

DEVELOPING AN OBSERVATIONAL CODING SYSTEM  
ON RACIAL ISSUES FOR BLACK-WHITE COUPLES

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## ABSTRACT

Interracial marriages are increasing steadily in the United States, and Black-White interracial couples have a unique experience as compared with other interracial pairings. Black-White couples experience more stressors (discrimination, lack of support from friends and family) and also may exhibit more protective factors (partner acceptance, strong coping skills) in their relationships, both of which impact the quality of the romantic relationship (Foeman & Nance, 2002). Due to the biases that exist in self-report measures on couple satisfaction and relationship quality (Paulhus, 1989, 1990), this study sought to develop a reliable observational coding system to objectively measure how Black-White couples discuss and cope together with issues surrounding race and racial difference. Successive Cohort Design (Epstein et al., 2007) was utilized due to the hypothesis that this design would allow for the coding system to be improved mid-study, ultimately resulting in a more relevant and reliable coding system. Participating couples ( $n=9$ ) were divided into three cohorts. After three codebook iterations, one code out of 21 (Social Support-Positive) was consistently reliable across all cohorts, and six other codes (Discrimination, Social Support-Negative, Coping-Passive, Increased Racial Awareness, Stress, Partner Positivity) achieved slightly low-to-good reliability in two of three cohorts. Code frequency data corroborate previous research identifying salient themes for Black-White interracial couples. Lack of social support was common, as was higher frequency of negative racial identity. The couples studied also employed passive coping strategies three times more often than active strategies, consistent with previous findings (Foeman and Nance, 2002). Due to several limitations of the current study (small  $n$ , inadequate training time, overlap of coders across cohorts), it is recommended that the final codebook of this study be applied to a larger sample with newly trained coders to assess sufficiently the reliability of the overall coding system. Future research that assesses how codes derived from this coding system correlate with relationship satisfaction measures can further inform couples' treatment.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Historical Resistance to Black-White Interracial Couple Relationships.....	1
Development of Black-White Interracial Couple Relationships.....	4
Unique Experiences of Black-White Interracial Couples.....	7
The need for research on younger Black-White Interracial couples.....	11
Methods of understanding couple relationship process .....	13
II. METHOD .....	21
Participants.....	21
Instruments.....	23
Overall Procedures.....	25
Coding Procedures.....	26
III. RESULTS .....	29
Data Analysis Plan.....	29
Step A: Achieving Initial Reliability .....	31
Step 1: Reliability of the coding system .....	32

Step 2: Analysis of final codes.....	37
Steps 3 and 4: Analysis of Issues Derived from the Feedback Process, and Codebook Modification .....	39
Additional Analyses: Reliability of Each Individual Code.....	47
IV. DISCUSSION .....	49
Implications of Results .....	49
Lessons Learned and Next Steps .....	56
Directions for Future Research .....	58
REFERENCES .....	60
APPENDIX A: Representative Codebooks .....	67
APPENDIX B: Changes to Codes Across Cohorts .....	117
APPENDIX C: Example Coding Materials .....	120

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Participant Demographics .....	pg 22
Table 2 Results of Coders' Efforts to Meet the Reliability Standards Prior to Data Coding .....	pg 32
Table 3 Average Kappa Value and % Agreement for Whole Coding System .....	pg 33
Table 4 Average Kappa Value and % Agreement for Whole Coding System, by clip .....	pg 33
Table 5 Kappa Values and % Agreement (All Coders, all Cohorts) .....	pg 35
Table 6 Frequency of Each Code Across Each Cohort.....	pg 37
Table 7 Obstacles to Inter-Rater Reliability .....	pg 40
Table 8 Average Kappa Values for Each Code .....	pg 47
Table 9 Changes to Coping Codes from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2.....	pg 117
Table 10 Changes to Social Support Code from Cohort 2 to Cohort 3 .....	pg 118
Table 11 Changes to Social Support Code from Codebook 3a to Codebook 3b.....	pg 119

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Confusion Matrix-Cohort 3, Clip 008 .....	120
Figure 2 Kappa Tabulation Worksheet-Cohort 3, Clip 008.....	121
Figure 3 Coding Transcript-Cohort 3, Clip 008.....	122

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Historical resistance to Black-White interracial romantic relationships*

The history of interracial relationships in the United States is unique and marred by discrimination, resistance, and violence. The hostility surrounding relationships between Blacks and Whites in the United States most likely stems from the history of White plantation owners forcing themselves on Black women, without “any benefit of marriage, romance, or status” (Smith, 1966). This violation became so widespread that laws were developed to discourage “association between the two races,” leading to antimiscegenation laws in 40 of the 50 states (Weinberger, 1966) that prohibited marriage between Blacks and Whites. These laws also insured that children resulting from unions between a Black and White person were illegitimate (Heer, 1966). These laws thereby insured that mixed-race children were considered Black, and thus denied access to White wealth and power. Though the laws in various states varied in terms of which groups were prohibited from involvement with Whites, every law prohibited involvement with Blacks, reflecting a specific resistance in this country to involvement between these two racial groups (Porterfield, 1982; Spickard, 1989). Concerns about denying Blacks access to money and power seemed to also motivate the proponents of racial segregation, which was defended strongly and violently by Whites. This segregation, intended by Whites to prevent other races from having social and romantic access to their children (Hirsch, 1983), contributed greatly to the limited opportunities for Whites and Blacks to interact throughout much of this country’s history.



All antimiscegenation laws were ruled unconstitutional in 1967 by *Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court*, and since then, there has been a steady increase in interracial marriages in the US. The percentage of all interracial marriages in the US has increased steadily, from 1% in 1970 to 3.2% in 1980, to an all-time high of 8.4% in 2010 (Batson et al., 2006; Wang, 2012). The percentage of Black-White *marriages* remains relatively low in comparison with other White-non-White pairings, particularly when US population percentages are considered. According to 2010 Census Data (US Census Bureau, 2011), 16.3% of the US population is Hispanic, 5.6% is Asian, and 13.6% is Black. However, of all new interracial marriages in 2010 (n=275,500), 43% of those marriages were White-Hispanic couples, 14% were White-Asian couples, and only 12% were White-Black couples (Wang, 2012). Based on census data, it would be expected that White-Black marriages would occur more often in the population than White-Asian interracial marriages. It is important to note that the population of Black-White interracial couples who are *dating or cohabitating* is steadily growing, as the number of interracial dating relationships of any nature continues to grow along with interracial marriage rates (Yancey, 2002). In 1990, 3.6% of Black men and 1.2% of Black women were in some type of interracial relationships. By 2000, those percentages had doubled, making it clear that this growing population warrants further research attention. These statistics also reflect an overall positive shift in race relations in the US (Waters, 1999), as 63% of Americans reported in 2010 that “it would be fine” if a member of their own family chose to marry someone outside of their racial or ethnic group (Wang, 2012). In 1986, only 50% of Americans endorsed this belief.

Despite the steady increase in Black-White marriages since 1970 (Domokos-Cheng Ham, 1995), there is still more resistance to this type of interracial marriage than to other configurations of interracial coupling. This fact is reflected in the relative percentages of interracial marriages in various minority groups. In 2010, 27.7% of Asian newlyweds in the US married outside of their race, and 25.7 % of newlywed Hispanics did so. In comparison, 17.1% of Blacks and 9.4% of Whites married outside of their race in 2010, though 70% of all intermarriages involve marrying a White spouse (Wang, 2012). These data highlight the fact that Black-White pairings in particular continue to be more resisted, despite the gradual increase in acceptance of interracial marriages in general.

The phenomenon of “Black Exceptionalism” provides a possible explanation of why Black-White relationships continue to be less accepted and less prevalent than other interracial pairings (Kroeger & Williams, 2011). Some recent research suggests that, though there is a steady increase in interracial relationships in the US across ethnic groups (Qian and Lichter, 2007, Wang, 2012)), which suggests a decrease in boundaries between groups, there is also evidence that, while other minority groups become more assimilated into mainstream (White) culture, Blacks are still often segregated from other groups (Gans, 2005; Lee and Bean, 2007; Lee 2008). This division in spite of a more general blurring of boundaries is “Black exceptionalism,” and is clearly seen in the fact that non-Black Americans are less likely to date Blacks than other races when they date interracially (Qian 2005) and also continue to have negative views of interracial unions involving a Black partner specifically (Lee and Bean 2005; Qian 2005). This data

provides support for the continued presence of racism and discrimination in the US along a Black/non-Black line, though the reasons for this phenomenon are less clear.

### *Development of Black-White interracial couple relationships*

Interracial couple relationships develop differently than relationships between members of the same race. Foeman and Nance (1999, 2002) focus on the unique experience of Black-White couples, whose relationships are typically highly scrutinized, and have developed a theory of interracial relationship development. The stages they describe are thought to occur in tandem with the basic stages of couple development. During the first stage, *Racial Awareness*, both members of the couple develop concurrent awareness from four perspectives, which are their own, their partner's, their collective racial groups', and their partner's collective racial group's perspectives. As this awareness develops, it begins to influence early decisions that the couple makes around where to eat and with whom to socialize. During this time, both partners experience the world differently than before as they begin to experience new responses from the public when out with their partner. New sensitivity develops regarding the 'racial place' of the partner, and each partner experiences having to explain his or her way of thinking and their perspective to an intimate, but also unfamiliar, other. This new sensitivity will most likely change each person's view of the world, whether or not the relationship continues. Newly formed interracial couples struggle with an ongoing process of deciding when to tell, whom to tell, and how to tell people about their relationship. New couples also experience constant pressure to try to let people know they are in an interracial relationship in subtle ways (Foeman & Nance, 2002). Most importantly, it is during this stage that the couple decides, either explicitly or implicitly, to highlight or downplay the

influence of race in their relationship. The couple's communication in this first stage provides the foundation for trust and dialogue that will be the foundation for the later stages.

In the second stage, *Coping*, the couple faces an increased sensitivity to the function of race in their lives and an increased need to find ways to integrate this new information into their relationship and manage the new challenges they face. Interracial couples are *forced* into the coping phase by society's lack of acceptance, and this may actually push couples into a deeper commitment more quickly, as they must rely on each other to survive the attack. Couples in this stage develop both proactive and reactive strategies. Members of new interracial couples must negotiate interactions with others carefully to avoid being ostracized as a result of their choice. They often attempt to manage how others view their decision to date interracially, often by attempting to "explain away" the role of race in the relationship (Foeman & Nance, 2002).

As couples become more established, and the coping stage continues, more coping strategies emerge. Some couples "fight fire with fire" by responding to negative energy by staring or scowling back, or by being even more demonstrative with their partners. Other couples try to "make a good impression" so that strangers get no corroboration of their negative opinions about interracial couples (Killian, 2001). More extreme coping strategies include disassociating from each other in certain social settings (Killian, 2001) or attending family events alone (Foeman & Nance, 1999). Many couples also restrict their activities (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002) in order to reduce the chance of being the victims of discrimination. How well the couple is able to develop coping strategies together greatly increases the couple's chances for success (Foeman & Nance,

1999), as the process of working together to cope strengthens the couple's bond. A couple that fails to work together to overcome challenges will likely feel a desire to end the relationship. In contrast, couples who develop strategies together begin to develop a common culture that increases the strength of their bond. This stage is defensive, as couples find ways to protect themselves from inaccurate descriptions and racially biased responses in order to ensure the survival of their relationship.

In the last two stages, the interracial couple has moved beyond mere survival and developed a way to exist comfortably together in an often resistant environment. In the third stage, *Identity Emergence*, the couple starts to develop self-sustaining behaviors that promote a positive view of themselves. The members of the couple take control of their images of themselves, and often begin to view their uniqueness as a source of strength rather than an obstacle. Interracial couples in this stage feel that they exist on their own terms and not as an undesirable subset of either racial group. In fact, couples in this stage develop skills that are necessary for the truly multicultural society, and can reframe their experience for the larger culture (Foeman & Nance, 1999, 2002). The fourth stage, *Maintenance*, is the process of maintaining effective strategies and perspectives over the course of the relationship. Over time, couples may need to focus more or less on race or develop new coping strategies. Each phase of the couple's relationship brings new opportunities for growth in each of the previous three stages, and successful navigation of each phase leads to ongoing maintenance of the relationship (Foeman & Nance, 1999, 2002).

*Unique experiences of Black-White interracial couples*

Although acceptance of interracial couples is increasing overall, 80% of Black/White couples still experience covert forms of prejudice, such as being stared at or being the subject of ambiguously negative comments (LaTaillade & Matthew, in press). Often, this discrimination and prejudice is experienced near daily, often from strangers, and can have far-reaching effects. The negative public reaction experienced can range from mild reactions to more blatant and harmful discrimination such as derogatory comments, subpar services, restricted lifestyle due to safety concerns, and job/housing discrimination (Killian, 2002; McNamara et al., 1999). Research on African-American couples has found that experiencing discrimination can lead to psychological depletion and decreased marital quality (Kelly, 2003; Lawson & Thompson, 1994; Oggins et al., 1993). Additionally, racism-related anger in Black couples can lead to displacement of anger onto their partners or to failure to support each other (Boyd-Franklin & Franklin, 1998; Kelly, 2003), which clearly leads to poor relationship quality. Discrimination has a similar negative effect on Black-White interracial couples (Mays et al., 2007; Schulz et al. 2006; Williams et al., 2003).

Research on the effects of discrimination on Black individuals has shown that experiencing discrimination is associated with negative psychological and physical health outcomes, like depression, conduct problems and hypertension (Brody et al., 2008; Brody et al., 2006; Cozier et al., 2006; Schulz et al., 2006), and it is likely that the impact of discrimination is as great or greater for the White partner (Yancey, 2007), who has most likely had limited experience with discrimination prior to the relationship, and is therefore even more negatively affected by experiences of racism. One study found that

Whites married to Blacks are much more likely to experience overt discrimination than Whites married to non-Black minorities, and White women married to Blacks experience more racism than White men married to Blacks (Yancey, 2007). Research with adolescents further supports these findings: interracial relationships between non-Black and Black partners yield the most disapproval from non-Black individuals' peers compared with other types of interracial unions (Kreager, 2008).

Throughout the course of interracial relationships, Black-White couples often experience discrimination and resistance *from their own families*, as well, making the issue of social support particularly salient for interracial couples. The families of White partners tend to be more resistant to interracial relationships (Killian, 2001), with the families of Black partners 16% more likely to approve of interracial marriages occurring in their family than the families of White partners (Wang, 2012). Regardless, interracial couples receive less social support than same-race couples (Luke & Carrington, 2000; Okun, 1996). In extreme cases, spouses report losing relationships with some members of their family because of their marriage, but it is more common for couples to experience strained or more restricted relationships with family, members of the community, and coworkers (Killian, 2002). Because of these strained relationships, isolation from social networks is very common for interracial couples (Hibbler and Shinew, 2002). Social support has a beneficial effect on same-race marriages (Ren, 1997), and estrangement from the extended family is detrimental to the quality of any relationship, regardless of race. For interracial couples, the isolation and loss of familial support that is often experienced can prove especially harmful (Root, 2001), increasing stress and heightening the amount of negative emotion and conflict in the relationship.

However, the self-imposed isolation that often results from a lack of social support (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002) may actually serve a protective function and help to maintain the couples' happiness together.

It seems logical, based on the discrimination and stress experienced, that interracial couples would be more vulnerable to relationship dissolution or divorce, as some research (e.g., Clarke, 1995) suggests. However, some studies have found no difference between the marital quality of same race marriages and interracial marriages (LaTaillade & Matthew, in press; Stevenson, 1995; Zhang et al., 2009). Partner acceptance may be one of the most important factors leading to interracial relationship success. Partner acceptance in this context is defined as 'closeness despite unresolvable problems' (Cordova et al., 1998), with compassion and understanding at the core. Though partner acceptance is also key to relationship satisfaction in same race couples (Jacobson and Christensen, 1996), LaTaillade (in press) found that interracial couples that were accepting of each other in their relationships were less negatively affected by social isolation, a unique stressor for interracial couples. Therefore, partner acceptance is likely even more important for interracial couples, and serves as a protective factor against the difficulties these couples face.

Each member of a Black-White interracial couple experiences unique challenges based on his or her race. At least initially, the Black partner in the relationship is likely to be more sensitive to the role of race for the couple, to notice discrimination more readily (Killian, 2001, 2002) and to approach the relationship more cautiously (Mills et al., 1994). The Black partner might also experience guilt at exposing the White partner to his/her burden of race and therefore be reluctant to share his/her experiences of prejudice



and subsequent feelings of anxiety with the White partner (Foeman & Nance, 2002, Killian, 2002). At the same time, the White partner will likely be less aware of the potential negative implications of an interracial relationship at the start of the relationship. This often leads the White partner to encourage the Black partner to relax about race or to see the Black partner's concerns about race as needless paranoia, further contributing to the Black partner's common experience of carrying the burden of race in *general*, and also in the context of the relationship (Foeman & Nance, 2002). Still, despite the White partner's desire to "not see race", entering an interracial relationship is often the first time that White partners are made to deal with the significance of being White and the privilege that it can bring (Rosenblatt et al, 1995). New research also suggests that non-Black people with Black partners suffer from more depressive symptoms and less relationship satisfaction than those with non-Black partners, whether that partner is of the same race or not (Kroegeer, 2011).

Both members of the couple, but the Black partners in particular, will also likely experience uncertainty about what being in an interracial relationship means in terms of their own racial identity (Rosenblatt et al., 1995) and their self-image in general. Both Black and White partners question themselves about the significance of their choice, and are questioned by family and friends about the implications of their interracial relationship on their membership in their racial/ethnic group (Karis, 2003; Rosenblatt et al., 1995). Often, already feeling like unacceptable members of their own groups leads people to seek partners across racial lines (Foeman and Nance, 2002). For Black partners, being accused of "acting White" often leaves those labeled as such feeling unattractive to their group, but more accepted by White partners. Similarly, "looking too

Black” can lead Black partners to date Whites who are attracted to the complexions rejected by some Blacks. A comparable issue for White women who date Black men is that of being “too fat” for their own group. Obviously, these feelings of rejection by one’s own group lead to self-esteem and racial identity issues that can lead people who date and marry interracially to feel like “losers” in their own race. Research indicates that, for people in interracial relationships, ambivalence and insecurity in one’s racial identity can lead to uncertainty in the relationship and poorer relationship quality (Bradbury et al, 2000; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004), while those who have resolved issues of racial identity feel less ambivalent about their relationships (Leslie & Letiecq, 2004).

*The need for research on younger Black-White interracial couples*

All of the research that has identified relevant themes for interracial couples has focused on well-established, married couples, often with one or more children (Killian, 2001, 2002; Luke & Carrington, 2000), even while acknowledging that the relationship structure of these relationships is developmentally unique (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; LaTaillade, in press). Married couples, for the most part, have passed through the stages of their relationship when their difference in race may have been more problematic and salient, before each member’s family “got used” to the idea of a mixed relationship, before marriage, before children, and before the development of a strong identity as a couple (Foeman and Nance, 1999, 2002). It follows that the older, married couples studied in existing research were most likely in the final two stages of the developmental process theorized by Foeman and Nance (2001, 2002): Identity Emergence and Maintenance. As described in the above section on the development of interracial relationships, the themes most salient to couples in these later stages are most likely very

different than the themes present in couples in the first two stages of interracial couple development: Racial Awareness and Coping. Couples in these early stages will most likely experience more, or be more sensitive to, resistance to their relationship (Root, 2001), so it is very likely that these couples will have more opportunities to clash around issues of perceived discrimination, will experience more stress in the relationship than do couples in the later stages, and will feel more conflict around their choice of partner, making these couples more appropriate for researching how all of these issues manifest.

Cohort effects also dramatically alter the experiences of interracial couples (Joyner & Kao, 2005), making the data collected on older, married couples much less relevant to understanding younger interracial couples. Older adults in interracial relationships are most likely being treated differently, and perhaps more negatively, than these younger couples. This is possibly because older interracial couples are interacting primarily with members of their own cohort, people who have less accepting views of interracial relationships as a function of the relatively more rigid norms that existed in this country when older Americans were forming their views and beliefs. It is therefore possible that research on older, married interracial couples has little relevance to the experiences of interracial couples that have formed in the last five years, particularly in younger age groups. For example, as of 2010 61% of 18-29 year-olds believed that more people of different races marrying has been a change for the better for society, while in adults 65 or older, only 28% of people believed that to be true (Wang, 2012).

