

A Multi-Decade Look at Black Female/White Male Interracial Marriages

by

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ABSTRACT

The number of interracial marriages and multiracial individuals continues to increase rapidly in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Black Female (BF) /White Male (WM) marriages are increasing, but not as quickly as other interracial marriages (Wang, 2012) leaving this population void in social science literature available to social workers. Consequently, there is a lack of information available to understand factors that contribute to these couple identities and how they navigate in the monoracialized systems they encounter. This qualitative study explored how BF/WM partners married in different generational cohorts experience and navigate race and identity as a couple through video recorded interviews where couples shared their narrative as a dyad. The secondary data analyzed was originally collected through snowball and convenient sampling to find BF/WM married couples that were married different generational cohorts living in the Phoenix area. Couples were asked to respond to starter questions (Linhorst, 2002) that encouraged them to share experiences as a couple interacting with community, social, and family systems. Ecological systems framework and social construction were used to guide analysis. Results from the multimodal transcript analysis and detailed review of the video data found themes of invisibility of the couples' relationships from community and family. Differences between cohorts were identified with movement from separation of racial identities within the couple identity to an infusion of both identities represented within the couple. Additionally, insights into the benefits of videography as a data collection method and its usefulness in connecting social work research to practice were identified and align with the NASW Cultural Competence standards (NASW, 2001).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF IMAGES	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
General Terminology	3
Race	3
Culture	5
Ethnicity.....	5
Multiracial	6
Monoracial	6
Interracial Marriage	7
Purpose of Study	7
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
Historical Evolution of Law and Interracial Marriage	9
<i>Loving v. Virginia</i>	15
Interracial Marriages	19
Gender	19
Education	21
Region	23
Theoretical Foundations	23

CHAPTER	Page
Emperical Research	29
Quantitative Research	29
Qualitative Research	33
Summary	41
3 STUDY METHODOLOGY	43
Videography in Social Science Research	44
Secondary Qualitative Data	47
Participants	48
Procedures	49
Human Subjects & Confidentiality	50
Data Collection	50
Data Analysis	53
Enhancing Rigor and Validity	55
Multimodal Transcription	55
Challenge of Describing Movement	57
Time Stamp Documentation	58
Audio vs. Video Review of Data	59
Creating an Audit Trail	60
Reducing Reactivity and Bias	62
Summary	65
4 FINDINGS	66
5 DISCUSSION	66

CHAPTER	Page
Summary of Findings	67
Invisibility	67
Minority Couple Identity	68
Majority Couple Identity	69
Mutual Couple Identity	69
Study Limitations	70
Recommendations for Future Research	74
Practice Implications	76
Enhancing Social Work Education	78
Enhancing Cultural Competence	80
Conclusion	82
REFERENCES	85
 APPENDIX	
A IRB STUDY APPROVAL.....	93
B RECRUITMENT SCRIPT.....	95
C INTERVIEW SCRIPT	97
D CONSENT FORM	99
E MODELING, PERFORMING AND NARRATION RELEASE	102
F FINDINGS CHAPTER VIDEO TRANSCRIPT	104

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Ecological Framework for Understanding Interracial Marriage	28

LIST OF IMAGES

Image	Page
1. Multiple Windows in Use During Multimodal Transcription	61
2. Screenshot of Video Sgment During Theme Comparison	63
3. Freeze Frame from Peer Debrief Session.....	65

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The historical construction of race and racial identity in the United States has cast a shadow on individuals who find love and intimate partnership outside of their socially designated racial group. Marriage between people of color and White people was outlawed for much of American history. In the landmark case *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967, the United States (U.S.) Supreme Court was faced with an opportunity to end state laws that prevented people of different races from marrying. At that time, there were 17 states that had and enforced miscegenation laws, which prevented people of color from marrying White people. Richard Loving (a White man) and his wife Mildred (a Native American and Black woman) challenged the Commonwealth of Virginia's miscegenation law in the U.S. Supreme Court and won in 1967, setting a national precedent that made miscegenation laws unconstitutional. The ruling invalidated these laws in all U.S. states and territories, thereby making it no longer illegal to marry someone of another race (Pascoe, 2009; Root, 2001; Gullickson, 2006; Spickard, 1989); however, such laws remained in writing until 2000 (Baars, 2009). "Prior to the repeal of anti-miscegenation laws, the Census of 1960 counted 148,000 interracial married couples" (Root, 2001, p. 179). Root (2001) reports that, according to U.S. Census data, interracial marriages rose by 500% since 1970. In 2010, 10% of all marriages were interracial, representing a 28% increase in the interracial marriage population in America since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Though the Loving's forged the way for all interracial marriages in America, their gender/race combination (Native American-Black female / White male) is still not as common as other interracial partnerships in the U.S. (e.g., Black men and

White women). Specifically, Black male newlyweds married outside their race 24% of the time, whereas only 9% of Black females did the same in 2010 (Wang, 2012).

There has been increased social recognition of interracial relationships as large corporations including General Mills (e.g. Cheerios) and Procter & Gamble (e.g. Swiffer) have increased representation of these couples and their families in their marketing campaigns. Social work journals, however, seem not to be on trend as interracial marriage studies are rarely represented. Often U.S. Census data are employed to identify trends to understand more about marrying outside of one's assigned racial group (Lewis & Ford-Robertson, 2010; Gullickson, 2006; Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Kaba, 2012). Other quantitative research has used survey data to explore nuances in interracial marriages (Sassler & Joyner, 2011; Kalmijn, 1993). Qualitative approaches to exploring interracial marriage use a variety of interview methods to collect data (Root, 2001; Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2002; Childs, 2005a; Childs, 2005b, Kouri, 2003; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013).

With an increasing number of interracial relationships and marriages, little research has been done to identify if any progress has been made in acceptance of these couples in our society, how they navigate in a monoracially influenced society, and how they raise their multiracial children. Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) suggest that studies address how "interracial couples construct a life together" (p. 45). This dissertation will explore how Black female (BF) and White male (WM) couples navigate their experiences of interracial marriage. There will be a focus on couples that have married within each of the past three decades to see if there are distinct differences

between BF/WM couple cohorts. The term generational cohort will be used to distinguish between couples married in different generations or decades.

In this Chapter, I will present historical context of interracial marriages, specifically BF/WM, and present an overview of previous social science research with this population. There will be a description of how this study enhances social work education and adds to an increased cultural understanding of interracial marriage for social workers. This manuscript will include a detailed description and outline of the qualitative study on Black female and White male marriage, which includes the use of videography, the Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method of analysis, findings, and study limitations. I will begin by providing definitions of important terms used throughout this dissertation.

General Terminology

Throughout history and within social science literature, terminology used to describe and identify an individual's race has varied. Spickard (1989) admits, "the use of terms in writing about intermarriage is impressively idiosyncratic and imprecise" (p. 20). While a variety of definitions and understandings of these terms (race, interracial, multiracial, and monoracial) have been applied, this manuscript will attempt to maintain clarity by beginning with a brief discussion of past usage of the terms and how they will be used in this discussion. The analysis and exploration of interracial marriage in this manuscript will suggest that readers focus on the subject at hand, in this case interracial marriage, rather than find themselves restricted by terminology (Spickard, 1989).

Race

Race is a social construct created to assign systematic classification to groups of people based on physical traits. Race is affected by the time and place in which it is defined, used, and discussed; thus, it varies by generation and country (Root & Kelley, 2003, Omi & Winant, 2007). Additionally, physical traits have been and are continually used as the foundation upon which the construction of race has been founded (Root, 2001; Omi & Winant, 2007). The biological notion of race is commonly rejected by social scientists who view race as a social concept; however “racial beliefs operate as an ‘amateur biology,’ a way of explaining the variations in ‘human nature’” (Omi & Winant, 2007, p. 17).

Race, according to social construction theory, is a concept that is constantly being remade to reflect the personal and public identities and experiences in a multiracial society (Burton et al., 2010). Omi & Winant (2007) “use the term *racial formation* to refer to the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings” (p. 16). As a result of racial formations, race becomes “common sense”; a way of understanding behaviors and norms in the world (Omi & Winant, 2007, p. 17).

Throughout this paper, the terms “Black” and “White” will be used as racial categories. This is consistent with the APA manual (2010) recommendation that they be “designated by proper nouns and are capitalized” as opposed to colors that are lower case, and will avoid “unparallel designations (e.g., African Americans and Whites)” (p. 75) where one group is described by ethnic or cultural heritage and the other by a color. Pascoe (2009) also uses these capitalized terms “to show the pervasiveness of racial categories then and now” (p. 14), and Spickard (1989) uses them as proper nouns

consistent with contemporary usage, so that neither term is an actual descriptive adjective of a group of people. The only time these terms will not be used is when directly quoting another work or referencing terminology that was previously used.

Culture

Race, culture, and ethnicity are often used interchangeably despite their different meanings. Root and Kelley (2003) explain that culture “encompasses the embracing, knowledge, and practice of traditions and values that span generations, though undergo change with the impact of historical events” (p. vii). Culture is different from race in that it is created and passed down by people, not forced on people. The *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence* (2001) describe culture as an “integrated pattern of behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions, of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group” (p. 9), and it will be referenced in this context in this paper. Culture is an overarching context for ethnicity (Root & Kelley, 2003).

Ethnicity

Burton and colleagues (2010) define ethnicity as “a subset of people whose members share common national ancestral, cultural, immigration, or religious characteristics that distinguish them from other groups” (p. 440). Their definition leaves out a component of self-selection that Root & Kelley (2003) include in their definition of ethnicity: “Ethnicity refers to self-identified membership in a group because of shared emotions, attitudes, and identification with values and history” (p. vii.). Root and Kelley (2003)’s definition of ethnicity adds an emotional component to the NASW definition of culture. Burton and colleagues (2010) state that ethnicity is also socially constructed with its malleable and shifting definition. For this dissertation, the definition of ethnicity will

include Root and Kelley (2003)'s definition with the additional understanding of Burton and colleagues (2010) component of social construction.

Culture and ethnicity have great influence on individuals and the experiences and choices they make, however, race will be more of the focus of this study due to its historically suppressive nature that has been socially constructed and forced on individuals despite their traditions, beliefs, or feelings of who they are.

Multiracial

Multiracial has previously been defined as an individual whose biological parents do not share the same racial background (i.e. one Black parent and one White parent or one Asian parent and one Native American parent, etc.) (Jackson, 2009; Moss & Davis, 2008). Mixed blood, half-breed, mulatto, biracial, mixed, mixed race, mixed heritage, hapa, multiethnic, multicultural, are all terms that have been used throughout U.S. history to label this population (Spickard, 1989; Jackson et al., 2012). Root & Kelley (2003) state that the term multiracial is the most inclusive expression to represent a person who has multiple racial backgrounds. A recent operationalization of multiracial by Jackson and colleagues (2012) is an individual of two or more racial backgrounds, and will be the definition for this manuscript.

Monoracial

Monoracial can be used to indicate a person who identifies with a single racial background. It can also be used to refer to "a system of racial classification that only recognizes one racial designation per person" (Root & Kelley, 2003, p. viii), or for the implications of this study, one racial designation per couple. The latter definition will be

the definition for monoracial in this study, unless specifically referring to a monoracial individual.

Interracial Marriage

The terms *intermarriage*, and occasionally *mixed marriage* have meant a marriage that crosses ethnic or racial lines, which could include a marriage that crosses religious or cultural boundaries (Spickard, 1989). The term *out-marriage* was also used for such marriage arrangements but from the perspective of one group, and *in-marriage* would be a marriage between individuals of the same group (Spickard, 1989). For this paper the term interracial will be used to describe a marriage between people of different racial backgrounds. Marriage will be defined as a legal married union, not a civil union, between heterosexual partners. Interracial marriage is unique in comparison to dating or cohabitating relationships in that the legal union communicates permanence to family, friends, and coworkers. Heterosexual partners will be the focus to discover possible gender dynamics of BF/WM partners that have a longstanding controversial history in the U.S.

Purpose of Study

The knowledge gained from this study of BF/WM interracial marriage will provide awareness and insight into a growing population that is currently void in social work education, literature, and practice. This study attempted to fill the gap in literature, by specifically exploring how BF and WM interracial marriages navigate their experiences as interracial couples. The study focused on couples that were married within each of the past three decades (different generational cohorts) to identify any emerging differences between how BF and WM partners marriage identity was influenced by

societal constructs of race, marriage, and gender in their surrounding system. The overarching question for empirical examination was: How do interracial BF/WM married partners, from three different generational cohorts, experience and navigate race and identity in their relationships?

An ecological systems framework is embedded in the core of the social work profession and was used to provide insight into the experiences and needs of interracial partners and their families. The use of video as a qualitative data collection tool provided additional insights into the experience of BF/WM interracial marriages, by allowing the researcher to analyze not only the verbal communication of the couples, but also how they interact through nonverbal communication as they share their stories. The addition of the nonverbal communication provides insights into how they relate to each other while discussing their experience as an interracial couple. The comprehensive understanding of both verbal and nonverbal communication will be an asset to social workers working with interracial couples.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

This chapter will provide a foundation of the historical progression of laws and acceptance of interracial marriages in the United States followed by the theoretical framework that will guide the methodology of this study. It will cover the history of Black and White (B/W) relationships from 1850 to present day, and specifically interracial marriages and social acceptance of such unions. This will include a detailed description of the Loving v. Virginia case that struck down all laws banning interracial marriage as unconstitutional. It also includes an overview of the ecological systems framework that will serve as the theoretical guide for analysis. The chapter will conclude

with a review of social science research presented in two sections: quantitative findings and qualitative findings.

Historical Evolution of Law and Interracial Marriage

During the latter half of the seventeenth-century, the first statutes prohibiting interracial marriages were enacted in Maryland and Virginia (McClain, 2011). This was during a time of slavery, restrictive voting rights, and segregation of Blacks and Whites (Pascoe, 2009). The atmosphere between the Black and White populations was hostile at best as Jim Crow laws fueled White animosity toward anyone perceived as having a drop of Black blood (Davis, 1995). Marriage was an institution that represented “whiteness, freedom, property, and propriety” that was denied to those of different races (Pascoe, 2009). B/W interracial relationships were more common in the North and West than in the South, and more likely to lead to marriage (Spickard, 1989; Pascoe, 2009). Black male/White female marriages made up the majority of interracial marriages in the North during this time (Spickard, 1989). Between 1850 and 1920 BF/WM marriages were somewhat less common than Black male/White female marriages (Gullickson, 2006). Despite the data that the prevalence of B/W unions was notable, their existence did not correspond with physical safety from and within the larger community. “Between 1885 and 1910 there were at least 2,715 lynchings of Black men and women in America,” and one in five of these lynchings were due to allegations of White women being raped by Black men or voluntary miscegenation by both parties (Spickard, 1989, p. 285). This gruesome mistreatment and murder of Blacks during the Antebellum and post slave years was the result of a desire of Whites to control economic and political power by controlling sexual relationships between people of different races in order to maintain

racially 'pure' offspring and thus retain social and cultural dominance (Spickard, 1989; Pascoe, 2009).

Sexual relations between Blacks and Whites were more prevalent than marriage in the 1800s and early 1900s due to miscegenation laws, historical abuse and invalidation of Black women's bodies, and societal disapproval of interracial marriage (Gullickson, 2006). "On the plantation, interracial sex occurred between frequently unwilling Black female slaves and White male slave owners and overseers" (Gullickson, 2006, p. 290). Historically, sexual relations between BFs and WMs were influenced by the power WMs had as owners of BF slaves on plantations (Gullickson, 2006). "Sex with slaves provided a particularly intimate demonstration of privileges of White manhood, of absolute power over both the slave women who were its immediate targets and the slave men who were held powerless to prevent it" (Pascoe, 2009, p. 25). Sex in this manner was forced. The rape of BF slaves by WMs was considered acceptable due to the fact that slaves were considered property and WMs were able to do as they pleased with their property. BF slaves that were to be used as concubines sold for more money than BF's sold for working in the home or field (Robertson, 1996). Many WMs who lived in the south believed that it was impossible to rape BFs because "they were naturally promiscuous" (Stevenson, 1996, p. 171). When in reality the BFs did not have a way to fight back and win against the suppressive and restrictive system they were forced into. Again, WMs created an excuse to justify their lewd behavior and physical abuse dehumanizing BFs. WM slave owners would then avoid responsibility of offspring from the raped BF slaves by disowning any offspring and selling them into slavery for profit (Robertson, 1996).

The brutality and extreme physical, mental and emotional abuse that BF's experienced from WM's created long lasting trauma that has been passed down through generations.

Both consensual and forced relationships existed between White and Black people during this time period; however, WM were given more "leeway to engage in sexual relations with black women" and faced few legal or societal repercussions as collectively their behavior was seen as acceptable (Gullickson, 2006, p. 291). One historically controversial interracial relationship between a BF and a WM was the relationship of Thomas Jefferson and his mistress Sally Hemings that resulted in multiple children (Kaba, 2012). Jefferson and Hemings' relationship is an example of a semi-consensual BF/WM relationship. Though their relationship is not known to be a forced sexual relationship, rather a consensual one, WM's still had privilege and power and often property rights over BF's that limited these relationships from being fully consensual. Any relations between BF/WM's angered the Black community, as they felt powerless to their females being taken advantage of. "By the end of Reconstruction, White opponents of intermarriage had come to see the problem solely in terms of Black men and White women" (Spickard, 1989, p. 285). Some people in the White community credited quasi-marital interracial behavior "only to déclassé White men, but that seems not to have been true; White men of every class attached themselves to Black women" (Spickard, 1989, p. 274). Early on, the Black community responded negatively to interracial marriage because many Blacks reportedly were angered by the perceived "betrayal of their race" and they were skeptical of a consensual interracial relationship (Spickard, 1989, p. 297).

In the 1860s, several laws were passed to prevent the mixture of races through marriage and collectively were called miscegenation (Pascoe, 2009). Laws against

interracial sex and marriage were remnants of pro-slavery rhetoric and philosophy, focusing on curtailing interracial sexual behavior in order to control the reproductive capacity of White women (Pascoe, 2009). Miscegenation statutes ensured, through statewide monitoring and control, that Black race and White race families were kept separate, and that children produced from parents of different races were unable to inherit wealth or property from the White parent (McClain, 2011). This was similar to the rule of hypodescent, where a person is treated as Black if they have any African ancestry (Moran, 2007). Hypodescent may have been a legal disincentive for intermarriage; however, it became a legal incentive for rape when the children of these sexual relations were sold and their White fathers received an economic benefit (Kuznicki, 2009). Gullickson (2006) found evidence that there was tolerance of interracial relationships in White communities during the antebellum period of marriages between Whites and free Blacks. Though the pro-slave states discouraged interracial marriage, many found it economically beneficial as it encouraged the growth of “property”, as each child born from a WM owner and a slave was also considered a slave and property of the master (Kuznicki, 2009). In 1882, Alabama won the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Pace v. Alabama* (1882), after imprisoning a Black male and White female for the crime of living together. This ruling endorsed all miscegenation laws at the time and supported states that were considering similar laws (Pascoe, 2009). Most interracial sex happened outside of marriage due to miscegenation laws, and couples lived as husband and wife without the consent of the state because living as a married interracial couple was against the law and punishable by fines and time in prison (Gullickson, 2006; Pascoe, 2009).

