

The Moderating Role of Problem Solving in Black-White Marriages: A Common Fate Model

by

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B.A., State University New York at Geneseo, 2010

M.S., Kansas State University, 2014

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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School of Family Studies and Human Services
College of Human Ecology

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

Black-White couples have the highest rate of divorce compared to other interracial pairings in the U.S. (Zhang & Hook, 2009). Given the racial climate in the United States that privileges White people (Burton et al., 2010; Hardy & Laszloffy, 2008; Killian, 2012), and the on-going opposition to Black-White unions (Pew Research Center, 2017), it is reasonable to expect that Black-White couples experience elevated stress from direct and indirect forms of racial discrimination. In order to identify factors that may help boost the resilience of non-divorced Black-White couples, this study used the Vulnerability Stress Adaptation (VSA) model of marriage (Karney & Bradbury, 1995) to better understand how problem-solving skills may buffer the impact of racial discrimination experienced by Black-White couples on marital satisfaction. The study included 178 Black-White heterosexual couples between the ages of 18 and 40. A common fate moderation analysis investigated whether problem-solving served as a mechanism through which Black-White couples were able to cultivate marital satisfaction despite the detrimental outcomes of discrimination experienced as an interracial couple. Results indicated that experiences of couple discrimination were negatively related to marital satisfaction and that couples' problem-solving skills buffered the extent discrimination impacted couples' marital satisfaction. The results have implications for therapists working with Black-White couples whether married or intending to marry. Research should further explore the impact discrimination experienced by interracial couples has on other aspects of relationships as well as on mental and physical health.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This year marks the fifty-year anniversary of *Loving v. Virginia* that legalized interracial marriage across the country. Interracial marriages that were legally forbidden only 50 years ago currently represent 17% of newlyweds in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2017). White Americans are the racial group least likely to marry a spouse of a different race (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Pew Research Center, 2017). Compared to Hispanics or Asians, Black Americans are the least likely to have a White spouse (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Zhang & Hook, 2009). Couples with one Black spouse and one White spouse currently consist of 11% of all interracial marriages in the United States, a percentage that has not significantly changed over the decades (Pew Research Center, 2017). Black-White couples however, have the highest risk of marital dissolution at 20%, compared to other interracial pairings (Zhang & Hook, 2009). Similarly, Bratter and King (2008) found that from 1985 to 1989, the overall the percentage of interracial couples divorcing (55%) by their tenth year of marriage was significantly higher than intra-racial couples (35.6%).

Although the percentage of non-Black American adults opposing a relative marrying a Black person has decreased from 63% in 1990 to 14% in 2016, disapproval of non-Black adults having a family member marry a Black person remains consistently higher than other racial groups (Pew Research Center, 2017). Racial discrimination has been found to be detrimental for marital satisfaction (Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Murry et al., 2008; Trail et al., 2012), which may help explain findings of higher dissolution rates among interracial couples --13.7% when compared to intra-racial couples -- 9.9% (Zhang & Hook, 2009). Given the racial climate in the United States that privileges White people (Burton et al., 2010; Hardy & Laszloffy, 2008;

Killian, 2012), it is reasonable to expect that minority and interracial couples experience elevated stress from direct and indirect forms of racial discrimination.

In recent years, video and/or audio recordings of police officers (both White men and women) killing unarmed Black men, women, and children have become viral on the Internet and are circulated repeatedly by several sources of the news and media. Although these killings are not a new phenomenon in the United States, technology has helped influence the renewed public awareness and concern about this issue. For decades, scholars have challenged the concept of colorblindness and the notion of a post-racial society permeating American culture and politics (Hardy & Laszoffy, 2008; Logan, Freeman & McRoy, 1987; Gotanda, 1991; Neville et al., 2000). The images of these killings and the resulting investigations have made institutionalized racism and its systemic oppression in this country difficult to avoid and/or disregard. There have been protests and rallies across the nation demanding justice and imploring Black Lives Matter. The emerging public awareness of racial inequality in the United States supports scholars' critiques and exposes the illusion of living in a post-racial society.

Given the social distance between people of African and European descent highlighted by current events, what impact does this have on these intermarriages? The academic research on how the race relations between these two groups may impact their couple relationships is in its infancy and there is a lack of research exploring the mechanisms of racial discrimination and its impact on marital satisfaction in interracial relationships. The present study investigated how marriages bridging the Black and White racial divide are maintained despite social opposition. Qualitative studies that explored interracial relationships found couples used strategies ranging from adjustments of racial attitudes (Killian, 2012; Yancey, 2007) and dissociating from each other in public (Killian, 2012) to extensively researching social environments before exposing

the family to the location or social activity (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002) to protect family from racial discrimination. Quantitative studies have analyzed the role problem-solving plays in maintaining interracial marriages (Dainton, 2015) or the impact discrimination has on marital outcomes among ethnic minorities (Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Trial et al., 2012). This study on Black-White marriages aims to further contribute to the literature by examining the role of problem-solving as a moderator to how the experience of couple discrimination due to race, influences marital satisfaction. Understanding how couples manage experiences of discrimination because of the racial composition of the couple could help inform clinical work with Black-White couples aimed at strengthening their union.

Vulnerability Stress Adaptation Model

The Vulnerability Stress Adaptation (VSA) model of marriage proposed by Karney and Bradbury (1995) served as the theoretical framework for this study. The VSA model integrates concepts of ecological niches, personal characteristics, attachment, processes of adaptation, perception of relationship, and behavioral theory. The model is a developmental framework of marriage that specifies mechanisms of marital changes and consists of three higher order constructs: enduring vulnerabilities, stressful events and adaptive processes (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). The model describes the possible ways these three constructs together can account for variations in marital quality and stability over time. The VSA model proposes eight possible pathways among its constructs. The present study will focus on three of these pathways as presented in Figure 1.

