1997; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990) and not what couples' lives are like once they get married or form a committed union (Fears & Deane, 2001; Wright et. al, 2003). Additionally, the majority of research on interracial relationships has focused on certain issues related to Black and White couples. Those topics include societal acceptance of Black-White unions and theories about what motivates people to enter into such relationships. However, little is known about how societal reaction or discrimination affects

the quality of those marriages (Scott, 1987).

At the most general level, the purpose of this study is to determine how the race and gender of the partners in Black-White interracial couples impacts their experience of discrimination, and in turn how the experience of discrimination affects marital quality. Black-White marriages are highlighted in this study due to the long and often tumultuous relationship Blacks and Whites have had historically in America and the strong opposition that has often been expressed to the sexual or romantic involvement of these two groups (Davidson, 1992). While it may be true that there is more acceptance of interracial marriages today than in the past, it has also been found that acceptance of interracial relationships is still weakest for Black-White marriages (Foeman & Nance, 1999).

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The current literature on interracial marriage primarily focuses on three main topics. These topics include the characteristics of those who intermarry, theories on why Blacks and Whites marry outside of their race, and social reactions to interracial marriages.

Characteristics of Those Who Intermarry

Research has shown that there are several common characteristics of those that choose to intermarry. It has been found that people who interracially marry tend to be younger, more likely to have been married before, live in urban areas, and be more distant in age from their spouse than people who marry within their own race. Also, Blacks who were born in the Northeast and North central regions of the United States are more likely to be married to non-Blacks than are Blacks from other regions of the United States (Tucker &

Mitchell-Kernan, 1990). Additionally, Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan (1990) found that males

and females within a particular racial group can exhibit vastly different tendencies towards

marrying interracially. For example, Black males have higher rates of intermarriage than

Black females, while Japanese and Native American women have much higher rates of

intermarriage than their male counterparts. Further, rates of intermarriage vary significantly

based on geographic location and gender. Currently interracial marriage rates are highest in

the West and lowest in the southern region of the United States. The only state in the country

that breaks the normal trends of interracial marriage is Hawaii. Hawaii has a unique racial

makeup in that no single racial group makes up more than 25% of the population and nearly

40% of all marriages are interracial (Solsberry, 1994). It is important however to note that

interracial couples often move to more hospitable areas of the country (Tucker & Mitchell-

Kernan, 1990). Although Black-White intermarriage is the fastest growing form of cross-

racial marriage, Hispanic and Asian American intermarriage to Whites still constitutes a

larger percentage of interracial marriages (Kalmijn, 1993), and Blacks still have the lowest

rate of intermarriage of all racial groups (Davidson, 1992).

Kalmijn (1993) studied Black-White interracial marriages specifically using data

from the National Center for Health Statistics. It was found that Blacks who intermarry with

Whites tend to have a higher level of education and have more occupational prestige than

Blacks who marry within their race. However, Black college graduates are less likely to

intermarry than Blacks with only some college. Kalmijn also found that Black people who

are in interracial marriages have a weaker level of racial group identification than those who

are not, although they report more favorable opinions about the characteristics of their racial

group (Kalmijn, 1993). In light of the increasing rates of interracial marriages, several theories have been developed to help explain why and how these marriages develop.

<center>*Theories on Black-White Interracial Couple Formation*</center>

Scholarly Theories

Several theories have been offered on why people intermarry and how those marriages progress. Structural theory states that interracial marriages are more frequent in a setting where there is a community structure in place that supports and sanctions interracial marriages as well as when society becomes increasingly desensitized to the stigma of interracial marriage. Recent attention given to interracial marriage in the media and in popular literature along with more people living and working in more integrated environments has lead to an increased acceptance of heterogeneous relationships (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002).

Another prevalent theory on why people chose to marry outside of their race is the social exchange theory. As it pertains to Black-White interracial marriage, social exchange theory states that when White women marry Black men, who usually are of higher economic status, they exchange the prestige of the their skin color for the Black husband's higher economic status (Davidson, 1992; Kalmijn, 1993; Lewis & Yancey, 1997).   However, Black women have been found to marry down in both interracial and same race unions, which seem to prove that Black-White interracial marriage is more complex than just an exchange of status (Foeman & Nance, 1999).

Kouri & Lasswell (1993) discuss an additional theory, which attempts to account for the formation of interracial relationships; the racial motivation theory. The racial motivation

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theory states that many interracial marriages take place because of racial differences, not in spite of them. From this viewpoint, it is believed that curiosity about those who are different increases the sexual interest one may have to a person of a different race. This theory also says that those who intermarry may be acting in rebellion against social norms of racial endogamy and using the marriage as a way to state their independence (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993).

Although not a theory of "why" couples' marry interracially, Foeman & Nance (1999) have offered one of the most comprehensive theories on "how" interracial relationships develop. They discuss what they believe are the four stages that interracial couples go through in the formation of their relationship. The four stages include (a) racial awareness, (b) coping, (c) identity emergence, and (d) maintenance. Racial awareness is defined as an interpersonal and cultural experience where two individuals become acquainted and familiar with the similarities and differences between them and subsequently create a shared belief that the relationship can work. Within this stage, there are four sublevels of awareness that are operating for each partner, (a) their own, (b) their partner's, (c) their collective racial group's, and (d) their partner's racial group. It is most important during this stage for each partner to communicate their own views and experiences so that the couple can have a shared meaning for their relationship.

Stage two is coping and this involves accepting that each partner is attracted to the other and discussing how race impacts their lives. This stage is often forced upon interracial couples, because they have no choice but to confront discrimination against their relationship in society. Often those closest to the couple challenge the relationship and predict that it will

fail. This may have a paradoxical effect and draw the couple closer together. The main part of this stage is the formation of coping strategies that are both proactive and reactive. This means that the couple will have to figure out how to shelter themselves from as much discrimination as possible, but still have a plan in place to deal with the discrimination they can not avoid (Foeman & Nance, 1999).