The Commonwealth of Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924 prohibited White individuals from marrying anyone other than another White person with the penalty for violating the law being a felony. It restricted marital licenses from being issued without confirming racial status through a racial registration certificate and made all such unions void, even if they had received a marriage license from another state (Wadlington, 1966). Several laws throughout much of the South, and parts of the North addressed racial mixing by the implementation of the "One Drop Rule" (Spickard, 1989). The South had originally rejected the notion of the one-drop rule when it was introduced in the early 20th century; however, within a matter of decades it had become the political norm and had a positive description throughout the South, continuing to impact the social construction of race today (Kuznicki, 2009). The concept of 'one drop' proposed that if a person had even a drop of blood that was not White, they would be considered a Negro or Person of Color. The 'blood content' rule posed many logistical difficulties with many of those in the South having to prove they were 100% White (Wadlington, 1966). Proof was difficult to find scientifically, as there is no scientific foundation for race due to its social construction. Therefore, judges relied on witness and expert testimonies that would describe physical and observable characteristics (i.e. hair, shape of the face, color of skin, and body structure) to prove someone was a quarter or eighth Black, as was in the case of Marie Antoinette Monks (Pascoe, 2009).

According to Spickard (1989) there was a one percent increase in interracial marriages after World War I due to the return of servicemen with wives from overseas. After World War II, there was a time of transition for race relations in America. BF's were not very approving of Black men who brought home women from the war (Spickard,

1989; Kaba, 2012). Both Black and White communities were hesitant to approve of Black men who partnered with immigrants or White women, and there was a change in the perception of WMs who partnered with BFs. WMs were often excused of consequences for engaging in sexual or marriage partnerships with BF; however, in 1950 that changed and harassment of WMs began for those in relationships with BFs (Spickard, 1989). Though Black people generally treated interracial couples better than White people did, they still considered them on the margins of society (Spickard, 1989). During this time of transition of race relations, pressure was put on government clerical workers and ministers who facilitated the legal transaction of marriage, many of whom refused to marry and issue licenses to the couples (Spickard, 1989). During this time, couples began to aggressively fight miscegenation laws with the ability to use other civil rights laws and changing social perception of race differences in their defense.

In 1948, *Perez v. Sharp* challenged miscegenation laws using the argument of religion and the separation of Church and State mandated in the Constitution. The lawyers in this case confronted California miscegenation laws on the basis that the couple was Catholic, and the Catholic religion was not against interracial marriage, thus the laws were in violation of their freedom of religion under the Fourteenth Amendment (Pascoe, 1996). The state countered with an argument for miscegenation with the use of eugenics to defend their position, claiming that there was a decline in birth rates and high mortality, short life expectancies and disease among ‘hybrids’ (Pascoe, 1996). The final decision was that miscegenation laws were unconstitutional on the premise of biological indeterminacy of race, making California the first state to counter a miscegenation law, since the Reconstruction (Pascoe, 1996).

Brown v. Board of Education was a landmark case that helped lead the way to the Civil Rights Movement. This 1954 case used the Fourteenth Amendment to establish that separate educational facilities violated the equality clause because they were inherently not equal, thus, overturning the *Plessey v. Ferguson* argument of (1896) of separate but equal (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). This argument was later used in the *Loving* case when the court ruled that having separate laws for marriage based on race was unequal, regardless of whether those breaking them received a similar punishment (Newbeck, 2004). “After the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*, many whites, including Mississippi Circuit Court Judge Thomas Brady, stated their fierce opposition to race mixing and warned that this would bring forth the ‘tragedy of miscegenation’” (Childs, 2005a, p. 48).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 might be the most noted act of social policy and justice change in the Civil Rights Movement. It allowed each person the “full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantage, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin” (Civil Rights Act, 1964, 243). Following the implementation of the Act, many states retracted their standing miscegenation laws; however, despite this wave of social and political change, at the time of the *Loving* trial in 1967, there were seventeen states that were still enforcing miscegenation laws (Newbeck, 2004; Bursik & James, 2012). Wadlington (1966) believed that a constitutional argument in the federal courts was the only option to eliminate the remaining states’ miscegenation laws.

Loving v. Virginia.

Richard and Mildred Loving were married in June 1958 in the District of Columbia because it was illegal to marry in their home state of Virginia. On July 14th of the same year, after they had moved back to Virginia, they were awoken in the middle of the night with police standing over them in their bedroom with flashlights. They were arrested and taken to jail for violating the Racial Integrity Act preventing interracial marriage, making such marriages that were valid in other states void in the state of Virginia. The Virginia Court Judge Bazile denied the appeal made by the Lovings to overturn their sentence, arguing that:

Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix (*Loving v. Common Wealth of Virginia*, 1967).

Judge Bazile stated that if marriage is about love, then those who loved across color lines had to decide if they were willing to leave home to marry the one they loved or deny their feelings and remain in state (Wadlington, 1966). They were ultimately evicted from the state and not allowed back as a married couple (Newbeck, 2009; Pascoe, 2009; Burisk & James, 2012). The couple moved back to the District of Columbia area until 1963 when Mrs. Loving wrote a letter to Senator Robert Kennedy expressing the couple's desire to live closer to family. He suggested that she write the American Civil Liberties Union, which she did and the case was eventually heard by the U.S. Supreme Court (Newbeck, 2009; Pascoe, 2009; Burisk & James, 2012).

The miscegenation laws in Virginia were counter to that state's deeply rooted beliefs that gave the individual complete freedom in making personal decisions (Wadlington, 1966). In 1966, Wadlington was surprised that Virginia would lean on its

historical founder story of John Rolfe, but held strong to the miscegenation laws and specified which categories of the population could interracially marry. There was a “Pocahontas exception” in honor of John Rolfe, one of the founding colonists, which declared individuals with one-sixteenth or less of American Indian blood as White and not colored (Moran, 2007). This was a common occurrence in Virginia, with a history of past marital mixing of races. Virginia became known for all of the light skinned Black individuals who were mistaken as Whites (Moran, 2007).

The Supreme Court ruled that the state of Virginia’s ban on interracial marriage prevented the Lovings from “liberty without due process of the law” (*Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia*, 1967). Validity of racial categories was not a central focus in the *Loving* case because they never denied their racial status, but admitted they loved each other (Newbeck, 2009; Moran, 2007). The Supreme Court ruled that miscegenation laws were unconstitutional because they violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and limited personal liberties by preventing individuals from forming families through legal marriage (*Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia*, 1967). Racial reformers saw *Loving* as dismantling the most challenging feature of miscegenation laws, which prevented marriage across the color line (Moran, 2007). The court extended the norm of colorblindness in public spaces found in *Brown v. Board of Education* to the institution of marriage (Newbeck, 2004; Moran, 2007; Bursik & James, 2012).

Despite the results of the *Loving* case, change regarding interracial marriage was slow and up until 2000, at least one state (Alabama) had laws barring interracial (Baars, 2009). South Carolina eliminated its constitutional clause preventing interracial

marriage just a few years prior in 1998 (Baars, 2009). Despite the eradication of miscegenation laws, opposition to interracial marriage remains. As recent as 2009, justice of the peace Keith Bardwell of Louisiana, refused to marry an interracial couple out of concern for their children (Williams, 2011). He held to these beliefs when faced with a lawsuit and chose to resign from his position. Baars (2009) reported “more than 40 percent of residents in some counties voted to uphold the symbolic ban” (p. 221). Though laws no longer remain that prevent interracial interactions, relationships and marriage, there remains defined social lines that divide the United States by race (Baars, 2009). It has taken several decades since the *Loving* case to see any notable increase in BF/WM interracial marriages. Root (2001) reports that in the 1960 Census, there were 51,000 B/W interracial couples with 25,000 being Black husbands/White wives and 26,000 BF/WM out of a total 148,000 interracially married couples. In 1970, after the *Loving* case, Black men/White women marriages almost doubled to 41,000 and BF/WM marriages stayed the same (Root, 2001).

A recent Pew Report (2012) found that 63% of Americans “would be fine” with a family member marrying outside of the family’s racial group (Wang, 2012). Though there has been an increase in positive public perceptions of interracial marriage since 1986 (when only half of Americans were “fine” with interracial marriage in their family), there are still questions as to whether interracial couples are actually experiencing this increase in approval, or if the public answered the survey with responses that might be considered politically correct (Wang, 2012). Even conservatives saw open opposition of interracial marriage as crude, in the 1970s (Spickard, 1989). Kaba (2012) reports that in his 2011 study 84% of white Americans approved of B/W marriages, yet the percentage

of B/W marriages remains small (Kaba, 2012). In 2010 there were 5.4 million interracial/interethnic married couple households (U.S. Census, 2010), with 12 percent being B/W marriages (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Interracial Marriages

Social science research has used US Census data and other survey data to identify trends in marrying outside one's assigned racial group in quantitative studies. Qualitative approaches to exploring interracial marriage typically rely on interview or focus group data collected through transcribed audio recordings and/or field notes. This section of the literature review will provide research findings on the variables of gender, education and region and their impact on interracial marriages, followed by a look at the findings specific to BF/WM partnerships.

Gender.

Historically, individuals with certain gender/race combinations have been confronted with stigma and stereotypes when seeking relationships outside of their monoracial group. Sexual purity was an argument used both socially and legally to prevent interracial partnerships in the South. It is important to note that the concern for White female purity was, like race, constructed and controlled by White men through creation and implementation of laws (Root, 2001). Gullickson (2006) suggests the "sexual purity of White women" was in the forefront of societal scrutiny, with the role of the WM in "perpetrating miscegenation" being less in focus (p. 300). More recently and specific to this study, gender is considered in research when identifying rates of "out-marriage," or marrying out of one's racial group. Women have a higher rate of marrying outside their race in comparison to male counterparts of their race (Lewis & Ford-

Robertson, 2010), which holds true for all races except BF (Baars, 2009). Baars (2009) found that BFs often feel betrayed and rejected when Black men marry outside their race. This is supported by literature that articulates a small marriage market for BFs due to high mortality, high incarceration, institutional racism, and the marrying out of Black men (Baars, 2009; Root, 2001).

To Black women, interracial relationships between Black men and white women and their children represent rejection because these relationships, along with incarceration, drug abuse, and homicide, are viewed as the source of the shortage of marriageable Black men (Childs, 2005, p. 545).

Killian (2002) suggests that BFs are more likely to be labeled “hypersensitive to situations due to their social locations as both persons of color and ‘emotional’ women” (Killian, 2002, p. 603).

Root (2001) found that women become the central gatekeepers to “racial construction, reconstruction and deconstruction” and predicts that women will be “central figures in the growth of interracial marriage,” which is most likely influenced by their role of bearing children (p. 170). Despite their history of being slaves who were raped, forced to work both in and out of WMs homes, and raise White children as well as their own, BFs have been known to be strong matriarchs, sometimes referred to as heroines, of Black families and culture (Stevenson, 1996). Kaba (2012) suggests, that BFs often reject non-Black males’ romantic advances. He also suggests there has been a decline in BF/WM marriages between 2009 and 2010, and that many of the BFs who are marrying out are marrying men from Europe and foreign BFs are marrying WMs from the U.S. (Kaba, 2012). Folan (2010) argues that BFs have fought against crimes of racism of Black people over the misogyny and sexism that they faced as BFs as a form of loyalty to

their culture. One way they have fought for their Black culture is by avoiding relationships with WMs. As a result, BFs have been silent about the mistreatment from within the culture by Black males, including rape and abuse, because racial inequalities were viewed as bigger problems than gender inequalities (Folan, 2010). Consequently, BFs have carried the responsibility and burden of ensuring Black racial and cultural customs are not lost but passed down through each generation.

Gullickson (2006) articulates that gender influences a higher status and exchange commodity for Black males than that of BFs due to females being seen as having less economic value. Much of the literature that discusses males marrying out has to do with social and economic mobility. “In all time periods, the larger number of actual [interracial] marriages took place between Black men and White women” (Spickard, 1989, p. 283). For Black men out-marriage results in upward mobility when he marries a White female (Spickard, 1989). WM interest in BF sexually, is rarely discussed outside of the sexual dominance in slavery and viewing BFs as exotic and forbidden (Root, 2001). WMs have historically constructed the belief that BFs are sexually aggressive, eliminating WM’s responsibility for being sexual predators (Root, 2001). This is an interesting and necessary area to explore regarding the structural, institutional, and intergenerational power of both male and white dominance as it relates to marriage, sexual identity, and equality. Root (2001) found that many of her WM participants in interracial marriages were willing to give up aspects of their WM privilege and blend into minority status while in ethnic communities.

Education.

The amount of education an individual obtains is often used as a means to understand marrying outside of one's racial group. During segregation, neighborhoods and schools were racially separated resulting in limited social interaction between races where people might meet leading to a relationship (Childs, 2005a; Burton et al., 2010). When schools and neighborhoods began to desegregate, people began to interact in social settings that provided more opportunity to be in interracial relationships. Currently, schools and colleges are more diverse than at any other time in history and instructors are encouraging students to be less judgmental of those who are different (Kaba, 2012). Historically, interracial marriages were part of the poor or working classes (Gullickson, 2006). Jacobs & Labov (2002) who pulled a sample from the 1990 Census, found interracial marriage to be most common within the middle class with partners who have similar educations. Kouri (2003)'s qualitative study confirms this by reporting that participants occupied similar work, school, and community spaces. "College-educated men and women are more likely to marry interracially than those with less education" (Qian, 2005, p. 35). Therefore, there is higher probability of Blacks and Whites who are educated to have partners outside their race (Gullickson, 2006). Qian (2005) suggests that married partners often have obtained educational levels that are similar as a result of similar social positions and values in their familial backgrounds- though Blacks (both males and females) marry Whites with less education than themselves six out of ten times (Qian, 2005; Kaba, 2012). Baars (2009) found that BF's tend to marry men with less education, older and previously married despite the race of the man. Baars' (2009) results was an advancement from Gullickson's (2006) study that asserted there was little evidence of education being a factor in selection criteria for BF/WM marriage. "White

men who marry interracially are more likely to have a college education than those who marry other Whites” (Baars, 2009, p. 224). Kaba (2012) suggests that BFs advancement in higher education and obtaining of higher paying careers, results in a struggle to find eligible Black men with similar social status (Kaba, 2012). A recent study by Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013), posits that 53 percent of interracial marriages have some graduate education. College education influences potential wage earnings, which in turn impacts income and class.

Region.

Black/White marriages historically tended to have higher rates in the North and West and lower rates in the South (Lewis & Ford-Robertson, 2010), despite larger Black populations in the south (Gullickson, 2006). Between 1960 and 1970, B/W interracial couples in the north increased, but decreased in the south (Baar, 2009). These numbers increased in the West to 12.3 percent and 1.6 percent in the South by 1980 (Baar, 2009). The rate of approval of interracial marriages has traditionally been higher in the West (Baar, 2009, Root 2001), and continues with the data from the most recent Census, with Hawaii having the most interracial marriages (Wang, 2012). Regional trends of fewer interracial marriages in the South largely reflect racial historical tension in the U.S. such as slavery and civil rights (Gullickson, 2006). Immigration restrictions throughout history have also impacted interracial marriage numbers, though mostly non-Black interracial marriages (Root, 2001).

Theoretical Foundation

In this section I will review the ecological systems framework and social construction theory as guiding theories for understanding interracial partner identity and

navigation in different generational cohorts. Theory is essential in guiding the research process, interpreting data, and applying findings to practice (Rockquemore, Brunsuma, & Delgado, 2009, p. 20). The ecological systems framework is seen as a foundational theory in social work research and practice. The ecological systems framework is often used by professional social workers to better understand how a client and their many environments impact each other. Founder, Bronfenbrenner (1986) created a five-level model of personal and environmental influence to address his concerns that developmental psychologists were neglecting the impact that environmental factors have on human development, specifically child development (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013; Renn, 2003). Bronfenbrenner's model focused on influences placed upon an individual by their environment, their responses to their environment, and the context of the socially constructed time (Renn, 2003). The ecological systems approach has been successful in exploring the fluidity of multiracial identity, and has potential for expanding the understanding of BF/WM interracial marriage and interracial family dynamics.

The ecological systems model encompasses both processes and outcomes by placing an individual (or in this study a couple) at the center or origin of development with nested systems surrounding the individual or couple, increasing in distance between the singular self/couple and the self/couple as a component of a much larger community (Stormshak & Dishion, 2002). This theory has also guided a deeper and more complete understanding for social workers about how identity is simultaneously innate, developed, and continually influenced by both internal and external forces; this is particularly true for racial and ethnic minorities, including multiracial individuals and interracial couples. Root (2003) was the first to use the ecological framework specifically to explore

multiracial identity development. She recognized that historical, geographical and gender lenses that impact racial and ethnic identity are in continual flux for multiracial individuals, as they interact with multiple environments. In marriage, each person comes to the partnership with his or her own set of ecological systems which both influence them and upon which they exert influence, creating a back and forth exchange of energy, change, and influence. When marriage partners have different racial identities, it adds both complexity and possible friction to the already adapting merging of the two separate ecological systems (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013).

One notable strength of the ecological systems framework is that it allows for the consideration and inclusion of multiple, complex influences that individuals/couples face during racial identity formation. This strength facilitates an examination of relationships that allows for additional analyses in order to understand what and how different systems influence, in this case, marital partnerships, and how the partnership responds to different systems. Crawford and Alaggia (2008) assert that familial relationships often do not follow a linear formation of identity or cohesion, and so the process of identifying how individuals move between and navigate different systems is useful when analyzing and interpreting data gathered about marriage, partnerships, and family systems. Specifically, interracial partners' familial support can influence how they identify racially as a couple within their extended family system, the community, and society as a whole (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008). The lack of linearity in identity development that Crawford and Alaggia (2008) allude to, matches the conclusions of Roots' ecological framework. At a macro systems level, the social and political views of those in power determine laws and policies regarding interracial marriage, posing additional considerations that an interracial

couple would have to face during their lifetime or the span of their relationship (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008). The ecological systems perspective is also useful in exploring interracial marriage in the 21st Century, in the United States, in that it allows research to focus on both the individual and the couple unit while identifying the personal, familial, political, and social forces and resources that individuals and couples are engaging with at a given moment in time and history (Renn, 2003). This allows researchers to identify existing predominant strengths of individuals and couples in interracial marriages while simultaneously providing a foundation for addressing the challenges these couples face moving forward in their lives.

The social work understanding of ecological systems framework, with components of social construction, was the guiding theoretical model of this study. Interracial marriage identity development, similar to Root's findings of multiracial identity development, is also fluid (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2011). The interracial marriage partnership is the center of their ecological system with nesting systems surrounding them (Stormshak & Dishion, 2002). The first system surrounding them consists of family, friends, and coworkers (microsystem), followed by their community-retail establishments, church, etc. (mezzosystem), and lastly by the larger society (macrosystem). It is important to note that laws preventing interracial marriage on a macrosystems level are no longer an issue; however, the legality of interracial marriage has not translated into social acceptance due to the power of racial social construction. Central to a systems model is the societal stress that can impact the individual/couple placed in the center of the system and how pressure from each system impacts the surrounding systems (Stormshak & Dishion, 2002).