Additionally, 85% of 18-29 year olds are accepting of interracial marriage in their families, while only 38% of adults aged 65 and older report being accepting of interracial marriage in their own families. It is therefore necessary to begin looking at this younger

population to get a more accurate picture of how the experience of being in an interracial couple in the US is changing. It may be that ideational shifts in recent generations have drastically changed the experience of discrimination for younger interracial couples, such that new themes must be identified, though some research suggests this is not the case for Black-White pairings (Kraeger, 2008; Kroeger, 2011; McClintock, 2010).

Since the ways in which younger interracial couples interact with each other, the themes most salient to them, and their experiences of their interracial relationships most likely differ from those of older interracial couples, the existing research is limited in its scope and does not necessarily provide information on the experiences of younger, non-married interracial couples. In addition to the need to reliably identify if the themes that have been deemed most ‘common’ by existing research are in fact the most salient themes that arise during couple interactions, it is also important for new research to examine the nature of interracial relationships in the present, more accepting, cultural environment. It is also necessary to examine the nature of interracial relationships in their more inchoate stages, when discrimination and opposition may be experienced more often, before strong coping methods have been developed, and at a point when there is more of a question as to whether or not the relationship will grow into a serious commitment.

#### *Methods of understanding couple relationship processes*

Existing research on interracial couples has relied on quantitative self-report measures and qualitative unstructured and semi-structured interviews, all of which have strengths and limitations that necessitate the development of new methods to gain more reliable, in-depth knowledge of interracial couples. Self-report measures are invaluable

research tools, used across many disciplines to determine the efficacy of treatments and to confirm or disconfirm hypotheses about various models of treatment and disease (LaTaillade & Matthew, in press; O’Leary, 2007; Schulz et al., 2008). Self-report measures measure perceptions, which are very important to consider as they affect peoples’ moods, thoughts, outlooks, and behavior (Beck, 1995). Self-report measures are easily replicable, can be related to outcomes, and allow people to be open about their true life experiences, such that researchers can gain knowledge of the views and experiences of any given population. However, it is well-documented that self-report measures have several weaknesses, particularly if the aim is to collect objective data. Many of the shortcomings of self-report measures concern the potential lack of validity of the information reported by responders, due to the effects of various self-report biases (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Hunsley, 1996; O’Leary, 2007; Paulhus, 1990; Weiss, 1980).

Particularly when asked about the presence or absence of stress/distress, it has been found that many people, when responding to self-report measures, demonstrate the *self-deception response bias* (SDRB; Paulhus, 1989, 1990), which results from a denial of problems and stressors as a way of coping. This bias may prove particularly problematic when studying relationship quality, as members of unhappy couples may develop a coping strategy of minimizing the extent of their unhappiness, and will respond to questionnaires about the quality of their relationship as if it is more positive than it truly is. Research has shown that, as the SDRB occurs on an unconscious level, people who demonstrate this bias are often unaware of their negative affect and therefore fail to report it, even when information gathered by more objective measures of physiology,

behavior, or by proxy indicate that negative affect and stress are present (Breetvelt & Van Dam, 1991; Shedler et al., 1993).

Self-report measures suffer from several other limitations that are particularly relevant to research on couples. *Social desirability bias* causes responders to over-report behaviors that are believed to be “good” and to under-report those that are “bad”. Clearly, this bias can have detrimental effects on the validity of self-report data collected about intimate relationships, as people may feel a desire to present themselves and their relationships in a positive light. In contrast, *sentiment override* (Weiss, 1980) can negatively skew couples’ self-reports. Sentiment override occurs when distressed members of couples attend primarily to their partner’s negative behaviors and interpret all behavior through a negative filter (Heyman, 2001). This bias can limit the potential of self-report measures to accurately portray what really happens in a couple’s relationship. A more general limitation of self-report measures is that the information gathered is limited to the questions the researchers deem important to ask, which may omit areas that are falsely thought to be irrelevant but are in fact important or even central to the area of interest.

Qualitative, interview-based methods allow for a greater depth and richness of information to be obtained, compared with self-report measures. Interviews provide the ability to ask follow-up questions based on the content that the subject reveals. This flexibility allows the researcher to get a fuller picture of the experience of each research participant, with the added benefit of being led by the *participant* to areas of importance that may not be explored using a standard battery of questions (Killian, 2001; Mohr & Beutler, 2003). Little is known at this time about the actual narratives that exist between

partners in interracial couples, so in-depth interviews with a focus on narratives are extremely valuable when looking at this population. Interracial couples' narratives about race and racism may or may not be contrary to mainstream understandings of social phenomena such as choosing a mate (Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1994), and interview-based research provides a way to learn more about such phenomena. Most importantly, this method allows learning to occur without the limitations of pre-existing hypotheses.

Unfortunately, qualitative methods have many weaknesses as well. Interviews are, by nature, idiosyncratic and not easily replicated. Each interview is influenced by myriad factors that cannot be reproduced, making them unreliable as a way of collecting data that can be applied to a larger population (Garb, 1998; Mohr & Beutler, 2003). Due to this lack of replicability, there is no way to determine if the data gained from interviews is associated with important outcomes, and it is therefore much more difficult to apply the findings to treatment. Also, as noted earlier regarding other forms of self-report, people might under-report negative aspects of their relationships due to being in denial, or due to a desire to present their relationship in a socially desirable way. All of these limitations make qualitative methods an important *first* step in the process of understanding any population, and provide the framework for developing more replicable, quantitative data collection methods that can be applied to couples research.

Across theories and therapeutic models of couples' treatment, couple communication is the common route to relationship problems (Heyman, 2001). This fact is important because almost "all relationship-relevant conflicts, emotions, and neuroses are played out via *observable communication*" (Heyman, 2001). More importantly, with self-report or qualitative interview methods, couples' own reports of their problems (or

lack thereof) tend to be less informative and/or accurate due to the aforementioned biases (Heyman, 2001; Paulhus, 1989, 1990; Weiss, 1980), which act as filters through which the couples' own reports travel. Given these limitations, the use of outside observation of communication is critical, both to enable the development of models of marital distress and for the development of clinicians' case formulations and treatment plans.

Observational methods utilizing behavioral coding provide a way to improve upon and enhance the objectivity and reliability of self-report measures and quantitative research methods (Gitlin-Weiner et al., 2000). The data collected using observational methods can be compared to data collected via self-report, and provides the opportunity to compare perceptions with more objective reality. Observational methods are replicable, and the data gathered via observation can therefore be correlated with outcome measures to determine relationships between couple behaviors and other aspects of the couples' lives, such as their relationship quality. Observational methods allow the researcher to *see* what behaviors are important, while this information may not be accessible to the partners themselves (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). This methodology reduces the effects of the SDRB (Breetvelt & Van Dam, 1991; Shedler et al., 1993), the social desirability bias (Gerich, 2008; Nederhof, 1985), and the sentiment override that can plague couples' own reports (Heyman, 2001). Also, observation measures actions, which are much more accessible to, and easily addressed by, therapists than are partners' attitudes. Another strength of observation, particularly when focusing on couples, is that this method focuses on interactions, and thereby gathers information on the dyad, rather than each partner's separate views about the dyad. Observation allows important themes that have been identified via other methods to be operationalized, and determines how



behaviors and attitudes are manifest in real time (Margolin et al., 1998). This knowledge can then be used to inform real-life treatment situations, allowing clinicians to observe behaviors with knowledge of the associated outcomes, thereby informing their treatment planning. These benefits of observational methods are particularly relevant to the treatment of couples.

Based upon the relative strengths of observational methods of studying couples, the goal of this pilot study is to develop a reliable coding system to measure the interactions of interracial Black-White couples around topics of race. It is important to focus research attention on this growing population (Wang, 2012) and existing couples coding systems (Gottman, 1999; Kelly et al., in manuscript; Roberts and Greenberg, 2002) are not generalizable to interracial couples, due to the uniqueness of the Black-White couple experience (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2001, 2002; LaTaillade, in press). A coding system is needed that can accurately and reliably identify the common themes of interracial couples' experiences around race and discrimination. The data gathered via observational coding can serve to inform research about how experiences around race affect the quality of these couples' relationships, which will lead to enhanced treatment for these couples.

The Successive Cohort Design approach, or SCD (Epstein et al., 2007) lends itself well to the goals of this study. The SCD was originally created in order to successfully generate new behavioral treatments, conduct preliminary testing, and, through a process of ongoing modification, develop a manual for the new treatment. The SCD involves seven steps: review of the literature and articulation of the theoretical model; development of the protocol and the writing of the manual; the treatment of the first

group; revision of the original manual based on what is learned from the treatment of Group 1; treatment of Group 2 using the revised manual; further revision of the manual based on knowledge gained from the treatment of the second group; and treatment of Group 3. The benefits of using the SCD to develop new protocols include 1) an improvement over the “tinkering” model of treatment development, a process that involves changing a manual several times during the course of development in a non-systematic way, which typically results in the expenditure of excess time and money; 2) the gained ability to examine data within each group, compare across groups for significant differences, and also collapse the groups to create a larger sample with more statistical power; and 3) the valuable opportunity to use knowledge gained from the experience of the clinicians during each iteration to make informed decisions to improve the manual *during the course of the study*. This ability is in contrast to the typical model of developing new treatments, in which one large sample is treated completely, and only at the conclusion of the study can the efficacy of the treatment be determined (Epstein et al., 2007). The hypothesis is that Successive Cohort Design can also be used to develop an observational coding system in an efficient and informed manner, using the same steps, and reaping the same benefits.

The use of SCD to develop an observational coding system will allow for the initial utilization of existing self-report and interview research on interracial couples while also providing the opportunity to gain more depth of information and accuracy of focus as each iteration of the coding manual is developed. These benefits are likely to be similar to those gained from using SCD to develop new treatments. This new depth and accuracy will result from the strengths of the observational format and the ability to

change the codes mid-study if so guided by the data, similar to the freedom associated with in-depth interviewing. Existing research suggests where to focus *initially* when capturing salient interactions of interracial couples, and use of the SCD should allow for modifications that ensure that the interactions that are truly salient, important to couples, and *feasibly codeable*, are those that are being measured and tested in this study.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### *Participants*

The participants were nine heterosexual Black-White interracial couples recruited from an East Coast University, ages 18-25. Participating couples were required to be in a committed relationship lasting for at least 4 months and could not be engaged or married. Table 1 presents the demographics of the participants. Couple 007 did not meet the age inclusion criteria, and so their data were not used in this study. Of the eight eligible couples, the average age of participants was 21.3 years, with an average relationship length of 9.13 months and 14.75 years of education. Six of the eight couples were made up of a Black male and White female partner.

Subjects were recruited using several methods. On social networking sites like Facebook.com, posts advertising the study were placed on the homepages of locally-based groups that advocate interracial unions. In addition to online recruitment, flyers advertising the study were placed in high-traffic areas around the college campus. The study was also listed in the university's Psychology Department Human Subject Pool, allowing undergraduate psychology students to participate in the study to fulfill a course requirement.

Table 1  
*Participant Demographics*

<b>Couple</b>	<b>Age of Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Education (in years)</b>	<b>Relationship Length (in months)</b>
001	21	M	White (Turkish)	15	17
	22	F	Af-Am (Nigerian)	17	
002	20	F	White	14	24
	20	M	Black	14	
003	22	F	White (Jewish)	15	17.5
	21	M	Af-Am	14	
004	22	M	Af-Am	16	24
	19	F	White	14	
005	19	F	Af-Am (Multiracial)	12	8
	18	M	White	12	
006	17	M	Af-Am (Dominican)	12	1
	18	F	White	12	
007	56	F	Black	14	1
	19	M	White	12	
008	29	F	White (Jewish)	18	7
	29	M	Black	19	
009	22	F	White	16	33
	22	M	Af-Am	16	

### *Instruments*

Demographic Measure. Participants provided information about their age, level of education, religion, ethnicity, and how often they interact socially with other racial and ethnic groups.

Interracial Couple Coding System. This measure is designed to document key interactions of Black-White interracial couples related to the impact of race on their relationship quality. Codes in the original codebook, Codebook 1, included: Discrimination, Social Support, Isolation, Partner Acceptance, Racial Identity Concerns, Increased Racial Awareness, Unique Stressors, and Coping. These codes are based on the themes identified in the literature as salient to Black-White interracial couples, as described above. Based on the literature, behavioral indicators for each code were defined in the code book, which is presented in Appendix A. Additional codes were added to Codebook 3.

Each code's original definition is presented below:

Discrimination--The discrimination code is used to capture statements about experiencing discrimination as a result of the interracial relationship. Code discrimination that the couple experiences or that the individual experiences, and indicate if the discrimination came from a stranger or someone they know.

Social Support- This code will capture all mentions of social support by the couple. Both presence and absence of social support will be coded.

Isolation- This code will capture all mentions of feeling distant and separate from their peers, family, or society in general.

Partner Acceptance- This code will capture all mentions by either partner that suggest that they are accepting of/empathetic toward the other partner's perspective or experience, or any statements suggesting that they are *not* accepting/empathetic. This code also includes perceptions from either partner that the *other* is not accepting. This code includes general positive sentiments about the partner.

Racial Identity Concerns/Self-Esteem Issues- This code will capture mentions from either partner of feeling negatively about themselves regarding their racial identity/place in their own ethnic group. This code also captures indications of low self-esteem related to race, insecurity related to race or being in an interracial relationship/the impact it may have. Mentions of positive feelings about racial identity and positive self-esteem are also coded here (as +).

Increased Racial Awareness- This code will capture instances of the Black or White partner feeling more aware of the impact of race in their daily lives.

Unique Stressors- This code will capture instances of the Black or White partner reporting the presence of stresses unique to themselves as a Black or White person.

Coping- This code will capture instances of the coping strategies that the couple uses to cope with discrimination and lack of acceptance, or to cope with the various other stressors that being in an interracial relationship can bring. This code will capture active coping strategies, passive strategies, and avoidant strategies.

Stress- This code will capture utterances by either partner about feeling stressed, uncomfortable, angry, or worried regarding the interracial relationship and/or race-related issues and experiences.

Partner Positivity/Negativity- This code will capture positive feelings, empathy, admiration, compassion, and caring that either partner shows for the other. This code captures positive statements not related to race-related situations.

Interracial Couple Identity- This code will capture mentions by either member of the couple about feelings of security/insecurity about being in an interracial relationship or the potential impact the relationship may have on their lives/others' opinions of them.

Self-Esteem- This code will capture explicit mentions from either partner of feeling negatively or positively about themselves in general, not specific to their race or ethnicity. This code captures indications of high or low self-esteem.

Color Blind/Humanistic- This code will capture statements by either member of the couple about having a "color blind" world view. This world view believes that race differences are not an issue and are therefore not worthy of any time or attention being paid to those differences.

For further details on the development of the measure, see the Results section.

### *Overall Procedures*

The observational task for this study was modeled after the typical observational couples research paradigm described by Roberts and Greenberg (2002), in which couples are videotaped while asked to talk together for 10 minutes "as they normally would" about a specific topic or issue. The paradigm suggests that the absence of the researcher in the room, and the couples' control over the flow of the conversation, allows for the couple to interact as they would naturally. For this study, the task was intended to elicit a discussion about the impact of non-acceptance of their interracial union on the



relationship, thus providing a sample of how the couple discusses race. The data were collected in the therapy clinic of the university where the PI is enrolled. Couples were shown to a private therapy room where they gave informed consent and then completed the demographic questionnaires. Couples were then given a written copy of the task prompt, which read, “Talk to each other about a time when one or both of you suspected that someone did not accept your interracial relationship. Think about what happened, how you dealt with it, and the discussion you had around the incident. Please have that conversation again here.” Couples were left alone for approximately 5 minutes to decide together on an incident to discuss. The PI then confirmed with the couple that they had thought of an incident to discuss, ensured that they understood the task, started the video camera, and left the couple in the private room for 10 minutes. The PI then returned to the room, turned off the camera, and provided the couple with a more thorough explanation of the purpose of this study; specifically, that a coding system is being developed to further the understanding of how contemporary interracial couples discuss race and their relationships. For four of the eight couples that participated in the study, at least one member of the couple received required Psychology class credit for participating. Four couples participated on a purely volunteer basis, and received no compensation of any kind. The entire process of participation took approximately 60 minutes.

### *Coding Procedures*

A codebook was developed to reliably measure the issues faced by interracial couples, as manifest in the literature. First, an extensive literature review was conducted to determine the race-related issues that most likely affect the relationship quality of

Black-White interracial couples. The themes identified by this review include *experiencing discrimination, lack of social support, the impact of partner acceptance, racial identity concerns, stressors that singularly affect either the Black or White partner, level of racial awareness, and coping strategies*. Behavioral Indicators representing potential manifestations of the important themes were developed, based on the literature and previous findings. The behavioral indicators comprised the examples for the codes presented in Codebook 1. The codebook included operational definitions of all codes, based on the behavioral indicators determined in the previous step; classic and lower bound examples of each code, as well as non-examples of the code; behavioral anchors (behavioral descriptors linked to specific codes); and decision trees to aid in determining how to code borderline/ambiguous dialogue. “Classic” examples are examples that epitomize the code and clearly show/demonstrate the behavior of interest that merits the code. “Lower bound” examples refer to the mildest behavior/statements that would merit the code. Non-examples of the code distinguished between behaviors that would merit the code and those that would merit either no codes or another code. See Appendix A for Codebook 1.

Two trained undergraduate students served as coders. They were trained on the original codebook and any iterations created throughout the study. Using selections of dialogue from films, fictional dialogue written by the PI, and one real couple clip, moving from simple to complex examples, coders learned the codes and definitions, classic and lower-bound examples, and non-examples of each code. All practice and data clips were transcribed by the PI and each clip was coded based on the written transcript. This ensured that the units of information in each clip were being divided uniformly

across coders (Margolin, 1998). Coders first were tested on their knowledge of code definitions and were then taught the coding procedure and shown how to code a practice tape with the PI. This coding practice involved extensive discussion between the PI and the coders to ensure that they understood the codes and coding procedure. To facilitate learning during the training phase, parts of the practice material were coded independently by the research assistants, and then their choice of codes and rationales was discussed in the meeting. Also, small changes were made to the codes to improve clarity, like adding additional examples. After all of the training material was used, coders reviewed all final codes and compared them to the codebook to ensure that they knew the rationale for every code. Coders then coded a reliability clip independently, which was also coded by the PI. Adequate reliability was reached when a comparison of the PI's and undergraduate coder's codes reached a Cohen's kappa of .60 or higher, and a percent agreement of .70 or higher, based on Fleiss's (1981) recommendation. Cohen's kappa is a statistical measure of inter-rater agreement which takes into account agreement that occurs due to chance. After reaching the reliability standard, coders were permitted to code the designated data clips. Reliability was maintained and observer drift minimized via twice-weekly two-hour meetings with the coders. These meetings took place after the coding of each clip. In these meetings, every clip was reviewed in depth, with one clip reviewed over the course of two meetings. All clips were double coded by the PI and the coders.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

#### *Data Analysis Plan*

The nine participating couples were split into three groups of 2-3 couples each, to facilitate use of the Successive Cohort design (Epstein et al., 2007), which enables continuous improvement upon the original Codebook 1. Cohort 1 is comprised of couples 1 and 3. Cohort 2 is comprised of couples 4-6, and Cohort 3 of couples 8 and 9. Couples 2 and 7 were not used in this study because couple 2 discussed religious differences rather than racial differences, and couple 7 was outside of the 18-25 age range of this study. Due to the small  $n$  of this study, Clip 1 was used as both a training clip and a data clip in Cohort 1, so that there were two data clips in that cohort. However, Clip 1 was only coded one time in Cohort 1, such that the codes assigned when assessing reliability are the same codes considered data for Clip 1. Coders were trained for Cohort 2 using clips 1 and 3, and for Cohort 3 on Clips 1 and 5. None of the codes used for training in Cohorts 2 and 3 was used as data for those cohorts.