Identity emergence, the third stage, is characterized by the formation of sustaining behaviors that keep the marital unit strong in the face of opposition. This process includes focusing on the family's strengths and seeing their racial differences as an asset instead of a liability. When the couple is hit with intolerant remarks in their daily lives, they reframe it so that the person making the remarks is the one who is abnormal, not them. Also, many interracial couples at this stage begin to see themselves as trailblazers that are ahead of society in truly making a multiracial society a reality (Foeman & Nance, 1999).

The final stage of maintenance spans the entire rest of the couple's life and involves creating new coping strategies when needed in order to keep up with the challenges of society. An important time for all interracial couples to reevaluate their coping strategies is when they decide to have children. Since the challenges of an interracial family are different from just an interracial couple, both partners must work together to redefine who they are as a unit (Foeman & Nance, 1999).

Although not a theory addressing interracial relationships per se, the vulnerability-stress-adaptation theory of marital development has been applied to interracial relationships by LaTaillade (1999) to address how they manage the stressors they experience. Her sample consisted of 240 couples; 80 same-race Black couples; 80 same-race White couples; and 80

Black-White interracial couples. The couples were recruited from Washington, Oregon, California, Georgia, and North and South Carolina and paid a total of $40 for their participation. The theory used was devised by Karney and Bradbury (1995) and offers a model of factors affecting adaptation of couples experiencing any type of stress. The model makes the assumption that the characteristics that the individuals in the couple bring into the relationship combined with stressful occurrences, impact the marriage. These external stressors can have an adverse effect on the marriage by wearing on the couple's resources, decreasing the level of relationship satisfaction, and increasing the number of negative interactions between the partners. Couples that have successful adaptive processes are believed to be able to minimize the negative effects of stress by how they interact and couples with unsuccessful adaptive processes that have negative interactions are believed to experience a lower level of marital quality, separation, or divorce. Although this model had previously only been used to examine White same-race couples, LaTaillade (1999) applied this theory to 80 Black-White interracial marriages. Discrimination was considered to be a stressor external to the relationship that could affect the number of negative spousal interactions and overall satisfaction in the marriage. Specifically, the vulnerability-stress-adaptation theory was used by LaTaillade to study the variables that could have mediating and moderating effects between stressful events and marital satisfaction and stability. These variables included partner support, communication, and ethnic and multicultural identity. Somewhat surprisingly, the results of the study indicated that discrimination was unrelated to how the couples communicated and their relationship satisfaction.

Popular Culture Theories

There have also been numerous theories about interracial couples reported in popular culture, which have not merited nor supported by scientific investigation, but are nonetheless prevalent and influence people's perceptions of those relationships. One of the most frequently voiced theories is that Black men are violent by nature and obsessed with the forbidden White woman due to the extreme opposition of those unions, which in some cases led to lynching (Solsberry, 1994; Wade, 1991). Although this belief is held less today than in the past, there is currently still an assumption that Black males are fixated on "possessing" White women and have adopted the majority culture's standard of beauty (Solsberry, 1994; Wade, 1991).

Foeman & Nance (1999) discuss what they consider to be areas of "mythology" regarding Black-White interracial couples. Two of those areas that apply to the couple unit in particular are Black sexual acting out, and White neurotic acting out. The first myth, Black sexual acting out, can be seen in the stereotype that Black people have an unusually strong sex drive. In this myth, Black males were seen as dangerous, and they used sex to enact revenge on White men for the suffering they faced during slavery. Black women on the other hand have been stereotyped as slaves to their sexual desire, and it has been said that the function of this stereotype was to allay the guilt White men had for raping their female slaves.

The expression of neurotic acting out as related to Whites who intermarry is a stereotype that has gotten some academic support throughout history. Whites have been said to be punishing their parents and making a social statement by marrying someone Black

(Foeman & Nance, 1999).

Social Reactions to Interracial Marriages

There has been a shift in society's view of interracial marriages. Many studies have shown that there is less pressure in society today to have racially homogeneous relationships than in the past (Lewis & Yancey, 1997). Nonetheless, recent studies also suggest that the Black-White interracial union, specifically the Black male-White female combination, is still the most negatively viewed relationship type (Norment, 1994).

History of Discrimination against Black-White Interracial Couples.

Today, the relationship between Blacks and Whites is seen as different from that of other minorities. When one speaks of "race relations" in America, the majority of people immediately think of the struggles between Black and White people (Killian, 2002; Wright et. al, 2003). Despite the dramatic increase in Black-White marriages, they are still the least favorable form of interracial marriage in America (Wade, 1991), and they are still considered to be a taboo subject by some (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000). In their study of 270 interracial couples Fears and Deane (2001) found that nearly half reported that marrying someone outside of their race makes marriage harder and two-thirds reported that at least one parent objected to their marriage.

Although tolerance of interracial couples has increased, there are still powerful forces in society that make Black-White interracial marriage hard and unappealing (Dainton, 1999). Many Black-White interracial couples report that they face discrimination from members of their own particular race; European Americans view them as being "too Black" and African

Americans view them as being "not Black enough" (Orbe, 1999). Based on their interviews with 50 interracial couples, Luke and Carrington (2000) discussed the many struggles interracial couples have once they go public with their relationship. Varied areas of their lives are often seriously impacted by their choice to marry interracially. Some areas include relationships with friends, family, and coworkers.