The traditional social work understanding of the ecological systems framework is often depicted visually with layered circles with macro systems representing the outside circles moving towards a circle in the middle representing the individual at the center of the systems. Nesting systems surrounding the individual represent the process and outcomes that each system has on the individual at the core the system (Stormshak & Dishion, 2002). After reviewing the literature, this traditional conceptualization of the ecological systems theoretical model did not seem to accurately depict the interactions among and between systems. The complexity of system interactions of interracial couples is difficult to completely capture within the traditional ecological systems model visual. Though each circle looks embedded, the solid lines of each circle or system visually depicted in the traditional visual model do not allow for the permeation and overlap that often occurs between and among systems. Therefore, I have developed a new visual representation that portrays a more accurate reflection of the systems encountered by interracial couples as a means of understanding how systems and social constructions impact their couple identity; this Ecological Systems Framework for Understanding Interracial Marriage (see Image 1) is outlined below.

The Ecological Systems Framework for Understanding Interracial Marriage uses the concept of a funnel rather than the traditional bulls eye visual representation previously associated with the ecological systems framework. The funnel represents the social constructions that have been created throughout history, shaping society and influencing history, policy, popular media, and other macro level systems of which individuals and couples are a part.

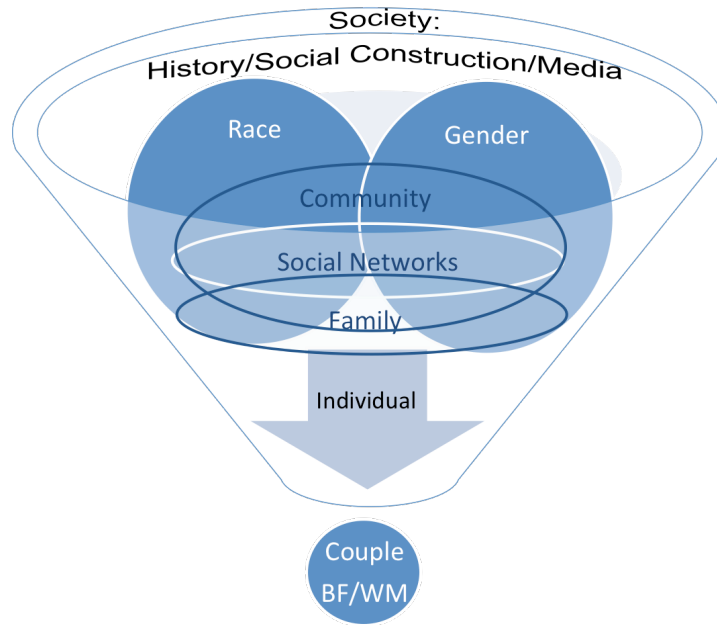


Figure 1. Ecological Systems Framework for Understanding Interracial Marriage

Within the funnel there are the two major socially constructed systems that impact BF/WM interracial couples: race and gender. The “structural power constructed by ‘whiteness’ and ‘maleness’ have influenced the construction of both concepts and its function within community, social, and familial systems (Root, 2001). Race and gender have socially constructed known roles, boundaries, and expectations that have become understood in society. Additionally, there are norms, though often referred to as stereotypes, for gender categories of different races. For example, Black women are often thought of as being loud and aggressive. The community categorizes people into these groups with the influence of media, laws and inaccurate historical education. Social networks (friends, colleagues, etc.) and family perceptions of race and gender influence the individual’s conceptualization of these systems. The family system is often the closest

system to the individual and passes on a history of how race and gender have been understood. Social networks and family members tend to question when someone close to them decides to make decisions that do not align with the culture established in those systems. Marrying outside of one's racial group is an example of a decision made by individuals that have been historically contrary to "traditional" racial boundaries and "deviation from the norm" (Childs, 2005, p.72). Each year there is an increase in interracial marriages; however, the rate of BF/WM interracial marriage is not increasing at a comparable rate. This makes the gender/race combination in a BF/WM interracial marriage double non "traditional" by marrying outside of race and being BF and WM. The overlapping race, gender, community, social networks, and family systems capture how neither acts alone, but each intersects and impacts the other resulting in individual and couple identities. This funnel conceptualization and its incorporation of social construction of the systems framework was used to understand how BF/WM interracial couples in this study navigate their experiences as an interracial couple. Specifically, in the output of the funnel, the couple unit was the focus, as how they experience and navigate race through the systems they have encountered was explored.

Empirical Research

Quantitative studies.

Quantitative examination of interracial marriage allows social science researchers the ability to quantify details about the individuals and the circumstances under which they married (i.e. age, education, region, etc.). This information is often used by government agencies to record change in populations living in different communities, as well as the impact of different laws. The majority of quantitative research on interracial

marriage uses secondary data for analysis that identifies interracial marriages based on household data and/or marriage certificates. Data sources that contain U.S. Census data identify marriages by the membership of an individual in relation to the head of the house or from reporting marriage (Gullickson, 2006). Due to a lack of reporting of those within the household having a marriage license or not, these studies include a number of cohabitation relationships as well as legal married relationships (Gullickson, 2006: Jacob & Labov, 2002).

Gullickson (2006) examined data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) at the University of Minnesota, which contains a sample of 1 to 5% U.S. Census data, and data collected through the North Atlantic Population Project (NAPP) to identify interracial marriage trends. He limits his studies to Black/White (B/W) marriages and counted individuals who identify as Hispanic with those who marked the White racial category. Though the IPUMS does identify Spanish surnames, actual collection of a Hispanic category was not utilized until 1970, thus he combined the categories to prevent skewed population results in the difference of categories for years prior to 1970 and years after 1970. Though this justification is valid and highlights the historical inconstancy in racial classifications, it also creates inaccurate results for all White population numbers and eliminates the Hispanic population. Gullickson utilizes the status exchange theory (the exchange of economic and/or racial status by marrying outside of the race) and structural assimilation theory (education for all will eliminate racial barriers and increase universalism) by looking at interracial marriage and education trends over time. Gullickson's report supports status exchange when looking at education

of Black males/White females, however education did not seem to be a criteria for partner selection within BF/WM marriages.

Jacobs and Labov (2002) tested Merton's Social Exchange theory using Census data by examining gender and educational differences to determine the odds of marrying outside of one's individual race. They conducted logistic regressions with a 1% sample of heads of households, and spouses and marriages present with no heads of households (multifamily households) from the 1990 Census for a total of 539,279 heterosexual marriages. The use of logistic regression allowed the researchers to look at a large number of participants, but still account for variety within the group. For example, they were able to create four categories (Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican and Other Hispanic) for Hispanic, rather than one combined Hispanic group. They were also able to test for a number of independent variables, where studies that utilize log-linear models are restricted. For these reasons they were able to test Merton's theory more accurately. Jacob and Labov (2002) found that Native Americans had the highest frequency of out-marriage, whereas BFs had the lowest rate of out-marriage. They tested Merton's theory by separating marriages where both partners had a college education from those that did not and found that higher education increased the chances of interracial marriage. Jacob and Labov (2002) concluded that exchange theory held true with high status minorities marrying dominant group members, but faltered when attempting to prove that less dominant group members would be willing to marry into racial minority groups. White males married out 2.41 %, White females married out 1.98%, whereas minority racial groups married out anywhere from 6.11% (Black males) to 52.42% (Other Non-Hispanic females) with the BF's marrying out the least of all minority groups - at 2.43% of the

time. They suggest additional research is needed to better understand the sizeable variety in interracial partnerships. Jacob and Labov (2002) provide a comprehensive picture of their study by providing detail about their sample, theory, hypothesis, justification of method to test their analysis, and description of findings.

Kalmijn (1993) examined annual marriage certificate data from 33 states to identify B/W marriage trends from 1968 to 1986, gathered by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) for approximately seven million marriages. An advantage to using marriage certificate data rather than census data is that both spouses, rather than one, complete the certificates. This provides a more accurate reporting of demographic information. Additionally, this data provides information on the number of new marriages each year, rather than potential overlap of attrition issues found in Census data as a result of death and divorce. However, the NCHS data are limited due to not all states reporting to them, and not all states asking for race on the marriage certificate.

Additionally, Hispanic is coded as White by the NCHS. Kalmijn suggests future research use the race of parents from birth certificates, as parentage of mixed race children is another indicator of (B/W) partner relations. He used education and race as predictors. One challenge Kalmijn encountered in analysis was the difference in number of males and females in the sample. He argues that there could be other explanations for status gains than the traditional monetary predictors used in exchange theory; thus, traditional predictors would not provide insight into interracial marriage in terms of status.

Additionally, he argues that college education data is not the best measurement due to a history of less White female than WM enrollment and more BF than Black male enrollment (Kalmijn, 1993). Not all of his findings supported exchange theory. He found

that BF marry someone of a lower status 13% more often than they marry someone of a higher status (Kalmijn, 1993). Overall he found that race and status are closely linked when considering a different race partner.

These quantitative studies all found complications with the theories employed; both exchange and assimilation theories. The BF/WM relationship is not explained/supported by these theories nor fully understood in these quantitative studies. There were challenges with the data in all of the studies due to complications with inconsistencies of how the census and other survey data collection has categorized race and marriage over time. Each of these studies compares interracial marriage rates over multiple decades, despite the complications and concerns presented in sample measurement given the changing racial and marriage classifications - posing difficulty in quantifying the group being analyzed. Each study notes challenges within their method of analysis in attempting to capture the full scope of their research question/hypothesis. The descriptive statistics found in quantitative studies that look at interracial marriages provide important information for the government and other agencies when enforcing Civil Rights laws; however, they do not explain beliefs, values, and motivations for intermarrying (McClain, 2011).

Qualitative Studies.

Qualitative methodologies allow research to seek in depth understanding of the complicated experiences that participants share, often furthering the findings found in quantitative studies (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2005). Qualitative research with interracial marriages allows participants to be more than a condensed number, and affords them the ability to share the nuances of who they are and how they navigate their

experience in an interracial relationship. Recent studies have begun to focus their research on strengths found within interracial relationships.

Foeman and Nance (2002) focus on communication across racial lines in interracial couples by executing 309 individual and couple non-structured interviews at dinner parties, in college classrooms, support group meetings, and non-staged events with individuals and couples who were in B/W romantic relationships. This method provides a casual environment for participants to share freely and honestly, however interviewees were not informed that their comments were being considered for a research project. Restricting the disclosure of purpose of their conversation with participants is an ethical concern violating the rights of participants. Their lack of formality with participants restricted them to only being able to approximate the ages of participants (approximately 18-40 years of age). Their research team met frequently during the research process to compare field notes and debrief on their findings towards supporting their previously established (Foeman & Nance, 1999) stages of relationship development with interracial couples. Their findings in this study supported their previously developed model of communication within interracial partnerships. That model consists of four stages: racial awareness, coping, identity emergence, and maintenance. However, their lack of rigor in method, specifically participant recruitment and lack of informed consent makes their findings questionable as to whether they were open to growth of their communication phases, rather than fishing for confirmation.

Killian (2002) facilitated semi structured in-depth interviews of a random sample consisting of ten B/W interracial couples together and individually (total of 20 individuals). He reported facilitating all the interviews, audio recording them, and taking

field notes. Killian did an inductive discursive analysis using HyperRESEARCH software to review data and create codes for recurring themes. Participants were asked questions about their family history, life together and how they negotiated their racial and ethnic differences. Killian's findings suggest that interracial couples adapt in a racist society by blocking dominant racial discourse from affecting their individual and couple identity. Killian's conclusions were a result of his detailed analysis that consisted of comparing and contrasting discovered themes across individuals, within each couple and across couples. Though he did not indicate a peer review process of his solo research work, he did self report his White ethnicity and the need for therapists to be self aware of their own identity and racial beliefs when working with diverse clients. Disclosing how his White male identity impacted his interpretation during analysis could have strengthened his argument.

A recent study by Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) investigated how interracial married couples create strong meaningful relationships despite potential societal and familial pressures. They did a grounded theory analysis of 17 couple interviews, between 26 to 59 years of age, from California. Couples were found using snowball sampling and word of mouth strategies. Unlike the other studies that focused on B/W couples, this study had multiple races represented within the interracial marriages. They interviewed each couple together and separately; tape recorded the semi-structured interviews, and then transcribed the recordings. They provided significant detail of their grounded theory approach to analysis that resulted in four relational strategies for interracial partners (creating a 'we', framing differences, emotional maintenance, and positioning in relation to societal and familial context). They also developed a guide for

social service professional working with interracial couples. Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) suggest the usefulness of future longitudinal research exploring the links between relationship strategies and structures, outcome measures, and parenting of multiracial children. Future studies will be able to build upon their work by testing their suggestions in practice.

Kouri (2003) interviewed 20 B/W couples (10 of which were BF/WM) ranging from 26 to 49 years of age. She used a constant comparison method and universal semantics to analyze the transcription of tape-recorded interviews and found that her participants were generally raised in and continued to occupy diverse spaces (i.e. school, work, community). She also found that both Black and White communities demonstrated resistance to interracial couples. Kouri, unlike other researchers, samples equally Black male/White female and BF/WM relationships; however, she does not present how the difference of gender and race within the couples are similar or different.

Root's (2001) study, examines the impact of family systems and social factors of race and gender that surround interracial partnerships, deliberately not focusing on problems/issues that are often the focus of studies on interracial marriage. In the first phase of her study she sought out multiple perspectives of interracial marriage through informal conversations and interviews with individuals, couples, and groups from around the country who were part of an interracial partnership at some point in time. In the second phase the Multiracial Family Project, she conducted individual interviews of family members of someone involved in an interracial marriage. This led to the third phase, the Biracial Sibling Project, which consisted of 30 biological sibling pairs (total of 60 participants) from parents of different races. Overall, Root reports 175 families of

different racial combinations were represented. Her book provides great insight into different types of interracial marriage with narratives shared by participants. She found that families respond with a variety of responses and levels of support of interracial partnerships yet continue to show concern for their children. Root summarizes her findings in a final chapter that provides 10 truths of interracial marriage. She reports testing and confirming her findings by presenting them to different groups of interracial families and with individuals in interracial families. Root does not report details about her method of analysis, only reporting she held interviews and focus groups, but not whether they were recorded, transcribed, or of the use of field notes, etc.

Childs (2005b) explored B/W couples, focusing on contemporary beliefs of interracial partnerships by conducting ethnographic interviews with 15 B/W interracial couples, between 20 and 69 years of age, who reported being in committed relationships for 2 to 25 years (nine were married, and four were BF/WM relationships). In her attempt to understand the social construction of these interracial partnerships, she also collected data from websites, films, White community gatherings, and Black community gatherings. She used a critical race theory strategy as a methodological tool to examine the narratives of her participants and looked for patterns in how they constructed their experiences. Childs does not go into detail about her method of analysis, but does triangulate the narratives of participants to other literature and data gathered. She found that dominant White discourses continue to negatively affect social responses to B/W relationships, with both White and Black communities continuing to have strong views on the crossing of the color line. Opposition to interracial marriages are no longer presented in racial terms, for example: people are not directly telling these couples they

should not mix the races. However, they are communicated by expressing concern for societal responses, “difficulty” being someone different, and concerns for the children (Childs, 2005b). She focuses on the specific views of BFs from this study in a separate article.

In Childs’ (2005a) article, she focuses her study on the perceptions of interracial marriage by BFs, both in relationships with WMs and those who were single. BFs are often portrayed as angry and not in favor of interracial partnerships, especially Black male/White female couples (Childs, 2005a; Kaba, 2012). BF perspectives are frequently left unexplored in interracial partner research (Childs, 2005a). Childs facilitated focus group interviews with BFs from three colleges who were members of Black Student Unions, as well as in depth interviews with BFs married to WMs to explore the stereotypes of BF resistance to interracial marriages. Participants ranged from 24 to 47 years of age. Audio was recorded of all interviews and transcribed as part of the larger study previously discussed (Childs, 2005b) and then reanalyzed as secondary qualitative data for this study. The focus groups revealed that BFs did not believe WMs found them attractive and voiced feeling personally threatened or rejected by Black males who chose to partner with White females. The interviews with BFs in interracial marriages revealed women feeling the need to validate their “Blackness” by mentioning activities and organizations they are part of that counter the “sellout image” that might be placed upon them (Childs, 2005a). Interviewing the college women in a focus group setting, without additional individual interviews, leaves room for respondents to communicate a group mentality response rather than their true individual beliefs on the subject. Additionally, Child’s racial background, a White Portuguese female, interviewing BFs about

dating/marrying WMs could skew the responses though she does report self disclosing her interest in the topic and personal experience in an interracial B/W relationship as a way to encourage respondents to share openly. This threat to validity could have been countered by utilizing a peer reviewer or member checking with participants, neither of which was reported.

The qualitative studies on interracial marriages presented have strengths and limitations to their methodologies that impact their findings. The number of participants found in these studies ranged from 20 to 309 individuals. The studies with participant groups over 100 (Foeman & Nance, 2002; and Root, 2001) do not provide detail of how they managed the qualitative data for such large qualitative sample sizes. Ages of participants represented five decades. All of the studies discussed how the participants individually identified. Five of the studies focused on B/W relationships, not including Childs' (2005a) study specific to BF/WMs (Killian, 2002; Foeman & Nance, 2002; Kouri, 2003; Childs, 2005b), only two of those report the number of BF/WM relationships represented (Childs, 2005b & Kouri, 2003). Kouri (2003) is the only study in which BF/WM couples are equally represented, highlighting a gap of BF/WM representation in the literature. The studies sampled participants from different parts of the United States: three from the Northeast (Childs, 2005a; Childs, 2005b; Killian 2002), two from California (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013; Kouri 2003), one national study (Root, 2001), and Foeman & Nance (2002) omitted the region details of participants from their article.

Root (2001) and Killian (2002) are the only studies that did not report recording and transcribing their encounters with participants; however, Root did report the number

of hours spent in conversations with participants indicating she kept record of some type. Neither Root (2001) nor Childs (2005b) clearly describe their methods of analysis, which prevents future researchers the ability to replicate their studies and limits the reliability of their findings due to lack of a structure of how conclusions were determined. Root (2001), however, does mention she tests her findings, she just does not indicate how she came to them. Two of the studies do not disclose a particular theory that led their research and/or analysis (Foeman & Nance, 2002; and Childs, 2005a); however, Childs (2005a) reports her data is collected from an earlier study (Childs, 2005b) where Critical Race Theory is indicated as the theory driving the research and analysis. All of the studies indicate that Black and White communities are not fully welcoming or accepting of B/W interracial partnerships.

All seven of the studies report race as an ongoing societal and familial concern when individuals choose a partner. Two studies provide suggestions for helping professionals working with this population (Killian, 2002; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2003), though not one provides evidence of the suggestions being successful interventions with this population. With the continued growth of interracial marriages in the United States, future studies should further explore these suggestions by testing which interventions are successful with interracial marriages. The three studies that proposed phases of interracial relationships (Root, 2001; Foeman & Nance, 2002; and Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013), presented them as nonlinear models/frameworks, which is consistent with multiracial identity literature (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008). Four of the studies report interviewing the couples together with many justifying the decision by referencing the couple as a unit; however, none of them discussed or explored the

combined identity of the couple as an interracial partnership/marriage (Killian, 2002; Kouri, 2003; Childs, 2005b; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). The studies relied on audio recording and field notes for data collection. A study was not found where the use of video was utilized to analyze nonverbal communication used by interracial partners. Discussion of nonverbal interactions between the interracial partners was not mentioned in any of the studies.