The first pathway is from enduring vulnerability to stressful events. Enduring vulnerabilities refer to inherent characteristics that in and of themselves pose challenges for the couple. Vulnerabilities may include stable demographic, historical, personality, or experiential

factors that individuals bring into the marriage. The inherent characteristics of interracial marriages fit this description as each partner comes from a different racial demographic and historically these relationships have been prohibited and/or experienced social opposition to their union. Stressful events refer to situations that would pose challenging for couples such as financial strain, transition to parenthood, conflict or in the case of this study, experiences of discrimination because of the Black-White racial composition of the couple. The model suggests being in a Black-White marriage may add stress (e.g. discrimination) to a couple and make the relationship more vulnerable to negative marital outcomes.

The second pathway is from stressful events to adaptive processes. Adaptive processes are the ways in which couples cope with stressful events such as marital difficulties, differences, transitions (Karney & Bradbury, 1995) and/or discrimination. Adaptive processes reveal the ways in which couples treat and respond to each other during marital difficulties, transitions, and differences of opinions. These interactive adaptive processes couples engage in may be maladaptive (e.g. physical aggression) as well as adaptive (e.g. resolving problems, communication). Considering and measuring couples' adaptive processes are important as evidence suggests they predict marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Karney & Crown, 2007). In the present study, problem-solving serves as the adaptive process used by couples to cope with discrimination. Problem-solving reflects a couple's ability to adjust to and together resolve issues (Lange, Van Der Wall, & Emmelkamp, 2000) making it an adaptive process. The VSA model proposes that stressful events (experiences of discrimination) negatively influence a couples' ability to adapt (problem solve) that ultimately influences marital outcomes.

The third pathway links adaptive processes to marital quality. VSA proposes couples' adaptive interactions can enhance marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Specifically,

the interaction of stressful events and couples' adaptive skills has the ability to overcome the impact of stressful events on marriage. In other words, couples' problems-solving skills are likely to buffer the impact that the experience of discrimination may have on marital satisfaction. By applying the VSA model, this study will test the extent to which problem-solving moderates the relationship between experiences of couple discrimination and marital satisfaction.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Interracial Couples and Discrimination

Racial discrimination has been identified by a growing body of research as contributing to an array of medical and psychological outcomes (Berger & Sarnyai, 2015). Racism (perceived or real) has been associated with hormonal and neural effects, cardiovascular disease, schizophrenia, mood and anxiety disorders, bodily pain, oxidative stress and many other negative health outcomes (Berger & Sarnyai, 2015; Paradies et al., 2015). Bratter and Eschach (2006) compared levels of psychological distress between interracial couples and intra-racial couples. Overall, the study found interracial couples reported higher levels of distress. White women who were intermarried (with the exception of those married to Asian men) reported significantly higher levels of distress compared to White women married to White men. The study found no significant differences in distress among White men: regardless of whom they were married to their levels of distress were similar. Another important finding of this study was that there were no significant differences in distress levels between Black spouses who intermarried and those who married someone of the same race. However, non-Black adults whose spouses were Black reported higher levels of distress than their counterparts married to someone of the same race. Socioeconomic variables only partially accounted for the elevated distress levels of the intermarried. These findings seem to mirror social distributions of power and privilege (Burton et al., 2010) and the authors proposed that distress was linked to the social distance suffered by Black people, which also affected non-Black spouses. Social distance is defined as the degree of acceptance or rejection of social contact between individuals belonging to diverse racial, ethnic, or class groups (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

The body of research analyzing the association between discrimination and marital outcomes (or social relationships in general) is scarce and this scarcity grows for Black-White couples, thus demonstrating an important gap in the literature (Bryant et al., 2010; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004; Trial et al., 2012). Leslie and Letiecq (2004) studied Black and White interracial couples and the extent to which racial identity, social support, and experience of discrimination could predict their marital quality. The researchers unexpectedly found that experiences of discrimination were not significantly related to marital quality. The researchers propose this may be because all participants were recruited from the Washington DC/Baltimore area, where there is a high rate of intermarriage and likely less discrimination against interracial marriages. Leslie and Letiecq (2004) urged for further research exploring discrimination and interracial marriage outcomes.

Qualitative studies have found interracial couples experience of discrimination ranges from the loss of family relationships to fear of safety because of the racial identity of their spouses (Killian, 2012; Yancey, 2007). Yancey (2007) found that most often White spouses' awareness of discrimination was a result of their lived experiences of discrimination because of the racial identity of their spouses. The White spouses reported previously minimizing or doubting the extent of racial discrimination their spouses would experience; the second hand knowledge of racial discrimination was not enough for White spouses to accept its reality. Some of the White spouses reported it was not until they personally experienced discrimination and humiliation because of the racial identity of their spouse that they began accepting the reality of racial discrimination. The results demonstrated that Black-White couples' primary experiences of discrimination, which were mostly overt and hostile compared to the other interracial unions

in the study, led the White spouses in Black-White relationships to create a shift in their racial awareness, racial narratives and thus their own racial identity.

Nationally representative data shows that White Americans are the least likely of all major racial groups to intermarry (Bratter & King, 2008); only 11% of White Americans marry someone outside of their race or ethnicity (Pew Research Center, 2017). By comparison, 18% of Black Americans marry someone of another race or ethnicity (Pew Research Center, 2017) and few of these marriages are with White partners (Qian & Litcher, 2007). Of all intermarried couples in the United States, only 7% percent consist of a Black husband and White wife and 3% include a Black wife and White husband (Pew Research Center, 2017). The low percentages of intermarriages among Black and White Americans may be explained by social boundaries that are “highly rigid and resilient to change” (Qian & Litcher, 2007, p. 90). Furthermore, for Black Americans, race and skin tone continue to outweigh education, living in racially integrated neighborhoods and other factors that can facilitate social mobility and/or intermarriage (Bryant et al., 2010; Burton et al., 2010; Qian & Litcher, 2007).