More often than not, people who marry outside of their race eventually must face the loss of a person they considered to be a close friend. Couples often report feeling shocked by their friend's negative and sometimes strong opposition to their marriage, since they had never discussed their views on interracial marriage with their friends until faced with the possibly of entering into an interracial marriage themselves. When this sudden ending of close friendships occurs, many interracial couples end up seeking out other interracial couples in their environment who they believe will support and understand their decision to marry, although most couples report not consciously doing so (Luke & Carrington, 2000).

Family is often another source of discrimination for those in interracial marriages. The majority of people in interracial marriages have said that they have had to face one or both parents express serious concern to outright disapproval of their choice to marry interracially. This disapproval can be expressed verbally or by certain family members refusing to come to important events such as weddings, holiday celebrations, or family reunions. In some extreme cases, members of interracial marriages have reported having lost all contact for years at a time with once close members of their families (Luke & Carrington, 2000).

It has also been reported that there are changes at one or both members of the

interracial couple's workplace. This form of discrimination can manifest even before a

person in an interracial relationship starts working at a particular place of business. Trouble

finding employment once the race of their spouse is known is a struggle many interracially

married couples reported facing. Even in cases where a person has a long history at a

particular job, discrimination is reported in many instances. Examples include getting passed

up for promotions for which one is qualified; being subjected to racially insensitive humor,

both about their particular relationship as well as derogatory jokes about people from the

racial group in which their spouse belongs; and being left out of social events that take place

outside of work because of the race of the spouse (Luke & Carrington, 2000, Zebroski,

1999).

Acceptance of Interracial Relationships.

Studies have also found that acceptance of interracial marriages is increasing at a

rapid pace and an increasing number of interracial couples are reporting that their families

have openly accepted their interracial relationship, and they feel comfortable speaking about

their relationship in public (Fears & Deane, 2001, Rosenblatt et. al., 1995). However,

attitudes regarding interracial dating have been found to vary based upon race, age, and

gender. In a study of 19 Black and White people between the ages of 21 and 40, Datzman &

Gardner (2000) reported that men have more positive attitudes than women, and people who

were younger also have more favorable views on interracial dating. The majority of the

research suggests that Black society is often more accepting of interracial relations than

White society; and therefore, Black-White interracial couples chose to live in either Black or

integrated communities as opposed to White communities. Hibbler and Shinew (2002) found

that the families of the Black partner in interracial relationships tend to be more accepting and supportive than the families of the White partner. In a study done by Killian (2001), which included in-depth interviews of 10 Black-White interracial couples in New York State, it was found that almost all of the White respondents reported their families having either initial apprehension or outright disapproval of their marriages, whereas the families of the Black partner were reported to be much more receptive to the relationship. Rosenblatt (1995) conducted qualitative interviews with 21 interracial couples. It was found that disapproval of interracial marriage was highest in White communities (46% of respondents) and acceptance of interracial marriage was highest among Black families. In a separate study eighty-six percent of Black respondents said that their families would welcome a White person into their family compared to only 55% of White respondents who said their families would welcome a Black person into their family (Fears & Deane, 2001).

Level of acceptance has also been found to be influenced by geographic location. The western region of the United States has the highest level of both interracial marriage and accepting attitudes. Also, the West coast has more liberal views regarding discrimination against Blacks, interracial relationships, civil rights, federal aid policies promoting equality, and protesting on issues relevant to Black Americans (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990).

The influence of race and gender on support and opposition to interracial marriage was examined by Zebroski (1999). Using a sample of 50 Black male-White female couples from around the United State, she found that although the most common response was that all racial groups were equally supportive of interracial marriage, further analyses found that White women were perceived as being more supportive of the relationship, followed by

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Black women, Black men, and White men respectively. It was also found that most of the respondents, no matter what their race or gender, reported that members of their own race and gender were most supportive of their relationship. In regards to opposition of interracial marriage, the results showed that the majority of the respondents felt that White men were most opposed to their relationship, followed by Black women, Black men, and White women respectively.

Datmen and Gardner (2000), also studied gender's influence on a person's level of acceptance of interracial marriages, particularly in the Black community. In the Black community, acceptance of Black-White interracial marriages varied based on gender. Black males not only tended to marry outside of their race more often than their female counterparts, they also had a more favorable opinion of interracial marriage in general (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1993). It has been suggested that one reason that Black women may be less accepting of Black-White interracial marriage is that their marriage options have been significantly negatively affected by the increase of Black men marrying White women (Norment, 1994).

An overwhelming majority of the research on the impact of interracial relationships on marriage options has found that Black women's marriage options are severely hampered by the increasing prevalence of interracial marriage by Black men (Kalmijn, 1993; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990; Solsberry, 1994; Crowder & Tolnay, 2000). The fact that Black men who marry outside of their race are more highly educated and have more economic prestige than Black men who marry within their race makes the pool of available Black spouses even more unappealing to Black women (Kalmijn, 1993). Studies have shown that for every 35-

45 year old single Black men who are in college or have jobs, there are 100 Black women who have the same status (Norment, 1994). Facing such dramatic numbers, many Black women feel betrayed or abandoned when they see a Black man marry a White woman. Some have gone so far as to say that Black-White interracial marriage weakens Black solidarity (Harold, 1994), and Black people who chose to marry Whites are "sell-outs" who are committing racial treason (Norment, 1994). Literature on Black women's attitudes about Black-White interracial marriages states that many feel that Black men are "brainwashed" with White society's standards of beauty, and in an effort to assimilate and make it to the top, marry White women (Norment, 1994; Porter, 1995).