Summary

There is a long history of tension and mistrust between Black and White populations in the United States (Pascoe, 2009). This was intensified by those in power (White people) attempting to maintain their control and privilege through dehumanizing means of brutality and enforcing unjust laws. Miscegenation laws attempted to prevent the races from mixing until 1967 when the Loving's won their case against the State of Virginia in the Supreme Court. Since that decision, there has been a slow and steady increase in acceptance of interracial couples in society, but there continues to be an underlying presence of disapproval and judgment. With an increasing number of interracial relationships and marriages, little research has been done to identify whether any progress has been made in acceptance of these couples in American society, how they navigate in a monoracially influenced society, and how they raise their multiracial children. It took 30 years for BF/WM marriages to begin to significantly increase after the *Loving* case and ending of most miscegenation laws in the United States. The number of reported BF/WM marriages stayed nearly the same from 1960 to 1980, and finally doubled in 1990 (Root, 2001). Despite the increased information collected about interracial marriage demographics, there exists a gap in the empirical and social work

practice knowledge about how these couples have navigated their experiences in society over the last 30 years.

The ecological systems approach used by Seshadri & Knudson-Martin (2013), is a familiar social work approach to practice. It has also been successful in exploring the fluidity of multiracial identity (Root, 2003), and has potential for expanding the understanding of BF/WM interracial marriage dynamics. The ecological systems framework is embedded in the core of the social work profession and combined with social construction, will provide insight into the experiences and needs of interracial partners and their families.

The small number of BF/WM marriages until recently could explain the lack of research on this population. In addition many people see the increase in interracial marriages as a sign that racism no longer exists or is so rare it no longer requires empirical exploration (Childs, 2005, p. 2). Though scholars continue to explore and report on the objectification of interracial couples by trying to identify how they came together, why they married outside their racial group, and how their relationship is different than monoracial marriages, other questions remain (Childs, 2005). Further, research does exist showing that interracial partnerships are able maintain their relationship despite persistent social and cultural barriers, though the reasons for this remain largely unclear (Kouri, 2003). The existing literature has not been able to examine trends in interracial marriage change over time and explore the broad constructs of how couples' experience public and political barriers or sanctions because of their differing races. How age and longevity of the marriage impacts social interactions, and the impact of long term familial support or disapproval on marriages has yet to be discovered. The

disproportioned and lack of information on the strengths and challenges of interracial partnerships can restrict the ability to understand and appropriately serve a growing population of interracial families in social work. The purpose of this study is to begin to better understand BF/WM marriages and how they have navigated their social environments over time. The next chapter will provide details as to how videography will provide insight into this population.

Chapter 3 – Study Methodology

The ecological systems perspective through the lens of social construction guided the methodology of this study in exploring the narratives of BF/WM interracial marriage in three different generational cohorts. Videography allowed for in-depth understanding of the shared narratives by providing the ability to analyze how BF/WM married couples navigate and construct their experiences through verbal and non-verbal communication. Narrative methods are known for providing deeper understanding of shared participant experiences, by allowing the participant to share without restrictions, providing an opportunity for the researcher to link diverse experiences (Greenhalgh, Russell, & Swinglehurst, 2005). Narrative methods are culturally sensitive because they are person-centered and allow participant(s) to construct their own story and meaning (Jackson, 2009). The shared narratives captured by video were analyzed using aspects of narrative methods and the Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method that accommodate the added visual data component to answer the research question: How do interracial BF/WM married partners, from three different generational cohorts, experience and navigate race and identity in their relationship? The Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method allowed for a holistic picture of how the narratives of the interviewed couples construct their

relationship in different systems, despite their being of different racial backgrounds, with its non-linear, content and process approach to analysis (Maietta, 2006).

This chapter will begin by providing background on the use of video in qualitative work and its potential benefits in social work and more specifically to this study of BF/WM interracial couples. This will be followed by an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of using secondary qualitative data. Following the overview of videography and use of secondary data, I will provide a detailed description of the collection of the original data and the process of data analysis for the current study. The chapter will conclude with the measures taken to improve study validity.

Videography in Social Science Research

Videography focuses on video analysis of visual and audio conduct and is similar to ethnography in that it too looks at how individuals interact within social settings (Knoblauch, 2006); however, it also differs in a few ways. Ethnographies were originally used by anthropologists to observe large populations (often tribal) and took a significant amount of time in the field gathering data (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2002; Knoblauch, 2006). Eadweard Muybridge gave birth to silent cinema in the 1880s by setting up a series of still cameras and taking pictures in succession of a horse running (Erickson, 2011). He was then able to show the pictures in sequence on a projector, making the horse appear as if it was running. This eventually led to film and video use as it is known today. Anthropologists first used film in 1898 (Erickson, 2011). 16-mm was used after World War II to capture family therapy interviews (Erickson, 2011). A multidisciplinary research team from Stanford in 1955-56 conducted the first recorded systematic attempt at simultaneous analysis of verbal and nonverbal aspects of social interaction, using

sound cinema film (Erickson, 2011). Their study conducted dyadic interviews with mothers and their children who were in family therapy. The researchers “prepared a narrative description of the interaction that took place” reporting the findings of their “multilayered, multimodal descriptive analysis” of semiosis in human social interaction (Erickson, 2011, p. 180). Their work on semiosis was later called context analysis.

Videographies tend to have shorter time spent collecting data compared to recording audio only and taking extensive field notes; however, the amount of time spent analyzing the data is similar (Knoblauch, 2006); though could be more time consuming depending on the depth of analysis planned. This is a result of the rich accurate data that is collected both audibly and visually with video, resulting in more data gathered (verbal, non-verbal, and environmental influences) in a shorter period of time (Gottdiener, 1979; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). This allows the recording of nuances of an interview that are often missed or not remembered by the researcher. Another benefit of video data is the option of repeat viewing, slow motion dissection of each frame, and the ability to fast forward and rewind through the data (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011; Knoblauch, 2006; Shrum, et al., 2005; Secrist, et al., 2002, Gottdiener, 1979). This method supersedes the audio recording and field note taking previously used to capture an interview with the actual ability to “re-live” the interview by viewing a live account of the interview, providing greater accuracy and increased information (Gottdiener, 1979). Unique to videography, the researcher has the ability to catch verbal and physical data that might have been missed. For example, facial expressions a wife makes while her husband is sharing a story communicates her reaction to his story. That which is not verbally communicated may be lost in an audio-only recorded interview. Additionally,

videography provided the ability to analyze the role the researcher played during the interview. Erickson (2011) clarifies that the video recording is not the data, rather it is a source to collect and review data. (Erickson, 2011). Decisions about what should be recorded and how, and what the focus of analysis will be, impact the outcome of data. Transcription is still necessary with videography, but greater detail than traditional audio transcription is necessary to capture the non-verbal communication collected (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). Details about multimodal transcription will be discussed below.

Video segments allow for analytic insight when exploring many areas of research (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). Video has been used in studying small group discussion, classroom behaviors, socialization, and teaching strategies (social and educational research), therapy sessions, supervision, oceanography, sleep studies, sports medicine, archaeological fieldwork, documentaries, work place studies, and more (Knoblauch, 2006; Erickson, 2011; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). Social and educational research has produced “ethnographic narrative reports in the form of video case studies that increasingly came to be called videography” (Erickson, 2011, p. 184). In a search of common social work journals, use of video was extremely rare, and when mentioned was used in the form of vignettes (staged situations displayed for educational purposes or discussion starters in focus groups). Having the ability to focus on the interracial couples on video enhanced of how interracial couple identity and dynamics were shaped through their communication and interactions with the various socially constructed systems they encountered. Social workers have the opportunity to gain a

deeper understanding of our clients through visual methodologies, such as videography (Jackson, 2012).

Secondary Qualitative Data

Secondary data analysis is the re-use of an existing qualitative data set with the purpose of exploring a research question that is different from the initial study (Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997; Heaton, 2008). Quantitative secondary data analysis has long been accepted and respected as a cost-effective approach to maximize the use of previously collected data (Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997). This type of research has been used when analyzing census and other nationally collected data about interracial marriage. Use of qualitative secondary data has been slow to catch on in social research fields, but has increased in popularity since the 1990s (Heaton, 2008). Revisiting an existing qualitative data set by asking new or additional questions can produce new knowledge and support existing theories or previous findings (Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997). Like the archiving of quantitative data, qualitative data is now being archived in establishments such as Qualidata, now known as ESDS Qualidata (Heaton, 2008). Technology and the ability to digitize data, has allowed for increased maintenance, accessibility, and preservation of qualitative data for future analysis (Heaton, 2008).

Heaton (2008) posits there are three primary modes of secondary analysis: formal data sharing - using data that was collected by another researcher; informal data sharing - data shared with a researcher(s) who were not apart of the original team joined by one or more members of the original team; and re-use of self collected data - investigation of additional questions not explored in the original study or to verify original findings. This

study revisited collected data that had not been academically analyzed in what Heaton (2008) calls a supplementary analysis. Supplementary analysis is an in-depth analysis of emerging issues that were not fully addressed in the original study (Heaton, 2008). Hinds, Vogel, and Clarke-Steffen (1997) identified a similar approach that reanalyzes the data set in part or its entirety, focusing on a notion that was identified in the original analysis, but not the focus of the original study. The original study found themes for the editing of a final video assignment. For this dissertation study the original interviews were reanalyzed for the purposes of this current study.

Skeptics have found challenges with re-using qualitative data. One concern is not being the original collector of data, which results in apprehension about the ability to interpret the data and address missing data (Heaton, 2008; Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997). When open-ended or semi-structured questions have been employed during an interview, concerns about missing data are minimized, and “concerns about the meaning of missing data” can be addressed (Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997, p. 412). A researcher not using their own data must be cautious of interpretation of originally gathered data such as field notes (Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997). There are benefits and challenges of being too close or too distanced from the data set. A benefit of being distanced from the data is the ability to review the data with an unbiased perspective. Researchers who are close to the data are more familiar with the process, participants, etc. If too distanced from the data, it is beneficial to communicate with the original research team (Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997). However, these concerns were not the case in this study as I was the original data collector of the data analyzed.

Participants

This study examined secondary visual data gathered for a Visual Ethnography course taken in 2012. Interracial couples composed of a BF and WM, were contacted through snowball and convenient sampling, and asked to participate in a video recorded interview. Recruitment involved sending out a recruitment script (see Appendix B) to contacts in the community to identify interracial couple participants. Three couples were chosen to participate in video recorded interviews based on meeting the BF/WM criteria and being married in as close to 3 different generational cohorts as was possible (recent, 10 years, 20 years). Interviews lasted between sixty and ninety minutes. A stepwise approach (Kendall, et al., 2009) was used, where contact was made with one of the partners who presented the opportunity to be interviewed to the other partner before agreeing to the interview.

Procedures

The original study received IRB approval from Arizona State University in October 2012 (see Appendix A). Those couples that agreed to be interviewed received an Informed Consent (see Appendix D) and a Modeling and Performing Narration release (see Appendix E) prior to the interview. Interviews did not proceed until both documents were signed. As compensation for their time, participants were given a free book from MAVIN (a national multiracial organization) titled *Multiracial Child Resource Book: Living Complex Identities* (Root & Kelley, 2003), as well as a DVD copy of their unedited interview. Providing participants with a copy of their contributed narrative is consistent with a review done of narrative research in social work conducted by Riessman & Quinney (2005). A content log was created of themes of conversations at each minute of video (Schubert, 2006). The researcher chose ideas/themes that

demonstrated similarities and differences between the decades and edited them in iMovie to create a summary video. For this study, the original unedited videos were used to create multimodal transcripts of each interview, both of which were analyzed using the Sort and Sift, Think and Shift Method (Maietta, 2013). This method aims to better understand quality interactions for what they are, with the inclusion of visual data, while maintaining richness in the outcome.

Human Subjects & Confidentiality

Participants reviewed and signed an Informed Consent form and Modeling, Performing and Narration Release form prior to their interview. Participants were given copies of the consent forms for their records. With the use of video, anonymity is not possible. This was explained to participants verbally and in the Informed Consent and Modeling, Performing and Narration Release. Additionally it was explained that the video would be used for the class project, dissertation analysis, and potentially as a training tool. The interview was not recorded without the couples' consent. Participants were informed that only first names would be used on the video and in analysis. Though interviewing families can lead to "increase[d] self awareness and empowerment of the family" (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007, p. 291), a list of resources was provided in MAVIN's *Multiracial Child Resource Book* to address any emotional concerns that may have arisen during the interview.

Data Collection

It is important in all phases of videography to have high-quality equipment to ensure all aspects of the process are documented for later analysis, so the process of collection and analyzing data run effortlessly (Secrist et al., 2002). In addition it ensures

better quality video clips that can be additionally used for educational purposes. The interviews were collected with both audio and video recordings. Interviews were audio recorded through the software GarageBand. This was done for two reasons: to be used as a backup to the video recording, to ensure the dialogue was recorded; and for use in later video editing if the video sound quality was poor. Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff (2011) report that many video recording devices today capture high quality images, but the audio is not of quality. They too suggest the use of an external microphone or recording source. An HD Flip Cam was mounted on a tripod to record each interview. The HD Flip Cam records audio and video digitally and is a small and unobtrusive camera. Digital recordings provide for the preservation of audio and video quality better than the earlier use of analogue tape (Shrum et al., 2005). The interviewer intentionally placed herself next to and slightly behind the fixed camera so she had a clear view of the monitor and the life of the battery (Shrum et al., 2005; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). This also allowed the participants to focus on the interviewer rather than the camera. “A fixed camera is ordinarily used to encompass all active participants in the scene” (Heath et al., 2011, p. 38). Placing the camera on a tripod allowed for a steady shot and ease in rotating and zooming the camera if needed. Shrum and colleagues (2005) state that having equipment such as a tripod and lighting also symbolizes to participants a “higher standard of production values” (p. 12). Heath and colleagues (2011) state a fixed camera allows the researcher to take on the role of the observer instead of the cameraperson freeing them to take notes. Each interview took place in a comfortable and convenient location of the participant’s choice, which helped reduce cancellations (Kendal et al., 2009). Extra lighting was brought to each interview to ensure that participants were lit correctly for the

camera if their chosen spot happened to be too dark for recording. After each interview, both the audio and digital video files were downloaded to a password protected external hard drive. Field notes were recorded after each video and included: reflections of the process, what went well, what could be improved, and topics of discussion after the video was turned off.

Eggenberger and Nelms (2007) assert that interviews are a collaborative way of discovering meaning from socially constructed knowledge experienced and shared by an interviewee(s). Linhorst (2002) suggests that researchers use an interview guide with a limited number of open-ended questions. A brief list of starter questions were created to ask about both social and familial encounters in response to the couples' relationships and marriages, as well as questions about preparing for and parenting children (see Appendix C). Questions were presented in sequential order, moving from meeting and dating to marriage and children.

Interviewing family members is uniquely different from interviewing a focus group, in that they are related and there are shared experiences within the intimate family environment (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007). In this study a dyad combination of husband-wife, which is a typical dyad combination (Kendall, et al., 2009), were interviewed. "Interview dyads or triads, where two or three participants are interviewed as a set or case study, can explore complex complementary as well as contradictory perspectives" (Kendall et al., 2009, p. 196). Interviewing family members together, rather than individually, has been rare until recently in qualitative research studies (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007). A benefit to dyad interviews is the multiperspective approach to interviewing. This approach is used to "understand relationships and dynamics" among

participants, “explore similarities and differences in perceptions,” and provides the opportunity for participants to “prompt each other to mention or expand on specific issues or experiences” providing greater insight into the dynamics of the relationship (Kendal et al., 2009, p. 196 & 197). This uncovers information and experiences that might not have been explored within an individual interview (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007). Interviewing couples together provides the opportunity for fact checking between the participants as the interview is taking place. Other scholars who focus on interracial partnerships have also interviewed couples together to capture the way they construct their life together (Childs, 2005; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013), however none of them utilized video to record their data.

Data Analysis

Maietta (2006) developed a qualitative analysis approach called Sort and Sift: Think and Shift. “The Sort and Sift technique encourages frequent movement between thorough review of data with recording of ideas that emerge during review and stepping back to review and reflect on content and process used during data analysis” (Maietta, 2006, p. 8). This process is founded on Seidel’s (1998) Collecting, Noticing, and Thinking process. The goals of the Collecting, Noticing, and Thinking process are to make sense of the data, look for patterns and relationships within data and across data, and to make discoveries about a topic area (Seidel, 1998). In comparing and contrasting findings one notices how they are similar and different, discovers typologies, or finds sequence and patterns from sorting and sifting and examining identified themes (Seidel, 1998).

Maietta (2006; 2013) has expanded the sorting and sifting process referenced by Seidel in his Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method. This method of qualitative analysis has two cyclical and recurring phases. *Diving In* is the first phase where the researcher actively engages with the data by reading, reviewing, recognizing, and recording thoughts. *Stepping Back*, the second phase, recommends the researcher reflect on where they are in the process and consider re-strategizing. This is followed by diving back in to see what new things are recognized. “The method discourages a linear approach to qualitative data analysis. Your work, your data and your self are all subjects of study” (Maietta, 2006, p. 8).

Maietta emphasizes the importance of identifying the pulse, rhythm, foundation of argument presented by the participants in quotations and segments. In this study quotes and clip segments were identified to provide accurate and contextual messages. As suggested by Maietta (2006) interesting passages were highlighted while reviewing the transcript. I used different colors to highlight similar categories. For example, blue was used for family interactions, green for interactions with friends and in social settings, and orange for conversations about children. Matching colored post it notes were then added to each page for easy access to find all of the places each category was identified throughout the transcript. This was followed by a repeated process of *diving in* and *stepping back*. After diving in and identifying broad categorical topics, I stepped back and was able to compare and contrast different occasions and circumstances revealed in the collected data (Heath, Hindmarsh, Luff, 2011). Key segments of dialogue and movement from each couple were compared side-by-side. This was followed by diving back in to reevaluate if the themes that had emerged in one interview were also found in

the other interviews that I might have missed. After confirming the preliminary findings during a peer debrief session, I then stepped back and re-watched each interview and tried to listen and watch for how they answered the research question. It was during this phase of analysis that narrative methods were helpful in uncovering the differences between each cohort. The language each couple used to describe how they navigate their “individual historical and cultural” backgrounds, and the overall message they were communicating and how they were communicating as a couple was analyzed (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). The tenets of narrative methodology enhanced Maietta’s stepping back phase of analysis.

Enhancing Rigor and Validity

Multimodal transcription.