Unfortunately, for the few Black-White couples, the risk of marital dissolution is high at 20% compared to other inter-marital groups (e.g., Hispanic-White couples 13.5% and Asian-White couples 8.4%) (Zhang & Hook, 2009). The authors suggested that marital dissolution among interracial couples was correlated with the social distance between the racial groups of the dyad. The researchers further found that Black husband-White wife couples were the least stable of all couplings in their sample. Zhang and Hook (2009) asserted that their results reflect the ongoing prejudice against Black people, especially men. Bratter and King (2008) reported similar findings of Black husbands-White wives being twice as likely to divorce compared to

White-White couples. However, they also found that White husband-Black wife couples were 44% less likely to divorce compared to White-White couples.

The literature has found Black-White couples to experience more racism than other interracial couples with a White spouse (Gaines, Clark, & Afful, 2015; Yancey, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2017). Research has also found experiences of racism and discrimination to be primary factors in the social isolation Black-White couples experience daily at work, with family and during leisure (Hibler & Shinew, 2002). The researchers report that for the interracial couples in their study, isolation was perceived as externally imposed, in contrast to choosing to withdraw from social network participation (Hibler & Shinew, 2002).

Problem Solving and Couples

Research has established a link between problem-solving skills and marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Karney & Crown, 2007). Thus, suggesting that couples' problem-solving extends beyond the content of the problem they are resolving and reveals more about their process of effectively working together. Couples that are able to manage conflict and resolve problems together well seem to be able to do so regardless of the specific issue at hand. A longitudinal study by Johnson et al. (2005) found problem-solving skills significantly predicts marital satisfaction with positive skills mitigating the detrimental effects of negative ones on marital satisfaction. Similarly, Orbuch et al.'s (2002) longitudinal study of Black couples and White couples found that destructive conflict styles significantly predicted divorce for both groups. Among interracial couples, Dainton (2015) found conflict management (e.g., cooperating and apologizing) to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction.

Some of this establishes problem-solving as a mechanism to combat racism. For example, to protect the family from having to experience discrimination, Hibler and Shinew

(2002) found that before engaging in a leisurely activity, every Black-White couple in their study extensively researched and assessed the activity's environment. Many sent one partner to the location of the intended activity to inspect the social environment in order to avoid subjecting themselves and/or their children to racism and ensure their comfort, psychological and physical safety (Hibler & Shinew, 2002). The study illustrates how couples vulnerable to the stress of racial discrimination elicit adaptive skills in efforts to protect their collective wellbeing. Such problem-solving skills may moderate the relationship between racial discrimination and marital outcomes (Bryant et al., 2010), although this feature has not been explored for interracial couples.

Killian's (2012) qualitative study explored the strategies interracial couples practiced when faced by social opposition to their union. The results demonstrated interracial couples would often minimize presentation of differences, deny or minimize the history and context of race by replacing it with narratives of individualism (e.g. in this society we are all equal, all you need to do is try hard enough), and avoid certain topics (e.g., race, social issues) in order to avoid discomfort and/or conflict. The way this manifested for these couples included some couples agreeing to act as if they don't know each other in certain public spaces. Some spouses would avoid certain public spaces altogether in the presence of their spouse or children. Some of the couples also learned to compartmentalize facets of their identity, for example creating clear distinctions between ethnicity and family. Although the author discussed the various implications of these approaches, these were considered adaptive strategies to hostile environments that threatened the safety of these couples. There is a need to further investigate how spouses socialized by different ethnoracial ideologies and burdened by racism navigate the intersection of race and marital success in the United States (Dainton, 2015).

Marital Satisfaction

Although the literature discussed above reveal how the social contexts of interracial couples can be risky to their marital satisfaction, one study found interracial couples reporting higher marital satisfaction than intra-racial couples (Troy, Lewis-Smith, & Laurenceau, 2006). The researchers found no differences in relationship quality, conflict style, coping, or attachment styles between interracial and intra-racial couples. The literature is in need of further empirical analysis of relationship outcomes among interracial couples (Gaines et al., 2015). Orbuch et al.'s (2002) longitudinal study with Black couples and White couples found that despite accounting for other interactional factors (e.g., conflict styles, communication) and socioeconomic factors (e.g., income, education) that predicted divorce, they could not account for the strong role race had in predicting divorce. This study suggests that the impact of race on successful marriage extends beyond healthy conflict, communication methods and socioeconomic status. Hence, further exploration on the context of race and its impact on marital outcomes is needed.

There is also a shortage of research exploring marital satisfaction among several ethnic minorities (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008). The lack of diversity in marital literature is concerning because it limits the generalizability of conclusions made through research (Fincham & Beach, 2010). In consideration of the aforementioned, research has found relationship satisfaction to be associated with personal well-being (e.g., self-esteem, global happiness, life satisfaction) (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007) and physical health (e.g., lower mortality rates, lower cardiovascular reactivity during marital conflict) (Proulx, Helms & Buehler, 2007; Robles et al., 2014) making marital satisfaction an important measurement of relationship health.

Present Study

Karney and Bradbury (1995) called for family scholars to expand the understanding of how couples interactions with each other allow them to overcome stressful events. Amato (2010) reported the need for family researchers to increase focus on positive interpersonal processes to expand our understanding of marital quality and satisfaction. The present study directly address the call for more research on couples especially interracial couples by investigating whether problem-solving serves as a mechanism through which interracial couples are able to cultivate marital satisfaction despite the detrimental outcomes of discrimination on marriages. The proposed moderation model examined is presented in Figure 2.

Given the impact of racial discrimination on marital satisfaction and the role that problem-solving plays in improving marital satisfaction, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Experiences of couple discrimination due to being in a Black-White marriage will be negatively linked to marital satisfaction.

H2: Problem-solving will moderate the relationship between experiences of couple discrimination due to being in a Black-White marriage and marital satisfaction.