Discrimination Differences Based on Gender and Race Combination of Couple

Not only has research shown that the Black-White interracial combination has historically been most controversial (Davidson, 1992), but some research suggests that the racial combination that elicits the highest levels of discrimination, particularly from White men, is Black male-White female couples (Scott, 1987). For example, Scott (1987) conducted a study where racially mixed and same race couples approached 32 White men around the age of 30 and asked for directions. It was found that interracial couples comprised of a Black male and White female received the slowest response time when asking for directions to a motel whereas the couples with other racial and gender combinations received faster rates of response. Wade (1991) also found that White men are more favorable to Black male-White female marriage and reproduction only when the female is considered to be unattractive by society's standards.

Race Differences in Perception of Discrimination

A study done by Killian (2001) found that in the 10 Black-White interracial marriages studied, the Black partner most often had the greater level of sensitivity to and awareness of negative reactions received while they were in public. Most of the Black partners gave specific instances where they experienced discrimination both individually and when they were with their spouse. Most of the White partners said that they either didn't notice or didn't look for negative reactions when they were in public; and therefore, the Black partner was often the one that pointed out the discrimination. On many occasions, Black partners in interracial relationships say they feel like their White partner isn't as aware of the discrimination they face in society as a couple; and therefore, they have to take on the role of pointing out cases of discrimination and taking a stand on behalf of the couple. This has been found to put an enormous amount of strain on the Black partner. More specifically, the Black female partners were found to most often take the initiative of explaining how they had been discriminated against (Killian, 2002).

Foeman and Nance (2002) found that since the Black partner has already experienced the most racism in society, he or she is more likely to be aware and sensitive to the part race plays in marriage. It was also stated that the Black partner might feel a sense of guilt for exposing his or her White partner to negative or threatening remarks the partner may encounter when the couple is together in public. On the flip side, the White partner may encourage the Black partner to just relax regarding discrimination which may lead the Black partner to feel paranoid and take on the responsibility of being aware of racism for both of them.

Effects of Racial Discrimination on Marital Quality of Black-White Interracial Couples

The discrimination that many interracial couples face in today's society is an important factor that may influence their level of marital quality (Davidson, 1992). Studies have found that interracial marriages are less stable and are at least three times less likely to succeed than same race couples (McNamara, 1999; Root, 2001). It has been proposed, although not empirically tested, that the higher rates of marital failure are linked to the negative effects of discrimination the couple face on a day-to-day basis. When the families of interracial couples withdraw their love and support, it has been found to leave deep psychological scars that decrease the overall level of joy in the marriage. It also puts an unrealistic amount of pressure on the marriage, and often leads to underlying feelings of resentment and irritation toward the spouse (Root, 2001; Browman, 1993).

One of the most common ways discrimination of interracial couples is asserted to affect marital quality is the lack of social support couples receive (Hendricksen & Watts, 1999). Diminished social support limits the amount of community, family, and workplace involvement that those in mixed-race marriages have access to (Killian, 2002). The stress of deciding to enter into an interracial marriage and the discrimination experienced in society makes these couples need familial support even more than same race couples. However, due to their families' negative views on interracial marriage, needed family support is often not available, which is even more detrimental due to the couples' already limited social networks (Mc Namara et. al, 1999). McNamara et. al (1999) also found that common family gatherings that bring together both sides of the interracial couple's family are usually extremely stressful for each partner and often leaves them drained. Travel and leisure

activities that interracial couples can participate in are also dramatically limited due to the discrimination they face when they travel as a family unit. Issues such as diversity of the destination, the level of safety for minorities, and the sub-par service they may receive must be researched before a simple family trip can be taken. Many Black-White interracial couples report preferring to stay at home where they can be assured that they will not be discriminated against (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002). Social support has been said to be helpful in the formation of interracial relationships, but also for the very survival of the marriage (Zebroski, 1999).

Discrimination can also affect marital quality of interracial couples by influencing the interaction patterns between the partners themselves. Often, Black partners in interracial relationships report feeling like their White partners are not truly aware of the level of discrimination they face in society, and therefore they have to take on the role of pointing out cases of discrimination and taking a stand on behalf of the couple. This has been found to put an enormous amount of strain on the Black partner (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2002) on top on the normal stresses of married life (Solsberry, 1994). Often both partners in an interracial marriage feel that if they openly discuss thoughts and feelings about race it may be offensive to their partner and the trust in the marriage may be undermined. This leads many interracial couples to repress their true feelings in the name of keeping their relationship intact (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Although most of the writings done on the effects of discrimination on interracial couples shows that the effects are negative, some have said that interracial couples facing discrimination in society can have a positive impact on their relationship, increasing the

partners' sense of commitment and unity (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002). For example, many

interracial couples report that they have become more aware and understanding of issues

surrounding race as a result of the discrimination they endured because they were in an

interracial marriage (Dalmage, 2000). Rosenblatt et. al (1995) also reports that there are

many hidden blessings that come from being in an interracial marriage. These include 1)

healing, which refers to the bridging of the gap between Blacks and Whites through love and

marriage, 2) enrichment, which refers to learning about another culture through being

married to a person of another race, and 3) withstanding racist opposition, which is the

overwhelming feeling of accomplishment many interracial couples feel when they withstand

and thrive despite experiences of racial discrimination.

   Finally, a study done by La Taillade (1999) looked at the way social support and

ethnic minority status can effect relationship functioning. It was found that Black-White

interracial couples had the same level of marital satisfaction as did the same-race couples and

were also satisfied with their level of social support. Results also showed that interracial

couples had a higher level of multiculturalism than same-race couples which was linked to

constructive communication and partner support. Surprisingly, interracial couples

experiences of discrimination were not found to be associated with communication and

relationship satisfaction.

   The purpose of the present study is to test the relationship between the experience of

discrimination and marital quality in interracial marriages. Although there are many ways

race can influence relationships, this study will focus on the discrimination that spouse's face

because their partner is of another race and the differences in their perception of

discrimination.