Transcription of talk must be done prior to overlaying the transcription of the visual elements (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). The audio files of the original study were professionally transcribed into a unimodal or conventional transcript of all verbal data collected (Luckmann, 2006). To prepare the transcripts for analysis, I first cleaned the transcript by listening to the audio-only recording and correcting missed words, naming participants, and fixing other typos. I then reviewed the transcript while watching and listening to the video to add the multimodal component, or the nonverbal data gathered (Bezemer & Mavers, 2006; Luckmann, 2006). This is where it was clear that the transcribers had made representational choices in their transcription of what to include and what to exclude (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011). I also skipped over some of the deletions believing that some of the transitional phrases “umms” and “ahhs” would not add any value in content evaluation. However, once I reviewed the video, it was clear

that those transitions were when one participant might look to the other for confirmation or up in the air thinking about what they were going to say next, or air quotes were used. It was in these spaces that actions occurred providing information about how the couple related to each other, which would not have been documented if the interview had only been audio recorded. There was also an incident of words that were misunderstood, and while watching the video it was clear that the participant was saying something different. In these ways, video allowed for a more accurate transcript.

After researching the multiple ways to document movement, the actual process of adding nonverbal documentation to the transcription of words, or multimodal transcription, took much more time than anticipated. The process was time consuming, but became extremely useful when returning to the data for analysis (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 201). First, I added a Word box column on the right hand of each page of transcription to record observations in, as suggested by Heath and colleagues (2010). However, I quickly realized that this was not going to be enough space, and there would be difficulty in trying to show where exactly the observation was taking place. I decided to use the Comments function within Word to capture all movement. With this function I was able to highlight the exact word(s), or space(s) between words and then write in the comment what movement was happening. I left the columns I had created, as they provided enough space to capture themes, notes, and other comments during analysis. I used the first letter of each person's name to indicate who was doing the action or to whom the action was directed.

Each movement was documented, then that portion of the video was replayed to make sure what was documented accurately described the action for the highlighted

content on the transcript. It would then be viewed again to see what, if any, the other participant's movements were for the same moment before moving on to the next section of video. "While watching real-time video, many things happen at practically the same time" (Secrist, Koeyer, Bell & Fogel, 2002, p. 11). It took approximately eight to ten minutes (sometimes more) to transcribe one minute of video action. I predict that if there were one person rather than two in the interview, this process would move quicker as the steps to record and verify the second person's movements would be eliminated. I also began to question if I was providing enough, or not enough detail in my description. Was I catching everything? It is evident that I became more detailed with each interview based on the increased number of Comments pages for the second and third interview. I found myself not knowing if the movement I was documenting was going to be relevant or not. Consequently, I documented as much as I could with the thought that I would determine what had meaning during analysis. "Video recordings seem to preserve every detail, whether potentially relevant or irrelevant" (Luckmann, 2006, p. 30). Multiple scholars suggest doing multimodal transcription only for important segments of the data that have been designated for more in-depth analysis, rather than the entire transcript as a way to manage the large amount of data and the extensive time it takes to document the nonverbal (Heath et al., 2010; Collier & Collier, 1986). In multimodal transcription video data is not solely descriptive or translations, rather "transduced and edited representations through which analytical insights can be *gained* and certain details are *lost*" (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011, p. 196).

Challenge of describing movement.

The difficulty of transcribing movement is that images cannot fully be depicted in words (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011). Verbal language can be translated into words, where as images and movement, nonverbal language, are forced to be described in words in a multimodal transcription.

Unlike talk, bodily conduct is not necessarily structured in terms of distinct turns, but the location of a particular movement within the emerging interaction remains critical to the ways in which an action, whether spoken, visible or a combination of both, is produced and understood by participants themselves (Heath et al., 2010, p. 74).

Exploring the connection between spoken word and the movement that accompanies it continues to be a challenge in social science research (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011). The challenge of fully presenting nonverbal data is increased with the limitations of disseminating findings in written journals. Online journals have begun to allow video fragments, though this is still rare (Heath et al., 2010). It is more common to provide a link to access the video segment. The findings chapter of this dissertation is presented in video format not only to share the video segments, but also to present the insights discovered by the researcher. Researchers who plan to attach video in any way to their publications must obtain institutional and participant permission prior to doing so (see Appendix D & E).

Time stamp documentation.

Transcripts present the evidence gathered audibly. In the case of multimodal transcripts, they represent all data seen and heard. However, “transcripts never operate in isolation” (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011, p. 194). It is important to keep all original presentational aspects of the data in context (tone, feeling, movement, etc.). Time stamps are necessary to be able to quickly find a section of the interview for repeat viewing,

rather than take the time to watch the entire interview, or even to jump around to try and find a clip (Secrist et al., 2002). While doing the second clean of the transcript (watching the video), I added the time stamp every time I, the researcher, asked a question or spoke. The video time stamp was important to record, as it was a different time stamp than that of the audio sent to the transcriber. Keeping record of when I spoke made it easy to find segments of video needing closer review after identifying themes in the multimodal transcript.

Audio versus video review of data.

With video there are several ways to approach data for analysis: audio first, video first, and/or transcript first. I chose to dive in and saturate myself with all aspects of the data. I was already very familiar with the video interviews since I had reviewed them multiple times for the original study. This familiarized me with what was said and how the couples interacted. For this study, after creating the multimodal transcription, I began my analysis review with the detailed transcripts, and then turned to reviewing identified video segments from that analysis. Video segments allowed for a deeper analysis of behavior patterns occurring while certain subjects were discussed. However, the researcher always needs to keep in mind the larger context of the video and not lose sight of positionality of that segment as a piece of a larger contextual interview. Without the larger interview context in mind video fragments could be misunderstood, so being familiar with their overall video prior to transcription and analysis was beneficial. After diving in and identifying themes in a detailed analysis, I stepped back and watched each interview again, noting segments where the couples were providing examples of experiencing and navigating race as a couple. Moving back and forth between the

detailed themes found in the review of the multimodal transcript and stepping back and reviewing each interview in its entirety, contributed to the discoveries in the Findings Chapter.

Creating an audit trail.

One benefit to video is that it captures all visuals at the location of the interview, allowing the interviewer to focus more on the interview and less on taking field notes. However, field notes are still necessary to capture interactions that happen before and after the video begins recording, as well as anything notable that happens outside the area being captured by video. After interviewing couple 2, they shared they had not talked about discussing race with their children prior to my interview. They then sought feedback on how to address certain situations. This was important to consider when analyzing the information they did share about racial experiences with their children during the interview. Two couples had a dog that can be heard in the background and one's son walked behind the camera, and was visible in a mirror in the frame. These are both examples of notations that were documented in field notes for the original study. Reflections on the use of equipment and overall impressions were also recorded to document the process of each interview.

When beginning the current study, I chose to use Evernote to record my audit trail. This note taking software was chosen because of its ability to manage multiple files and its mobility. Evernote archives information in the form of notes, lists, sketches, photos, document attachments, multimedia files (i.e. video), and even the ability to record a voice memo into the note (Geyer & Reiterer, 2012). It provided a way to capture the complexities of my visual method in one location. I was able to upload previously

recorded field notes from the first study, add screenshots of the process of completing the multimodal transcript, keep track of the time to complete each phase of the process, record insights and reminders throughout the process, and more. I especially appreciated the easy accessibility that Evernote provides while in the field because it is web-based and syncs across multiple devices. This allowed me to add a note or video memo to my audit trail immediately from my phone after having dinner with a group of Black females that shared insight into BF/WM relationships I had not previously heard. I did not have to wait until I was back at my computer. While completing the multimodal transcript, I had the transcript document, QuickTime window with the video data, and my Evernote Audit trail open on my desktop (see Image 1).

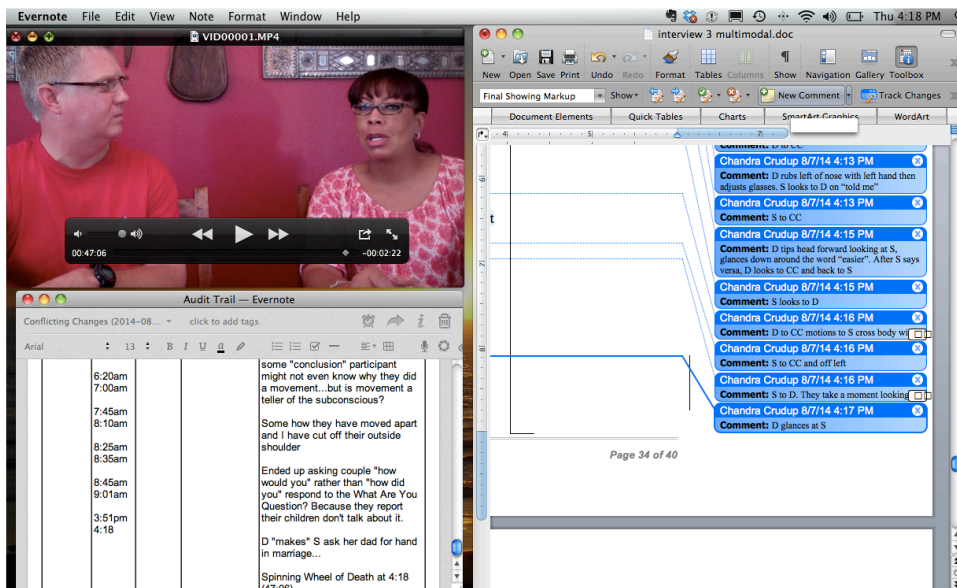


Image 1. Screenshot of Multiple Windows in use during Multimodal Transcription

This allowed me to keep track of how much time I was spending on each transcript, and keep a log of questions, notes, and reflections during the process. It is important to note the significance of saving often and having an organized system for filing. As a result of using multiple programs and the amount of time that goes into completing each minute of

the multimodal transcript, loss of data from a program freezing can be a major set back. To keep track of all file names, each video file name reflected the interview number, the transcript was named with the same interview number, and each referenced as such within Evernote for easy retrieval (i.e. Interview 1.mov, Interview 1.docx, Multimodal Interview 1.docx). Evernote also has advanced search capabilities that enable searching of not just typed text, but any word captured in a picture or document added to the note. This makes it convenient to find a word or phrase during analysis and the writing phase of research.

Reducing reactivity and bias.

Though qualitative research requires co-construction of meaning (between participant and researcher), reducing reactivity and bias effects are still necessary to ensure meanings shared by participants are interpreted with little influence of the researcher's perspective (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, p. 443). This is achieved through the establishment of trustworthiness by providing results that closely reflect participants' intended meanings. Trustworthiness is the result of specific procedures used in rigorous scholarship (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, p. 444). There are threats to trustworthiness such as researcher bias and reactivity. There are many tactics to deal with threats to trustworthiness such as: "prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, negative case analysis, audit trial, and reflexivity" (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, p. 444). Video data increases trustworthiness by providing the ability to playback accurate data captured during the interview for analysis (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011) in turn providing greater insight than traditional qualitative data collection forms (i.e. filed notes, and audio only interviews) alone.

Triangulation, researcher reflexivity and peer debriefing were used to address validity concerns and other limitations in this study. Triangulation is a procedure used to find a convergence among several sources to form themes in data, and is a strategy to increase rigor (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). Lietz, Langer, & Furman (2006) describe triangulation by observation as a review and analysis of qualitative data by more than one observer to allow for commonalities and differences to emerging, presenting insight to the data. In this study, the outcomes from the different couples were compared to each other to find congruence, and then compared to existing research on this population (see Image 2).



Image 2. Screenshot of video Segment During Theme Comparison

Researcher reflexivity is when researchers acknowledge and report personal biases, values, and beliefs that might influence their analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). “Reflexivity is an important part of qualitative inquiry because it is through this reflection that qualitative researchers can ponder the ways in which who they are may both assist and hinder the process of co-constructing meanings” (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, p.

447). The Sort and Sift: Shift and Think method allowed for reflexivity as part of the analysis process, and researcher reflections were recorded along with other analysis findings. The use of video eliminated some of the observer bias as it provides the actual account of the interview (Gottdiener, 1979). Due to the rare use of videography and as suggested by Lietz and colleagues (2006), this study maintained an audit trail to enhance rigor and document the process. An audit trail kept track of decisions made during analysis by the researcher to allow transparency in reporting procedures. Personal bias, values, and beliefs, will be reported along with the analysis of findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Both the audit and researcher reflections were kept in Evernote as described above.

Concerns of verification surface when attempting to verify findings as is standard with quantitative statistical methods (Heaton, 2008). Qualitative data is not verified the same way quantitative data is. Member checking in qualitative research can assist with concerns of validity, though it can be a challenge when using secondary data - as time has usually passed and access to participants may be difficult, as is the case with the secondary data used in this study. "Member checking, also known as respondent validation, allows participants to review findings from the data analysis in order to confirm or challenge the accuracy of the work" (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006, p. 453). In place of member checking, this study utilized peer debriefing to address validity concerns. Peer debriefing is when someone familiar with the research topic reviews the data and research process and provides constructive feedback (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This process includes engaging in dialogue about the project findings, population, and

methods used (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). Peer debriefing addresses reactivity and bias concerns that are threats of trustworthiness.

For this study, two peers viewed each of the three interviews. Both peers were PhD students, one of which was a BF married to a WM and the other a WM familiar with WM privilege literature. After both had individually watched the interviews and taken notes on the themes they found, I met with both of them to share my analysis process and discuss findings. Both shared their findings as well during a video recorded debriefing session (see Image 3). The peer reviewers gave me feedback on my findings and methods utilized during this session. Both peer reviewers discovered similar themes confirming my findings.



Image 3. Freeze frame from Peer Debrief Session

Summary

This chapter provided the background and justification for the employment of videography as a research method and data collection for analyzing BF/WM interracial marriages in different generational cohorts. A secondary qualitative analysis was

conducted of an original project that was conducted for a Visual Ethnography course. Dyad interviews were conducted to capture how each couple construct their couple identity. A multimodal transcript was created to document the movement captured in each recorded interview. For this study, the Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method and narrative method were used to during analysis. A detailed audit trail was kept to provide transparency in the process of this innovative method of social work research. Triangulation, researcher reflexivity and peer debriefing were strategies used to address concerns of research validity.

Chapter 4 – Findings

The findings for this study are presented in video format. This is aligned with the methodology employed. Access to the video can be found through a password accessible link (<http://vimeo.com/110712520>). For protection against copyright infringement and potential misuse of the participant video in any way, those interested in viewing the Findings Video will need to request the password by emailing the researcher at ccrudup@asu.edu. A transcript of the video transcript can be found in Appendix F.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

This study sought to examine BF/WM interracial marriages in three different generational cohorts in the Phoenix, AZ valley. Themes were identified when exploring how these couples navigate in their environments using the Sort and Sift: Think and Shift and narration methods. In this final chapter, I will summarize the findings of the study, discuss study limitations, and provide recommendations for future research considerations for this population and the method employed. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the social work education and practice implications.

Summary of Findings

This study examined three BF/WM interracial couples married in different cohorts to identify how they navigate race and identity in their relationship. Looking at the narratives of each couple from an ecological systems framework and through a social construction lens, there was an overarching theme of invisibility that all couples experienced and distinct differences by cohort of how they navigate as a couple.

Invisibility.

Each couple experiences invisibility, where their couple relationship and parent child relationship was not recognized, in their community and in their family. Each couple experiences instances where they are together in public, and they are asked individually if they need assistance. People in their communities do not expect and are not used to seeing a BF/WM, so they assume they are not a couple. This invisibility was also reported by Onwuachi-Willig & Willig-Onwuachi (2009). Each couple experienced questioning of the relationship in its early stages from relatives, but still reported that their family was supportive. There was also a de-emphasis on race in Childs' (2005) study with participants finding other explanations for familial ignorance other than racism. Not only did their couple relationship face invisibility, their parent-child relationships experienced invisibility. Dana shared numerous stories of being disassociated from her child by being called the "nanny," "step mother," and even being approached as if her child was lost. Despite the invisibility experienced from outside systems, each couple communicated clearly that their couple unit was not negatively impacted by race. Childs (2005) found that couples who minimized race tended to say that others were supportive of their relationship.

Minority couple identity.

A unique identity emerged for each generational cohort and their approach to navigating race as a couple in social environments: majority couple identity, minority couple identity, and mutual couple identity. Beginning with their wedding ceremonies there was a clear distinction between each couple and their navigation of race and identity. Couple 3, Dana and Steve, navigate by maintaining separate racial identities and leading on one side, her side when it comes to inclusion of cultural traditions in ceremonies and child rearing. The minority couple identity they have to navigate as a couple is similar to the relationship structure: singularly assimilated, proposed by Seshadri & Knudson-Martin (2013). They posit that singularly assimilated couples do not highlight cultural differences while one culture seems to take a “nearly invisible back seat” (p. 48). The partner who assimilates into the other’s culture does not feel resentful. This is also true for Dana and Steve with the addition of Steve feeling as if he does not have culture and thus relies on Dana and her minority status as being the default culture for the couple to rely on when encountering racial situations. Root (2001), Folan (2010), and Stevenson (1996) all speak of women, especially BF, as the gatekeepers of passing on tradition and culture to children. It was evident that Dana has taken on this role through Steve’s deferment to her in their couple relationship (e.g. through stories shared and Dana usually speaking first), and in her parenting choices (e.g. emphasizing multicultural peer groups, food, and making it clear to all that she was the parent to her children despite any questioning of that relationship). Finally, the strong emphasis on the importance of family and shared parenting responsibilities of extended family is consistent with a Black, minority identity (Stevenson, 1996). Couple 3 was married in the

1990s. This was a time where there was a dramatic increase in interracial marriage, yet they were raised in families that still experienced the racial tension of segregation and where White people were assumed to have no culture.

Majority couple identity.

Couple 2, Marquita and Mike, navigate their social experiences around race by maintaining nontraditional gender and racial roles and assuming an American White Christian influence in child rearing and cultural traditions. Their conception of gender and racial identity are based on the socially constructed norms of gender and racial expectations presented by the American majority, or White culture. Thus, they replace his Amish culture and her Black culture with a majority White couple identity. Kalmijn (1993) asserted that BF/WM marriages were doubly unique due to the crossing of race boundaries and the reversing of traditional male dominance within the marriage system. Marquita reports always identifying more with White culture than Black culture. She believes the reason she tended to lean toward White culture was because she respected her elders, chose to use proper English, and do her school work, all of which she reports not being popular in her Black peer group. Marquita maintains her non-traditional racial role of continuing to identify with White culture, and Mike takes on a non-traditional gender role of self-identifying as being more feminine in the relationship by being a stay at home dad. These double non-traditional roles of gender and race were unique to couple 2. The reverse gender roles described by the couple as being part of their couple identity were not found in previous literature.

Mutual couple identity.

Couple 1, Yolanda and Jason, navigate by infusing both individual identities into a new couple identity that has increased awareness of social injustices. Childs (2005) also noted a heightened awareness in her study. “Many times their attachment to their racial or ethnic heritage has lessened, especially when there is a heightened awareness of the existence of racism and inequality perpetuated by whites on blacks” (Childs, 2005, p. 22). Their relationship identity is similar to Seshadri & Knudson-Martin (2013) identified couple structure of integrated. They found that integrated couples combine both individual cultures by celebrating both backgrounds. Yolanda and Jason take their relationship a step further. Not only do they celebrate each other’s background, they have a mutual respect for each other that includes heightened awareness about how racial situations impact their partner. Additionally, they feel a need to act on their new understanding of heightened awareness by addressing injustices of other oppressed populations. This is consistent with a more contemporary perspective of taking a stand against social injustice.