A sequence of steps facilitated the development of codebook 1 toward being a reliable measure of race-related issues that affect Black-White interracial couples. First, after applying codebook 1 to the first cohort of clips, kappa and agreement values were computed between the PI and two trained coders who had already reached the aforementioned reliability standard. These kappa and agreement values for that cohort of clips comprised the data for assessing the reliability of that iteration of the codebook. See Appendix C for a sample confusion matrix that presents the code similarities and

differences across each pair of coders, and the kappa formula that is applied to these differences. After these values were computed, the second step involved consideration of disagreements among the coders as reflected in the percentage agreement and kappa scores. Discussions were held to determine whether or not the PI's original code(s) or the differing code(s) applied by one or both of the coders were used as the final codes that were applied to the clip after each disagreement was discussed. In all cases, the principal investigator made the final determination of which codes would be applied, taking the feedback of all coders into account.

After each cohort was coded using the foregoing procedures, the PI received feedback from the coders as the third step in improving the reliability of the coding system. Feedback was given regarding the feasibility of utilizing the existing coding system successfully, any confusion that existed about what constitutes a code and what does not, and opinions about code overlap or the need to omit any codes. Again, discussion was used to resolve disagreements among coders, towards determining the kinds of changes that needed to be made to optimize the coding system's ability to reliably detect the relevant codes identified in the literature. Fourth, the PI used this input to modify the codebook for the next cohort of clips. Modifications were designed to improve both the feasibility of coding, and the reliability of codes designed to measure the impact of race on interracial couples. Fifth, after the codebook was modified, the coders were then retrained on the new modified codebook, as described in the coding procedures above; again each coder was required to obtain a minimum Kappa value of .60, reflecting good reliability beyond chance with the codes applied by the PI before they could code clips for use as data. The foregoing five steps were then repeated for the

second cohort of clips, and again for the third cohort of clips, towards improving the reliability of coding via a successive cohort design.

*Step A: Achieving Initial Reliability*

As shown in Table 2 below, each of the 3 training sessions designed to prepare coders to reliably apply the coding system was moderately successful, based on Fleiss's (1981) recommendation that a Cohen's Kappa value between .40-.60 be considered "fair," between .60-.75 "good", and above .75, "excellent" (Bakeman and Gottman, 1997; Fleiss, 1981). Table 2 shows the average of the two coders' scores on the clips for which they reached the initial standard of reliability with the PI. Across all cohorts, the percentage agreement of the undergraduate coders with the PI ranged from .68 to .76. Kappa values pre-data collection, across all cohorts, ranged from .53 to .78. Notably, in training coders for Cohort 2, one of the two coders being trained reached reliability on her *second attempt*, rather than her first, and thus the table includes one kappa score that is below the .60 threshold, and the corresponding percentage of agreement falls below the .7 threshold. The training of the second and third cohorts also varied in that, for each of these cohorts, one of the two coders had participated in the coding of a prior cohort. Therefore, the previously trained students were taught to apply the changes made from one coding system to the next, and students who were new to coding were taught the entire coding system.

Table 2  
*Results of Coders' Efforts to Meet the Reliability Standards Prior to Data Coding*

	Training Clip	Avg. % Agreement w/PI	Avg. Kappa w/PI
<b>Cohort 1</b>	001	0.76	0.68
	003	0.68	0.56
<b>Cohort 2</b>	001	0.75	0.68
	001	0.70	0.64
<b>Cohort 3</b>	001	0.70	0.64
	005	0.69	0.60

\* Note: For each training clip, two coders each tried to reach the initial .60 (Kappa Value) standard of reliability with the PI. The agreement scores above are the average of their two scores. In all cases but one, the Kappa standard of reliability was reached on the first try by both coders.

*Step 1: Reliability of the Coding System as Assessed by Percentage Agreement & Kappa Values*

Analysis of each step in the procedure was undertaken to determine the coding system's feasibility and usefulness. For the first step, assessing overall reliability as shown in Table 3 below, the average kappa value between the PI and each coder on the data clips decreased from .57 to .41 across the three cohorts, and average percent agreement decreased from .70 to .52 across cohorts, with both scores decreasing with each new cohort. Thus, the coding system developed never met the  $K=.60$  standard of reliability after initial training. Moreover, contrary to expectations, findings reveal that use of the successive cohort design in this small pilot study resulted in a coding system that was *less and less reliable*.

Table 3  
*Average Kappa Value and % Agreement for Whole Coding System (Data Clips only)*

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
<b>Kappa Value</b>	.57	.53	.41
<b>Percent Agreement</b>	.70	.68	.52

Note: Values in this table are the average of the scores of two coders being compared with the PI

Next, exploratory analyses were conducted to determine if the decreasing kappa and percentage agreement scores were related to particular clips, in the event that “difficult clips” affected the scores. Table 4, below, presents the average kappa values and percent agreement values for each data clip in each cohort, across all coders. As evidenced in the table, coding system reliability decreased overall not just across successive cohorts, but across successive clips within each cohort. Therefore, there were not particular difficult clips that brought the average reliability of the entire coding system down.

Table 4  
*Average Kappa Value and % Agreement for Whole Coding System, by clip (Data clips only)*

	Cohort 1		Cohort 2			Cohort 3	
<b>Clip</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>006</b>	<b>008</b>	<b>009</b>
<b>Kappa</b>	.68	.47	.59	.55	.45	.43	.39
<b>% Agree</b>	.76	.63	.71	.70	.64	.56	.47



Additional exploratory analyses were conducted to determine if differences among coders in ease of using the coding system exist, and to determine if a specific coder's performance accounted for low average agreement between the PI and the coders. Table 5 presents the kappa and percent agreement values for *each data clip in each cohort*, for all coders.

Table 5  
*Kappa Values and % Agreement (All Coders, all Cohorts)*

Cohort 1				Cohort 2						Cohort 3				Coder Average		
001		003		004		005		006		008		009				
K	%	K	%	K	%	K	%	K	%	K	%	K	%	K	%	
Coder 1 (JO)	.75	.82	.46	.64										.61	.73	
Coder 2 (CF)	.60	.71	.48	.61	.61	.72	.55	.69	.42	.60				.53	.67	
Coder 3 (SR)					.58	.70	.55	.71	.48	.67	.42	.56	.45	.53	.50	.63
Coder 4 (SC)											.44	.56	.32	.42	.38	.50
Average Value	.68	.76	.47	.63	.59	.71	.55	.70	.45	.64	.43	.56	.39	.47		

As shown in Table 5, the reliability of each coder with the PI varied greatly. Kappa values ranged from .75 to .32 and percent agreement values ranged from .82 to .42. Coder 1 had the highest average kappa and percent agreement with the PI, while coder 4 had the lowest. Only coder 1's average kappa and percent agreement values (.61 and .73, respectively) meet criteria for adequate reliability (Fleiss, 1981), but one of her Kappa scores was very high (.75) and the other was low (.46). This table illustrates that being a "new" coder, coding her first cohort, or an "old" coder, coding her second cohort, did not impact Kappa scores, either positively or negatively. In Cohort 2, Coder 2 (the "old" coder) did not do significantly better than Coder 3 (the "new" coder), and in Cohort 3, Coder 3 (the "old" coder) did not code significantly better than Coder 4 ("new"). Overall, none of the coders coded consistently well with the PI, and the Kappa values for clips 001 and 004 were the only clips that were coded reliably across the board, regardless of coder.

Based on the foregoing results, further content analysis of the characteristics that might distinguish Clips 001 and 004 from the other clips was performed. Clip 001 was the first clip coded to meet reliability after the initial codebook training. Though only coded once, the coding of this clip was used both to assess if reliability was reached *and* as data, due to the small *n* of Cohort 1. The high level of reliability for this clip can likely be attributed in part to the fact that coders were newly trained. Additionally, Clip 001 is particularly easy to code reliably, compared with other clips, as speaking turns (the unit used to delineate when a code should be applied again) in Clip 001 are very long, making it more likely that 2 coders will ultimately agree that a code appeared in that turn. More specifically, though all couples were recorded for 10 minutes, Clip 001 has only 39

speaking turns, while other clips have up to 90 speaking turns. In Clip 004, as well as Clip 001, the couple was much more “on task” than in other clips. The majority of speaking turns in each of these clips is related to discussing how racial difference impacts the couple. Also, in both clips 001 and 004, the couples used less vague wording and more explicitly stated and re-stated the nature of the discrimination or lack of support they experienced, rather than using words like “it” and “that.” These differences likely contributed to significantly higher Kappa values for these clips than any others in the study. Notably, the high kappa values for clips 1 and 4 are not a result of those clips having more codes overall, as these clips in fact have the lowest total number of codes (39, and 44 codes respectfully) of all 7 clips.

*Step 2: Analysis of Final Codes*

Table 6 presents the frequency that each code manifested per clip, and per cohort.

Table 6  
*Frequency of Each Code Across Each Cohort*

	<b>Cohort 1</b>		<b>Cohort 2</b>			<b>Cohort 3</b>	
	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Discrimination-Individual</b>	0	3	0	3	0	0	1
<b>Discrimination-Couple</b>	0	5	1	11	7	3	0
<b>Social Support +</b>	2	9	10	3	5	3	1
<b>Social Support -</b>	10	3	6	6	1	6	5
<b>Racial Identity +</b>	1	0	4	1	2	0	0
<b>Racial Identity -</b>	3	3	6	3	4	5	3

Table 6--continued

<b>Partner Acceptance + (Partner <u>Agreement</u> in Cohort 3)</b>	1	6	4	14	15	12	2
<b>Partner Acceptance – (Partner <u>Disagree</u>m't in Cohort 3)</b>	0	5	0	1	2	2	0
<b>Coping-Active</b>	0	5	0	7	7	6	3
<b>Coping-Passive</b>	19	16	9	7	16	14	3
<b>Coping-Avoidant</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Increased Racial Awareness (B/W)</b>	0	1	4	1	0	0	0
<b>Isolation</b>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Unique Stressors-Black</b>	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
<b>Unique Stressors-White</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Stress</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	7
<b>Interracial Couple Identity +</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0
<b>Interracial Couple Identity -</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	5
<b>Partner Positivity</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	5
<b>Partner Negativity</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	1
<b>Color Blind</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0
<b>Total Number of Codes</b>	39	56	44	57	59	73	40

As shown in Table 6 above, some codes appeared consistently across each clip in which they were assessed, while other codes rarely appeared. Social Support-Positive and Negative, Racial Identity-Negative, Partner Acceptance-Positive, and Coping-Passive were present across all clips, and the Stress, Interracial Couple Identity-Negative, and Partner Positivity codes, which were only added to the codebook in Cohort 3, were

present in both Cohort 3 clips. Codes that appeared in less than half of the clips were Discrimination-Individual, Coping-Avoidant, Increased Racial Awareness, Isolation, and Unique Stressors-Black. Racial Identity-Positive, Partner Acceptance-Negative, Partner Negativity, Discrimination-Couple and Coping-Active appeared in most clips, but not all. The Unique Stressors-White code did not appear in any clips, across all three cohorts, and the Interracial Couple Identity-Positive and Color Blind codes, added for Cohort 3, did not appear in either Cohort 3 clip.

Many codes had two modifiers, and often one modifier occurred more often than the other. For example, Discrimination-Couple appeared more than Discrimination-Individual, Racial Identity-Negative appeared more than Racial Identity-Positive, Partner Acceptance-Positive (and Partner Positivity) more than Partner Acceptance-Negative or Partner Negativity, and Interracial Couple Identity-Negative more than Interracial Couple Identity-Positive. Passive coping was the most used type of coding when compared with Active and Avoidant coping.

#### *Steps 3 and 4: Analysis of Issues Derived from the Feedback Process, and Codebook Modification*

The obstacles experienced during coding, and how subsequent codebooks were changed to address these obstacles, is presented. The common coding obstacles across all three cohorts are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7  
*Obstacles to Inter-Rater Reliability*

Obstacle to inter-rater reliability	Examples
<p>Confusion about how codes differ from each other ( i.e. “Overlapping”)</p>	<p>If one member of a couple is discriminated against in the presence of the partner, is it Discrimination-Couple or Discrimination-Individual?</p> <p>Is “My grandmother was stand-offish when she first met you?” an example of Discrimination or of Social Support-Negative?</p> <p>Does “I don’t know how that new place will be, let’s just go to our usual spot.” qualify as Isolation or Coping-Avoidant?</p> <p>Is “I feel like my family would accept it” a Coping-Passive code or a Racial/Couple Identity-Positive code?</p>
<p>Confusion about where to “draw the line” between what receives a code and what does not (i.e. “threshold issues”)</p>	<p>Does a mention of “random people giving [the couple] looks” meet the threshold to be coded as Discrimination?</p> <p>Does chiming in or “parroting” of a partner qualify as Partner Acceptance?</p> <p>Does an assumption of support (“I feel like my family will accept us.”) meet criteria for a Social Support code?</p>
<p>Difficulty coding “Vague References”</p>	<p>Does “It made me feel uncomfortable” meet criteria for a Discrimination code? (Issue: What “it” is being referenced in that statement?)</p> <p>Does “My mom keeps trying to set me up with someone White?” meet Discrimination criteria? (i.e. is this statement implying that Mom is trying to steer the speaker away from dating a Black man?)</p>

Table 7--continued

<p>Coders forgetting aspects of code definitions</p>	<p>“We didn’t talk about it at first, but later I asked C. about [the experience the couple had]... ”—Here, a Coping-Active code was missed by the coders</p> <p>Coders forgot that any mention of using a coping strategy receives a Coping code</p> <p>In Cohort 3, coders missed applying an Isolation code because they forgot it was part of the codebook</p>
<p>Inferring meaning in order to assign a code</p>	<p>“For a little while it was hard to reconcile with them...” said in the context of a difficult family situation—Stress code?</p> <p>“We don’t care, we don’t have any fights about it”—does this statement receive the Interracial Couple Identity-Positive Code?</p>

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A major obstacle to high inter-rater reliability was our finding that a number of our codes overlapped, which led to confusion about how codes differed from one another. This issue was seen throughout all cohorts and across many different codes. Regarding the Discrimination-Couple and Discrimination-Individual codes, in Cohort 1, questions were raised regarding if the reporting of one partner about discrimination the other partner experienced received the Individual or Couple modifier, and whether or not discrimination that only one member of the couple experiences while with their partner warrants the Couple modifier. Clarifications to the codebook addressed these issues, making it clear that if only one partner is actively discriminated against, even if both are present, Discrimination-Individual is coded. It was also clarified that if the couple is



discriminated against due to the fact that they are a couple, a Discrimination-Couple code is given.

In earlier codebooks, Social Support could not apply to the opinions and treatment of strangers, and could only be used when a participant spoke of a friend or family member's known approval or disapproval of their relationship. At the same time, the Discrimination code was not defined clearly enough that receiving "looks" from strangers clearly merited the code. Therefore, statements like "Random people give us looks" and "Your grandmother was stand-offish when I met her" either were not captured, or were inconsistently coded as both Discrimination and Social Support, due to the fact that they were often deemed discriminatory by coders, but were not part of the Discrimination code definition. By Cohort 3, statements like these had moved from receiving no code ("Random people...") or being only a Social Support code ("Your grandmother...") to being non-examples due to their lack of specificity, to being coded as both Discrimination *and* Social Support in some cases. The changes to the codebook that resulted in these fluctuations happened in large part in order to capture both the clear, but passive, disapproval of strangers and the more subtle disapproval of friends and family.

Initially, the Isolation code was defined such that it captured statements of feeling disconnected from others *as well as* mentions of avoiding certain situations out of fear of discrimination. However, this avoidance was not a major component of the code. The Coping-Avoidant code was defined to capture both avoidant behavior and, largely, feelings of helplessness. Both codes allowed for statements of restricted behavior to be coded. After Cohort 2, the Isolation and Coping-Avoidant codes were much more clearly distinguished from each other. It was clarified that anticipatory avoidance is coded under

Isolation, while the Coping-Avoidant code is meant to capture instances of avoidance of *known* discriminatory people or situations. With this clarification, it is still possible that a statement of avoidance may be coded as both Coping-Avoidance and as Isolation, such as “They treat us so rudely there, let’s just stay home.” Unfortunately, these two codes did not appear significantly in Cohort 3, so it is unknown how these distinctions will impact reliability.

Throughout the first two Cohorts, statements like “I feel like my family would accept it” and “I don’t think your mother likes me” were the source of many disagreements between coders, as in early codebooks, statements that guessed at approval were coded only as Coping-Passive (as “wishful thinking”), while anticipation of disapproval was only coded as an Identity-Negative code. Notably, Social Support was not coded for these types of statements initially, because it wasn’t known if support was actually present or absent in these cases, a requirement for the Social Support code in early codebooks. Ultimately, in order to capture both the beliefs of the speaker *and* their felt experience of being accepted or not, the aforementioned statements and others similar to them could be coded with both a Social Support code and an Identity code. The Social Support code captured the support, or lack thereof, while the Identity code (Racial Identity or Interracial Couple Identity) captured the speaker’s beliefs about how others felt about them.

Threshold issues and how to handle “vague references” were other major obstacles to inter-rater reliability, and were often closely related to code vs. code distinctions, as discussed above. Statements like “Random people give us looks” and “I feel like my family would accept it” highlight both code distinction issues and threshold

issues. Issues of vague reference are closely related to threshold issues—does referencing a discriminatory act with “it” meet the threshold to be coded? Based on the discussions held in research meetings, and what issues the PI was attempting to capture, codebook definitions were made progressively clearer to address these issues. More clarifying statements and behavioral anchors were added to code definitions, making them more explicitly operationalized, and more Classic, Lower-Bound, and Non-examples were added to many codes. For example, it was clarified for Cohort 3 that mention of specific negative action by a stranger is not coded as Social Support, while general feelings of approval or disapproval, even from strangers, is coded there. This distinction was made somewhat arbitrarily, as the goal was to ensure that there were clear instructions for coders about where to code each type of instance to increase reliability. However, it was deemed that specific negative actions are more appropriately coded as Discrimination, not Social Support-Negative, so more vague disapproval was more appropriately captured by the Social Support-Negative code, which is about less specific actions. It was also clarified, by the end of Cohort 2 coding, that hopeful statements about how people might react to the interracial couple (“I hope that they will accept us.”) could not be coded as Social Support-Positive, since these hopeful statements are not about the actual presence of support. The issue of vague references was addressed by adding a non-example to the Discrimination code. The non-example of “It [negative treatment by a family member] made me feel really uncomfortable,” was added to specifically state that a participant discussing their feelings *about* discrimination is not coded as Discrimination, as the statement is not about the discriminatory act directly.

Inter-rater reliability was negatively affected by coders forgetting aspects of code definitions or forgetting that a code was part of the codebook. At times, codes were missed because they had not been seen stated a certain way before. For example, the quote in the table above (“We didn’t talk about it at first...”) is an example of ‘gathering information’ and thereby merits a Coping-Active code. However, this type of more subtle discussion of coping had not been seen by coders before, and was therefore missed. In the later cohorts, coders often had difficulty remembering all aspects of code definitions, resulting in missed codes. This issue was particularly present for the Coping codes, which had the most extensive definitions. One coder said that it was specifically difficult to code Coping statements that were not specifically written out as examples in the codebook, and another forgot that acts of retaliation are coded as Coping-Active.

Reliability was also impacted by coders inferring the meaning of participant statements in order to assign a code. In these instances, coders had to move several levels away from the actual utterances of participants to justify the assignment of a code. Often a statement would *imply* confidence, for example, but would not state it explicitly. In the Stress Code, the code book allowed for coding “*observed* feelings of frustration, exasperation, anger, or upset.” However, each coder had a different threshold for when stress was being “observed.” For example, if a participant is calmly discussing an instance in which her father was judgmental and said insulting things to her partner, is a Stress code warranted? Some coders would infer stress due to speech content, even if the participant was not indicating stress.

Cohort 3 had a few additional obstacles, including difficulties maintaining inter-rater reliability due to knowledge of the previous codebooks and difficulty coding Cohort

3 based solely on the definitions present in Codebook 3. Coders also reported that coding of Cohort 3 was particularly difficult because many minor and major changes were made to the codebook during this cohort, which made it “difficult to keep track of what was right.”