<center>Hypotheses</center>

Based on the literature which has found that the Black male-White female combination in interracial couples elicits the highest level of discrimination (Scott, 1987; Davidson, 1992) and the fact that the Black partner in these marriages often has a greater level of sensitivity to and awareness of racial discrimination (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2001), the following hypotheses will be tested.

H1: Black partners will perceive more discrimination due to their partner's race than will

Whites because of Blacks being more attuned to racism.

H2: There will be no differences in level of discrimination perceived based on gender.

H3: There will be a significant race by gender interaction in perceived discrimination with

Black men and White women perceiving higher levels of discrimination.

Based on writings and assumptions in the literature which state that the frequent discrimination that interracial couples face has many negative effects on those marriages including higher rates of divorce and lower levels of social support (Dalmage, 2000; Hendricksen & Watts, 1999; McNamara et. al, 1999) and the other body of literature that states that the discrimination interracial couples face may strengthen the marriage and increase the couple's commitment to one another (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Dalmage, 2000; Rosenblatt, 1999), the following hypothesis will be tested.

H4: There will be no relationship between an individual partner's perceived discrimination and his or her marital quality.

Based on literature that reports Black partners in interracial marriages feeling a great

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deal of strain because they believe that their White spouses are not truly aware of the level and amount of discrimination they face in society (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2002), and the fact that the difference in perception sometimes leads to a breakdown in communication on the topic of race (Rosenblatt, 1995), the following hypothesis will be tested.

H5: Shared perception between partners of the total level of discrimination experienced will be positively associated with each partner's marital quality.

CHAPTER III

Method

Sample

The data for this study will be drawn from data collected from a sample of African American/White interracial couples that live in the greater Washington, D.C. and Baltimore areas for a previous study. The inclusion criteria for the study were that the couples had to have one African American partner and one White partner, be married, be currently living together, and have grown up in the United States. The final sample consisted of 52 African American male/White female couples, and 24 African American female/White male couples. The average age of the participants was 37.1 years old and the majority (71%) had completed college. Seventy percent of the couples had children living in their households at that time. In the households that contained children, couples made up of African American males-White females had and average of 1.6 children and the couples that were White males-African American females had an average of 1.2 children. The African American male participants had been married to their White partners for an average of 8.5 years, and the

White male participants had been married to their Black partners for an average of 6 years. The personal median income was $22,000 for the Black females, $25,00 for the White females, $40,000 for the Black males, and $37,000 for the White men in the study. Most of the couples that participated lived in multi-ethnic and integrated neighborhoods (Leslie & Letiecq, 2004).

<div align="center">*Procedure*</div>

African American-White interracial couples from the D.C. metropolitan area were recruited using advertisements in the local newspapers during a one-month period. Couples that were interested in participating were told to contact the principal investigator by telephone. Altogether, 106 couples responded and met the research criteria. The couples were sent two informed consent forms as well as two questionnaires, one for the African American partner and one for the White partner. They were instructed to complete the questionnaires separately and return the questionnaires in the return self addressed, stamped envelope provided. The couples were given a total of $30 for their participation. Of the 106 couples that were sent questionnaires, 76 of them returned both the husband and wife questionnaires and were included in the study for a return rate of 72%.

<div align="center">*Measures*</div>

Independent Variables

Race. Race was determined by the participant's indication on the questionnaire that they were either Black/African American or White/Non-Hispanic.

Gender. Gender was determined by the participant's indication on the questionnaire that they were male or female.

Perceived Discrimination. It should be noted that perceived discrimination was an independent variable for hypothesis 4 and 5, but was a dependent variable for hypothesis 1 through 3. Krieger's (1990) measure of perceived racial discrimination was used to assess perceived discrimination. Seven types of discrimination that a person may face were assessed on the questionnaire. These include discrimination experienced 1) at school, 2) at work, 3) in getting a job, 4) in housing, 5) in receiving medical care, 6) from the police or in the courts, and 7) in social situations. Both the Black and the White partners were asked to rate the level of discrimination they have faced, initially based on their own race, and then based on the race of their partner in each area. These levels of discrimination are ranked on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 "never" to 5 "very often" with a possible total score range from 0-35. Higher scores indicated a greater experience of racism (Leslie & Letiecq, 2004). (See Appendix A).

Shared perception of discrimination. A shared perception of discrimination score was calculated for each couple by subtracting the lower individual perceived discrimination score from the higher individual perceived discrimination score. Thus, the lower the score the more similar the partners' perceptions of discrimination. Scores ranged from 0 to 16. Couples were divided into two groups based on the distribution of the scores. A total of 44 couples had shared perceived discrimination scores of 0 to 2 and comprised the high-shared perception group. A total of 32 couples had scores of 3 to 16 and comprised the low-shared perception group.

Dependent Variables

     Perceived discrimination. As described previously, peceived discrimination was an independent variable for hypothesis 4 and 5 and a dependent variable for hypotheses 1 through 3.