These findings further support the Ecological Systems Framework for Understanding Interracial Marriages presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 1). The generational differences of each couple are demonstrated through their individual experiences. Those experiences have been influenced through the social construction and historical experiences of each partner and how each system they interact with has shaped their own understanding of race and gender. Each couple’s unique couple identity is a direct result of the interactions of the systems they have encountered and the history and social construction that has impacted those systems around race.

Study Limitations

With videography, researchers are faced with the limitation that the camera presents. The camera is seen as an actor, not to be minimized in data collection, but can be viewed as intrusive and threatening to participants (Shrum et al., 2005). Though it can be seen as an intrusion, it also can become known as another member of the research team. Participants may initially feel self-conscious, however many videographers report that participants quickly forget the camera is there (Shrum et al., 2005). Eggenberger and Nelms (2007) found that families were open to tell their stories and discuss experiences. Shrum and his colleagues (2005) argued that participants are more comfortable with being video recorded due to the increase in home videos as well as trust built with the interviewer. Erickson (2011) posits that with the easy mobility and access to video recording devices, video documentation has become a part of people's social lives. This was found to be true during the interviews for this study, as several of the participants noted they were nervous at first, but once the interview became conversational, the camera seemed to disappear. Participants were observed looking back and forth from the camera to the interviewer at the beginning of the interviews, but became more relaxed focusing on the interviewer and each other as time passed. Though participants appeared comfortable and seemed to answer questions freely, they may not have shared all memories and thoughts due to the presence of the camera (Secrist et al., 2009). In addition, families may not have been open and honest due to being interviewed in a dyad rather than individually (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007).

Another potential limitation with video technology is the potential of computers crashing due to the amount of memory video consumes, as well as issues with video compatibility (Secrist et al., 2002). To address these potential research dilemmas, steps

were taken to make sure there was enough memory on the researcher's computer and external hard drive, updates to computer software were made regularly, and tests were done with the computer software and camera to ensure video compatibility. A test video take was done at each interview to make sure the recording equipment was recording properly. These steps were taken to avoid loss of data and ensure the data was preserved properly.

Without a clear vision of aims and method of analysis, the amount of data gathered can prove overwhelming and difficult to translate into manuscripts (Kendall et al., 2009; Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). This can lead to difficulties in wading through the large amount of data collected, making the ability to find themes challenging. The Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method of reviewing the data provided a way to assist in the management of the large amount of data. This method accounts for context, transcription, audibly, and visually gathered data. Though this method was helpful in guiding the process of analysis, narration methods were used to compliment the process. Another challenge with video data is translating it into text for articles and papers. Textual requirements have limited video to still framed images accompanied by descriptions of the video. The textual account of the recorded movements needs to be carefully presented to enable the reader to have a sense of the relevant action to understand the insights found and arguments made (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). The textual limits that come with describing movement is one of the reasons the decision was made to present the Findings Chapter in video format. With the increase of journals moving to online formats, it will be more common to include photography, audio, and video links within an article (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2011). Including this

multidimensional aspect in a journal article will allow for illustrating the author's point by sharing an example (visual and/or audio), enhancing the impact of qualitative descriptions (Secrist et al., 2002), as was demonstrated in Chapter 4.

Researchers must take caution and not "lose themselves" in the video. "Real-time video material is so rich that it is easy to lose oneself in overall impressions" (Secrist et al., 2002, p. 12). Reviewing the actual account of the interview evokes viewer emotions of the message shared, stories told, and self-reflection on the task of interviewing. There were moments when the content I was reviewing made me cringe. The challenge in video based data analysis is to translate the feelings that come with re-experiencing the interview through a critical lens and into words. In addition to "losing" oneself in the video, I would argue that the emotional response evoked when viewing the content is exhausting. During the peer debrief session a peer expressed exhaustion after watching all three videos. One explanation for this could be that the reviewer's mirror neurons are being activated. Karen E. Gerdes and colleagues (2010) report findings on social cognitive neuroscience and empathy. They report a connection between what a person views and their own emotional response. In this study, watching couples share the interactions they have had in navigating their social systems evoked an emotional response. Trying to remain as objective as possible, I continually tried to counter this natural emotional response by attempting to maintain an objective perspective in understanding each couple's story. This process of experiencing their story and attempting to prevent my emotional response from skewing my perspective resulted in a draining analysis process. Re-experiencing the data also allowed me to analyze myself as the interviewer in a way different than just by re-listening to an audio recorded

interview. I was able to see how participants responded to my questions. There were times that that the couples paused and looked to each other before speaking, and times when I was not clear and they looked confused. Had I placed a second camera focused on me, I would better be able to understand how the interviewer-interviewee interactions impacted the participants. There were moments where the female participants looked to me as if I was an ally and understood what they were talking about, possibly because I am also a woman of color. My response to this interaction and my facial expressions that initiated this response were not captured, and therefore are difficult to fully analyze.

The use of secondary data also provided a limitation. The data had already been collected, limiting the ability of the researcher to return to each participant dyad and ask further questions or conduct member checking of findings. However, contact information was collected for each participant, making it possible for telephonic, electronic, and in-person follow up questions. Overall, the use of this emerging qualitative method contributes to social work knowledge by providing new insights into the population, as well as into the practice of videography.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research of interracial marriages should further explore the generational differences found in this study to identify whether themes translate to other couples and other racial/gender interracial marriages. Continued research on BF/WM marriages is needed to expand the knowledge discovered in this study of the uniqueness found in each cohort relationship, and how social workers can best address the needs of this population. Future research should also explore what has attributed to a new focus on the infusion of couples' identities and their willingness to act upon their heightened awareness

convictions. Narrative methodologies allow the couples to share their stories as a dyad unit providing a benefit to understanding the couple having a combined cohesive identity. Understanding how to support couples that identify with the themes of each generational cohort needs further exploration. Finally, the use of video was useful in this study to examine how couples interact. The additional nonverbal information used to explore how couples communicate could be valuable in other dyad interviews, specifically when trying to understand how couples socially construct concepts of race and gender.

For the utilization of videography in future research, I would recommend considering the benefits of having two cameras to record. The ability to record both the participants and the interviewer would provide additional insight as to the influence of and role of the researcher and their non-verbal interactions. It would also be advisable for the camera to be zoomed out to capture more of the body language. For example, after reviewing the video of each interview, I realized the frame was too tight on Dana and Steve. This resulted in some action not being captured. For efficiency, those analyzing video data should wait to do a multimodal transcription until after themed segments of video have already been analyzed due to the detail and time it takes to complete the task. Evernote was a useful tool in recording a detailed audit trail, and should continue to be explored as to its efficiency in maintaining a detailed audit by a research team. There is a need to continue the exploration of video as a viable research tool and how the findings impact social work practice. Video not only allows for unique additional insights into the data that it collects, but also provides the collection of video that can be used in training and educational environments to provide social workers and students direct access to research to inform their practice.

In editing the Findings Chapter video there was the challenge of atmospheric sound that made it difficult at times to hear participants. For example, Yolanda and Jason chose to have their interview at a coffee shop. The sound of the wind, people and cars passing by were all recorded. Though the audio was also recorded in Garage Band in a way that eliminated some of that environment sound, I chose to use the video audio as it reflected the environmental factors that influenced the interview. Additionally, there would have been confusion in seeing people walking by and talking, but not hearing them. Due to environmental distractions, there were edits to the Findings Chapter made to avoid the audio and visual of those passing by, however there were times when it was unavoidable. During the clip with Yolanda and Jason, a car honked its horn. Yolanda looks in the direction of the horn, but continues sharing. To limit these distractions, I would suggest that future videography of interviews be conducted in a location with fewer distractions.

Practice Implications

It is challenging to find studies that evaluate actual practice with interracial partners in social work literature. Previous research seems to make practical suggestions based on findings, but does not report on testing those suggestions (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). Analyzing the interventions may be difficult with this population due to the low probability that a social worker would work with enough interracial couples for a study. Future research could poll social workers about their experiences working with this population, to find out if what they have found successful strategies in their work. Narrative therapy, genograms, strengths-based interventions, ecological perspective, and critical conversation approaches have all been

presented as useful in therapeutic settings with interracial partners (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013; Killian, 2002; Aniciete & Soloski, 2011). The use of video enhances these approaches, as seen in this study, by providing insights into how couples communicate verbally and nonverbally. In therapeutic settings, video recordings would enhance the therapeutic experience by allowing the couples to watch their interactions and then apply the approaches mentioned above. Members of the couple would be able to see and discuss their individual strengths and then explore the strengths they have as a couple unit. The video segments in the Findings Chapter provides validation of narrative methods that provide a space for couples to share and discuss their cultural/racial identities enhancing each other's experiences around race and culture. Holland and Kilpatrick (1993) discuss the importance of listening to stories using narrative interventions. Video provides social workers the ability to listen to the story as well as examine how couples visually construct their stories.

Social workers also must be aware of the impact the invisibility experienced by these couples has on the individuals and the couple as a unit. They could feel as if others are rejecting their relationship and/or doubt their choice of partner. The invisibility of the parent/child relationship can be troublesome for parents. It is also important for social workers to recognize that each interracial couple creates their own unique couple identity and aspects of that couple identity assist them in navigating racial encounters in their social environments. It is important that social workers recognize the overlapping influences of race, gender, systems, and social construction that influence each couple's identity. Most importantly, social workers should not assume that challenges within the relationship are a result of racial tension due to being in an interracial relationship.

Strategies demonstrated by these couples to navigate monoracism were the use of humor, focusing on each other, maintaining multicultural peer groups, and standing up against social injustice.

Enhancing Social Work Education

With the increase in interracial couples in this country, it is inevitable that social workers will encounter interracial couples and their children in practice. Social workers need to be prepared to help couples through conflicts that arise if opposing racial opinions impact their relationship and/or children. Examining the multicultural worldview of interracial marriages is a way to bring research into practice. Exploring how these couples navigate their experiences provides researchers and practitioners a better comprehension of interracial marriage and family dynamics that could enhance our understanding of working with diverse populations in general. McDowell and colleagues (2005) believed that having critical conversations about identity “can be highly effective with other issues of oppression (e.g., gender, abilities, class)” (p. 410). For social workers to work towards cultural competence in their practice, they must develop skills and knowledge to serve diverse populations (Brown, 2009) that are not restricted to a monoracial categorical system. The findings from this study present new insights into BF/WM couple identity providing cross-cultural knowledge and insight into the impact of monoracial categorical system on interracial couples. Lewis and Ford-Robertson (2010) suggest exploring interpersonal dynamics within interracial relationships is helpful in understanding racial relationships in the United States. Exploring the interracial marriages in this study provides perspective in changes overtime for the unrepresented BF/WM partner population in social research, specifically social work research.

The method of videography adds new knowledge to social work education about BF/WM interracial marriages. Insight from the nonverbal analysis of interracial couple communication gleaned from the videography provides additional insight into working with interracially married couples face-to-face. Communication, both verbal and non verbal, will be an important tool for social workers to use when working with interracial married couples (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). The story telling/narrative approach will be useful when educating and preparing social workers for practice by allowing them to experience an interracial couple's story on screen. Viewing couples share their stories provides a unique and rich insight into this population that a vignette in a textbook cannot provide. In this way, video serves as more than an innovative data collection tool, but will lead to a beneficial teaching tool. "All students have a familiarity with stories and find their use to be a rich and nonthreatening avenue to thinking about human struggles in living" (Holland & Kilpatrick, 1993, p. 306). Observing through video the shared experiences of these interracial couples will provide students with insight into how the couples view familial and societal pressures and ideas of raising multiracial children. Holland and Kilpatrick (1993) believe that stories enhance social worker's appreciation of culture, both their own and other's, providing insight into a community different than their own. "Stories offer creative and empowering approaches to strengthening education for professional practice in a multicultural world" (Holland & Kilpatrick, 1993, p. 308). In clinical practice, social workers need to be aware of historical and current socially constructed beliefs about interracial marriages to prevent reinforcement of experiences of social isolation and marginalization that these couples may experience elsewhere (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013).

Enhancing Cultural Competence

Social workers have an ethical responsibility to be culturally sensitive in their practice and support the dignity and worth of a person (NASW, 1999). All couples, monoracial or interracial, deal with social pressures. Being cognizant of various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and refraining from imposing assumptions about values is a key component in many helping professions (Aniciete & Soloski, 2011). According to NASW (2007), cultural competence is a “process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each” (p. 11). The key components of cultural competence that this study addresses are self-awareness, cross-cultural knowledge, and cross-cultural skills (NASW, 2007). As a multiracial female from a B/W interracial marriage I began this project not from a place of judgment, but from a place of false assumption that being from a B/W interracial marriage meant I knew about all B/W interracial marriages. I quickly became aware that there are differences between my parents’ Black male/White female marriage experiences and the BF/WM couples in my study. Social workers need to be cautious of their own biases. Additionally, they need to be cautious of assumptions made towards populations they are familiar with. For those not familiar with multiracial families, this study provides insights into the intersection of cultures and how they influence individual and couple identity. Understanding how these couples navigate monoracial systems and respond to racial situations provides insights from a strengths

perspective that can help social workers develop the cross-cultural skills needed in practice.

Empathy is a necessary skill that social workers must use with clients. Gerdes & Segal (2009) have done work on how the use of empathy can be used to improve social worker responses to those who are culturally different from them. Empathy is known as one's capacity to "imagine what another person is feeling and thinking" (Gerdes & Segal, 2009, p. 115). Gerdes & Segal argue that, "by building a framework of empathy on the principles of social justice, we can promote imitation of socially constructive behaviors and cognitive processing that stress our similarities rather than beliefs that are created to divide us" (Gerdes & Segal, 2009, p. 123). This framework of empathy could be useful in direct application with interracially married couples in therapy. Social workers work with clients on how to regulate emotions. One way individuals regulate emotions is through judging someone or their situation (Gerdes & Segal, 2009). Social workers are not void of judgment and continued exposure to cultural competence trainings can help address biases that may lead to judgment. Interracial couples may receive judgment from family, friends, society, and even social workers. Some of this judgment comes from a historical socially constructed belief that being different, or moving outside racially constructed boundaries, is not acceptable. In the past, interracial relationships have been seen or explained as an act of rebellion; however, Root (2001) argues that interracial relationships are rarely a result of rebellion. If one is cognitively taught to judge/disapprove/be unaccepting of interracial couples, then through this socially constructed influenced belief they too would disapprove of interracial marriage.

Gerdes and Segal's (2009) idea of being empathetic includes not just understanding another's situation, but also taking action based on the interpretation of the circumstances. Increased understanding of interracial partnerships, consistent with the NASW Cultural Competence standard of self-awareness (NASW, 2001), should lead to increased advocacy for this small, but growing population and their families. The use of videography in this study brought to "life" the couples' experiences, which taps into components of interpersonal empathy such as perspective-taking, self-awareness, affective mentalizing, and possibly efforts at emotion regulation (Gerdes & Segal, 2009), as well as provide cross-cultural knowledge to better understand interracial partners (NASW, 2001).

Conclusion

In summary, this study has provided a comprehensive historical overview of the challenges interracial couples have faced in America. Specifically BF/WM couples have overcome a history of trauma and social and familial barriers. It has been legal throughout the U.S. to marry a partner of another race since the *Loving v. Virginia* case in 1967; however, BF/WM marriages have yet to increase at the rate of other interracial marriages. Previous empirical studies have explored what attracts interracial partners to each other and the barriers they face. Despite the historical challenges in collecting accurate and consistent data on race at the governmental level, the United States is moving towards being an intimately interracial and multiracial country. The incremental changes regarding how and when people are asked to self-identify their racial and ethnic background is shifting with each passing decade (Root, 2001; Kaba, 2012). This social and political shift does not, however, necessarily equate to an end of racial prejudice,

oppression, or racism (Root, 2001, p. 26). Researchers in this area have consistently argued that though interracial marriages between Black and White individuals may be few in number, their inherent existence indicates a shift in the often-complicated relationships between Black and Whites in the United States (Childs, 2005; Root, 2001; Qian, 2005; Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005; Gullickson, 2006). As the body of research related to oppression, racism, and diversity grows in both prominence and significance inside and outside the social work profession, interracial marriages continue to receive little attention.

This study used an ecological systems framework through the lens of social construction to identify how couples in different generational cohorts navigate race as couple units. The Sort and Sift: Think and Shift method provided a visual method that allowed for insight into the shared narratives of the interracial married couples when exploring how interracial BF/WM married partners experience and navigate issues of race and identity in their relationship. Key quotes, researcher reflections, and notable visual interaction captured by video were recorded and tracked. An audit trail was kept of each step of the process using Evernote. I checked-in often by stepping back and reflecting on what has been found and considered alternative perspectives. This also was done during the peer debriefing process. Through the Sort and Sift: Think and Shift and narration methods, a secondary data analysis of dyad couple interviews was conducted. My findings show a need for social workers to be aware that interracial married couples in different cohorts navigate their systems differently, thus needing a different level of support. They need support in responding to their relationship being not recognized or invisible to family and the community. Social workers must be aware couples may take

on minority, majority, or mutual couple identities and understand the variables that lead to those couple identities.

This study adds to the larger body of existing research about interracial marriage while also starting the dialogue about how to best serve, understand, advocate for, and support mixed race families, parents and children. This study is novel because it used both video ethnography and qualitative research methodologies to more accurately capture the interracial couples' interpersonal experiences. This study explored communication beyond words with the inclusion of an examination of nonverbal communication used between partners. Similarities and differences between BF/WM partners (a minority population within the interracial population) who were married in different generational cohorts were explored. The findings enhance social work education by providing insight into a growing population of interracial partners, leading to increased cultural competence, specifically self-awareness and cross-cultural knowledge, in the field, and presents new implications for practice skills. The data collected from this study allows for the development of evidenced-based best practices for social workers engaged in micro practice with families and children, as well as macro practice considerations for social workers engaged in social and policy change. The data deepens the existing knowledge base and understanding of race, marriage, and oppression adding to the social work academic literature.

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APPENDIX A
IRB STUDY APPROVAL

To: Kelly Jackson
UCENT 800

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 10/10/2012

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 10/10/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1210008351

Study Title: A Generational Look at Interracial Marriage

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Recruitment Script (for body of the email)

Chandra Crudup, a PhD student at Arizona State University, is conducting a study to identify generational similarities and differences for interracial couples when addressing family and preparing for child rearing.

She is looking for research participants who are in an interracial marriage (wife African American/husband White) and have been married up to 30 years. Interviews will take approximately from 1 to 3 hours and will video taped. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential.

A free copy of the *Multiracial Child Resource* book will be provided as well as a DVD copy of the final product.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or know someone who is, please contact Chandra at ccrudup@asu.edu.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please email them to ccrudup@asu.edu.

Thank you for your taking the time to participate in this important study.

Chandra Crudup, MSW

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW SCRIPT

A Generational Look at Interracial Marriage
Interview Script

What year did you get married?

How did you meet? How old were you? Where?

Had either of you previously been in interracial relationships?

How did you tell your family?

How did they respond? (Immediate family/Extended family)

What challenges have you faced being in an interracial relationship?