The above hypotheses will be tested after controlling for type of Black-White union (Black husband-White wife or Black wife-White husband) henceforth referred to as 'group', age, income level, number of children, length of marriage, religiosity, highest level of education, childhood intergroup contact. Prior research has found age, household income, length of marriage, and children to be associated with marital satisfaction (Bryant et al., 2008; Bryant et al., 2010; Karney & Bradbury, 1995). These factors have also been associated with divorce (Amato, 2010; Bratter & King, 2008) hence the need to control for their influence. Controlling for religion and childhood intergroup contact (diversity of neighborhood, school and friend group) was informed by the literature's association of these variables with divorce and separation

(Amato, 2010; Zhang & Hook, 2009). Couple composition has also been associated with marital stability. For example, Black husband-White wife have been found to have lower marital stability compared to Black wife-White husband or other interracial marriages (Bratter & King, 2008; Zhang & Hook, 2009).

Chapter 3 - Methods

Sample and Procedures

Data for this study was extracted from a larger secondary dataset collected on Black-White marriages by a Qualtrics Panel in May 2016. The use of this data set and study was approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Kansas State University. Qualtrics charged \$19 for each couple they recruited. Payments to the participants (undisclosed) were made by Qualtrics. All participants were in Black-White heterosexual marriages and between 18 and 40 years of age. The ages were restricted to account for the recent changes in public perception of interracial marriages (Pew Research Center, 2017) likely influencing the experience of discrimination for these couples. Data from both spouses were included in the study. Couples with at least one spouse born outside of the United States were excluded from the sample used in this study. This decision was informed by research that suggests country of birth is significantly associated with marital satisfaction (Bryant et al., 2008).

The final sample for this study consisted of 178 couples. The demographic description is presented in Table 1. The ages of Black spouses ($M = 31.78$ years, $SD = 4.38$ years, $Range = 22$ to 40 years) were similar to those of White spouses ($M = 31.94$ years, $SD = 4.13$ years, $Range = 19$ to 41 years). The sample made up of 93 Black husband and White wife couples and 85 White husband and Black wife couples. The mean length of marriage of all 178 couples was 6.64 years ($SD = 4.57$ years, $Range = 1$ month to 21.42 years). The couples had an average of 2.88 ($SD = 1.25$, $Range = 1$ to 6) children.

Most participants attended college (81.4% percent of Black spouses and 83.6% of White spouses). Bachelors degrees were earned by 35.4% of Black spouses and 39% of White spouses. Black (12.9%) and White (12.4%) participants also earned Masters and/or Doctorate Degrees with similar frequencies. About one quarter of participants (25.8% to 27.1%) reported an annual household income

less than \$49,999. Approximately 35% of participants reported annual household income between \$50,000 to \$69,999 and 38% report income of \$70,000 or above. Religious affiliations were similar across racial groups with Christianity being the predominant religion (66.1% for Black spouses and 65.5% for White spouses).

Measures

The following measures were used to quantify the constructs examined in this study and are presented in the Appendices.

Experiences of Couple Discrimination

This measure consists of six adapted items from Trail et al.'s (2012) measure that assessed individual experiences of discrimination. This study adapted the measure by adding the term 'interracial couple' to items in efforts to measure the experiences of discrimination couples faced as a unit because they were in an interracial relationship. Items were scaled from 0 = *never* to 3 = *most of the time* asking participants to report how often they experienced six types of discrimination because they were an interracial couple. This included being treated as inferior, people acting fearful, being treated with less respect than others, people treating them as if they had been dishonest, called names or insulted, and being threatened or harassed (Trail et al., 2012). The adapted scale is presented in Appendix A. Higher scores for this measure indicate greater experiences of discrimination because the couple was interracial. The study that originally used this measure and focused on the individual experience of discrimination, reported alpha reliability scores of .75 for husbands and .69 for wives (Trail et al., 2012). Cronbach alphas of the adapted scale indicated high reliability for wives ($\alpha = .93$) and husbands ($\alpha = .90$) in this study.

Problem Solving

The couples' problem-solving skills were assessed using Lange et al., (1991) Interactional

Problem-Solving Inventory (IPSI) that measures couples' ability to work together to solve problems. IPSI consists of 17 items such as "Before deciding upon a solution for a particular problem, we first view the matter from different angles," and "After we have discussed a particular problem, I often feel that my point of view has not been properly acknowledged" scaled from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*. The full scale is presented in Appendix B. Lower IPSI scores indicate that the couple is unable to effectively address their problems (Lange et al., 2000). The measure was found to be reliable with Cronbach alphas of .88 (wives) and .87 (husbands) in this study.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was assessed using the Funk and Rogge's (2007) four-item Couple Satisfaction Index or CSI-4 that measures the extent participants were satisfied with their marriages. Sample questions included, "How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?" and "In general how satisfied are you with your relationship?" scaled from 0 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Completely*. The complete scale is presented in Appendix C. Higher scores indicate greater levels of satisfaction with relationship (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Cronbach alpha reliability scores were the same for both husbands and wives ($\alpha = .92$) in this study.

Control Variables

Religiosity was measured using the 5-item version of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012) presented in Appendix D. Participants were asked about religious attendance and beliefs (e.g., "How often do you take part in religious services?" and "How often do you pray?"). Responses were summed and recoded so that higher scores reflected greater religiosity. Cronbach alphas for this study were .86 for White spouses and .87 for Black spouses.

Childhood intergroup contact was measured using three items adapted from Phinney, Ferguson, and Tate (1997). The measure enquired about intergroup contact in participants' neighborhood, school

and friend group while growing up. Participants were asked to complete three statements: “In my neighborhood where I grew up...” “In my school while growing up...,” and “In my friend group while growing up...” Participants responded using a 4-point Likert scale from (1) “Nearly everyone was from my ethnic or racial group, (2) Most of the people were from my ethnic or racial group, (3) there was about an equal mix of my ethnic group or other groups, and (4) Most of the people were from different ethnic groups. Higher scores indicated more exposure to intergroup contact while growing up. The Cronbach alphas for these three items together in this study was .89 for White spouses and .89 for Black spouses.