     Marital quality. The Personal Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) (Braiker & Kelley, 1979) was used to assess marital quality. The PRS is a 25 item, 9-point Likert scale with answers ranging from 1 "never or not at all", to 9 "very much, very often or extremely." There are four subscales on the PRS: love, conflict, ambivalence, and maintenance. The love subscale consists of 10 items (questions # 1, 4, 7, 10,13, 16,17, 19, 21, 23) that examine a spouse's sense of belonging and attachment to the partner. An example of an item on the love subscale is, "To what extent do you love your partner at this stage?" The total scores for this subscale range from 10 to 90. The conflict subscale consists of 5 items (questions # 3, 5, 12, 24, 25) that assess how partners communicate with one another and have overt conflict. A sample question would be, "When you and your spouse argue, how serious are the problems or arguments?" The total scores for this subscale range from 5 to 45. The ambivalence subscale is a 5-item scale (questions # 6, 9, 15, 18, 20) that assesses the individual's level of confusion or uncertainty about the value of the relationship and the amount of conflicting feelings each partner has about the marriage. Two examples of questions are, "How confused are you about your feelings toward your spouse?" and "To what extent do you feel that your spouse demands or requires too much of your time and attention?". The total scores for this subscale range from 5 to 45. The last subscale

(questions # 2, 8, 11, 14, 22) consists of 5 items that examine maintenance by looking at the behaviors the couple has for maintaining and maximizing the benefits of the relationship. A sample maintenance question is, "How much time do you and your spouse spend discussing and trying to work out problems between you?" The total scores for this subscale range from 5 to 45 (Leslie & Letiecq, 2004). (See Appendix B). The correlations among the marital quality subscales for the current sample are as follows:

Table 1

Correlations Among Marital Quality Subscales
($n=152$)

Subscale	1	2	3
1. Total Love	-	-	-
2. Total Conflict	-.486**	-	-
3. Total Ambivalence	-.661**	.574**	-
4. Total Maintanence	.334**	.045	-.165*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

CHAPTER IV

Results

The present study was designed to test the following hypothesis:

1. Black partners will perceive more discrimination due to their partner's race than will Whites.

2. There will be no differences in level of perceived discrimination perceived based on gender.

3. There will be a significant race x gender interaction in perceived discrimination with

partners in   Black men, White women couples perceiving higher levels of discrimination.

4. There will be no relationship between perceived discrimination and marital quality.

5. Shared perception between partners of the total level of discrimination experienced by the

couple will be positively associated with marital quality.

The means and standard deviations of the dependent variables can be found in Table

2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Marital Quality Subscales and Perceived Discrimination
(n=152)

Subscale	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Total Discrimination	11.11	5.00
2. Total Love	79.28	9.66
3. Total Ambivalence	12.22	6.91
4. Total Conflict	19.51	6.30
5. Total Maintenance	30.98	6.18

The statistical procedure used to test hypotheses 1 through 3 was a two-way analysis

of variance (ANOVA). The independent variables for hypotheses 1 through 3 were race and

sex and the dependent variable was the total perceived discrimination score. Four pearson

correlations, one for each martial quality subscale, were used to test hypothesis 4. The

independent variable was the total perceived discrimination score. The dependent variables

were the total scores for love, conflict, ambivalence, and maintenance.   For hypothesis 5, a

multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used. The independent variable was the

partner's shared perception of discrimination. The dependent variables were the total scores

for love, conflict, ambivalence and maintenance.

Analysis

The results of the two-way ANOVA for hypothesis 1 through 3 indicated no

significant effect for race on the level of discrimination perceived $\underline{F}(1,151) = .057$, $\underline{p} = .812$.

Thus, hypothesis 1 was not supported. No significant differences were found for sex on the

level of discrimination perceived $\underline{F}(1,151) = .816$, $\underline{p} = .368$. Therefore supporting hypothesis 2.

Finally, no race by sex interaction was found $\underline{F}(1,151) = .642$, $\underline{p} = .424$. Hypothesis 3 was

therefore also not supported.

For hypothesis 4, correlations were computed for the entire sample to test the

relationship between perceived discrimination and marital quality. Each category of the marital

quality scale was examined and results indicated no significant relationship between perceived

discrimination and love $\underline{r} = -.022$, $\underline{p} = .791$; conflict $\underline{r} = .075$, $\underline{p} = .360$; ambivalence $\underline{r} = .030$, $\underline{p} =$

.717; or maintenance $\underline{r} = -.081$, $\underline{p} = .319$.   These findings support hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5 was tested using a MANOVA. Each category of the marital quality

scale was examined separately. Results indicated that the difference in partners' perception of

discrimination was not significantly related to their level of love $\underline{F}(1,151) = .802$, $\underline{p} = .372$;

conflict $\underline{F}(1,151) = 1.719$, $\underline{p} = .192$; and maintenance $\underline{F}(1,151) = .878$, $\underline{p} = .350$, respectively.

However, ambivalence was found to be associated with differences in partners' perception of

discrimination $\underline{F}(1,151) = 4.809$, $\underline{p} = .030$. The couples with low-shared perception of

discrimination were more ambivalent about their relationships (M = 13.64, SD = 7.38) than were

the couples with high-shared perception of discrimination (M = 11.18, SD = 6.39). Thus hypothesis 5 was only partially supported.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Interracial marriage has been an interesting and controversial topic over the past several decades. The purpose of this study was to increase our understanding of the characteristics and relationship dynamics of these couples. The impact of discrimination on an interracial couple's overall marital quality was studied as well as how disparities in perception of discrimination affected the marriage.

Several findings are noteworthy in this study. First, in this sample neither race, gender, nor their combination affected perception of discrimination. That is, men and women of both races perceived the presence or absence of discrimination in the same way. Based on the history of Black-White race relations in America one would assume that since Blacks face much higher levels of discrimination than do Whites, they would be more sensitive to, and on the lookout for, instances of discrimination (Dainton, 1999; Killian, 2001). This begs the question, why would it be the case in this study that Blacks and Whites perceived discrimination similarly when other scholars have reported that Black partners are more likely to perceive discrimination (Killian, 2002; Foeman & Nance, 2002)? It is possible that due to increased awareness and sensitivity to racial discrimination on society's part and the more equal playing field that currently exists between Blacks and Whites, Black spouses may not be experiencing as strong instances of discrimination as they would have

several years ago. It is also possible that the participants in the study may have grown up in a more integrated and accepting world and therefore have not been forced to be as aware of racial discrimination as previous generations were. Another reason for the current findings may be that the couples had already formed a joint perception regarding discrimination due to the fact that the average length of marriage for the sample was 7 years. It could be that if the sample was comprised of mainly newlyweds, the results may have shown more of a disparity on how they perceived discrimination, having less time to form a shared view of the world.