What benefits have you found being in an interracial relationship?

What has had the largest impact on your relationship?

What year did you get married?

There is a new trend among interracial marriages to have a “Fusion” wedding, incorporating traditions from both cultures into the wedding. Did your wedding include traditions from both cultural backgrounds?

What conversations did you have about children prior to getting married?

What questions/concerns came up from family members regarding you having children?

What questions/concerns have your child(ren) had about being multiracial?

What have you encountered raising racially mixed children (i.e. what comments have you heard, circumstances encountered)?

How did you respond to those questions/concerns?

What is each of your education and occupation background?

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM

A Generational Look at Interracial Marriage Informed Consent

Date _____

Dear _____:

Introduction

Researchers

I, Chandra Crudup, a graduate student under the direction of Professor Kelly F. Jackson in the College of Public Programs at Arizona State University, has invited your participation in this research study.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify generational similarities and differences for interracial couples when addressing family and preparing for child rearing.

Description of Research Study

If you decide to participate, then you will join a qualitative study that will consist of one interview asking you to share your experience as an interracial couple. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

If you choose to participate in the study, your participation in the interview will last between 1 and 3 hours. The interview will be held at a place of your convenience. The interview will be videotaped, you will be asked to share about your experience as an interracial couple and your encounters/responses with family and preparation for children. Approximately 3 couples will be participating in this study in the Phoenix metro area.

Risks

If you do decide to participate, there are limited known risks. The completed project will be a visual ethnographic account of 3 interracial couples. Each couple will have access to the final project. The research team will only disclose first names. With any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

Benefits

Despite the fact there will be no direct benefit to you, there are possible benefits to your participation in the research such as having the opportunity to share your experience as an interracial couple in America. Additionally, the information that you provide will give insight to how interracial marriages have been perceived over time.

Withdrawal Privilege

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. If you choose to

withdraw, the researcher will delete any audio file of you and eliminate your responses and image out of any video footage used for analysis and documenting the study. The researcher will also destroy copies of consent forms and/or any other documentation that contain your personal information.

Costs and Payments

Your participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. However, the research team recognize that your participation may cause you some inconvenience. You will be offered a complimentary copy of *the Multiracial Child Resource Book: Living Complex Identities* (Root & Kelley, 2002).

The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but only your first name will be used.

I would like to video tape the interview. You will not be recorded, unless you give permission. If you give permission to be taped, you have the right to ask for the recording to be stopped. The digital video will be kept on a secure, password protected hard drive.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: ccrudup@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

By signing below you are agreeing to participate to in the study.

Signature

Date

By signing below, you are agreeing to be video taped.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

MODELING, PERFORMING, and NARRATION RELEASE

Modeling, Performing and Narration Release

In consideration for my appearing in the A Generational Look at Interracial Marriages study and for no subsequent remuneration, I do hereby on behalf of myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators authorize the producers to use live or recorded on tape, film, or otherwise, my name, voice, likeness, and performance for television or film distribution throughout the world and for audiovisual and general education purposes in perpetuity.

I understand that this interview is part of research concerning people's experiences in an interracial marriage. I agree to participate in the interview, and to allow the information I provide be used to develop a generational understanding of acceptance of families and preparing for children for those interracial marriages. I understand that the interview will take at least an hour. I understand that the aim of this research is to develop a fuller understanding of interracial couples and families, and that it will result in various kinds of publications. I may be quoted by first name in publications and other public presentations, and grant permission for the videotape, audiotape and transcript of the focus group interview to be made available to other scholars and researchers and the public. I realize that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Further, I agree to identify, defend, and hold the research team harmless for any and all claims, suits, or liabilities arising from my appearance and the use of any of my materials, name, likeness, or biography.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Street Address _____

City and Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

Date _____

APPENDIX F

FINDINGS CHAPTER VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Findings Chapter Video Transcript

Text: Findings Chapter

CC: The findings chapter for this dissertation is presented in video format to demonstrate the innovative videography methodology used, as well as, provide an example of a new medium for presenting research findings in the field of social work. A transcript of this video presentation can be found in Appendix F.

Text: Research Question: How do interracial BF/WM married partners, from three different generational cohorts, experience and navigate race and identity in their relationship?

CC: This study asked: How do interracial BF/WM married partners, from three different generational cohorts, experience and navigate race and identity in their relationship? In this video I will present the following finding of invisibility shared by all couples and then the variation by cohort of how they navigate as a couple.

The three couples chosen for this study were each married in a different generational cohort or decade.

Text: Yolanda and Jason Couple 1 married 2 years (picture)

CC: Couple 1 has been married the least amount of time. Yolanda and Jason were 27 and 34 years of age at the time of marriage. Yolanda is a professional actress and Jason is a mechanic, they do not have any children. They had been married for two years.

Text: Marquita and Mike Couple 2 married 8 years (picture)

CC: Couple 2 is the middle cohort couple. Marquita and Mike were 20 and 21 when they were married. Marquita worked at a professional theater and Mike was a stay at home dad of their 3 kids under four, at the time of the interview. They had been married for 8 years and together for 10 at the time of the interview.

Text: Dana and Steve Couple 3 married 20 years (picture)

CC: Couple 3 has been married the longest. Dana and Steve were 27 and 32 when they were married. They both worked for water departments and have 2 children, one in college and one in middle school. They had been married for 20 years at the time of the interview.

Clip 1:

Meet the couples

Couple 1: Yolanda and Jason

Yolanda: I'm Yolanda.

Jason: I'm Jason.

Yolanda: We met in 2006 here at Gold Bar.

Jason: Actually, yeah, right over there, actually. *[Laughs]*

Yolanda: *[Laughs]* Then we went and had pizza down the street, talked politics all night long, which you're not supposed to do, but we did.

Jason: It worked out. *[Laughs]*

Yolanda: Then we got married October 16th two years ago, and we've been married for two years.

Couple 2: Marquita and Mike

Mike: My name is Mike.

Marquita: I'm Marquita, and we've been married eight years.

Marquita: So, I went to college in Ohio, and I was a member of the band sorority there, and Mike's younger sister, Abby, came my sophomore year. We met. Instantly hit it off. Told her I wanted her to be my little sister in the sorority, and then we said yes.

We met, and then that summer, she invited me to North Carolina to hang out with her family. They were trying to hook me up with their older brother, and I didn't even know Mike existed. We traveled down to Oxford, Ohio, and then Mike and I met, and it was, I guess, love at first sight. We were both smitten with each other.

Mike: Yeah, I'd say so.

Marquita: Yeah. *[Laughter]* Then we spent the whole vacation, and then two weeks later, he drove up to my school for a wedding, and then we started dating. Then we were together ever since!

Couple 3: Dana and Steve

Steve: I'm Steven.

Dana: I'm Dana.

Steve: We got married in 1992, so it's 20 years ago.

Dana: Right here in Phoenix. We've lived here the whole time.

Steve: I think the first thing we did together, we went to--it was a friend of Dana's. We went to a spring training baseball game. It wasn't really a date.

Dana: Wasn't a date. It was just a group of friends goin' out and goin; to a spring training game. Then I noticed this gold watch on his wrist against his tan. *[Laughter]*

Steve: Which I don't have anymore.

Dana: *[Laughter]*

Steve: I still have the watch.

Dana: Yeah, tan's gone. I noticed the gold watch on his wrist, and I told my friends, like, "Did you see that?" It was like--oh, my gosh, it was just beautiful, that gold watch against his skin. I just loved it.

Steve: I was better-lookin' then. I was a lot better-lookin'.

Dana: *[Laughter]* Oh, please, Steve-o! *[Laughter]*

Text: Connection to Partner's Character and Personality

CC: Each couple had a connection based on personalities and character attraction. In these clips we see them revisit that moment when they first met.

Couple 1 met at the location where the interview took place. They had not previously mentioned this. I found it endearing that the place they chose to be interviewed about their relationship was the place they met. In this clip you see them remember the moment they met. They show through the smiling and nodding in agreement that these are positive memories.

Couple 2 met in a blind date situation but meant for Mike's brother, not Mike. In this clip Marquita uses air quotes when she says "love at first sight," as if she knows that it sounds cliché but that is how it happened for them. Mike agrees, by turning forward raising his eyebrows and saying "yeah I would say so." His response is an example of the type of humor and light heartedness he demonstrates through the rest of the interview.

Couple 3 had been coworkers, but in this introductory clip you hear about the moment Dana began to see Steve as a possible partner. As Steve remembers, you see his cheeks get pink, with embarrassment as Dana describes her attraction to him. In this clip, at the beginning of the interview you see Steve trying to decide wear to look, at me or the camera. This was common at the beginning of each interview, but as each couple relaxed into the interview it became less noticeable.

Their couple connection is apparent with the way Dana playfully calls Steve by a nick name “Steve-o” and his smiling response.

Only Marquita shared that race was a factor when choosing a partner. She finds her self attracted to “nerdy White men,” and not attracted to Black men. This is based on her experience growing up without a strong Black male role model.

Text: Invisibility: BF/WM are Not Recognized in Social and Family Environments

CC: One theme that was uncovered during analysis was that the couples relationships were invisible in their communities and by family members. Meaning they were not acknowledged by others as a real couple due to their interracial status. This demonstrates how society still uses a monoracial lens to view relationships and may still not be ready to “see” BF/WM interracial couples. Couple 2 and 3 share almost the exact story when sharing challenging or annoying circumstances they encounter as an interracial couple. While in the check out lane at stores they are asked separately if they need help because the employee does not recognize that even though they are standing together, that they are in a relationship.

Clip: Invisibility in Community

Marquita: Yeah. No, for the most part the biggest challenge or issue we get—well, I guess the biggest annoyance is when we go to shopping together.

Mike: *[Laughter]*

Marquita: Like, we'll be at Wal-Mart, and we're clearly together—

Mike: We're clearly working out of *[in unison]* one cart.

Marquita: *[In Unison]* one cart.

Mike: We oftentimes have children with us that we're trading back and forth.

Marquita: Right, and then people are, like, "Oh, so are you two together?" or a line will open up next. Like, "Oh, you wanna come to this line, miss?" I'm, like, "No, we're—

Mike: "We're kinda together."

Marquita: "We're kinda together."

Mike: Sort of making out in the checkout line.

Marquita: *[Laughter]* Yeah.

Mike: It's pretty obvious that we're together.

Marquita: There's been annoyances, but nothing that is—

Mike: But that is where it becomes quite obvious that people don't expect—

Marquita: Yes.

Mike: - a black woman and a white man to be together.

Marquita: Mm-hmm.

Text: Invisibility in Community

CC: Despite the fact they are standing right next to each other, and have children they are both responding too, people still do not acknowledge their relationship as a couple in public. Couple 3 shares an almost exact account that they have experienced. Couple 3 also shares how Dana has had multiple encounters at school, or the mall, and other public places where she is not associated as being the mother of her children. In this way the relationship between mother and child is also invisible. Couple 1 did not share on camera any situation where their relationship was not recognized by others. However, because the other two couples shared almost the exact experience, I did follow up with Couple 1 who confirmed that they too experience their relationship not being recognized by others, however it did not come to mind during the interview.

As Mike states, society does not anticipate seeing BF/WM in relationships. In this clip Mike and Marquita share their experience of being invisible by completing each others sentence, and even speaking in unison. All 3 couples have moments similar to this, where they overlapped their speaking and nodding in agreement as they remember the story being told, literality sharing their story together, demonstrating their strong connection.

Text: Invisibility in Family: Seeing but NOT Believing

CC: Each couple reports that their families are accepting and supportive of the relationship now, but they all experienced at least one member of the family questioning if the relationship was serious or going to last. In this way they each experienced a family member who was in disbelief or unwilling to see their partner as a viable long term mate. Marquita's mother asked her in front of Mike if she was dating anyone else. And in this clip Jason share's how he got the feeling from Yolanda's mom that she did not think their relationship would last.

Clip 3: Questioning of Partner Choice

Yolanda: ...and you met my mom that year cuz she was here in town.

Jason: Yeah, she came out for a couple days, yeah.

Yolanda: It was very early on.

Jason: Yeah, and I got the impression from her that she was like, “Just some guy.” She wasn't really invested in it, I don't think.

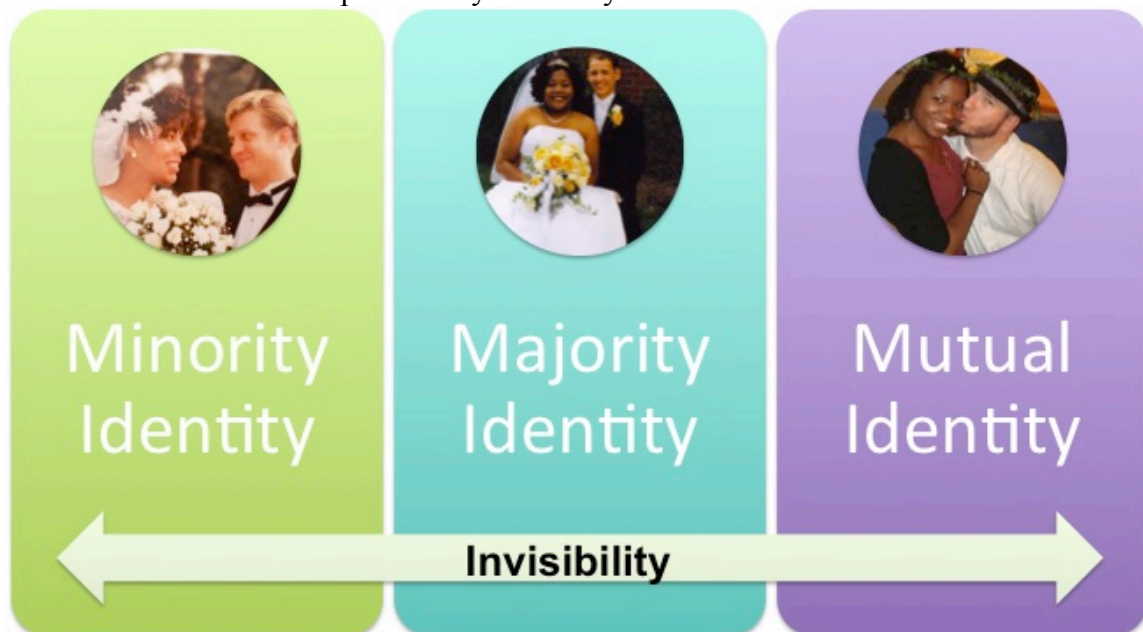
Yolanda: We weren't that invested yet.

Jason: No, not yet. –Pause-- *[Laughs]*

Text: Invisibility: Families Question Relationship Choice

CC: Here, Yolanda excuses her mothers dismissiveness or lack of acknowledging that this is her partner choice, by suggesting the only reason the comment was made is because the relationship was in its infancy. Dismissing familial comments that are in opposition to the relationship occurred in in all three interviews. In couple 3, Steve’s mother projected her concern to the welfare of the children rather than on the relationship, which is a common concern for her generation. Though the families of these couples are now supportive and accepting of the couple, they each have experienced a time where a family member also did not want to accept or see the blossoming relationship for what it was, similar to the clerk not recognizing them as a couple.

Text: Construction of Couple Identity Varies by Cohort



CC: Invisibility was a theme that all three couples experienced. How each couple navigates as an interracial couple in systems that only recognize monoracial partners, is where the differences in generational cohorts became apparent. There

seemed to be three distinctive ways the couples navigated. They adopted either a minority identity; a majority identity; or a mutual identity.

Text: Race Does Not Impact Internal Couple Identity

CC: Each couple made it clear that race is not the focus of their relationship, by repeatedly making appoint to say that their couple challenges were not a result of their racial differences. They make it clear that race is not a factor in their challenges as a couple, their benefits of being in the relationship, nor having an impact on their relationship. Each couple made it clear that they see their partner for the person they are not by their race. Despite their ability to internally view their couple identity as being not impacted by race, their racial differences do impact their lives as a couple as they interact among their familial, social, and community systems. Couple 3 takes an avoidant approach to responding as a couple to monoracial situations they encounter; Couple 2 assumed reverse traditional gender and racial roles; and Couple 1 used an increased heightened awareness. The generational differences emerge with the differences in each couples marriage ceremony.

Text: Couple 3: Tradition of Family = Her Family

CC: Dana's family was very involved in the ceremony of her and Steve's wedding. Steve comes from a Protestant background and shares he has no culture. They share multiple examples of how family is an important component to their relationship and raising their children, but always refer to her family.

Clip 6: One Sided Wedding Tradition

Dana: We actually--

Steve: I was Protestant. There is no culture.

Dana: *[Laughter]* That's just so mean. Just bland. We actually had one of my favorite uncles--he's passed away now. My Uncle Roy married us, and another family friend, Reverend Burton, they both married us.

Steve: I remember, during the ceremony, even he got my name wrong.

Dana: It was hysterical.

Steve: Called me Stewart.

Dana: Yes.

Steve: "Do you, Stewart--?"

Dana: "Do you, Stewart--?" Sorry.

Dana: I had to look at him and say, "Steven." It was, I guess it was the tradition of using family. I have several uncles and aunts that are in the ministry. Whether it be for a funeral or a wedding, somebody was gonna marry us. That was the tradition. Otherwise, that's it.

Text: Tradition of Family = Her Family

CC: The tradition in their family was her family tradition. Steve does not identify with having culture so assimilated in to the established culture of Dana's family. Steve did remember that the Reverend did not know his name during the ceremony. Though she seems to say it was funny, and they are both laughing when she goes on to talk about the tradition being her family Steve looks away, expression less. It is hard to say if this bothered him based on his presentation in the clip. However, he later talks fondly about the family time they now have around holidays, which again is described as her family coming to town. Dana and Steve lean on her family traditions, a minority identity, to address racial situations in their social environments.

Text: Couple 2: Non "Cultural" Wedding Ceremony

CC: Marquita and Mike do not consider themselves cultural people; therefore they did not feel the need to include any of their "culture" in their wedding. However, they have, what they call, a "typical" wedding. The typical wedding they describe is what could be described as an American wedding tradition.

Clip 5: Non "Cultural" Wedding Ceremony

Marquita: [Laughter] I guess Mike and I aren't very cultural people in that sense that we—you know, me being African American would pull that heritage and Mike with his Amish background would say, "I want that there." We were kinda, like, "Well, let's get married. Yay! Let's have a traditional wedding. Yay." Then we were, like—

Mike: I think we probably worked the wedding planning the way most couples do—

Marquita: Right.

Mike: - in that you planned everything but kind of approved it with me—

Marquita: Right.

Mike: - but I didn't have a lot of hands-on input. Of course, it didn't help that you were across the state and I was working in a different city.

Marquita: Correct. But we didn't have that desire to have the cultures represented in our wedding.

Mike: Yeah, so we had a beach-themed wedding, which is generally a white-themed wedding, but we both loved it.