*Additional Analyses: Reliability of Each Individual Code*

Table 8  
Average Kappa Values for Each Code (Data Clips only)

	<b>Cohort 1 (clips 1 &amp; 3)</b>	<b>Cohort 2 (clips 4-6)</b>	<b>Cohort 3 (clips 8 &amp; 9)</b>
<b>Dis-I</b>	0 (3)	.77	.77 (I+C)
<b>Dis-C</b>	.40	.83	-----
<b>SS+</b>	.77	.86	.76
<b>SS-</b>	.67	.56	.49
<b>RI+</b>	.25	.57	n/a
<b>RI-</b>	.51	.70	.44
<b>PA+</b>	.51	.32	.44
<b>PA-</b>	.63	0	0 (3)
<b>Cope-A</b>	.39	.49	.32
<b>Cope-P</b>	.64	.50	.62
<b>Cope-Av</b>	1	n/a	0 (1)
<b>IncRA</b>	1	.58	0 (2)
<b>Iso</b>	.32	n/a	0 (2)
<b>US-B</b>	n/a	0	.41 (B+W)
<b>US-W</b>	n/a	n/a	-----
<b>Stress</b>	-----	-----	.75
<b>ICI</b>	-----	-----	.42
<b>PP</b>	-----	-----	.62
<b>PN</b>	-----	-----	0 (1)
<b>Color Blind</b>	-----	-----	0 (1)
<b>Self-Esteem</b>	-----	-----	n/a

*Note: The average number of times that the code appeared across the clips for the given cohort is presented in parentheses for codes with very low frequencies. N/A indicates that the code did not appear, but was part of the coding system. "-----" indicates that the code was not part of the coding system for that cohort.*

As shown in Table 8, the reliability of each individual code was assessed to determine the contribution of each to the overall reliability of the coding system. These values were calculated with 2x2 tables (Code, Not the code) for clips with no disagreements, and with 3x3 tables (Code, Code Disagreement, Not the code) for clips in which any statement was coded as two different codes by two coders. The Social Support-Positive code was the only code consistently coded reliably at or above a Kappa value of .6 across all three cohorts, indicating that at the end of this pilot study, this code is the only code that is consistently salient and measurable. Several other codes showed promise, and yielded a slightly-low-to-good kappa value in at least two out of three cohorts. These codes are Discrimination, Social Support-Negative, Coping-Passive, and Increased Racial Awareness. Two of the six new codes added for Cohort 3, Stress and Partner Positivity, met the  $K=.6$  cutoff in that cohort, also indicating promise as reliable codes. Other codes never reached adequate reliability, including Partner Acceptance-Positive, Coping-Active, and Unique Stressors-Black, while the Racial Identity-Negative code was inconsistent in its reliability across cohorts. Though only coded in Cohort 3, the Interracial Couple Identity, Partner Negativity, and Color Blind codes had poor reliability in that cohort.

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The results of this pilot/exploratory study suggest that a reliable coding system for young, Black-White interracial couples can be successfully developed. Though the overall kappa value of the coding system as a whole decreased from .57 to .41 over the course of 3 cohorts, the kappa values for several individual codes, the many lessons learned, and the final codebook that resulted suggest that future research will yield a reliable, and valuable, coding system. Additionally, the results of this study indicate that the themes identified in the literature as most salient to interracial couples are in fact important, and that high positive regard and shared coping strategies are often present in these couples, corroborating previous research findings.

#### *Implications of Results*

There are several implications of the decrease in the kappa value of the coding system from the beginning to end of this study. The initial reliability of the coding system in Cohort 1 includes the reliability coding of Clip 1. This clip was coded immediately after training was completed, and those coding results were also used as data for this study. The inclusion of the “reliability clip” as data for Cohort 1 may have falsely inflated the overall kappa value for the initial codebook. This seems particularly more likely in light of the fact that the second data clip for Cohort 1, Clip 3, has a poor kappa value of .47. If Cohort 1 only consisted of the reliability data for Clip 3, the average Kappa value across all 3 cohorts would be fairly consistent, rather than decreasing.



However, due to the small  $n$  of this study, and its exploratory nature, Clip 1 was included as data.

Despite the possible inflation of the Cohort 1 kappa value, the decrease in the average reliability of the coding system from the first iteration to the third, and from clip to clip within each cohort, suggests that while the use of multiple iterations in the successive cohort design (SCD) is beneficial when developing a treatment modality (Epstein et al., 2007), it is not necessarily ideal for the development of a coding system. It is possible that the fundamental idea behind successive cohort design, using experience and trial-and-error to inform the creation of the next, improved “version,” is very beneficial in the development of a reliable and relevant coding system in that changes and improvements can be made based on how the previous version succeeded or failed. However, it was the case in this study that these changes, and the short amount of time between iterations, seemed to confuse the coders and thus negatively impact reliability. SCD is likely best used for coding system development if there is a complete change in coders between versions, so there is no contamination from previous codebook knowledge. In this study, however, the limitations of resources and time did not allow for a completely new research team to code each new version of the coding system. Additionally, only at the completion of the study was this necessity apparent.

Consistently decreasing reliability within cohorts is also likely due to the fact that, contrary to Successive Cohort Design, the codebook was often altered *during training*, rather than in between cohorts only, resulting in a tenuous-at-best grasp of the correct code definitions by the coders. Within each cohort, during reliability training, small changes were made to many codes between training meetings, as a result of questions and

issues that arose during the coding of training clips. Therefore, the initial codebook presented to coders at the beginning of training had been edited and expanded by the time reliability clips were coded. More specifically, Codebook 1 had five versions, Codebook 2 had three versions, and Codebook 3 had two versions. This fluidity likely resulted in the lines between codes between hard to discern and remember, and therefore negatively impacted reliability. Even though coders achieved reliability prior to data coding, it is likely that not enough training and practice occurred with the *final* codebook versions before data coding began. Additionally, there were not enough clips or time available to have coders reach reliability on several clips prior to beginning data coding, as suggested by Margolin (1998). Therefore, coders were not able, in the typical short period of approximately one week allotted to training, to solidify the final, “correct” code definitions, particularly given that they typically only had one clip on which to practice. This likely made them susceptible to “drifting” back to using older, more familiar coding definitions, and resulted in a great deal of code confusion. As discussed by Bakeman & Gottman (1997), the only solution to such code confusion is additional training, which was not possible due to the limitations of this study.

Despite the low overall reliability of the coding system as a whole at the end of this study, there are some promising results for individual codes. The Social Support-Positive code had very high inter-rater reliability in all 3 cohorts, indicating that the Social Support-Positive code is operationalized and defined clearly, and can be coded reliably and consistently. Additionally, the Discrimination-Individual and Coping-Passive codes achieved good inter-rater reliability in two of the three cohorts, including the last cohort. These three codes seem to share the fact that they are each

operationalized and defined very thoroughly in the codebook, and also appeared very consistently across clips. The Social Support-Positive and Coping-Passive codes were also the focus of a lot of discussion in weekly training meetings, likely resulting in a greater understanding of how to utilize these codes than for some others. The Stress and Partner Positivity codes, added in Cohort 3, achieved good inter-rater reliability in that cohort, suggesting that these codes are also quite promising. These successful Cohort 3 codes share the fact that they are quite easily identified by specific words and phrases and represent more specific, narrow concepts than some other codes.

Wide variation in the content of each clip seemed to greatly impact the reliability of each code across cohorts. How often a code appeared, and therefore, how often each code appeared within a cohort, varied greatly for some codes (Discrimination-Couple, Racial Identity-Positive and Negative, Partner Acceptance-Positive, Coping-Active), as did the reliability values for those codes. This variability makes it difficult to determine in some cases what led to variations in reliability for codes. For example, did changes to the codebook positively or negatively impact reliability, or did the unique qualities of the clip, like whether or not the couple spoke with vague terms and without specific referents, most impact reliability? At the same time, information about the strength of certain codebook definitions can be inferred from codes that appeared infrequently, but were still coded reliably. For example, the Discrimination-Individual code appeared only 3-4 times in each of the three cohorts in this study, but reliability jumped from zero (no reliability) to .77 (high reliability) from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2, and remained high in Cohort 3. This result suggests that for the Discrimination-Individual code, successive iterations were helpful. The Social Support-Positive code appeared only 4 times in

Cohort 3, but was coded as reliably as in Cohort 1, when it appeared 11 times. These data suggest that the high reliability of these codes was the result of successful codebook operationalization, rather than the idiosyncrasies of each clip.

Based on the frequencies with which various codes appeared in the final data coding of clips, important trends are visible, providing preliminary insight into the information that may be gained from a successful implementation of this coding system. Though some of these codes were not reliably coded, their pattern of appearance fits with clinical observations and prior findings. For example, the Social Support and Racial and Interracial Couple Identity codes have both Positive and Negative modifiers. Notably, the Negative versions of these codes appeared more frequently than the corresponding Positive codes, suggesting that couples participating in this study experience more negative responses to their relationship than positive ones, and have more negative self-identities than positive ones, at least with regard to their race and interracial relationships. These trends correspond with research findings indicating that individuals in Black-White relationships experience high rates of disapproval (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2001, 2002; Luke & Carrington, 2000; Okun, 1996) and feel more negatively about themselves (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2002; Kroeger, 2011; Rosenblatt et al., 1995).

In the one cohort in which they were coded, Stress and Interracial Couple Identity-Negative both appeared very frequently, suggesting that Black-White interracial couples experience a high level of stress around their relationship, and also have feelings of insecurity and a more negative than positive outlook on how being in an interracial couple will impact them. These trends are supported by the literature (Bradbury et al,

2000; Foeman and Nance, 2002; Kroeger, 2011; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004). The higher presence of negative couple and individual identity may also be due to the fact that the couples studied herein were in the early relationship stages, when it is more common to experience doubt and insecurity (Foeman & Nance 2002). There is also some evidence that the Black partner experiences more stressors in the context of the relationship than the White partner does, as suggested by the presence of the Unique Stressors-Black code in cohort 3, while the Unique Stressors-White code was never coded. This supports previous research findings about the unique difficulties that Black partners face (Killian 2001, 2002; Mills et al., 1994).

Regarding how couples handle the stress that accompanies being in an interracial relationship, the couples in this study discussed using passive coping strategies three times more than active coping strategies, while avoidant coping strategies were mentioned only two times across all couples. This trend corresponds with the findings of Foeman and Nance (2002), who state that couples earlier in their relationship tend to use more passive strategies to cope with the possibility of discrimination. There were also higher rates of Partner Acceptance/Agreement-Positive and Partner Positivity than the corresponding Negative codes. This suggests that couples handle the stresses of being in interracial relationships both with passive coping strategies *and* by treating each other with positive support and acceptance, at least in the context of the discrimination and negativity that they face as a couple. These trends are also in line with previous research (Foeman & Nance, 2002) which suggests that as a result of having to develop defensive strategies together in order to maintain their relationship, Black-White couples tend to develop a stronger bond, characterized by acceptance of each other, which serves a

protective role in the face of negative societal views (Jacobson and Christensen, 1996; LaTaillade, in press).

The Social Support-Positive, Social Support-Negative, Racial Identity-Negative, Partner Acceptance-Positive, Coping-Active and Coping-Passive codes appeared in every clip, and the Stress, Interracial Couple Identity-Negative, and Partner Positivity codes appeared in both clips in which they were being coded. This suggests that, in line with previous research (Foeman & Nance 2001, 2002; Jacobsen & Christensen, 1996; Killian 2001, 2002; LaTaillade, in press), the themes represented by these codes are consistently salient in the Black-White interracial couple experience, regardless of age or the length of the relationship. Therefore, it is important to continue working toward reliably coding these concepts with Black-White couples.

It is important to note that the  $n$  for this study is small ( $n=8$ ) so generalizations cannot be made from this data about all Black-White interracial couples, but the trends identified suggest that important information about the nature of young Black-White interracial relationships will ultimately be gained from a codebook like the one developed here. Additionally, the subject pool for this study was limited as the couples that choose to participate are likely to be happier and more well-adjusted than couples who choose not to participate. Also, video and audio recording was used, and this level of intrusiveness led to self-selection for this study of couples who were likely much more comfortable discussing their experiences, both with their partner and with others. Also, as a result of the use of a convenience sample, i.e. college students, this study cannot determine if these results would generalize to less educated Black-White interracial couples.

*Lessons Learned and Next Steps*

Despite holding weekly, often twice weekly, research meetings with coders to reduce the impact of observer drift (Margolin, 1998) the first clip coded of each cohort was the highest, with each subsequent clip decreasing in inter-rater reliability. This result suggests that perhaps training prior to data coding was not adequate in terms of providing enough breadth of examples. This lack of breadth is partly the result of a lack of adequate training materials, such as extra couple clips that were not being used as data. The lack of adequate training is also due to the fact that, due to scheduling constraints, coders were being trained on the coding system as data collection began. Therefore, there was no knowledge yet of how the codes would manifest with real couples. The training periods were also too short. Longer training periods before data coding will aid in decreasing the negative effect that time-since-initial-training had on overall reliability (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997). Increased training time will also likely decrease the number of times that coders forget important aspects of codebook definitions or randomly miss a code. Additionally, in future studies two coders could code each clip together, increasing the chances that all codeable statements would be captured, or the procedure could be changed such that each coder reviewed each clip several times, each time focusing on a specific grouping of codes. These changes might allow for a more focused, methodical approach to the coding, and help to increase coder consistency and inter-rater reliability. Finally, overlap of coders across cohorts and changing the codebook during training periods should be avoided in future studies.

In the development of this coding system thus far, “splitting” of codes has been the most common way that the codebook has been altered. After the initial codebook was

developed, it became clear that many different themes could potentially be coded as more than one code. Additionally, as coding began, several different ideas were revealed to be unintentionally “lumped” together under one broad code. Rather than combine, or “lump” potentially overlapping codes at this early stage of coding system development, codes were “split” into a larger number of explicitly distinct codes with each successive cohort. According to Bakeman and Gottman (1997) initially coding at a more detailed level increases the probability of collecting more reliable data. This splitting also allows for more complete information about what specific themes are most salient, and also allows for a clearer sense of what codes are well on the way to being consistent and reliable. This information is valuable in determining what codes should ultimately comprise the final coding system, which codes should not be included, and which might be best combined (“lumped”) with another code after the fact. By coding at a more molecular level initially, any “lumping” that occurs later is more empirically guided (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997).

Based on which clips had better inter-rater reliability, it seems likely that the task prompt given to participating couples needs to be altered. The clips that achieved highest reliability in this study were characterized by couples that spoke uninterrupted for long spans, discussed very specific instances of suspected discrimination or non-acceptance of their relationship, discussed multiple examples, and were more specific in their word choice, relying less on words like “it” and “that” (making less vague references) than other couples. In order to increase the likelihood that data clips collected in subsequent studies more closely resemble these ideal clips, it will likely be helpful to provide couples with more time to think of instances of discrimination (couples were given only



approximately 5 minutes in this study), more thoroughly confirm that the couple has at least 2-3 instances to discuss, and emphasize in the instructions that couples speak in detail about their *feelings, opinions, reactions* and *responses* to said instances. Asking couples to specifically prompt each other to speak on these four areas would likely increase the likelihood that each partner will stay on task and fully discuss their experience (Margolin, 1998), thereby providing better content to aid in coding system development.

### *Directions for Future Research*

This study focuses only on Black-White heterosexual couples, thereby limiting the ability to generalize data obtained from this coding system to interracial couples with other racial compositions, and to homogeneous couples of any race. It is necessary that observational coding systems specific to other inter-racial groups are developed as well, so that the valuable information that will ultimately be gained from the creation and implementation of this coding system can also be collected for other groups. This will allow for comparisons to determine which issues are similar and different across different constellations of interracial couples.

Future development of the coding system described here will be greatly aided by having a larger sample size. This will aid codebook development as there will be a larger variety of examples of how codes can manifest in couples' discussions, which will help the training process to be more exhaustive, thereby increasing inter-rater reliability (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997). A larger sample size will also allow for the possibility that future coding data can be analyzed and correlations detected between the ways that couples discuss race in the context of their relationship and their satisfaction as a couple

and relationship quality, if adequate power to detect significant effects (Cohen, 1992) is reached.

The immediate next step in the development of this coding system should be to apply Codebook 3, the final codebook of this study, to all clips already gathered for this study, or to apply Codebook 3 to a new group of clips. Codebook 3 should be applied to a larger number of clips, and be implemented by newly trained coders, in order to get a clearer sense of how reliable the coding system is as a whole, without previous coder knowledge impacting the results. Additionally, the codebook definitions are clearest in this final codebook, and so it is important to more clearly determine what areas are still in need of improvement. As there are already several codes that are promising in terms of their reliability, it is also recommended that those codes (Social Support-Positive, Discrimination-Individual, Coping-Passive, Stress, and Partner Positivity) be considered as a potential, smaller coding system when newly applied in the next round of coding. Even if only those five codes are applied to video clips, important information can surely be gained about how those five themes present in the lives of interracial couples, and how those themes interact with and influence couples' relationship quality.

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## APPENDIX A

### Representative Codebooks

#### **Codebook 1-Final**

##### **Coding Steps:**

1. Review code book for 10 minutes before starting the coding process.
2. Watch the entire clip once without coding it.
3. During and after watching the clip, write a general summary of the conversation and topics raised on the Comment Sheet.
4. Complete the rest of the comment sheet (see notes below on how to do this).
5. Code each specific utterance on the tape that pertains to the codes in this code book, and the time that it occurs.

##### **CODING COMMENT SHEET:**

- Include on this sheet the conversation topic and a general summary of the conversation.
- Include significant content (what were the main topics discussed?)
- Significant process information, such as frequency, intensity or duration of events, atmosphere, energy, and style of interactions.
- Racial/cultural or other statements that seem relevant/important but do not fit in any code categories
- Include statements that you're not sure about – "Don't Know" (DK) re:
  - Unclear statements that may be meaningful, where there is not enough information to code it in a particular way
  - Indecipherable speech that could be meaningful (put time that it occurs too)
- Important contexts raised in the discussion, such as socioeconomic status (SES), military or other occupations, school experiences, racial groups involved, or that they grew up with, etc.
- Specify if the couple was on task: did they discuss specific incidents in their lives or general phenomena and "the way things are"?

**Basic Unit of Code (One Speaking Turn):** Each time a person's speech or behavior exhibits one of the phenomena of interest in this codebook, it must be coded **once for each speaking turn**. Thus, any observable speech or behavior can represent the basic unit of code, and any speaker can receive multiple codes during one talking turn, as long as it is a different code. Conversely, the speaker can also receive no codes during a talking turn.

### Frequency, Intensity, and Duration (FID) of codes:

- **Frequency/Repetition:**

REPETITION IN THE SAME SPEAKING TURN: Give the same [micro] code only once in the same speaking turn, regardless of whether different situations or examples are given under the same code.

REPETITION OF A CODE OR PHRASE IN A DIFFERENT SPEAKING TURN:

**CODE IT AGAIN!**

- New Speaking Turn = Even if the listener says something minor like “uh-huh”, but seems to have heard and paid attention, and the confider’s speech seems affected by the listener’s attention.
  - A partner’s facilitative head nod or interjected “uh-huh”/minor comment DOES NOT constitute a different speaking unless the comment serves to interrupt the speaker’s monologue.
- **Intensity:** Negative intensity is captured with the stress/confusion code. Use this code if the speaker states or you observe his/her feelings of frustration, exasperation, anger, or visible upset.
  - **Duration:** If a speaking turn focuses on the same situation/viewpoint for over 30 seconds, do not recode it (see above) but put a star/asterisk by the code (\*) to denote the excessive length of the utterance.

### Uncertainty in coding:

When you are [still] uncertain about whether or not an utterance deserves a code, one method that may help is to **restate the utterance** in such a way that the restatement would definitely get the code. Then compare the difference between the restatement and the actual utterance to see if the actual utterance truly conveys the same meaning.

Another way to deal with uncertainty is to be **conservative**. If unsure of the speaker’s intent, and **you can think of two or more conflicting ways a statement can be read** (i.e. it could mean this or that but not both), then don’t code it. Instead write it down, along with the reason why it shouldn’t be coded (to help discussion if the codes conflict), and put it in parentheses. Also, note the GIST of the statement, which takes precedence over the specific words.

### Conservative coding and references/specifiers:

There will be many times where the speaker will refer to something and not be clear about the details. Overall, if something is unclear or there is not enough information to code it in a particular way, don’t code it, but **note the issue on the Comment Sheet**.