Age, length of marriage (in months), number of children, income levels were included as continuous variables. Group membership was coded 1 for Black husbands-White wife and 2 for Black wife-White husband.

Data Analysis

Ledderman and Kenny (2012) advise the use of Common Fate Model (CFM) with dyadic data when analyzing constructs that have an effect on both members. When analyzing common forces that influence both dyad members (e.g. shared life events, couple discrimination) and/or characteristics of a relationship (e.g. relationship harmony/disharmony, problem-solving) CFM is a more accurate model than actor-partner independence (APIM) model (Ledderman & Kenny, 2012). The CFM assumption is that dyad members are similar to each other due to the shared influence of the dyadic common fate variable. On the other hand, the APIM’s assumption is that the nonindependence in dyads is a result of partner effect, direct effect of one’s causal variable on the outcome variable of the other, adjusted for the effect on their own outcome variable, the actor effect (Ledderman & Kenny, 2012). CFM allows for the measurement to occur at the level of the dyad versus at the individual level. The measures for CFM analysis must assess constructs at the level of the relationship rather than the self or perceptions of their

partner.

In this study, participants' experiences of discrimination against their union represent shared external influences that may affect the dyad. Problem-solving and marital satisfaction are characteristics of the relationship itself, which may also have an impact on the members of the dyad. Each of these factors are conceptualized at the level of the dyad rather than individually, making the relationship itself the object of observation in this study. This study included three common fate variables: experiences of couple discrimination, problem-solving, and marital satisfaction as presented in Figure 2. Each of these consists of two manifest variables as indicators: husband responses and wife responses.

The model tested for moderation effects of problem-solving onto marital satisfaction. For this, a new common fate interaction variable defined by the interaction of common fate experiences of couple discrimination and problem-solving was created. All variables were mean centered to avoid high probability of high multicollinearity with the interaction variable (Aiken & West, 1991).

The model further controlled for possible confounding factors including income level, religiosity, age, duration of marriage, number of children, the childhood intergroup contact, and group membership (Black husband-White wife, White husband-Black wife), all of which have been found to be significantly associated with marital satisfaction and marital instability (Amato, 2010; Bryant et al., 2008; Bryant et al., 2010; Fincham & Beach, 2010; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Zhang & Hook, 2009).

The proposed model was analyzed using structural equation modeling with MPlus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) software. Preliminary analyses – descriptive statistics, correlations and *t*-tests were run on the data using SPSS V. 24 (IBM, March, 2016). To confirm the proposed model presented in Figure 2, an alternative model with problem-solving and marital satisfaction reversed was tested. The alternative model essentially tested if experiences of couple discrimination would be linked to problem-

solving and if marital satisfaction would moderate the relationship between experiences of couple discrimination and problem-solving.

Common Fate Models are saturated models with zero degree of freedoms. Hence, fit indices Akaike information criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) will be used to compare models. Smaller AIC/BIC values indicate better fit of the model to the observed data (Little, Boviard, & Widaman, 2006). A moderation model with control for only group membership will be compared to a moderation model with seven control variables: income level, religiosity, age, duration of marriage, number of children, childhood intergroup contact, and group membership (Black husband-White wife, White husband-Black wife) in order to determine goodness of fit.

Chapter 4 - Results

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1. Results of *t*-tests indicated no significant differences between spouses with respect to problem-solving and marital satisfaction. Results however, demonstrate differences among Black and White spouses for experiences of couple discrimination. Black spouses reported significantly higher experiences of couple discrimination ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .77$) than White spouses ($M = 1.95$, $SD = .75$); $t(344) = -3.31$, $p = .001$. Given the continued presence of racial oppression in the United States it is expected that Black spouses would be more aware of racism in society and thus report experiences of racial couple discrimination at higher rates than White spouses.

Differences across groups (Black husband-White wife and White husband-Black wife) were examined using *t*-tests. Results indicated significant differences in experiences of couple discrimination among Black spouses, $t(172) = -2.54$, $p = .012$. Black husbands married to White wives experienced more discrimination ($M = 2.29$, $SD = .80$) compared to Black wives married to White husbands ($M = 1.98$, $SD = .79$). Similarly differences were found in experiences of couple discrimination among White spouses, $t(170) = -2.12$, $p = .035$. White wives married to Black husbands experiences more couple discrimination ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .75$) compared to White husbands married to Black wives ($M = 1.92$, $SD = .72$). These findings suggest as per the reports of both Black and White spouses, Black men married to White women experience greater social opposition to their union than White men married to Black women. These differences may be due to the dynamics of power and racist narratives based on the intersections of race and gender. Due to the small numbers in each of the groups, comparison across groups were not possible. Subsequent analysis controlled for the effect of group differences.

Table 2 presents bivariate correlations among measured variables for both Black and White spouses. The intradyadic correlations were robust for experiences of couple racial discrimination ($r = .71, p < .001$), problem-solving ($r = .73, p < .001$), and marital satisfaction ($r = .67, p < .001$) warranting the estimation of common fate variables. There were no significant correlations found between experiences of couple discrimination and problem-solving. However, Black ($r = -.22, p = .004$) and White ($r = -.22, p = .003$) spouses' experiences of couple discrimination were negatively associated with marital satisfaction. In addition, Black ($r = -.21, p = .007$) and White ($r = -.24, p = .002$) spouses' experiences of couple discrimination were negatively associated with their spouses' reports of marital satisfaction. These results reflect the inter-relatedness and nonindependence of spouses.