Text: Non “Cultural” Wedding Ceremony

CC: Wedding ceremonies are cultural events. Because Marquita and Mike do not see themselves as cultural people, they did not see a need to have a “cultural” wedding. Though they wanted to have a traditional wedding. They speak of the female planning in the wedding as being a more commonly seen tradition. Mike does say at the end, that their beach theme was more of a “White-Themed” wedding. In reality what they describe is a typical American ceremony that is strongly influenced by White culture. However, they both make it clear throughout the interview that Marquita identifies more with White culture and has surrounded her self since high school in more White social settings than Black. This couple does not identify with their individual cultures (his Amish background and her Black background), but more with mainstream, majority, White culture, which is different than the other couples. In the clip we see Marquita roll her eyes and do air quotes when she says “cultural people.” Her body language suggests that she is apologizing for their lack of fitting into traditional cultural norms.

Text: Couple 1: Inclusive Wedding Ceremony

CC: Jason and Yolanda included both cultural backgrounds in their wedding. This is a new theme among intercultural or interracial marriages called a Fusion Wedding. They even included a piece standing up for marriage equality to demonstrate their belief in social justice.

Clip 4: Inclusive Wedding Ceremony

Yolanda: Our wedding vows were a Celtic love poem, and we jumped the broom.

Jason: Which is fun.

Yolanda: We didn't have a traditional ceremony at all. We did a sand ceremony where you combine different colors of sand, and we're so creative. We used black-and-white. *[both Laugh]*

Jason: It's true. We did.

Yolanda: Then, we had a segment of the wedding where we were talking about marriage equality.

Jason: Katie married us, and one of my friends from work, a friend from work this time, his wife, she does a—she bakes cakes and stuff. She has a business. and she did our wedding cake, and my friend John took pictures for us, and so it was a very personal thing, so it was really—

Yolanda: Very personal, very nontraditional, very mixed in themes and styles and all of that, so I think we certainly fall into that fusion category. I didn't know we were being so typical.

Jason: I know. What we're trying to say is yes, we did a trendy fusion wedding, but we were very personal about it, as well. [*both Laugh*]

Text: Inclusive Wedding Ceremony

CC: Jason and Yolanda made their marriage very personal, and we see that personal for them is the combination of both individuals, backgrounds and what is important to them. We also see them laugh at their choice to use black and white sand during the sand ceremony. During this moment Yolanda chooses to look right into the camera. Jason's response of laughter makes it seem as if this was just a coincident, but they are open to see the irony in their color choice. Their marriage ceremony was very integrated and mutually representative of both their backgrounds and personalities.

Text: Shift from Minority to Mutual

CC: There were generational differences found in the wedding ceremonies. Couple 3 used the tradition of family, her family. Couple 2, had a "traditional" wedding free from any individual cultural background, rather a typical majority – also known as White Protestant (which neither of them are)- ceremony. And couple 1 chose a very inclusive and celebratory of their unique individual identities, ceremony as they chose to honor their combined, mutual couple identity. Generationally, there is a move from a one sided- minority focused ceremony, to a mutually respectful of both identities ceremony showing a shift in generational perspective and focus from each couple. A shift in generational perspective is also found in how each couple navigates or copes in environments that view their couple unit through monoracial expectations or bias.

Text: Couple 3: Minimization of Race in Parenting

CC: The strategies used to navigate monoracial environments also vary by couple. Couple 3's strategy of ignoring and minimizing race during child rearing is limited to their messages about race with their children, as Dana is passive aggressive about other people's ignorant remarks. With a strong family focus, they have raised their children to be open to different types of foods and cultural activities, however race does not seem to be of high priority to talk about in the

home as a couple nor in parenting. In fact, their 13 year old did not know what an interracial relationship was at the time of the interview. They have taken a color-blind approach to raising their children, minimizing or ignoring race as a variable that matters or should matter.

Clip: Race not Discussed in the Home

Steve: They don't really--they don't bring it up. It's not discussed at all, I don't think.

Dana: It's kinda like the Pilgrim family. They just doesn't see that at all. Oddly enough, before you got here, Brett asked me what the interview was about. I told him interracial couples. He looked at me, and he goes, "What's that?" I said, "A black and white person that are married." He just goes, "Oh," and walked out of the room.

I think--I mean, I see it at parties that we've had, too. It's just very diverse. I mean, we have friends that are Persian, Asian, Hispanic, white, black. I love food. I love trying different foods. My boys have picked that up also. We go try--they are so adventurous as far as trying out different foods.

I just don't see things that way. They're not stuck in a rut and won't mention anything like that.

Steve: Maybe you need to interview the kids.

Steve: "Talk to your mother."

Dana: *[Laughter]* Hm. "It's just because we love each other, and color doesn't matter. It doesn't matter where you're from or your background, really. Being black or white. It's whether you love the person or not. Why is that person asking you that, anyway? It's none of their business."

Text: Avoidant Approach to Race

CC: Couple 3 only talk about race if it is brought up by others. This silence around uncomfortable issues could be a response to their generational cohort, where difficult topics were not discussed. When Steve's mother shared concerns with him about the children, they never discussed the concerns as a couple. When their youngest son came home with a drawing from school with him and his mother drawn in brown crayon and his brother and father drawn in yellow crayon Rather than talking about the differences he saw, the picture was copied and sent out to

the family to show how funny or cute the art work was. Dana's minimization of addressing race as a couple and in parenting is uncommon for Black Females who are known to pass the cultural torch. Dana's explanation for this is she is "not stuck in a rut." Both Dana and Steve's parents did not make race an issue in their house growing up. Dana shares that though her parents were raised in time where there was segregation on buses, they never brought racial bitterness into the home. There were many interracial relationships and multiracial individuals in her extended family. Additionally, they were a military family so she is accustomed to being around many different types of people. That has seeped into the relationship. Her minimization of race in parenting approach is uncommon for Black mothers, however she still takes a lead. Notice how she talks about her love for food and how that has been passed down to the children. They have multicultural friends and have raised their children to be multicultural and racial differences are minimized. She may not have passed down racial beliefs to her children, but she is dominant in passing down other traditions, such as an openness to try new things.

In these clips we see couple 3 struggle to answer questions about how race has impacted their kids. It is clear they have not had discussions about race with their children in this way. This was shocking as a mixed race researcher. The literature and my own experiences left me questioning how it could be possible that their children had not had these experiences and how it had never been discussed in the home. This could be a result of their children being fare skinned and not receiving questions in social settings about racial identity, thus they have not had to face questions from their children about race allowing them to maintain an avoidant approach as a couple and a family about such topics. I might have to take Steve up on his offer to talk to the children to explore their perspective of growing up in a multiracial family.

Throughout the interview, Steve lets Dana take the lead in sharing stories. Dana was often the first person to speak. In this way, despite their colorblind communication approach within the couple and raising children, they turn to her, as the minority, to take the lead in how the couple will respond to situations. Couple 3 defaults to her minority status to navigate racial situations.

Text: Couple 2: Non-traditional Gender and Racial Roles

CC: Couple 2 deny that race has an impact on their relationship, but do credit their non-traditional gender and racial roles as an asset to the functionality within their relationship. As shown earlier, they do not see them selves as cultural people. However, they do recognize that they do take on reverse gender and racial roles.

Clip: Couple 2: Mixed in Reverse

Mike - I think another thing that's unique to us, again, that's not race-relevant, so I don't know if it's pertinent, but we—as I've said before, I'm a stay stay-at-home parent, and she works, and I think in many ways, our personalities

are geared towards I'm the more feminine one in the relationship, and she's the more masculine one. Like I just said, she likes wrestling; has always liked wrestling. I've never cared about wrestling; never really been interested in it at all. She likes going to concerts, but I think generally guys tend to flock to more that kind of venue. I do all the cooking in the house. My cleaning isn't up to par, but I do most of it.

Marquita - So we're kind of mixed in reverse and all that fun stuff.

Both - *[Laughter]*

Mike - Yeah, so I think our racial orientation kinda of sits to the fact that I'm more feminine and she's more masculine, which is actually how it is more commonly—which is more common that the black man is with the white woman cuz, technically, you're the black man and I'm the white woman.

Mike: But, yeah. Actually, now that I go back and touch on that, actually, I think it is quite relevant as to the orientation of our gender to race.

Marquita: Mm-hmm.

Mike: We've always pretty much been that way—

Marquita: Mm-hmm.

Mike: Even into individual things that are part of our personalities.

Text: Mixed in Reverse

CC: In this clip Mike explores that what helps them navigate as a couple is the fact that they take on nontraditional gender roles that are more commonly found in Black male /White female relationships. As there are more of that combination of interracial relationships, he suggests their reverse personality types is what makes their partnership work. This recognition and taking on of non traditional gender roles is unique to the middle couple. They recognize that not only is their BF/WM marriage uncommon their reverse gender and race personalities are different than other couples, but an asset in making their relationship work. Their understanding of “traditional” and “non traditional” racial and gender roles are based on the socially constructed norms of what is expected by the majority in society on what it means to be a Black or White person, and what it means to be female or male person. In this way, like their wedding ceremony, they have based their couple identity on majority definitions of race and gender.

Text: Couple 1: Heightened Awareness

CC: Finally couple 1, much like their choice in programming during their wedding ceremony, have chosen to embrace and celebrate racial differences and take it a step further by engaging in an heightened awareness around all social justice issues. They find that heightened awareness has been a blessing and a curse in that it has opened their eyes to individual bias and injustices of others and forces them to stand up for their beliefs. Unlike the other couples who take a minimizing approach to addressing race as a couple, and see themselves as falling into non traditional gender roles, Yolanda and Jason are now aware of racial biases and discrimination as a result of their BF/WM partnership and choose to be upfront and talk about their new heightened awareness around all things social justice and take action when they feel an injustice has happened.

Clip: Heightened Awareness: Blessing and a Curse

Jason: I feel like just when I talk about a heightened awareness, I guess I'm talking about of those around me and things that people are going to say around me and try to mostly just speak up cuz people sometimes say things. I'm kind of—I don't know.

Yolanda: Say things about-- race?

Jason: Yeah, like people—we live in a weird time right now I think, and I think that race in general has—not heightened because of having a black president because obviously there's been a lot of fucked up, messed up things and—sorry, but I just feel like a heightened sensitivity, I guess is what I'm getting at, to those around me and the way that they speak sometimes, I guess.

Yolanda: Umm- Challenges. I think that- I don't know. It's weird cuz I feel like everything—we've been pretty smooth when it comes to that part of our relationship. That hasn't been our greatest challenge is

dealing with being of different races, but adding to what he said about sensitivity, sometimes we can be sensitiver (beep) in dealing with each other or—we were having a conversation the other day and he said that there was only one time that I really approached him with a sense of—what would you call it—correction or he felt like I was accusing him of being racist, and I don't even really remember it, but apparently, I did. [Laughs]

Jason: No, it wasn't that you were accusing me of being racist, and to be perfectly honest with you, I don't even really remember what was even said, but I remember the emotional reaction that I had, but yeah, that wasn't a challenge, really, I guess,

Yolanda: It's stupid to go back to it, but talking about that heightened awareness thing, it's probably a little bit of a blessing and a curse. You know what I mean?

Jason: Yeah, I can see that. I can see that, for sure.

CC: How is it a blessing?

Yolanda: Well, because—

Jason: It's heightened awareness. It's, I guess, just being—gaining knowledge about things that you may not ordinarily—being able to talk to her and completely relax and be myself, which has more to do with her as a person than her as a black woman, but there is that. There is the honesty that comes with being with you, I guess.

Yolanda: We were just having this conversation this morning. Somebody in his presence said the derogatory word for a gay man.

Jason: The F-word.

Yolanda: The F-word, the dreaded F-word, and you tell 'em what you said.

Jason: What I told him about that was that—he had said it and I told him that he shouldn't be saying that, and it's not allowed to say that, and those weren't the exact words but—

Yolanda: Tell the exact words cuz they're cool.

Jason: No, cuz they get edited out.

Yolanda:

He said, “It's one of those words that you shouldn't say like the N-word. It's a word that you shouldn't say, and when there are black people around, mostly you realize that they're black people, and so you probably would not say that word, but when there are gay people around, you don't always know that they're gay, and do you still wanna say that word?” I was like good for you, Jason, because it's like you said; you can't hide from it anymore. You know what I mean? That's the blessing. [Laughing]

Text: Blessing and a Curse

CC: Yolanda and Jason have developed a sensitivity around their partners background as they are now more invested in not just their own identity but their conjoined, mutual identity. They feel as if they are more aware of statements they might have said before that they realize now could be insensitive or make their partner feel uneasy. Through this gained awareness they have a new integrated view towards those in their surrounding systems and make appoint to stand up for injustices when they arise, as a response to their new mutual perspective they have created as a couple. This is unique to this cohort, in that they were the only couple that has discovered a new sense of identity that is outspoken and takes on challenges in a constructive and forward way as a cohesive unit that has combined insights from both partners. In these clips it is also apparent they both feel this way as the they both speak equally agreeing with each other with head nods, where as the other two couples voice their navigation methods from one side with the other partner nodding in agreement but not necessarily adding to the discussion.

CC: Looking at different generational cohorts of BF/WM marriages has provided new insights as to how interracial couples navigation of racial situations has evolved over time.

Text: Invisibility (and pic)



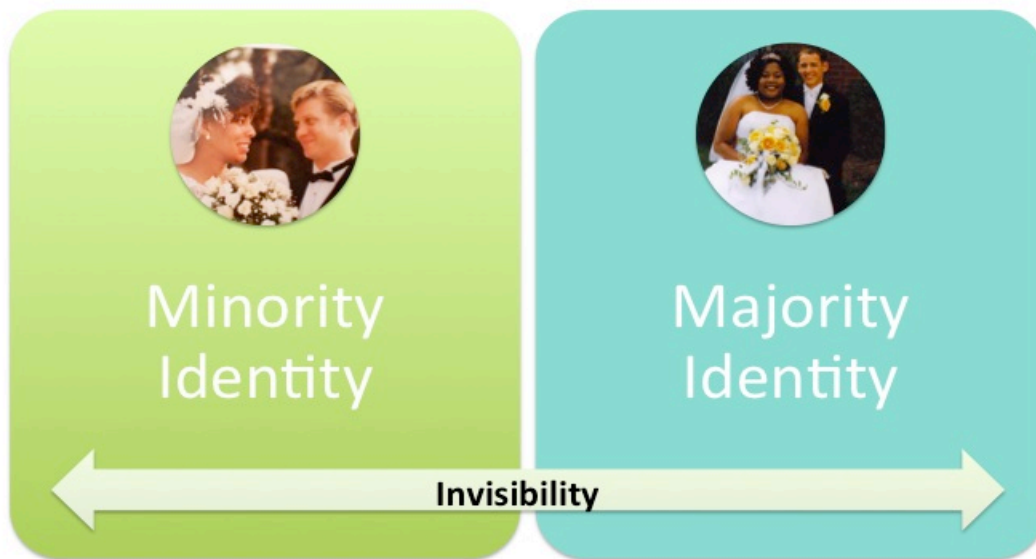
CC: All three couples continue to experience invisibility in community, social, and even family systems. Their couple relationship and often parent child relationship is not always recognized by others. These couples experienced at least one parent questioning their partner choice, but after the individual made it clear that was their choice, the family has been supportive. Not one couple experienced rejection of their relationship by family or friends, which is an advancement from cohorts before them. The couples wedding ceremonies was the first place it was apparent there were differences between the cohorts.

Text: Minority Identity: One Sided Wedding – Race Not Discussed



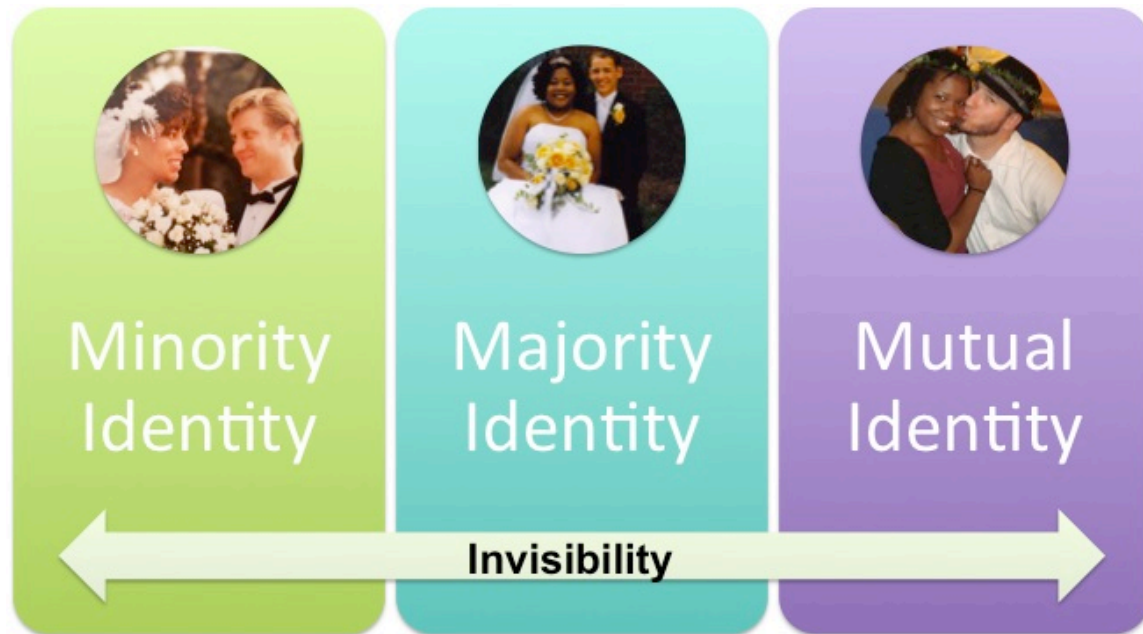
CC: Dana and Steve had a one sided tradition wedding where Dana's family was incorporated and not Steve's. Though they minimize racial discussion in their home, their approach to navigating as a couple has been to lean on Dana, as the minority, when they are forced to address race as a couple in social and family settings.

Text: Majority Identity: Non Cultural Wedding – Non Traditional Race and Gender Roles



CC: Marquita and Mike had what they call a non cultural wedding and also see themselves as having reverse gender and racial identities. These nontraditional roles are based on majority constructed ideas of what these roles are supposed to be. For example, Mike is a stay at home dad, and Marquita likes wrestling. Their lack of incorporating culture, and adoption of majority culture, is how they navigate as a BF/WM couple.

Text: Mutual Identity: Inclusive Wedding – Heightened Awareness = Call to Action



CC: Unlike couple 3 and couple 2, Yolanda and Jason take an equally active and mutual approach to their interracial couple identity. They have created a mutual respect and understanding for each other's individual identity, to form a new mutual identity. They minimize familial ignorance; but confront occurrences together and are open to discuss it as a couple. They had an inclusive wedding ceremony and recognize their increased heightened awareness as a charge to address encounters of social injustice.

Text: Invisibility / Shift from Minority to Mutual Identity

CC: All three couples experience invisibility, but generationally navigate these experiences differently. These couples show a generational shift from couples leaning on the minority partner, as the expert to deal with racial encounters; to focusing on each other as a unit to mutually approach inequalities they encounter within the systems where they interact. The finding of invisibility as well as the different assumed couple identities and how each cohort navigate race and identity, informs social work practice. They provide new insights necessary for being aware of challenges (invisibility) these couples face, strategies used to connect as a couple and strengthen their ability to address racial bias and discrimination in their social environments. Social work education and practice implications will be explored further in the Discussion Chapter.