### Vagueness:

If someone talks about something vaguely, but we learn later on in the clip that they were referring to something codeable, DO NOT go back and code the vague references prior to that point. DO code future vague references AFTER it is clear that what’s being referenced is codeable, and it is a clear reference. If it is too vague, and not clear what’s being referenced, don’t code it.

**DON’T forget that you should ALWAYS comment on uncertainties in coding on the coding sheet, and that you should bring those examples of uncertainties, classic examples, and lower bound examples to the coding meetings for discussion.** This will ensure that we stay consistent in coding, and that good examples become incorporated into the code book.

**REDIRECTIONS to the topic ARE NOT CODED.** For example, “I think you are supposed to be telling me some more about how you deal with how society stereotypes interracial couples.” **HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS ARE NOT CODED** (e.g. “what if”, “scenario” or other statements indicating that they clearly are not discussing events that have actually happened). Conversely, **RESPONSES TO HYPOTHETICALS ARE CODED** because they show the speaker’s beliefs/actions. (Example: “I would tell them the truth, set them straight” –said in response to a hypothetical scenario in which someone applied a stereotype to the speaker. Code as Active Coping)

### CODES

**Discrimination (Codes: Dis-I; Dis-C; add (f) for friend/family and (s) for strangers)—**

The discrimination code is used to capture statements about experiencing discrimination as a result of the interracial relationship. Code discrimination that the couple experiences or that the individual experiences, and indicate if the discrimination came from a stranger or someone they know.

Presence of the discrimination themes indicated by...

- statements about experiencing discriminatory ACTIONS, either obvious or suspected, because of their relationship
- Noticing being stared at, hearing derogatory comments, feeling unwelcome (due to behavior)
- Feeling that someone has made an ambiguously negative comment about their relationship
- Belief that they have received subpar service because of their relationship
- Being questioned about their membership in their group

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “People always stare at us when we walk through that neighborhood.”  
[Dis-C(s)]

LOWER BOUND:

NOT THE CODE: “My mom keeps trying to set me up with someone else.” (SS-)—not specific enough for Dis code.

**Social Support (Code: SS+; SS-) (for the *relationship* specifically)-**

This code will capture all mentions of social support by the couple. Both presence and absence of social support will be coded. Presence of support will be coded **SS+**; Lack of support will be coded **SS-**

Presence of social support themes indicated by...

- Statements about a reduction in the presence of friends or family in their lives because of their relationship
- Mention of the loss of a relationship, or strain/less closeness of a relationship with friend/family
- Statements about missing a relationship they once had, that they feel has faded because of their relationship
- Statements about receiving explicit support of the relationship
- Statements about receiving explicit criticism/lack of support of the relationship

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "They just think it's wrong." (SS-)  
 "Linda doesn't seem to care at all." (SS+)  
 "My dad keeps asking me what I'm doing 'skiing the slopes'." (SS-)

LOWER BOUND: "My parents are just weird about it, you can tell they're uncomfortable." (SS-)  
 NOT THE CODE:

**Isolation (Code: Iso)—**

This code will capture all mentions of feeling distant and separate from their peers, family, or society *in general*. This code does not necessarily include *restricting* behavior, unless it leads to isolation. This code is meant to capture more general feelings of isolation, which are not captured under the Social Support code.

Presence of Isolation themes indicated by...

- Statements about feeling isolated from the world/peers/neighborhood
- Statements of not feeling "connected"
- Actively choosing to avoid certain activities to avoid discrimination (possibly positive)—  
MAYBE THIS IS JUST COPING??
- Complaints about not having an adequate social life
- Statements of more general distance from/lack of connection with parents/friends, etc.

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "We never go out anymore" (and is related to the relationship)  
 "I don't feel like I can talk to anyone about my life."

LOWER BOUND: "I'm not very close to my parents."

NOT THE CODE:

**Partner Acceptance (Code: PA+ or PA-)—**

This code will capture all mentions by either partner that suggest that they are accepting of/empathetic toward the other partner's perspective or experience, or any statements suggesting that they are *not* accepting/empathetic. Acceptance (or lack) does not have to be specific to race-related issues, but does not include arguing back and forth, unless it is specific to racial concerns. **ALSO INCLUDES PERCEPTIONS FROM EITHER PARTNER THAT THE *OTHER* IS NOT ACCEPTING.** This code also includes general positive sentiments about the partner.

Presence of Partner Acceptance indicated by...

- Statements of understanding the partner's experience/point of view
- Accepting the partner's belief that discrimination has occurred (even if they hadn't noticed it)
- Disagreeing with the partner about the presence of racial issues (lack)
- Attempting to convince the partner that discrimination has *not* occurred (Lack)
- Showing empathy or lack of empathy/sensitivity toward the partner's experience of racism or difficulty dealing with racial issues
- Showing compassion/empathy toward the other partner
- Statements of admiration or praise for the partner
- "Chiming in"/providing an additional example when the partner is describing an event— chiming in represents agreement with the partner about the significance/meaning of an incident

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "I understand how hard it is sometimes for you." (PA+)  
 "Well, isn't it possible that you were just seeing things?" (PA-)  
 "You're an amazing man." (PA+)

LOWER BOUND: "You wouldn't understand." (PA-)  
 "You expect me not to talk to you about this?" (PA-)

NOT THE CODE: "Why should we care?" (not the code b/c it's a bit vague, could be coping, could be them trying to help the partner not to feel upset)

"Do we think this is the right way to solve the problem?" (too vague, not sure if they agree or disagree)

**Racial Identity Concerns/Self-Esteem issues (Code: RI+; RI-)**

This code will capture mentions from either partner of feeling negatively about themselves or insecure regarding their racial identity/place in their own ethnic group. This code also captures indications of low self-esteem related to race, insecurity related to race or being in an interracial relationship/the impact it may have. Mentions of positive feelings about racial identity and positive self-esteem are also coded here (as +). Presence of Racial identity/Self-esteem related themes indicated by...

- Statements about questioning themselves about their choice to be in an interracial relationship
- feeling like unacceptable members of their own groups
- feeling unattractive to their group
- general statements of feeling rejected by their group
- statements of insecurity about their place in their own ethnic group
- statements of confidence in their racial identity
- statements of positive self-esteem
- statements of insecurity about how being in an interracial couple make impact their lives
- statements of concern/worry about how pp will react to the interracial relationship

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “Trying to date (same race) men/women, I feel like a loser....like I’m not good enough.” (RI-)  
 “I’m proud that I can look across racial lines, it doesn’t change who I am.” (RI +)

LOWER BOUND: “Did you tell them that I’m White”? (RI-)  
 “I need you to tell me that it’s okay to do this [date interracially].” (RI-)

NOT THE CODE:

**Increased Racial Awareness (Code: IncRA-B; IncRA-W)**

This code will capture instances of the Black or White partner feeling more aware of the impact of race in their daily lives, but without a feeling of not wanting the new awareness and without an accompanying feeling of stress or negativity. (Black partner=IncRA-B; White partner = IncRA-W)

Presence of this theme indicated by...

- Statements about a new/growing awareness of how race can impact treatment
- Statements about realizing that Blacks/Whites are treated differently

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “I had never noticed before how people aren’t comfortable with interracial couples.”

“I had never realized how differently Blacks are treated compared to Whites.”

LOWER BOUND: “Is this like a ‘Black tax’ thing?”

NOT THE CODE:

**Unique Stressors--Black partner (Code: US-B)**

This code will capture instances of the Black partner reporting the presence of stresses unique to the Black partner.

The presence of these stressors will be indicated by...

- Statements about feeling singularly concerned about the role of race in the relationship
- Statements of noticing discrimination but being reluctant to share with the partner
- Statements about being initially (or currently) more cautious about the relationship
- Statements of experiencing guilt about exposing the White partner to the burden of race
- Statements of reluctance to share experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and subsequent anxiety with the White partner

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “I feel like I can’t tell you about this, because you’d rather not know.”

LOWER BOUND: “You don’t have to talk about it, no one reminds *you* every day that you’re White.”

NON-EXAMPLES:



**Unique Stressors--White partner (Code: US-W)**

- Statements about feeling “sick” of having to hear about how race matters
- Feeling burdened by their increased awareness of the significance of race in the US
- Feeling discomfort/guilt about realizing the significance of being White and the privilege that can result

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “It makes me uncomfortable, hearing how differently you’re treated.”

LOWER BOUND: “I want a night off, I’m tired of hearing about how hard it is for you.”

(US-W AND PA-)

NON-EXAMPLES:

**Coping Strategies (Code: Cope-A; Cope-P; Cope-Av)**

This code will capture instances of the coping strategies that the couple uses to cope with discrimination and lack of acceptance, or to cope with the various other stressors that being in an interracial relationship can bring. This code will capture active coping strategies (Cope-A), passive strategies (Cope-P), and avoidant strategies (Cope-Av)

Presence of this theme indicated by:

- Statements of proactive, reactive, or avoidant coping strategies (active/passive/avoidant)
- Overt statements of an active strategy the couple uses to navigate society
- Statements about negotiating interactions with others carefully to avoid being ostracized
- Statements about trying to manage others’ view of their decision (trying to explain away the role of race, thinking about how to tell others that they are in an interracial relationship)
- Statements that help the person to establish a frame of mind that serves a protective function

**ACTIVE COPING = strategies that focus on the source of stress and reactions geared towards addressing it. The theme here is addressing the problem.**

This includes:

- problem solving
- cognitive decision making (strategizing and planning)
- gathering information
- religious or spiritual coping
- seeking social support (seeking tangible help or understanding [understanding is lower bound], NOT venting)
- trying to understand the problem differently so as to address it
- correcting individuals who perpetuate the problem
- making a plan of action and following it. —suggesting an active plan of action
- mention of having explicit discussions together *about* the problem (i.e. racial issues) in the past
- retaliation

EXAMPLES:

CLASSIC:

“When people look at us like we’re weird, I just stare back at them.”

“You could have said/done...”; “Did you talk to them about the (racial) problem?”

“I think it’s best to set a good example, so people can’t say anything bad about us.”

LOWER BOUND:

“I try to treat myself with respect (compensatory action related to the problem of negative media images of Black women).”

“I would leave an organization like that”

NON-EXAMPLE: “I want to end the problem ASAP” (no action, so could be wishful thinking)

**ACCOMMODATIVE / PASSIVE COPING = strategies that accommodate to the problem.**

This includes:

- cognitive restructuring (positive thinking or positive reinterpretation that is not geared towards addressing the problem; rationalizing behavior)
- acceptance      -trying to feel better      -venting      -distracting one's self
- emotional, cognitive, or behavioral disengagement      -self-encouragement
- ignoring, enduring, denial      -wishful thinking      -isolating
- acknowledging that something should/can be done without taking personal responsibility for addressing it.
- keeping the relationship a secret      -making a plan of action that is passive in nature/circumvents

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:      "Just ignore it."  
                   "I'm dealing with it by just trying to hang in there."  
                   "We just don't tell them about us."

LOWER BOUND:      "I don't think it will matter to them."  
                               "Maybe it's not really so bad."

NON-EXAMPLES:      "There's nothing that can be done." (helpless)

**AVOIDANT/HELPLESS COPING = the person is immobilized or otherwise limits his/her life because of the problem.**

This includes:

- giving up      -being unable to think, move, or act      -avoiding
- saying that there's nothing that one can do, or saying that there's something that they want to do but can't.
- restricting behavior

Note: Code statements of direct avoidance, such as going out of one's way to avoid or stopping an activity because of the problem. Do not include things that *may* serve the function of avoidance (too much inference)

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:      "There's nothing that we can do."      "I don't go to that store anymore."  
                   "I just walk out of the room whenever my racist boss walks in."

LOWER BOUND:      "I couldn't bring myself to talk to him."

"I'm about to explode (gets passive code for venting) and there's nothing I can do (also gets helpless code)"

"I still want to connect with them, but at this point, it's not gonna happen."

NON-EXAMPLE:      "So what can you do?" (would need more clarity/context to determine if they are giving up or just being rhetorical)

## **Codebook 2-Final**

### **Coding Steps:**

1. Review code book for 10 minutes before starting the coding process.
2. Watch the entire clip once without coding it.
3. *Code the clip using the transcript (Observational Coding Sheet) only--this is to avoid inferring too much into the words*
4. *Watch one more time after coding is finished, not to change any codes, but to add codes if you've missed something*
5. During and after watching the clip, write a general summary of the conversation and topics raised on the Comment Sheet.
6. Complete the rest of the comment sheet (see notes below on how to do this).

### **Observational Coding Sheet – Instructions**

- a. The coding sheet will already have a transcription of the clip entered in, designating speaking turns. As you watch the clip the 2<sup>nd</sup> time (after doing your initial coding), code speaking turns that have no special codes as neutral (X)
- b. If it makes it easier, go through the transcript several times, coding one or a pair of codes at a time.

### **CODING COMMENT SHEET:**

- Include on this sheet the conversation topic and a general summary of the conversation.
- Include significant content (what were the main topics discussed?)
- Significant process information, such as frequency, intensity or duration of events, atmosphere, energy, and style of interactions.
- Racial/cultural or other statements that seem relevant/important but do not fit in any code categories
- Include statements that you're not sure about – “Don't Know” (DK) re:
  - Unclear statements that may be meaningful, where there is not enough information to code it in a particular way
  - Indecipherable speech that could be meaningful (put time that it occurs too)
- Important contexts raised in the discussion, such as socioeconomic status (SES), military or other occupations, school experiences, racial groups involved, or that they grew up with, etc.
- Specify if the couple was on task: did they discuss specific incidents in their lives or general phenomena and “the way things are”?

**Basic Unit of Code (One Speaking Turn):** Each time a person's speech or behavior exhibits one of the phenomena of interest in this codebook, it must be coded **once for each speaking turn**. Thus, any observable speech or behavior can represent the basic unit of code, and any speaker can receive multiple codes during one talking turn, as long as it is a different code. Conversely, the speaker can also receive no codes during a talking turn.

### Frequency, Intensity, and Duration (FID) of codes:

- **Frequency/Repetition:**

REPETITION IN THE SAME SPEAKING TURN: Give the same [micro] code only once in the same speaking turn, regardless of whether different situations or examples are given under the same code.

REPETITION OF A CODE OR PHRASE IN A DIFFERENT SPEAKING TURN:

**CODE IT AGAIN!**

- New Speaking Turn = Even if the listener says something minor like “uh-huh”, but seems to have heard and paid attention, and the confider’s speech seems affected by the listener’s attention.
- A partner’s facilitative head nod or interjected “uh-huh”/minor comment DOES NOT constitute a different speaking unless the comment serves to interrupt the speaker’s monologue.

### Uncertainty in coding:

When you are [still] uncertain about whether or not an utterance deserves a code, one method that may help is to **restate the utterance** in such a way that the restatement would definitely get the code. Then compare the difference between the restatement and the actual utterance to see if the actual utterance truly conveys the same meaning. For example...(we still need to put an example here).

Another way to deal with uncertainty is to be **conservative**. If unsure of the speaker’s intent, and **you can think of two or more conflicting ways a statement can be read** (i.e. it could mean this or that but not both), then don’t code it. *Instead, note (in parentheses) on the coding sheet that a particular utterance was confusing and was difficult to code/not code.*

Also, note the GIST of the statement, which takes precedence over the specific words.

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There will be many times where the speaker will refer to something and not be clear about the details. Overall, if something is unclear or there is not enough information to code it in a particular way, don’t code it, but **note the issue in parentheses next to the dialog.**

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If someone talks about something vaguely, but we learn later on in the clip that they were referring to something codeable, DO NOT go back and code the vague references prior to that point. DO code future vague references AFTER it is clear that what’s being referenced is codeable, and it is a clear reference. If it is too vague, and not clear what’s being referenced, don’t code it.

**DON’T forget that you should ALWAYS comment on uncertainties in coding on the coding sheet, and that you should bring those examples of uncertainties, classic examples, and lower bound examples to the coding meetings for discussion.** This will ensure that we stay consistent in coding, and that good examples become incorporated into the code book.

**REDIRECTIONS to the topic ARE NOT CODED.** For example, “I think you are supposed to be telling me some more about how you deal with how society stereotypes interracial couples.”

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**FINISHING EACH OTHERS’ SENTENCES:**

If one partner finishes the other partner’s sentence, and the full sentence warrants a code, **ONLY CODE IT ONCE THE SENTENCE HAS BEEN COMPLETED! DO NOT CODE THE FIRST HALF OF THE SENTENCE IF IT IS NOT YET CODABLE.**

Ex: Partner 1- “The ability to be accepted by our friends and family---” (NO CODE YET!!)  
 Partner 2- “—is all that really matters.” (NOW CODE JUST THIS PART AS COPE-P!)

## CODES

### **Discrimination (Codes: Dis-I; Dis-C)—**

The discrimination code is used to capture statements about **experiencing discrimination as a result of the interracial relationship**.

If discrimination is **by a friend/family member/someone they know**, code both **Dis and SS-**.

Distinguish between discrimination that the couple experiences (C) and that the individual experiences (I). If *one* member of the couple experiences discrimination even while the other member is present, it is 'I'. If both members of the couple are present and feel discriminated against, it is 'C'.

Presence of the discrimination themes indicated by...

- statements about experiencing discriminatory **ACTIONS**, either obvious or suspected, because of the difference in race in the relationship
- Noticing **being stared at**, hearing derogatory comments, feeling unwelcome (**due to behavior**)
- Feeling that someone has made a negative comment about their relationship (Dis-C) or about one individual in the couple because of that person's skin color (Dis-I)
- Belief that they have received subpar service because of their relationship (Dis-C)
- Being questioned about their membership in their group (Dis-I)

### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "People always stare at us when we walk through that neighborhood."  
[Dis-C]  
"XXX completely ignore me when we go to your parent's house"  
(Dis-I; SS-)

LOWER BOUND: "Your mother wouldn't even look at me. (Dis-I and SS-)

NOT THE CODE: "When my grandmother met you, she was pretty stand-offish."  
( SS- only)  
  
"It [neg. treatment by a family member] made me feel really uncomfortable." (this is someone discussing their feeling *about* discrimination, but this statement is not about the discriminatory act directly, so not **Dis** code)

"My mom keeps trying to set me up with someone else." (SS-)—not specific enough for Dis code.

"There's a stigma about White women dating Black men."  
NO CODE because it's a statement of fact. No active discriminatory act is being discussed here. If the speaker goes on to say, "...and xxx clearly hates me because I'm with you" then Dis-I and SS- would be coded.

**Social Support (Code: SS+; SS-) (about interracial dating/relationships specifically)-**

This code will capture all mentions of social support by the couple. Both presence and absence of social support will be coded. Presence of support will be coded **SS+**; Lack of support will be coded **SS-**

**NOTE: If they state as fact that friends/family disapprove, even with no proof, consider it fact and code as SS- (rather than as RI-)**

**Specific** negative action by a stranger is *never* coded as SS-, while negative action from friend/family is *always* SS- (and could also be Dis). *HOWEVER...*

This code is also used for more general statements about “people’s” discomfort or general societal disapproval (or approval) of interracial relationships that are not specific acts of discrimination-- this kind of SS may include strangers.

Vague references to SS are not coded (ex: “It’ll just take time for them to accept us” *implies* that someone doesn’t accept, but it is not actually stated, so no code)

Presence of social support themes indicated by...

- Statements about a reduction in the presence of friends or family in their lives because of their relationship
- Hearing statements that are ambiguously disapproving, but are believed to be disapproving by the couple
- Statements of vague acceptance by others (??)
- Statements about receiving/feeling subtle, implicit acceptance OR disapproval
- Mention of the loss of a relationship, or strain/less closeness of a relationship with friend/family
- Statements about missing a relationship they once had, that they feel has faded because of their relationship
- Statements about receiving explicit support of the relationship
- Statements about receiving explicit criticism/lack of support of the relationship

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “They just think it’s wrong.” (SS-)  
 “Linda doesn’t seem to care at all.” (SS+)  
 “My dad keeps asking me what I’m doing ‘skiing the slopes’.” (SS-)  
 “My family doesn’t feel weird about it.” (SS+)

LOWER BOUND: “My parents are just weird about it, you can tell they’re uncomfortable.” (SS-)  
 “She doesn’t care about it (racial difference) anymore.” (SS+)  
 “People just don’t get it, they’re so uncomfortable with the idea of going outside your race.” (SS-)  
 “We saw that kind of nonacceptance over and over” (SS-)



Social Support, “Not the Code” examples, cont...