Results indicated a strong correlation between Black ($r = .51, p < .001$) and White ($r = .50, p < .001$) spouses' problem-solving and their own reports of marital satisfaction. Black ($r = .42, p < .001$) and White ($r = .41, p = .001$) spouses' problem-solving skills were linked to their spouse's report of marital satisfaction. In conclusion, correlations between measured variables were overall as expected. The large correlations within dyads provide evidence for common dyadic constructs, hence, validating the use of Common Fate analysis (Ledderman & Kenny, 2012).

Common Fate Moderation Model

In order to test the fit of the proposed common fate moderation model to the observed data, a model without control variables was first analyzed followed by the proposed model with control variables (group membership, age, income level, number of children, length of marriage, religiosity, and childhood intergroup contact). Model fit was determined by the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) values. Smaller values

indicate better fit (Little, Boviard, & Widaman, 2006). The model controlling for only group membership produced an AIC of 2276 and a BIC of 2349. The full moderation model with seven control variables produced smaller AIC (1971) and BIC (2072) values and hence was retained.

The factor loadings of all three common fate variables were significant at the .001 level for all three variables. Factor loadings ranged from .79 to .87, indicating that spouses share common experiences of discrimination, problem-solving skills and marital satisfaction. Unstandardized and standardized results of the common fate moderation model are presented in Table 3. This model accounts for 73% ($p < .001$) of the variance in couples' marital satisfaction.

H1: Experiences of couple discrimination will be negatively linked to marital satisfaction. As hypothesized, experiences of couple discrimination was directly linked to marital satisfaction. The direct pathway was negative and significant ($B = -.42, \beta = -.28, p = .001$). Each unit of discrimination reported by the couple decreased their reports of marital satisfaction by .28. Results confirmed experiences of discrimination have a negative impact on marital satisfaction.

H2: Problem-solving will moderate the relationship between experiences of couple discrimination and marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported. Problem-solving significantly moderated the relationship between discrimination and marital satisfaction ($B = .59, \beta = .27, p = .002$). This finding is important since discrimination decreased marital satisfaction by a factor of .28 ($p = .001$). The results suggested that problem-solving is positively linked to marital satisfaction. Specifically, problem-solving has a direct positive effect on marital satisfaction ($B = .75, \beta = .62, p < .001$) and when couples experience discrimination because of their union, their ability to problem solve helps buffer its impact on marital satisfaction.

Figure 3 illustrates how problem-solving positively moderates the relationship between couples' experiences of discrimination and marital satisfaction. As couples' experiences of discrimination and problem-solving increased, marital satisfaction increased. At low experiences of couple discrimination, couples reported similar levels of marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction began to diverge when more discrimination was experienced; the direction of marital satisfaction was highly dependent on problem-solving skills. Average and low problem-solving skills reduced marital satisfaction while high problem-solving skills increased marital satisfaction. Figure 3 demonstrates vast differences in marital satisfaction between those couples with low, average and high problem-solving when discrimination is at its highest point. Couples with high experiences of discrimination and low problem-solving skills reported the lowest marital satisfaction.

Alternative Model

The alternative model was another Common Fate moderation model with problem-solving and marital satisfaction reversed using the same control variables as the original model. Fit indices 1999 for AIC and 2099 for BIC. The alternative model tested if experiences of couple discrimination would be linked to problem-solving. Results found couple discrimination was significantly linked to problem-solving ($B = .28, \beta = .21, p = .02$). Next, this model tested if marital satisfaction would moderate the relationship between experiences of couple discrimination and problem-solving. Results suggested marital satisfaction was a significant moderator ($B = .32, \beta = .20, p = .03$) of the relationship between experiences of couple discrimination and problem-solving. These findings suggested that the more couples' experienced discrimination, the more they engaged in problem-solving skills. In addition, couples' marital satisfaction helped couples engage in more problem-solving even when couples

experienced discrimination for being an interracial couple. The cross sectional nature of the observed data does not allow the true temporal ordering of the variables to be determined. In other words, this data does not allow us to determine whether problem-solving predicts marital satisfaction or whether marital satisfaction effects problem-solving. Hence, the results are not predictive and should be interpreted with caution.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

The goal of this study was to empirically test the moderating effect of couples' problem-solving on the relationship between the experiences of couple discrimination and marital satisfaction for Black-White interracial couples. Couples' ability to problem solve together was found to significantly moderate the relationship between the experiences of couple discrimination and marital satisfaction. The role of couples' problem-solving as a moderator of racial discrimination on marital outcomes was proposed by Bryant et al. (2010) in their conceptual framework for African American couples. The VSA model also suggests the interaction of stressful events (e.g., experience of discrimination) and couples' adaptive skills (e.g., problem-solving) have the ability to overcome the impact of stressful events on marriage. The results provide empirical support for this proposition with a Black-White couple sample. Couples' problems solving skills served to buffer the impact that experiences of discrimination has on marital satisfaction. The VSA model interprets problem-solving as a measure of interracial couples' ability to adapt together to the undesirable experiences of discrimination that they face for being in an interracial union. Results are consistent with the VSA framework whereby interracial couples' ability to adapt and interact with each other allows them to manage the stress from racial discrimination in a way that maintains their satisfaction with their marriage.

Previous studies on interracial couples have suggested a variety of strategies used to manage unwanted experiences of racial discrimination and protect their relationship (Hibler & Shinew, 2002; Killian, 2012). Interracial couples experience hostile and inhumane treatment that denies them a sense of security or legitimate citizenship in public spaces (Killian, 2012). The problem at the root of this discrimination is racism. Couples cannot solve this institutionalized

oppressive system with their own strength. Interracial couples must then learn to manage their responses to it, which can be adaptive or maladaptive. The adaptive process of problem-solving allows couples to negotiate and/or create ways to confront, avoid, address, and/or interpret experiences of racial discrimination together.