Second, the results indicated that there was no relationship between perceived discrimination and marital quality. Although it was initially thought that discrimination would have a negative effect on marital quality, conflicting findings have been reported in the literature suggesting that discrimination could have both a negative impact on the marital quality of interracial couples (Dalmage, 2000; Hendricksen & Watts, 1999; McNamara et. al, 1999) and a positive impact (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Dalmage, 2000; Rosenblatt, 1999). This led to the hypothesis in this study that there would be no relationship between perceived discrimination and marital quality.

Even though the finding in this study supports the hypothesis, we are still left wondering exactly what the finding means. It may be that discrimination does not affect the couple's level of marital quality at all and is of very little consequence to their relationship functioning. For example, if discrimination is not extreme as is the case when a person is physically assaulted due to their race or the race of their partner, it may not cause enough emotional stress or have a serious impact. On the other hand, it may be that discrimination

affects couples differently, with some relationships being strengthened by withstanding discrimination and some relationships suffering. If this is the case, an analysis that uses group means could make these differences wash out or disappear. Thus, the finding would appear non-significant although discrimination may be affecting couples in different ways. Unfortunately, sample size prohibited further investigation of this possibility.

Third, and perhaps most interestingly, these data suggest that when couples do not perceive discrimination similarly, they experience more ambivalence in their relationships. Interracial couples make many sacrifices in order to be together. Sometimes these include experiencing separation from their families, the loss of their jobs, or social isolation from many things they may have enjoyed being a part of before they entered into an interracial marriage. Because these partners make such huge sacrifices, they may feel a heightened sense of ambivalence and disillusionment about their marriage when differences of perception are experienced. The question still exists, however, as to why other aspects of marriage such as love or conflict were not negatively affected (Luke & Carrington, 2000). It may be possible that partners in interracial marriages may truly love each other and yet still have serious questions regarding whether or not they made the right decision to marry interracially. While there may be a great deal of mutual affection in the relationship, the realization that their partner does not see the world as they do regarding race may cause them to question what other things their partner sees differently. Another possibility is that because the average length of marriage for the couples in the study was 7 years, the topic of differing views on discrimination may have already been abandoned, and they simply live with ambivalence. Early on in the marriage there may have been passionate debate over the

topic of discrimination and conflict levels may have been higher, but after a certain point in the marriage the spouses may have simply given up trying to get their partner to understand their view.

Future Research

These findings raise several questions for further study. First, the question of what makes ambivalence unique compared to the other factors on the marital quality scale should be examined. Could it be that once partners realize that their spouse has significantly different views on how they see the world as well as how they deal with or feel about discrimination, they may also question if they really know their spouse or if their spouse really understands them? This may cause a spouse to feel disconnected from their partner, leading to feelings of ambivalence about the relationship.

Another question that could be looked at is do certain types of discrimination have a more negative impact on marital quality when compared with other forms of discrimination. Is it possible that certain forms of discrimination such as physical violence or rejection from one's family of origin may cause a deeper emotional reaction from a spouse, which would have a greater impact on the overall marital quality of the relationship?   Could it also be that some forms of discrimination such as stares in public or racist comments at the workplace may have the opposite effect and bring certain couples closer, making them develop an us against the world attitude which could tighten their marital bond? Because this study did not consider types of discrimination, it is impossible to address this question.

Also future studies should examine why Black partners did not perceive more discrimination than did their White counterparts even though earlier research suggest

otherwise (Foeman & Nance, 2002). As stated previously, things such as the area a spouse grew up in or currently live in and new societal views on race may impact their level of perception of racial discrimination. Living in the Baltimore/Washington area where interracial couples are common may decrease Black's concern about or attentiveness to discrimination. In addition, since sample size was fairly small in this study, the impact of the race and gender combination of interracial couples on how much discrimination they perceive should still be examined further. Previous studies suggest that the Black male-White female combination elicits a more negative response from society (Scott, 1987); however, the findings in this study seem to challenge that. While this was not found to be the case in this sample, additional research should examine this question with couples residing in different parts of the country and in different types of communities.

Lastly, further studies should be done where a comparison is made with a normal sample of the general population of interracial couples and a sample in a clinical setting. It could be that a sample in a clinical setting may yield much different results and give the examiner a more detailed perspective on the effects of discrimination. Also, a control group of same-race couples should be used to determine if discrimination really is the influencing variable that causes a decrease in marital quality or is it other more general relationship issues.

Limitations

While considering the findings of this study, it is essential that one view them in the light of the limitations of the study. One of the first limitations was the small sample size of Black-White interracial couples. While this study's sample size is fairly large compared to

most studies done on interracial couples with self-report measures, the number of participants still diminished the level of power of the analysis, which in turn made testing some of the hypothesized relationships difficult. Also the small size of the sample takes away the possibility of doing follow-up exploratory analysis.

A second limitation of this study may have been the location in which it was conducted. Considering the fact that the sample was derived from the local Washington D.C. and Baltimore metropolitan area, the participants could not only have more sensitivity to racial issues and knowledge on how to effectively handle them, they also could encounter less discrimination due to the progressive views held by many in this region of the country. For decades Washington D.C. has been seen as a relatively hospitable place for interracial couples. Today, the Washington D.C./Baltimore area has a high rate of interracial marriage compared to other states in America, with 9.5% of the state being comprised of interracial marriages (Frey, 2003).