NOT THE CODE: “She told me that there’s a stigma that White women are taking Black men away from Black women.” This is a statement of fact, not specific enough to be coded as SS- or Dis

“I don’t know how my family would feel about it.” This is not an assumption either way, just statement of fact (i.e. lack of knowledge).

“Interracial dating is just culturally shocking to them.” Not the code because it being *shocking* does not necessarily mean that they disapprove.

**Isolation (Code: Iso)—**

This code will capture all mentions of feeling distant and separate from their peers, family, or society *in general*. **This code can capture feelings of distance and separation from others that is not specifically linked to being in an interracial relationship.** This code does not necessarily include *restricting* behavior, unless it leads to isolation. This code is meant to capture more general feelings of isolation, which are not captured under the Social Support code. This code also captures actions or ideas that keep the couple overly isolated or separated from society.

**This code is distinguished from Coping-Av in that *anticipatory avoidance, avoiding potential/expected discrimination that is not actually known or guaranteed to occur*, is coded here. Not all Isolation codes will be Coping-Av codes.**

Presence of Isolation themes indicated by...

- Statements about feeling isolated from the world/peers/neighborhood
- Statements of not feeling “connected” in general
- Actively choosing to avoid certain activities to avoid potential or anticipated discrimination (statements of this kind will most likely receive both Iso and Coping-Av codes)
- Complaints about not having an adequate social life
- Statements of more general distance from/lack of connection with parents/friends, etc.

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “I don’t know how that new place will be, let’s just go to our usual spot.”  
 “I don’t feel like I can talk to anyone about my life.”

LOWER BOUND: “I’m not very close to my parents.”

“I’d love for my parents to actually be involved in my life.” (gist=they are not=Isolation)

NOT THE CODE: “It makes me just want to stay home with you.” (This is not quite Iso B/c they might still go!)

**Partner Acceptance (Code: PA+ or PA-)—**

This code will capture all utterance by either partner that suggests that they are accepting of/empathetic toward the other partner's **perspective or experience**, or any statements suggesting that they are *not* accepting/empathetic.

Acceptance (or lack) does *not* have to be specific to race-related issues, but does not include arguing back and forth, unless it is specific to racial concerns. ALSO INCLUDES PERCEPTIONS FROM EITHER PARTNER THAT THE OTHER IS NOT ACCEPTING. *This code also includes general positive sentiments about the partner.*

This code does *not* include one partner restating after the other what they (as a couple) think about/have done in their experience. These instances call for re-coding of 'the thought' or statement of action itself. (see Couple 003, lines 12-13 for example)

NOTE: This code does *not* include correcting the other partner's misinformation or misunderstanding of what one partner is saying.

This code does *not* include "parroting" of the other partner, OR continuing to 'agree' with a partner's agreement with the speaker. (i.e. cannot "partner agree" with yourself)

Presence of Partner Acceptance indicated by...

- Statements of understanding OR disagreeing with the partner's experience/point of view
- Statements of trying to help the partner to better understand race-related issues
- Accepting the partner's belief that discrimination has occurred (even if they hadn't noticed it)
- Disagreeing with the partner about the presence of racial issues (lack) (less aggressive disagreement is still disagreement, i.e. "Maybe, but I don't think so")
- Attempting to convince the partner that discrimination has *not* occurred (Lack)
- Showing empathy or lack of empathy/sensitivity toward the partner's experience of racism or difficulty dealing with racial issues
- Showing compassion/empathy toward the other partner
- Statements of admiration or praise for the partner; Statements of trusting or "backing" their partner, about *any* issue (does not need to be race related)
- "Chiming in"/providing an additional example or additional details when the partner is describing an event--chiming in represents agreement with the partner about the significance/meaning of an incident

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "I understand how hard it is sometimes for you." (PA+)  
 "Well, isn't it possible that you were just seeing things?" (PA-)  
 "You're an amazing man." (PA+)

Partner Acceptance examples, cont.....

LOWER BOUND: "Exactly" (PA+)

"You wouldn't understand." (PA-)

"You expect me not to talk to you about this?" (PA-)—*perceived* lack of acceptance

"Maybe, but I don't think she feels that way about you anymore." (PA-)

"Since you want to know, I'll ask her for our benefit." (PA+)

"No, I think it was \_\_\_\_\_" (PA-)

NOT THE CODE: "Why should we care?" (not the code b/c it's a bit vague, could be coping, could be them trying to help the partner not to feel upset)

"Yeah"

"Do we think this is the right way to solve the problem?" (too vague, not sure if they agree or disagree)

"Yeah, our friends." (Parroting)

### **Racial Identity/Self-Esteem (Code: RI+; RI-)**

This code will capture explicit mentions from either partner of feeling negatively or positively about themselves or secure/insecure regarding their racial identity/place in their own ethnic group. This code also captures indications of low/high self-esteem related to race, security/insecurity related to their race or security/insecurity about being in an interracial relationship or the potential impact the relationship may have. Mentions of positive feelings about racial identity and positive self-esteem are also coded here (as +).

Presence of Racial identity/Self-esteem related themes indicated by...

- Statements about questioning themselves OR NOT about their choice to be in an interracial relationship
- Statements of confidence in their decision to be in an interracial relationship
- feeling like unacceptable members of their own groups
- feeling unattractive to their group
- general statements of feeling rejected by their group
- statements of security/ insecurity about their place in their own ethnic group
- statements of confidence in their racial identity
- statements of positive self-esteem
- statements of security/insecurity about how being in an interracial couple make impact their lives
- statements of concern/worry OR lack concern or worry about how pp will react to the interracial relationship

### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "Trying to date (same race) men/women, I feel like a loser....like I'm not good enough." (RI-)  
 "I'm proud that I can look across racial lines, it doesn't change who I am." (RI +)  
 "Who cares what they think? It's not about them." (RI+ AND Cope-p)

LOWER BOUND: "I don't care what everybody else thinks about us" (RI+ AND cope-p)  
 "Ultimately, it just comes down to what we want to do." (secure in their decision)  
 "Did you tell them that I'm White"? (RI-)  
 "I need you to tell me that it's okay to do this [date interracialy]." (RI-)

### **NOT THE CODE:**

"It's not our problem." "We're over it."  
 "You're nice, that's all that should matter."  
 ((None of the above are the code because these statements are open to interpretation. It is not clear if these statements imply confidence in their relationship choice. All ARE cope-p))

**Increased Racial Awareness (Code: IncRA-B; IncRA-W)**

This code will capture instances of the Black or White partner feeling more aware of the impact of race in their daily lives, but *without* a feeling of not wanting the new awareness and *without* an accompanying feeling of stress or negativity. (Black partner=IncRA-B; White partner = IncRA-W)

Presence of this theme indicated by...

- Statements about a new/growing awareness of how race can impact treatment
- Statements about realizing that Blacks/Whites are treated differently
- Expressions of amazement, acceptance of their newly gained understanding

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:            “I had never noticed before how people aren’t comfortable with interracial couples.”  
                           “I had never realized how differently Blacks are treated compared to Whites.”

LOWER BOUND:        “Is this like a ‘Black tax’ thing?”

NOT THE CODE:        “I can’t believe people would actually say that [discriminating thing] to you! (not the code if it is unclear whether the disbelief is about how rude people can be, or about the specific racial component)

### **Unique Stressors--Black partner (Code: US-B)**

This code will capture instances of the Black partner reporting the presence of stresses unique to the Black partner.

The presence of these stressors will be indicated by...

- Statements about feeling singularly concerned about the role of race in the relationship
- Statements of feeling alone in their experience because of their race
- Statements of noticing discrimination but being reluctant to share with the partner
- Statements about being initially (or currently) more cautious about the relationship
- Statements of experiencing guilt about exposing the White partner to the burden of race
- Statements of reluctance to share experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and subsequent anxiety with the White partner

#### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "I feel like I can't tell you about this, because you'd rather not know."

LOWER BOUND: "You don't have to talk about it, no one reminds *you* every day that you're White."  
 "You wouldn't understand." (implying that the White partner cannot relate due to racial difference)

NON-EXAMPLES:

### **Unique Stressors--White partner (Code: US-W)**

This code is meant to capture the negative valence that might be present in some statements that might otherwise be considered for the Increased Racial Awareness code. This code is applicable only when stress seems to be present.

- Statements about feeling "sick" of having to hear about how race matters
- Feeling burdened by their increased awareness of the significance of race in the US
- Feeling discomfort/guilt about realizing the significance of being White and the privilege that can result

#### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "It makes me uncomfortable, hearing how differently you're treated."

LOWER BOUND: "I want a night off, I'm tired of hearing about how hard it is for you."  
**(US-W AND PA-)**

NON-EXAMPLES:

### **Coping Strategies (Code: Cope-A; Cope-P; Cope-Av)**

This code will capture instances of the coping strategies that the couple uses to cope with KNOWN discrimination and lack of acceptance, or to cope with the various other stressors that being in an interracial relationship can bring. This code will capture active coping strategies (Cope-A), passive strategies (Cope-P), and avoidant strategies (Cope-Av)

Presence of this theme indicated by (among other things):

- Statements of proactive, reactive, or avoidant coping strategies (active/passive/avoidant) used to deal with KNOWN problems
- Overt statements of an active strategy the couple uses to navigate society
- Statements about negotiating interactions with others carefully to avoid being ostracized
- Statements about trying to manage others' view of their decision (trying to explain away the role of race, thinking about how to tell others that they are in an interracial relationship)
- Statements that help the person to establish a frame of mind that serves a protective function



**ACTIVE COPING = strategies that focus on the source of stress and reactions geared towards addressing it. The theme here is addressing the KNOWN problem.**

**Note: Statements about instances of using active coping strategies in the past to deal with known problems are coded.**

This includes:

- the act of problem solving together, even if no resolution is reached, or if the resulting solution is to “do nothing” or use a passive coping strategy
- cognitive decision making (strategizing and planning)
- gathering information
- religious or spiritual coping
- seeking social support (seeking tangible help or understanding; this does NOT include venting)
- trying to understand the problem differently so as to address it
- correcting individuals who perpetuate the problem
- making a plan of action and following it
- *suggesting* an active OR PASSIVE plan of action
- mention of having explicit discussions together *about* the problem (i.e. racial issues) in the past
- retaliation

Note: if the plan of action that they decide upon is passive, then the *discussion* about figuring out what to do (if this discussion occurred) is coded active, but any statements about the passive strategies they then use is coded as passive.

Note: This code does NOT include the couple trying to gain more understanding/information from each other

EXAMPLES:

CLASSIC:

“When people look at us like we’re weird, I just stare back at them.”

“You could have said/done...”; “Did you talk to them about the (racial) problem?”

“I think it’s best to set a good example, so people can’t say anything bad about us.”

“I tried once to tell my parents the truth and talk about their disapproval.”

LOWER BOUND:

“I try to treat myself with respect.” (compensatory action related to the problem of negative media images of Black women)

“I would leave an organization like that”

“I talked to \_\_\_\_ about it and she explained to me about....”

“Ultimately, it just comes down to what we want to do.” (Problem solving, discussing together.

**Also RI+)**

Coping-Active examples, cont...

NON-EXAMPLE: “I want to end the problem ASAP” (no action, so could be wishful thinking)  
“It might get us a little closer to knowing why she feels that way about me.” (This is *almost* the code, but not quite because he is explaining *why* he wants to get information—he is neither in this utterance *getting* information or discussing how they *can or have in the past* gained the information. This is one step removed from what we are trying to capture.)

**ACCOMMODATIVE / PASSIVE COPING (Cope-P) = strategies that accommodate to the problem; Statements that help to establish a frame of mind that serves a protective function**

Note: if the plan of action that a couple decides upon is passive, then the *discussion* about figuring out what to do (if this discussion occurred) is coded active, but **any statements about the passive strategies they then use is coded as passive.**

**This code DOES NOT include statements of desire and wishing that the situation were different.**

This includes:

- cognitive restructuring (positive thinking or positive reinterpretation that is not geared towards addressing the problem; rationalizing behavior)
- acceptance of the problem; acceptance of the fact that the problem exists
- trying to feel better
- venting
- distracting one's self
- emotional, cognitive, or behavioral disengagement (i.e. "Who cares?" or "I don't care")
- self-encouragement
- ignoring, enduring, denial
- wishful thinking (i.e. being hopeful about how the problem will be resolved)
- isolating
- acknowledging that something should/can be done without taking personal responsibility for addressing it
- keeping the relationship a secret
- implementing a passive plan of action (NOTE: the act of *making* the plan is active)
- being understanding of/patient with the discomfort that others have with the relationship

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "Just ignore it."  
 "I'm dealing with it by just trying to hang in there."  
 "We just don't tell them about us."  
 "All that should matter is that you're a good guy." (protective hopeful frame of mind)  
 "We just brush it off—it's their thing, we're over it, clearly."

LOWER BOUND: "I don't think it will matter to them."  
 "Everyone in your family would probably accept it."  
 "Maybe it's not really so bad."  
 "We didn't/don't really talk about it (discrimination, etc.)"

NON-EXAMPLES: "There's nothing that can be done." (helpless)  
 "Your mom should be used to this." (too ambiguous)  
 "I really wish that I could talk to my parents about this." (not passive, maybe helpless?)

**AVOIDANT/HELPLESS COPING (Cope-Av) = the person is immobilized or otherwise limits his/her life because of a KNOWN problem.**

This includes:

- giving up
- being unable to think, move, or act
- avoiding
- saying that there's nothing that one can do, or saying that there's something that they want to do but can't
- restricting behavior

**This code does NOT include anticipatory avoidance (See Isolation code)**

Note: Code statements of direct avoidance, such as going out of one's way to avoid or stopping an activity because of the problem. Do not include things that *may* serve the function of avoidance (too much inference)

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:

"There's nothing that we can do."

"I don't go to that store anymore."

"I just walk out of the room whenever my racist boss walks in."

"I decided not to tell them anything about it at all."

LOWER BOUND:

"I couldn't bring myself to talk to him."

"I'm about to explode (gets passive code for venting) and there's nothing I can do (also gets helpless code)"

"I still want to connect with them, but at this point, it's not gonna happen."

NON-EXAMPLE:

"So what can you do?" (would need more clarity/context to determine if they are giving up or just being rhetorical)

"Instead of that new club, let's just go to that restaurant we like." (This is anticipatory avoidance, so Isolation)

## Codebook 3-Final

### **Coding Steps:**

1. Review code book for 10 minutes before starting the coding process.
2. Watch the entire clip once without coding it.
3. *Code the clip using the transcript (Observational Coding Sheet) only--this is to avoid inferring too much into the words*
4. *Watch one more time after coding is finished, not to change any codes, but to add codes if you've missed something*
5. During and after watching the clip, write a general summary of the conversation and topics raised on the Comment Sheet. (??)
6. Complete the rest of the comment sheet (see notes below on how to do this).

### **Observational Coding Sheet – Instructions**

- c. The coding sheet will already have a transcription of the clip entered in, designating speaking turns. As you watch the clip the 2<sup>nd</sup> time (after doing your initial coding), code speaking turns that have no special codes as neutral (X)
- d. If it makes it easier, go through the transcript several times, coding one or a pair of codes at a time.

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- statements about experiencing discriminatory **ACTIONS**, either obvious or suspected, because of the difference in race in the relationship
- Noticing **being stared at**, hearing derogatory comments, feeling unwelcome (**due to behavior**)
- Feeling that someone has made a negative comment about their relationship (Dis-C) or about one individual in the couple because of that person's skin color (Dis-I)
- Belief that they have received subpar service because of their relationship (Dis-C)
- Being questioned about their membership in their group (Dis-I)

### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:

"People always stare at us when we walk through that neighborhood."  
[Dis-C]  
"XXX completely ignore me when we go to your parent's house" (Dis-I; SS-)

LOWER BOUND:

"Your mother wouldn't even look at me. (Dis-I and SS-)  
"Random people give us looks." (Dis-C)  
"When my grandmother met you, she was pretty stand-offish." ( SS- and Dis-I ; the bx of grandma leads to feeling unwelcome

Discrimination code, examples, cont...

NOT THE CODE: “It [neg. treatment by a family member] made me feel really uncomfortable.” (this is someone discussing their feeling *about* discrimination, but this statement is not about the discriminatory act directly, so not **Dis** code)

“My mom keeps trying to set me up with someone else.” (**SS-**)—not specific enough for Dis code.

“There’s a stigma about White women dating Black men.”

NO CODE because it’s a statement of fact. No active discriminatory act is being discussed here. If the speaker goes on to say, “...and xxx clearly hates me because I’m with you” then Dis-I and SS- would be coded.



**Social Support (Code: SS+; SS-) (about interracial dating/relationships specifically)-**

This code will capture all mentions of social support by the couple. Both presence and absence of social support will be coded. Presence of support will be coded **SS+**; Lack of support will be coded **SS-**

**NOTE: If they state as fact OR STATE THAT THEY THINK/BELIEVE/FEEL that friends/family disapprove, even with no proof, still code as SS +/- . If it is a guess/belief/feeling/assumption, ALSO CODE ICI-/RI-. Coding as ICI, in addition to SS, will help capture instances when the SS code is based on perception, not fact.**

**Specific** negative action by a stranger is *never* coded as SS-, while negative action from friend/family is *always* SS- (and could also be Dis). *HOWEVER...*

This code is also used for more general statements about “people’s” discomfort or general societal disapproval (or approval) of interracial relationships that are not specific acts of discrimination-- this kind of SS may include strangers.

Vague references to SS are not coded (ex: “It’ll just take time for them to accept us” *implies* that someone doesn’t accept, but it is not actually stated, so no code)

Presence of social support themes indicated by...

- Statements about a reduction in the presence of friends or family in their lives because of their relationship
- Hearing statements that are ambiguously disapproving, but are believed to be disapproving by the couple
- Statements of vague acceptance by others (??)
- Statements about receiving/feeling subtle, implicit acceptance OR disapproval
- Mention of the loss of a relationship, or strain/less closeness of a relationship with friend/family
- Statements about missing a relationship they once had, that they feel has faded because of their relationship
- Statements about receiving explicit support of the relationship
- Statements about receiving explicit criticism/lack of support of the relationship

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “They just think it’s wrong.” (SS-)  
 “Linda doesn’t seem to care at all.” (SS+)  
 “My dad keeps asking me what I’m doing ‘skiing the slopes’.” (SS-)  
 “My family doesn’t feel weird about it.” (SS+)  
 “My grandmother was stand-offish around you when she met you.” (SS- and Dis)

Social Support, examples, cont...

CLASSIC: "I feel like my family would accept it." SS+ and ICI+ (Not clear if the family actually *does*, so this is a guess at support, but also shows confidence in relationship)

LOWER BOUND: "My parents are just weird about it, you can tell they're uncomfortable." (SS-)  
 "She doesn't care about it (racial difference) anymore." (SS+)  
 "People just don't get it, they're so uncomfortable with the idea of going outside your race." (SS-)  
 "We saw that kind of nonacceptance over and over" (SS-)

NOT THE CODE: "She told me that there's a stigma that White women are taking Black men away from Black women." This is a statement of fact, not specific enough to be coded as SS- or Dis

"I don't know how my family would feel about it." This is not an assumption either way, just statement of fact (i.e. lack of knowledge).

"Random people give us looks." This is not SS because "getting looks" is a specific act of discrimination, therefore, Dis-C

"Interracial dating is just culturally shocking to them." Not the code because it being *shocking* does not necessarily mean that they disapprove.

**Isolation (Code: Iso)—**

This code will capture all mentions of feeling distant and separate from their peers, family, or society *in general*. **This code can capture feelings of distance and separation from others that is not specifically linked to being in an interracial relationship.** This code does not necessarily include *restricting* behavior, unless it leads to isolation. This code is meant to capture more general feelings of isolation, which are not captured under the Social Support code. This code also captures actions or ideas that keep the couple overly isolated or separated from society.

**This code is distinguished from Coping-Av in that *anticipatory* avoidance, avoiding potential/expected discrimination that is not actually known or guaranteed to occur, is only coded here. NOTE: Some Isolation codes will also be Coping-Av codes, if the avoidant behavior is in response to a KNOWN stressor.**

Presence of Isolation themes indicated by...