The VSA model suggests couples' adaptive interactions can change marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995) and results from this study support the claim. Interracial couples' problem-solving was positively linked to marital satisfaction. These results are consistent with the consensus in the literature of the link between problem-solving skills and marital satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2005; Karney & Bradbury, 1995). The current study further aligns with Dainton's (2015) findings with interracial couples, which found conflict management (e.g., cooperating and apologizing) to significantly predict marital satisfaction.

Results indicate that the experiences of couple discrimination is negatively linked to marital satisfaction. These results are consistent with previous studies that report negative associations between discrimination and marital satisfaction among Black and Hispanic groups (Murry et al., 2008; Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Trial et al., 2012). The research exploring this association among Black-White interracial couples is scarce, as is the research analyzing discrimination and marital outcomes, and social relationships in general (Bryant et al., 2010; Trial et al., 2012). Consequently, the findings of this study serve to help fill these gaps in the literature by providing evidence for discrimination's negative impact on marital satisfaction of Black-White couples. The study found no significant differences between Black and White spouses' reports of marital satisfaction. These findings reflect previous studies that did not find significantly different reports of marital satisfaction between different racial group compositions (Troy et al., 2006). The ability of Black-White couples to maintain their marital satisfaction at a

level equivalent to non-Black-White couples reflects the extent of effort required from the interracial couples to protect their marriages from the potential detriments of discriminatory acts. The significant factor loadings of the common fate problem-solving variable indicate that the spouses share similar problem-solving skills. This may suggest that couples who use similar strategies to solve problems are more resilient and able to manage their experiences of discrimination. The significant factor loadings of the experiences of couple discrimination common fate variable further indicates that couples in this study experienced similar types of discrimination and are perhaps able to relate to their spouses' experience, hence easing the process of confiding in each other. Whether these couples had developed strategies of problem-solving together or happen to gravitate to similar problem-solving skills is unknown. However, given that the couples experience the same forms of discrimination, they may be similarly attuned to how they are perceived by others, which may explain their ability to join forces as they learn to cope with the ruthlessness of discrimination.

Limitations and Future Research

The small sample size of Black husband-White wife and White husband-Black wife unions did not allow group comparison across different gender-racial compositions of Black-White marriages. As such, the differences in experiences of discrimination (Yancey, 2007), psychological distress (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006) and rates of marital dissolution (Zhang & Hook, 2009) found across different gender-racial dyad compositions could not be teased out. In this study, the groups differed in the experiences of couple discrimination. Black spouses reported couple discrimination at significantly higher rates than their White spouses. The findings are consistent with the literature, which suggest ethnic minorities, especially those of African decent, are most aware of race and racism (Killian, 2012; Paradies et al., 2015; Pew

Research Center, 2017; Yancey, 2007).

The results also demonstrated significant differences in reports of couple discrimination among gender-racial compositions of Black-White marriages. Black husbands married to White wives reported greater experiences of couple discrimination than Black wives married to White husbands; just as White women married to Black men reported more experiences of couple discrimination than White men married to Black women. The results echo Zhang and Hook's (2009) proposition that findings reflect society's persistent racist persecution and distrust of Black men. These findings are also consistent with Bratter and Eschbach's (2006) results that found intermarried White wives had higher levels of distress compared to intermarried White husbands. This study supports the assertion that there is something specific about the experience of White womanhood and bi-cultural experiences that warrants further exploration. The findings also suggests the power and privilege White men have access to allows them to function in spaces where they are not often subject to couple discrimination.

Overall these findings are consistent with the dynamics of power distributed through a racist and sexist society whose historical features include: the myths of Black men as White women's rapists, White men's obligation to defend White women from the threat of Black men, Black women as chronically promiscuous, and the assumption that White men possess an incontestable right to Black women's bodies (Davis, 1981). The racist Black male rapist myth provides context to the greater social opposition and couple discrimination against Black husbands-White wives. The White male's historical obligation to defend White womanhood may help explain White wives experiences of couple discrimination. A White woman married to a Black man from Yancey's (2007) study recounted her experience of couple discrimination riding in the car with her husband, when unjustly pulled over by a White male police officer.

The wife reported the officer aggressively approached them, silenced her husband, and asked her to step out of the vehicle. She then reports the officer inquired about her safety, stated that she did not appear to be a prostitute, and Black men and White women are rarely seen in vehicles together. The wife expressed how infuriating this experience of couple discrimination was while also expressing how perplexed she was by the officer's seemingly genuine concern for her safety. This example from Yancey's (2007) study provides a poignant illustration of how the White male obligation to defend White womanhood narrative (Davis, 1981) may underlie experiences of couple discrimination for intermarried White women. White husbands' and Black wives' reports of experiencing less couple discrimination in this study may also be contextualized by the disenfranchising narrative of the promiscuous Black woman as well as the historical acceptance of White men's power over and sexual exploitation of Black women. This study provides evidence for the need to further understand the unique implications couple discrimination may have on varied gender-racial dyads. Future research needs a larger sample to further explore differences across the varied gender-racial couple compositions. Intersectional research to further explore the role race, gender, sexual orientation, and age differences may have on experiences of discrimination, problem-solving and marital outcomes are also warranted.

This study used marital satisfaction as the relationship outcome while the VSA model also includes marital stability. A replication of this study with the addition of marital stability may help explain what contributes to higher marital dissolution among interracial couples that report comparable marital satisfaction to racially homogenous marital dyads. Another limitation of this study is that the problem-solving measure was not specific to managing the discrimination targeted at their relationship. There is a need for more focused measures to assess how challenges that arise from issues pertaining to race and ethnicity are managed in interracial

relationships (Burton, 2010). Interracial couples use a variety of strategies to survive living in a racist society (Killian, 2012). Dainton's (2015) findings suggest that the maintenance activities that predict marital satisfaction in interracial couples may differ from intra-racial couples. The field would benefit from measures intended to explore how couples use problem-solving to address issues specific to racial discrimination. The problem-solving skills interracial couples use for issues specific to racial discrimination remain unclear. Our findings, however, suggest that when interracial couples are able to interact and work together to resolve problems regardless of the context of the problem (e.g., couple discrimination) it is useful and instrumental to the satisfaction of their marriages.