The findings of this study show that although the impact of discrimination on interracial couples may be less than previously believed, there are possibly still negative consequences for those couples that face discrimination based on their race. Further research should be done that examines the unique impact discrimination may have on the ambivalence levels of interracial couples as well as other characteristics of couples that may have led to their decrease in marital quality such as poor communication skills or other existing marital issues unrelated to race.

A final limitation of the current study may be the potential bias the participants may have had coming into the process. Since this study was based upon a sample that willingly

volunteered both their time and opinions and responded to an advertisement, it may be that the respondents had very strong positive feelings about their marriage and therefore wanted to share their experience with others. This may have influenced the results and may be why discrimination was not found to be as significant as was originally hypothesized.

Clinical Implications

There are also several clinical implications for therapists from the results of this study. First, the results send the message to therapists that it cannot be assumed that the Black partner in the relationship necessarily has stronger feelings about racial discrimination or that the Black man/White woman combination experiences more discrimination. If a therapist automatically made the assumption that the Black partner had certain feelings about discrimination, it could negatively impact the therapist-client relationship. The Black partner could be offended that the assumption was made just because of their particular race. It is also important for therapists to not make assumptions because the White partner may actually be the spouse that is attuned to racial discrimination and has stronger feelings on the topic. If this is the case, the therapist may overlook a serious emotional concern the White partner is feeling.

The implications of the findings on the impact of discrimination on marital quality are two fold. First, interracial couples have many characteristics that could and do impact the way that they communicate about stressful issues such as discrimination. Interracial couples that come for marital counseling may have varying levels of coping skills and therefore the therapist can not assume that all couples that have experienced discrimination are negatively impacted. As stated previously, research has shown that certain couples actually have their

relationship strengthened by outside stressors such as discrimination. This may lead therapists who work with interracial couples to assess the couple's effectiveness of communication and coping skills as well as family of origin information that may have shaped their current views on marriage and how to deal, or not deal with racial issues. The therapist may also want to take the lead by bringing up the topic of race and getting each partner to express how they view the topic and what it does to them emotionally.

Secondly, therapists should be aware of one or both partners in the couple possibly having higher levels of ambivalence, while at the same time having strong love and maintenance and fairly low conflict. This is an important area for therapists to consider because even if a couple still love each other, a divorce may occur if both spouses become ambivalent about their marriage and begin to question whether the relationship can survive or if they feel that their partner does not truly understand them. This may be addressed by the therapist having the couple recount what initially attracted them to their partner and why they decided to marry. This may stir up the positive and hopefully passionate feelings they once felt for one another and at the same time help them gain a better understanding of how their partner feels about facing discrimination in their everyday life. It may also be important for the therapist to ask each spouse to explain what their experiences with race and discrimination were like as they grew up and help them understand how this may be shaping their current views and perception of discrimination.

In summary, these data may suggest that discrimination is not as big of a factor as once thought, yet we need not be naïve in drawing this conclusion from just one study. Other factors such as the geographic location of the couples as well as the other characteristics each

spouse may bring into the relationship that can cause it to be either strengthened or damaged

need to be examined. In light of the increasing rates of interracial marriage, there is still a

great deal of research that needs to be done on this topic.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Perceived Discrimination Questionnaire

Directions: Please indicate the degree to which you have experienced discrimination, been prevented from doing something, or been hassled or made to feel inferior, in any of the following seven situations because of your SPOUSE'S race or color. Place a check mark in the appropriate space below.

	5 Very Often	4 Often	3 Sometimes	2 Rarely	1 Never
At school	____	____	____	____	____
Getting a job	____	____	____	____	____
At work	____	____	____	____	____
Getting housing	____	____	____	____	____
Getting medical care	____	____	____	____	____
From the police or in the courts	____	____	____	____	____
In social situations	____	____	____	____	____

Appendix B

The Personal Relationship Questionnaire

The following questions ask about certain aspects of your relationship with your spouse. Please answer these questions for the present time in your relationship. Circle the number which best represents your view of your marriage.

1. To what extent do you have a sense of "belonging" with your partner?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   not at all   very much

2. To what extent do you reveal or disclose very intimate things about yourself or personal feelings to your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   not at all   very much

3. How often do you and your spouse argue with each other?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   never   very much

4. How much do you feel you give to the relationship?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   not at all   very much

5. How often do you try to change things About your spouse that bothers you (e.g., behaviors, attitudes, etc.)?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   never   very often

6. How confused are you about your feelings toward your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   not at all   extremely

7. To what extent do you love your spouse at this stage?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   not at all   very much

8. How much time do you and your spouse spend discussing and trying to work out problems between you?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
   never   very often

9. How much do you think about losing some of your independence by being involved with your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

10. To what extent do you feel that the things that happen to your spouse also affect or are important to you?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

11. How often do you and your spouse talk about the quality of your relationship-- for example, how good it is, how satisfying it is, how to improve it, etc.?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
never   very often

12. How often do you feel angry or resentful Toward your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
never   very often

13. To what extent do you feel that your relationship is special compared with others you have been in?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

14. How often do you try to change your Behavior to help solve certain problems Between you and your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
never   very often

15. How ambivalent or unsure are you about continuing in the relationship with your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

16. How committed do you feel toward your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

17. How close do you feel to your spouse?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

18. To what extent do you feel that your spouse demands or requires too much of your time and attention?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

19. How much do you need your spouse?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

20. To what extent do you feel "trapped" or "pressured" to continue in this relationship?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

21. How sexually intimate are you with your spouse?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

22. How much do you tell your spouse what you want or need from the relationship?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

23. How attached do you feel to your spouse?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

24. When you and your spouse argue, how serious are the problems or arguments?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   extremely

25. To what extent do you communicate negative feelings toward your spouse—e.g., anger, dissatisfaction, frustration, etc.?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
not at all   very much

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