- Statements about feeling isolated from the world/peers/neighborhood
- Statements of not feeling “connected” in general
- Actively choosing to avoid certain activities to avoid potential or anticipated discrimination (statements of this kind will most likely receive both Iso and Coping-Av codes)
- Complaints about not having an adequate social life
- Statements of more general distance from/lack of connection with parents/friends, etc.

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “I don’t know how that new place will be, let’s just go to our usual spot.”  
 “I don’t feel like I can talk to anyone about my life.”

LOWER BOUND: “I’m not very close to my parents.”

“I’d love for my parents to actually be involved in my life.” (gist=they are not=Isolation)

NOT THE CODE: “It makes me just want to stay home with you.” (This is not quite Iso b/c they might still go!)

**Stress Code (STR):**

This code will capture utterances by either partner about feeling stressed, uncomfortable, angry, or worried regarding the interracial relationship and/or race-related issues and experiences.

Stress may be indicated by:

- statements about general problems of the speaker with coping with racial situations
- stated or observed feelings of frustration, exasperation, anger or upset

Examples:

**Classic:**

"It really bugs me when..."

"That really annoys/bothers me..."

"It was so hurtful when..."

"It's uncomfortable at first, especially when you don't know them."

"I feel really bad about how he treated you."

"It was awful when..."

**Lower Bound:**

"I couldn't believe he said that (rude/discriminatory thing)"

**Partner Agreement/Disagreement (Code: PA+ or PA-)—**

This code will capture all utterance by either partner that suggests that they agree or disagree with their partner's **perspective or experience**, or the significance/magnitude of the situation/incident, IN GENERAL.

This code does *not* include one partner **restating** after the other what they (as a couple) think about/have done in their experience. These instances call for re-coding of 'the thought' or statement of action itself. (see Couple 003, lines 12-13, 004, line 69-70 for example)

NOTE: This code does *not* include correcting the other partner's misinformation or misunderstanding of what one partner is saying NOR DOES THIS CODE INCLUDE STATING A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE WITHOUT NEGATING THE PARTNER'S POV.

This code does *not* include "parroting" of the other partner, OR continuing to 'agree' with a partner's agreement with the speaker. (i.e. cannot "partner agree" with yourself)

Presence of Partner Agreement indicated by...

- Statements of understanding/agreeing OR disagreeing with the partner's experience/point of view
- Accepting the partner's belief that discrimination has occurred (even if they hadn't noticed it) OR refusing to accept/doubting that discrimination occurred
- Disagreeing with the partner about the presence of racial issues (less aggressive disagreement is still disagreement, i.e. "Maybe, but I don't think so")
- Attempting to convince the partner that discrimination has *not* occurred (Disagree)
- "Chiming in"/providing an additional example or additional details when the partner is describing an event--chiming in represents agreement with the partner about the significance/meaning of an incident
- Mentions of past agreement/disagreement are coded here too

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "Well, isn't it possible that you were just seeing things?" (PA-)  
 "Exactly" (PA+)

Partner Agreement examples, cont....

LOWER BOUND: "Like you said before..." (PA+)

"Maybe, but I don't think she feels that way about you anymore." (PA-)

"Since you want to know, I'll ask her for our benefit." (PA+) ←where should this go??

"No, I think it was \_\_\_\_\_" (PA-)

"Yeah, that's right, it was the beginning of the summer." (PA+) (that's right, makes it PA)

"But...." (PA-)

"Yeah, I sort of feel like that, too" (PA+)

NOT THE CODE:

"Why should we care?" (not the code b/c it's a bit vague, could be coping, could be them trying to help the partner not to feel upset)

"Yeah"

"Do we think this is the right way to solve the problem?" (too vague, not sure if they agree or disagree)

"Yeah, our friends." (Parroting)

### **PARTNER POSITIVITY/NEGATIVITY (PP/PN)**

This code will capture positive feelings, empathy, admiration, compassion, and caring that either partner shows for the other. This code captures positive statements NOT RELATED TO RACE-RELATED SITUATIONS.

This code will also capture negative feelings, criticism, judgment, and lack of compassion, caring, or empathy expressed from one partner to the other. Again, these feelings are NOT RELATED TO RACE-RELATED ISSUES/SITUATIONS.

This code includes the *perception* of one partner that the other is or isn't accepting/compassionate/caring/empathetic toward them.

This code may be indicated by:

- Communicating that they value and respect their partner, or indicating that they do not
- Showing belief in their partner's abilities, or doubt in their abilities
- Showing compassion/empathy/caring toward the other partner or a *lack*
- Statements of admiration or praise for the partner; Statements of trusting or "backing" their partner, about *any* issue (does not need to be race related)
- Complimenting/Insulting

#### Examples

CLASSIC:

"You handled that so well."

"You're such a great guy!"

"I understand how hard it is sometimes for you." (compassion)

"Ugh, you wouldn't understand." (PN)

LOWER BOUND:

"Wow, you're probably in that situation a lot, huh?" (empathizing with partner's experience, aware of their experience)

"You expect me not to talk about this (race-related) stuff?" (PN— perception/assumption that the partner won't support?)

"I want to talk this stuff out with her, because I know she bottles things up, and I want to make sure she's not upset about it." (compassion)

### **Racial Identity (Code: RI+; RI-)**

This code will capture explicit mentions from either partner of feeling negatively or positively or secure/insecure regarding their individual racial identity/place in their own ethnic group. This code also captures indications of low/high self-esteem explicitly *related to race*, security/insecurity related to their race. Mentions of positive feelings about racial identity are also coded here (as +).

Presence of Racial Identity related themes indicated by...

- feeling like unacceptable members of their own groups, regarding their race/ethnicity
- feeling unattractive/undesirable to their group, regarding their race/ethnicity
- general statements of feeling rejected by their ethnic/racial group
- statements of concern that they will be rejected by other (i.e. partner's family) because of their race
- statements of security/ insecurity about their place in their own ethnic group
- statements of confidence in their racial identity

### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:            "Trying to date (same race) men/women, I feel like a loser....like I'm not good enough." (RI-)  
                          "I'm proud that I can look across racial lines, it doesn't change who I am." (color blind?/ri+?)  
                          "Who cares what they think [about the individual]? It's not about them." (RI+ AND Cope-p)

LOWER BOUND:        "Did you tell them that I'm White"? (RI-)

NOT THE CODE:        "It's not my problem."  
                          "I'm over it."  
                          (These codes are open to interpretation. It is not clear if these statements imply confidence and security. They are Cope-P, though.)



### Interracial Couple Identity (ICI +/-)

This code will capture mentions by either member of the couple about feelings of security/insecurity about being in an interracial relationship or the potential impact the relationship may have on their lives/others' opinions of them.

- Statements about questioning themselves about OR feeling confident in their choice to be in an interracial relationship
- Statements of confidence in their decision to be in an interracial relationship
- statements of security/insecurity about how being in an interracial couple make impact their lives
- statements of concern/worry/discomfort OR lack of worry or discomfort about how pp will react to the interracial relationship (if they say "probably/expect", assume a concern unless it is clearly stated that there is no concern)

If it has "us" or "we" in it then think about whether or not it has to do with identity.

Examples:

"Who cares what they think, it's not about them" (ICI+--b/c of last half of sentence; cope-p b/c of "who cares")

"I don't care what everybody else thinks about us" (ICI+ AND cope-p)

"Ultimately, it just comes down to what we want to do." (secure in their decision)

"I feel like my family would accept it." Not clear if the family actually *does*, so this is hopeful, based on confidence in the relationship, and therefore is SS+, AND ICI+

"If they knew about us, they would probably say you were going to steal me away from my culture or something." ICI-

NOT THE CODE:

"It's not our problem." "We're over it." "You're nice, that's all that should matter."

((None of the above are the code because these statements are open to interpretation. It is not clear if these statements imply confidence and security in their relationship choice. ~~All ARE cope-p~~))

"We knew what we were getting into."

**Self-Esteem (SE+, SE-)**

This code will capture explicit mentions from either partner of feeling negatively or positively about themselves in general, not specific to their race or ethnicity. This code captures indications of high or low self-esteem.

Presence of Self-esteem related themes indicated by...

- Statements of confidence or lack of confidence in themselves/their abilities
- feeling unattractive /attractive
- statements of security/ insecurity about themselves
- statements of positive or negative self-esteem

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "I don't think your mom likes me." (Just SE, not RI, b/c not clearly related to race)

LOWER BOUND:

NOT THE CODE:

**Increased Racial Awareness (Code: IncRA-B; IncRA-W)**

This code will capture instances of the Black or White partner feeling more aware of the impact of race in their daily lives, but *without* a feeling of not wanting the new awareness and *without* an accompanying feeling of stress or negativity. (Black partner=IncRA-B; White partner = IncRA-W)

Presence of this theme indicated by...

- Statements about a new/growing awareness of how race can impact treatment
- Statements about realizing that Blacks/Whites are treated differently
- Expressions of amazement, acceptance of their newly gained understanding

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC:            “I had never noticed before how people aren’t comfortable with interracial couples.”  
                          “I had never realized how differently Blacks are treated compared to Whites.”

LOWER BOUND:    “Is this like a ‘Black tax’ thing?”  
                          “I was definitely the only White person, and I was very aware of my race.”  
                          “I think that was the first time I was in a large group of people and was the only White person...but that kind of thing probably happens to you all the time...”

NOT THE CODE:    “I can’t believe people would actually say that [discriminating thing] to you! (not the code if it is unclear whether the disbelief is about how rude people can be, or about the specific racial component)

### **Unique Stressors--Black partner (Code: US-B)**

This code will capture instances of the Black partner reporting the presence of stresses unique to the Black partner. This code is only used for negative aspects of being the Black partner (i.e. statements about being “used to” being the only minority in a group is not coded here.)

The presence of these stressors will be indicated by...

- Statements about feeling singularly concerned about the role of race in the relationship
- Statements of feeling alone in their experience because of their race
- Statements of noticing discrimination but being reluctant to share with the partner
- Statements about being initially (or currently) more cautious about the relationship
- Statements of experiencing guilt about exposing the White partner to the burden of race
- Statements of reluctance to share experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and subsequent anxiety with the White partner

#### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “I feel like I can’t tell you about this, because you’d rather not know.”

LOWER BOUND: “You don’t have to talk about it, no one reminds *you* every day that you’re White.”

“*You* wouldn’t understand.” (implying that the White partner cannot relate due to racial difference)

NON-EXAMPLES: “I’m used to it.”

### **Unique Stressors--White partner (Code: US-W)**

This code is meant to capture the negative valence that might be present in some statements that might otherwise be considered for the Increased Racial Awareness code. This code is applicable only when stress seems to be present.

- Statements about feeling “sick” of having to hear about how race matters
- Feeling burdened by their increased awareness of the significance of race in the US
- Feeling discomfort/guilt about realizing the significance of being White and the privilege that can result

#### **EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: “It makes me uncomfortable, hearing how differently you’re treated.”

LOWER BOUND: “I want a night off, I’m tired of hearing about how hard it is for you.”  
(US-W AND PA-)

NON-EXAMPLES:

**Coping Strategies (Code: Cope-A; Cope-P; Cope-Av)**

This code will capture instances of the coping strategies that the couple uses to cope with KNOWN discrimination and lack of acceptance, or to cope with the various other stressors that being in an interracial relationship can bring. This code will capture active coping strategies (Cope-A), passive strategies (Cope-P), and avoidant strategies (Cope-Av)

Presence of this theme indicated by (among other things):

- Statements of proactive, reactive, or avoidant coping strategies (active/passive/avoidant) used to deal with KNOWN problems
- Overt statements of an active strategy the couple uses to navigate society
- Statements about negotiating interactions with others carefully to avoid being ostracized
- Statements about trying to manage others' view of their decision (trying to explain away the role of race, thinking about how to tell others that they are in an interracial relationship)
- Statements that help the person to establish a frame of mind that serves a protective function

**ACTIVE COPING = strategies that focus on the source of stress and reactions geared towards addressing it. The theme here is addressing the KNOWN problem.**

**Note: Statements about instances of using active coping strategies in the past to deal with known problems are coded.**

This includes:

- the act of problem solving together, even if no resolution is reached, or if the resulting solution is to “do nothing” or use a passive coping strategy
- cognitive decision making (strategizing and planning)
- gathering information
- religious or spiritual coping
- seeking social support (seeking tangible help or understanding; this does NOT include venting)
- trying to understand the problem differently so as to address it
- correcting individuals who perpetuate the problem
- making a plan of action and following it
- *suggesting* an active OR PASSIVE plan of action
- mention of having explicit discussions together *about* the problem (i.e. racial issues) in the past
- retaliation (this can include verbal responses like talking back, making jokes directed at the person who causes the problem—does not have to be extreme confrontation)

Note: if the plan of action that they decide upon is passive, then the *discussion* about figuring out what to do (if this discussion occurred) is coded active, but any statements about the passive strategies they then use is coded as passive.

Note: This code does NOT include the couple trying to gain more understanding/information from each other

EXAMPLES:

CLASSIC:

“When people look at us like we’re weird, I just stare back at them.”

“You could have said/done...”; “Did you talk to them about the (racial) problem?”

“I think it’s best to set a good example, so people can’t say anything bad about us.”

“I tried once to tell my parents the truth and talk about their disapproval.”

LOWER BOUND:

“I try to treat myself with respect (compensatory action related to the problem of negative media images of Black women).”

“I would leave an organization like that”

“I talked to \_\_\_\_ about it and she explained to me about....”

“Ultimately, it just comes down to what we want to do.” (Problem solving, discussing together. Also RI+)

Active Coping, examples, cont...

NON-EXAMPLE:

“I want to end the problem ASAP” (no action, so could be wishful thinking)

“It might get us a little closer to knowing why she feels that way about me.” (This is *almost* the code, but not quite because he is explaining *why* he wants to get information—he is neither in this utterance *getting* information or discussing how they *can or have in the past* gained the information. This is one step removed from what we are trying to capture.)

**ACCOMMODATIVE / PASSIVE COPING (Cope-P) = strategies that accommodate to the problem; Statements that help to establish a frame of mind that serves a protective function**

Note: if the plan of action that a couple decides upon is passive, then the *discussion* about figuring out what to do (if this discussion occurred) is coded active, but **any statements about the passive strategies they then use is coded as passive.**

**This code DOES NOT include statements of desire and wishing that the situation were different.**

This includes:

- cognitive restructuring (positive thinking or positive reinterpretation that is not geared towards addressing the problem; rationalizing behavior)
- acceptance of the problem; acceptance of the fact that the problem exists
- trying to feel better
- venting
- distracting one's self
- emotional, cognitive, or behavioral disengagement (i.e. "Who cares?" or "I don't care")
- self-encouragement
- ignoring, enduring, denial
- wishful thinking (i.e. being hopeful about how the problem will be resolved)
- isolating
- acknowledging that something should/can be done without taking personal responsibility for addressing it
- keeping the relationship a secret
- implementing a passive plan of action (NOTE: the act of *making* the plan is active)
- being understanding of/patient with the discomfort that others have with the relationship
- joking, using humor (NOTE: humorous retaliation directed outward at others is ACTIVE)

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "Just ignore it."  
 "I'm dealing with it by just trying to hang in there."  
 "We just don't tell them about us."  
 "All that should matter is that you're a good guy." (protective hopeful frame of mind)  
 "We just brush it off—it's their thing, we're over it, clearly."

LOWER BOUND: "I don't think it will matter to them." (wishful thinking)  
 "Everyone in your family would probably accept it."  
 "Maybe it's not really so bad."  
 "We didn't/don't really talk about it (discrimination, etc.)"  
 "Who cares what they think??" (also ICI)



Coping-Passive, examples, cont...

- NON-EXAMPLES:
- "There's nothing that can be done." (helpless)
  - "Your mom should be used to this." (too ambiguous)
  - "I really wish that I could talk to my parents about this." (not passive, maybe helpless?)
  - "I couldn't picture my dad being like that, he's such a nice guy."

**AVOIDANT/HELPLESS COPING (Cope-Av) = the person is immobilized or otherwise limits his/her life because of a KNOWN problem.**

This includes:

- giving up
- being unable to think, move, or act
- avoiding
- saying that there's nothing that one can do, or saying that there's something that they want to do but can't
- restricting behavior

**This code does NOT include anticipatory avoidance (See Isolation code) but some statements that get the Isolation code may be coded here, if they are in response to a known problem.**

Note: Code statements of direct avoidance, such as going out of one's way to avoid or stopping an activity because of the problem. Do not include things that *may* serve the function of avoidance (too much inference)

**EXAMPLES:**

CLASSIC: "There's nothing that we can do."  
 "I don't go to that store anymore." (also Iso)  
 "I just walk out of the room whenever my racist boss walks in."  
 "I decided not to tell them anything about it at all."

LOWER BOUND: "I couldn't bring myself to talk to him."  
 "I'm about to explode (gets passive code for venting) and there's nothing I can do (also gets helpless code)"  
 "I still want to connect with them, but at this point, it's not gonna happen."

NON-EXAMPLE: "So what can you do?" (would need more clarity/context to determine if they are giving up or just being rhetorical)  
 "Instead of that new club, let's just go to that restaurant we like." (This is anticipatory avoidance, so Isolation)

**Color Blind /Humanistic (CB)**

"I don't see it; I'm not looking; color doesn't matter; no matter what color, everyone's the same."

This code will capture statements by either member of the couple about having a "color blind" world view. This world view believes that race differences are not an issue and are therefore not worthy of any time or attention being paid to those differences.

Statements in this category might also be coding as Coping.

NOTE: This code also includes *working toward* a color blind worldview, even if they are not quite there.

**Classic Example**

"You and I don't see color."

"I don't ever think about our race, at all."

"I don't feel like our race every plays a role."

**Lower Bound:**

"It didn't bother me so much as, why are you worried? Like, why are you in my business?"

"I'm proud that I can look across racial lines.... it doesn't change who I am."

## APPENDIX B

## Selected examples--Changes to codes across cohorts

Table 9

*Changes to Coping Codes from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2*

<b>Code &amp; Classic Example</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Additions and Rationale</b>	<b>Clarifications</b>
<b>Coping-ALL</b>	This code captures all coping strategies the couple uses to cope with discrimination, lack of acceptance, and other stressors caused by the interracial relationship	None	This code captures strategies used to cope with <i>known</i> stressors and problems
<b>Coping-Active</b> <i>Example: "I tried once to tell my parents the truth and talk about their disapproval."</i>	This code focuses on strategies and reactions geared toward addressing problems and stressors directly, in the past or present	Code also includes retaliation and problem solving discussions between the partners	Code does not include venting or asking questions of the partner. Code does include the process of developing or suggesting a <i>passive</i> strategy
<b>Coping-Accommodative/Passive</b> <i>Example: "We just don't tell them about us."</i>	This code focuses on strategies and reactions that accommodate to or passively address stressors and problems	Code also includes cognitive restructuring/rationalizing, secret-keeping, strategies that serve a protective function, acceptance, wishful thinking	Code does <i>not</i> include wishes that the situation were different
<b>Coping-Avoidant/Helpless</b> <i>Example: "I still want to connect with them, but at this point, it's not gonna happen."</i>	This code captures a lack of ability to address problems and stressors, attempts to avoid them, or a sense of powerlessness	Code includes restricting behavior	Code does not include <i>anticipatory</i> avoidance

Table 10  
*Changes to Social Support Code from Cohort 2 to Cohort 3*

Code & Classic Example	Definition	Selected Additions	Selected Clarifications
<b>Social Support</b>  <b>Modifiers:</b> <b>Positive (+)</b> <b>Negative (-)</b>	This code will capture all mentions of social support by the couple. Both presence and absence of social support will be coded.	Code also includes hearing statements that are ambiguous but are believed to be disapproving by the couple  Code also includes statements of vague acceptance by others	Feelings of <i>general</i> societal disapproval (or approval) of interracial relationships that are not specific acts of discrimination can be coded here-- this kind of SS <u>may include strangers</u> .  If it is stated as fact that friends/family disapprove, even with no proof, consider it fact and code as SS- (rather than as RI-) Vague references to SS are not coded (ex: "It'll just take time for them to accept us" <i>implies</i> that someone doesn't accept, but it is not actually stated, so no code)  <i>Specific</i> negative action by a stranger is not coded here

Table 11  
*Changes to Social Support Code from Codebook 3a to Codebook 3b*

Code & Classic Example	Original Definition	Additions
<b>Social Support</b> <b>Modifiers:</b> <b>Positive (+)</b> <b>Negative (-)</b>  <b>Example:</b> <i>“I feel like my family would accept it.”</i>	<p>This code will capture all mentions of social support by the couple. Both presence and absence of social support will be coded.</p> <p>If it is stated as fact that friends/family disapprove, even with no proof, consider it fact and code.</p>	<p>If a statement of presence or absence of support is a guess/belief/feeling/assumption, ALSO CODE as ICI-/RI-.</p> <p>Coding as ICI, in addition to SS, will help capture instances when the SS code is based on perception, not fact.</p>

# APPENDIX C

## Example Coding Materials

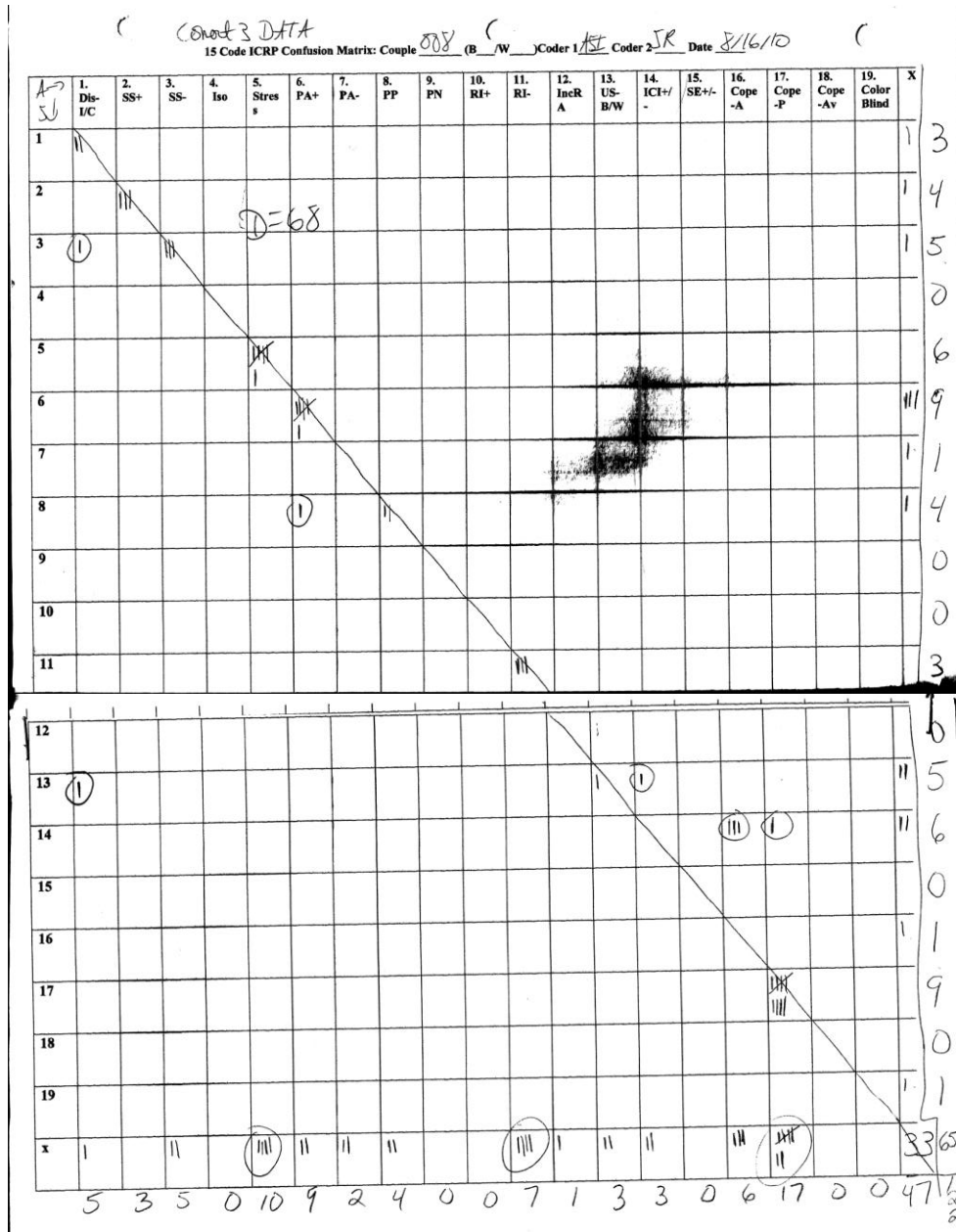


Figure 1. Confusion Matrix-Cohort 3, Clip 008.

ICRP Kappa Tabulation Sheet Cohort 3 DATA Couple: 008 Coder 1: AJI Coder 2: JR Date: 8/16/10 Codebook: 3-6

P<sub>Obs</sub> =

# of tallies on the Diagonal: 68

[DIVIDED BY]

Total # of tallies: 122

P<sub>Obs</sub> = .5574 (to 4 decimal places)

Kappa =

P<sub>Obs</sub>: .5574 [MINUS] P<sub>Exp</sub>: .2337 = .3237

[DIVIDED BY]

1 [MINUS] P<sub>Exp</sub>: .2337 = .7663

KAPPA = .4224 (to 4 decimal places)

11

7

Row x Column 1:	5	x	3	=	15
Row x Column 2:	3	x	4	=	12
Row x Column 3:	5	x	5	=	25
Row x Column 4:	0	x	0	=	0
Row x Column 5:	10	x	6	=	60
Row x Column 6:	9	x	9	=	81
Row x Column 7:	2	x	1	=	2
Row x Column 8:	4	x	4	=	16
Row x Column 9:	0	x	0	=	0
Row x Column 10:	0	x	0	=	0
Row x Column 11:	7	x	3	=	21
Row x Column 12:	1	x	0	=	0
Row x Column 13:	3	x	5	=	15
Row x Column 14:	3	x	6	=	18
Row x Column 15:	0	x	0	=	0
Row x Column 16:	6	x	1	=	6
Row x Column 17:	17	x	9	=	153
Row x Column 18:	0	x	0	=	0
Row x Column 19:	0	x	1	=	0
Row x Column 20:	47	x	65	=	3055

Products for RxC 1-16 ADDED: 3479

[DIVIDED BY]

Total # of Tallies squared: 14884

P<sub>Exp</sub> = .2337 (to 4 decimal places)

Figure 2. Kappa Tabulation Worksheet-Cohort 3, Clip 008



## Couple 008-Transcript with codes

Turn	M	W	Coder 1	Coder 2	Alycia	Codes & Comments (e.g. Specification Of Content, High Intensity, Long Duration, Difficulties, Etc.)
1.	x		STR SS-  Cope-a	STR SS- ICI-	STR SS- ICI-	Well yeah, it's obviously, as we discussed, <u>it can be difficult for me</u> sometimes when we are out in public. And not that, it's nothing, well basically we are out in public and <u>I feel as if people are being disapproving</u> . They are giving--
2.		x	x	x	x	Mmhmm. What kind of looks do they give?
3.	x		Dis-I	SS-	Dis-C	That's just it. It's THE look. It's kind of umm..it's that— <u>people turn up their nose, they kind of scrunch their face up</u> . It's like they smell something bad. And you know—it's nothing too overt. It's not like they are looking at me and rolling their eyes or giving me the finger, or giving us the finger for that matter. But it's just <u>the way that people somewhat react</u> and uh, <u>I can tell that they are being---that they are disapproving</u> .
4.		x	x	x	x	And this is <i>all</i> Black people? (see Note in Cope-A)
5.	x		SS-	Dis-C	SS-?	No, well it's not <i>all</i> Black people. It's just that, I know that look. I mean, <u>It's a look that I've seen on people that I know</u> .
6.		x	x	x	x	Mmhmm
7.	x		SS-	Dis-C	Dis-C  ICI-	So it's not something where, where people who I may not necessarily be friends with them, but I've been in social settings with them and I know what their feelings on the matter are, and <u>they will have a somewhat disapproving look or that general look</u> , ya know? That isn't to say I don't see it on people of other races, or sometimes it's a questioning look of-what are <i>they</i> doing together? Or, <u>you can see the gears turning in people's head</u> in trying to make the connection or make the association and figure out what it is that-- ya know— what's going on with <i>those</i> two.
8.		x	x	x	x	Mmmhmm
9.	x		Dis-I STR	Dis-C STR	Dis-C STR Cope-p	Or, even worse it's " <u>ugh, what's that about.</u> " And, <u>it's not a pleasant feeling</u> , um, it's ya know, <u>you want to challenge it, you don't take it to heart</u> , but at the same time <u>it's very annoying when someone kind of looks down on you</u> without

						knowing anything about you.
10		x	x	x	PP	Yea, why don't you share that with me when it happens? (see Cope-A note)
11	x		Cope-p US-B	Cope-p	Cope-p	Cuz I don't want to draw attention to it--
12		x	x	x	x	Yeah
13	x		Cope-p US-B PP	Cope-P US-B PP	Cope-P PP	--ya know—I don't want to—what am I going to do –“hey look at them they're looking at us.” <u>It doesn't really serve much of a purpose to point it out, and that I don't want to make you feel self-conscious. I don't want to make you feel embarrassed.</u> Or, for that matter, I don't want the reverse to happen and you to get an attitude with them.
14		x	X	X	X	(laughs) I don't think I would get an attitude with strangers.
15	x		Cope-p STR	Cope-p STR	Cope-P STR	Well, it's just one of those things where I don't see— <u>In my mind it's not worth it,</u> but it is particularly <u>annoying.</u>
16		x	PP	x	PP PA-	But it means something to you.
17	x				x	<u>Yeah it does</u> —it's the scrutiny of, ya know, I guess, how would you feel if, ya know, someone was—how would you feel basically if you saw someone who looked at me and said “ugh, what are you doing with him, and why are you two together.” Or, they didn't say it, but they just kind of gave you that look.
18		x			x	Right
19	x				x	And, you wouldn't –well actually, how would you react to that?
20		x			STR	Well, I would not be pleased
21	x				x	Yeah
22		x			US-B <del>SS-</del> PP	But I think <u>I'm oblivious sometimes,</u> or all the time, to it. And, I mean, <u>do you feel like you notice it because you know more about it?</u> Like, the only thing I know is what I've heard that like, ya know, <u>Black women don't want White women taking the good Black men.</u> (laughs) You're a good Black man
23	x				PA+?	(laughs) Umm, Thank you. Um, yea, that's definitely true.
24		x			X	That's all I've heard.
25	x				SS+	I mean, it can be true. I can't say it's a universal truth. Obviously, I mean, (right) <u>obviously I have Black friends who approve of our relationship</u> (sure). It's not as if they look at it and go, “oh ya know,

					SS-  Cope-p	she's nice but what are you doing with her?" It does happen that way and there are, ya know, there are Black men for that matter who would say, "oh, what are you doing in an interracial relationship, ya know, you are supposed to show solidarity (right), you are supposed to.." It's essentially, <u>I feel like some people give you the look, give me the look essentially, as if they are trying to assign guilt</u> , ya know, "you should be ashamed of yourself." And the feeling that I have, the <u>reaction that I want to have is "how dare you?"</u> (right) Who are you, basically." <u>And that's just how people are</u> . But it's one of those things where you don't want to justify the feeling, you don't want to yell and rail and scream, but at the same time..
26		x			PA+ Cope-p	You don't want to acknowledge it at all.
27	x				PA+ Cope-p Stress RI-  Dis-I US-B	That's it! You don't want to acknowledge it but at the same time you want to say— who the hell do you think you are, ya know. And it, it creates issues, ya know. It makes me feel [un]comfortable, it makes me feel like someone's questioning who <i>I</i> am, and I don't like that, ya know, I guess, here's what's really annoying about it, is that I've had to deal with people being racist, ya know, basically White people who didn't like me for all my life, I've had to put up with that --
28		x			X	Right
29	x				Cope-p  RI-  Dis-I  Stress	--and ya know , it's fine, you learn to deal with it, when you're in that environment. But then to get ya know, and dealing with similar behavior growing up from Black people, who are like, " oh, you're not Black, you're not.." and it's that same feeling, I guess, just a little bit more advanced in that now, you get older, and you are still dealing with racism from one side, and then there are the consistent feelings of "oh okay, you're not Black," but then now it's like, okay so, basically <u>it's the feeling of you can't win</u>
30		x			X	Yeah
31	x				RI- STress	You can't nothing that you do is going to be accepted or approved upon, or approved of.
32		x			X	Right. If you were dating a Black woman, would that be approved?
33	x					I guess in the people who make those kinds

					RI-  SS+	of judgments, I'm sure it would be approved, <u>not that I would be approved.</u> <u>Whatever it is, it's just not enough,</u> it's just one of those issues, ya know. Um, I mean, I feel, and maybe it's the area, but I feel a little more gratified that I haven't seen as much of the—ya know, I haven't seen racism from White people or anything along those lines. <u>You're family has been very kind to me all along and very accepting of me—</u> your mother and your father and your brother, obviously—they have been great. If nothing else, <u>my family has been more difficult.</u> (not sure why)
34		x			?	But, not cus I'm White
35	x				x	No, not at all. Um, ya know, my mother considers herself an honorary Jewish person, so she's okay.
36		x			x	Oh, I didn't know that (laughs)
37	x				?  SS+	Ya, oh, I mean, I guess I never told you that. So she's...that's fine. And it's, it's not as if it's... <u>it's not as if its a big deal for them, they are just weird as it is.</u> But, ya know, I think for that level it's good that the people who are, who I surround myself with, and thankfully who you surround yourself with are all very accepting of it. It's just people from really, people who I regard as ignorant--
38		x			x	Yeah
39	x				x	And that's—How do you feel when I mention these issues or these..when I bring up a situation after the fact and tell you like, “oh yea, that guy was not happy with us.”
40		x			Cope-p  IncRA-W?	I think I tune it out, like I think I'm kind of numb to it. Um, I mean I don't, I mean my reaction is always the same..It's the fact that I don't notice it, and that's my White privilege, I just don't pick up on it. I'm just kind of walking around, and I don't notice people giving me dirty looks because I'm in an interracial relationship
41	x				X	Mhmm, So, well that's nice, at least
42		x			X	Why was that funny?
43	x				US-B	Nothing, I just, it's not funny. Sorry, you are talking about White privilege like walkin' around like you are runnin the show and all that. Uh, yea, it's just um... That'd be nice. I think part of it though is, and I'm sure part of it is that, <u>since a little kid, I've been trained to keep an eye out</u>

					Cope a (plan/strategy)	for people who are disapproving, ya know, <u>people who are going to have some kind of a comment to say</u> , or who are fighting the comment back. Cuz the people who say something, they are easy to deal with. It's the people who don't (right), <u>but you need to know to look out for it</u> . And, ya know, you learn to look for it on both sides. I think that the most that I've seen from, ya know, any reactions that I've seen from White people that stand out, more often than not are cases where people didn't realize we're together, where...
44		x			PA+?	And then we hold hands and people are like, what?
45	x				x	No, no not even that far. More along the lines of, let's say, we are waiting in line at a book store and someone calls the next person to the register, and we walk up at the same time, and <u>the look on the person's face behind the register is they are about to say, "oh no, he or she was first,"</u> (see note on PA, why this isn't)
46		x			Pa-?	Really?
47	x				X	and then they stop and go, 'ohhh wait no, they're together', and then they kind of let it, ya know
48		x			X	I've never noticed that.
49	x				x	Yea, well it's things like that where they kind of--they look at me as if they're waiting for me to say "well I was next," or have some kind of complaint. But, and then they're like "oh they are together, oh okay," and then they feel a little sheepish about the whole thing.
50		x			X	Yeah
51	x				?	And I mean that happens across the races, really.
52		x			Cope-p (rationalizing)	Yeah, I mean, but I think, I would probably do the same thing if I just saw, ya know, two people of different races on a line, not really interacting too much.
53	x				X	Racist---(laughs) no, I'm kidding
54		x			Cope-p?	I don't know if I would assume that they were together
55	x				ICI-  Cope-p	Yeah, I mean that happens. I think because I've seen it, I try and <u>frame myself to look for it</u> . But it's not something that, the more I think about it, it's not something you see all that often, at least not something I see all that often. So, um, it's not high school anyway really. So, yea.. <u>it's</u>

						<u>understandable. But--and that's fine. I don't mind the mistake, because it's not done from a sense of anger or a sense of judging, you know, it's just an honest mistake.</u> But when it's a situation where it's that look of disapproval—
56		x			x	Right...
57	x				SS-  stress  Cope-p	that's when it's a really nasty—that's it, <u>it's hate, ya know, for no good reason.</u> And that's really all it stems from, ya know..it stems from people who—at least that's my opinion on it—people who for one reason or another, don't want to be happy for other people, or they think that they know better or they know what's good for a relationship. And, I don't know, I mean.....I'm not saying, oh ya know, that's pitiable, that's too bad, they really should have a better idea—no, they're assholes quite frankly, but, um, it's just, the nature of it, and, I try not to let it bother me, and usually it doesn't. Um, I think that's because no one has acted outwardly rude about it.
58		x			X	Yeah
59	x				x	If that happens, or if someone starts being nasty to <i>you</i> , then, um..
60		x			X (too vague?)	That's when there would be a problem
61	x				PA+ Stress	Then there would be a problem..right. And ya know, in certain situations it can make things awkward... Um..ya know..
62		x			X	Do you have an example of something that happened?
63	x				?	Nothing in particular. Just uh, ya know what it is—just in situations where it stands out a little bit more. When we went to that play that your mother got us tickets for, and, I think out of let's say, let's say there were about 100 people in the audience, I think there were 3 White people. And, you being one of them. And we were going around and being introduced and there was that momentary—now mind you these were people who were very friendly—but there was still that momentary look of “OH, this is your <i>boyfriend!</i> ”
64		x			Cope-a	Well, it's true I mean-- a lot of times I tell people, like, <u>I'll tell people before they meet you</u>
65	x				PA+	<u>I'm glad you do</u> —that's my—I mean, you

					RI- /cope-a?	remember, early on that was my first question—we would be on our way somewhere and I'd lean over and say “did you tell them I'm Black,” just so they knew, know in advance.
66		x			x	Yeah
67	x				Ici-??	You never want to have to deal with the “OH HI”—The really big eyes and the shocked look. Or, even worse, someone asking you, ya know, to go get the rest of the bags out of the car, thinking that you're the driver.
68		x			x	Oh <i>god</i> !
69	x				Cope-a PA+	Um, and thankfully again that hasn't happened because you have this sense to pre-warn people.
70		x			Stress Cope-p (accepting)  Cope-a	Yeah, I mean I feel <u>weird</u> doing it, but like, <u>it's just kind of a fact of life</u> —when my friends, when my White friends tell me they are seeing a new guy I assume he's White—and I'm sure they do the same for me too, ya know. And especially my family—I definitely told them before.
71	x				PA+	That's good. Like you said, that's very good.

72.		x			Cope-p	I mean, I don't know if it's a racism thing, but it's just expectations.
73.	x				Pa+ Cope-p  Cope-a?	Mhmm. Yeah, you don't want to blow anyone's mind on the first—dinner is going to be awkward enough, you don't need to drop any other surprises on them. And, the reverse was true, ya know—I made sure my family knew in advance.
74.		x			X	But you have dated mostly White girls in the past, right?
75.	x				?	No not mostly, I've dated the rainbow. (Lots of chuckles) Um—not to make it sound like, ya know, it was that many people—but uh yea, it's Black people, White people, in-between. Ya know, there's been a variety. <u>I just mention it</u> , just so that, ya know what it is, I'm sure they're curious is the thing. And with your name, it's not one that stands out as being one race or another.
76.		x			x	So it's different—so in your family they're curious, in my family they would just assume that my boyfriend is White.
77.	x				RI-	Right, but <u>my reasoning is that I have a 'track record'</u> , if you want to put it that

					Cope-p?	way. So, ya know, <u>and it's general curiosity, and, yea, I'm sure just because they can't tell</u> —they know that the people who I interact with are of many different races and things of that nature so, I don't know...
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Figure 3. Coding Transcript-Cohort 3, Clip 008