Hibbler and Shinenew (2002) found that interracial couples put immense effort in protecting the relationship and family from experiences discrimination, make an effort to be informed about their social environments and prevent exposure to hostile environments when possible. More research is needed to further explore the ways in which interracial couples cope with discrimination. Interracial couples' ability to manage discrimination likely goes beyond problem-solving skills and includes a number of variables. For example, Yancey's (2007) findings suggested that the racial attitudes and awareness of the White spouses played a meaningful role in the marriages of interracial couples, especially in Black-White couples. The literature is in need of further conceptualization and analysis of how spouses socialized by different ethnoracial ideologies and troubled by racism balance the intersection of race and marital success.

Another limitation of this study is the use of cross-sectional data, which make it challenging to analyze the direction of causality and temporal ordering of constructs examined. Future research should include longitudinal data in order to examine the direction of causality,

temporal ordering of variables and further confirm the applicability of the VSA model with interracial couples.

Strengths of the Study

This study took advantage of a rarely utilized data analysis for dyadic data (Ledermann & Kenny, 2012). In Ledermann and Kenny's (2012) review of the literature they found common fate models used only five times since the model was first introduced in 1985. On the contrary the actor-partner interdependence model has dominated dyadic data analysis with hundreds of publications (Ledermann & Kenny, 2012). Common Fate Models uses the dyad as the unit of analysis versus analyzing one spouse's impact on the other. Using CFM was particularly relevant for this study since each of the measures was conceptualized at the dyad level, exploring the impact on the relationship as a whole, versus individuals within the relationship.

Another unique contribution of this study is its contribution to the scarce literature on Black-White interracial couples. Most studies on interracial couples do not differentiate or isolate the interracial composition of the couples (e.g., Troy et al., 2006). The diversity within interracial couples can have unique implications for the frequency and type of discriminatory experiences making it important to study interracial groups separately.

Clinical Implications

The present study has implications for clinicians working with Black-White couples and interracial couples in general. The results suggest the importance of assessing the discrimination interracial couples face and how they are managed within the relationship. Clinicians should explore with couples their process of understanding the discrimination they experience, and how these experiences affect their marriages. It is important to name the experience and call it what it is – "Racism." The naming of the experience can in turn help couples grieve and condemn its

existence, externalize it and develop appropriate rhetoric to counter it to offer just one example of problem-solving that may be developed to confront it.

In order to assist couples with this exploration, clinicians must be acutely aware of their own assumptions, values, and beliefs regarding race, interracial relationships, acculturation, and assimilation (Hardy & Laszlofy; Kenney, 2002). Clinicians should not be alarmed if interracial couples deny any impact of race, or race defining any aspect of their relationship. Studies in geographical areas with greater prevalence and more acceptance of interracial unions have found no association between discrimination and marital outcomes (Leslie & Letieqc, 2004). Other studies have found that elevated levels of distress among interracial couples is relative to the racial composition of the dyad (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006).

Colorblind narratives are often expressed by individuals in comments such as “We are just like any other couple,” “Race does not matter in our relationship,” or “I don’t see race or color” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2008; Killian, 2012). The colorblind perspective is apparently a common narrative among interracial couples (Killian, 2012; Leslie & Letieqc, 2004) although these same couples report that racial identity (Leslie & Letieqc, 2004, Yancey 2007) and experiences of racial discrimination (Killian, 2012) have a significant impact on marital outcomes. The appearance of contradictory stances may reflect the inability of interracial couples to feel empowered to recognize and acknowledge discrimination but instead adapt a narrative of colorblindness that is less provocative. Scholars have conceptualized this contradiction as a coping mechanism or survival strategy (Killian, 2012; Leslie & Letieqc, 2004). The literature reminds us that historically interracial marriages have been pathologized (e.g., neurotic self-hate), minimized as psychosexual attraction to someone physically different, considered hatred towards one’s own racial group, and reduced to a rebellion against parental

authority (Kenney, 2002; Logan, Freeman & McRoy, 1987). It is understandable why these couples may want to avoid emphasizing race as an important factor in their marriage. Our role as clinicians may help couples identify the narrative they have of race in general (Kenney, 2002).

Scholars argue that a limited awareness of racial discrimination may prevent people from learning effective defenses in dealing with possibly hostile environments and/or prevent them from actively working to change these oppressive structures (Neville et al., 2010). Therapists may then help interracial couples identify a variety of narratives, behavioral skills, relational and/or environmental factors that serve to protect their relationship from the detrimental outcomes of racism. Integrating a multicultural lens to treatment allows clinicians to be informed of the ways in which race, ethnicity and culture may be associated with the presenting problem in treatment and provides opportunities to make the covert, overt (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2008). Training in clinical interventions for working with interracial couples may enhance their ability to help interracial couples take the racialized experiences of their spouses seriously (Kenney, 20002; Yancey, 2007).

As clinicians if we choose to ignore the impact that race and ethnicity have on couple and family dynamics, we may easily collude with the racist ideology and dominant social discourses of race (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2008; Killian, 2012; Neville et al., 2000) that interracial couples struggle with daily. The findings of this study are a source of empowerment to Black-White marriages. The results suggest that problem-solving, something within their control, can serve as a buffer to the detrimental effect of larger systemic issues such as racism on their relationship and well-being. These couples are resilient and are able to counter discriminatory acts against them by working together to solve problems. Providing interracial couples a safe environment to express and recount incidences of discrimination can help give voice to their pain and suffering.

Such shared experiences can help draw couples together who can then jointly develop strategies to counter and manage these discriminatory acts.

Figure 1 Vulnerability Stress Adaptation Model

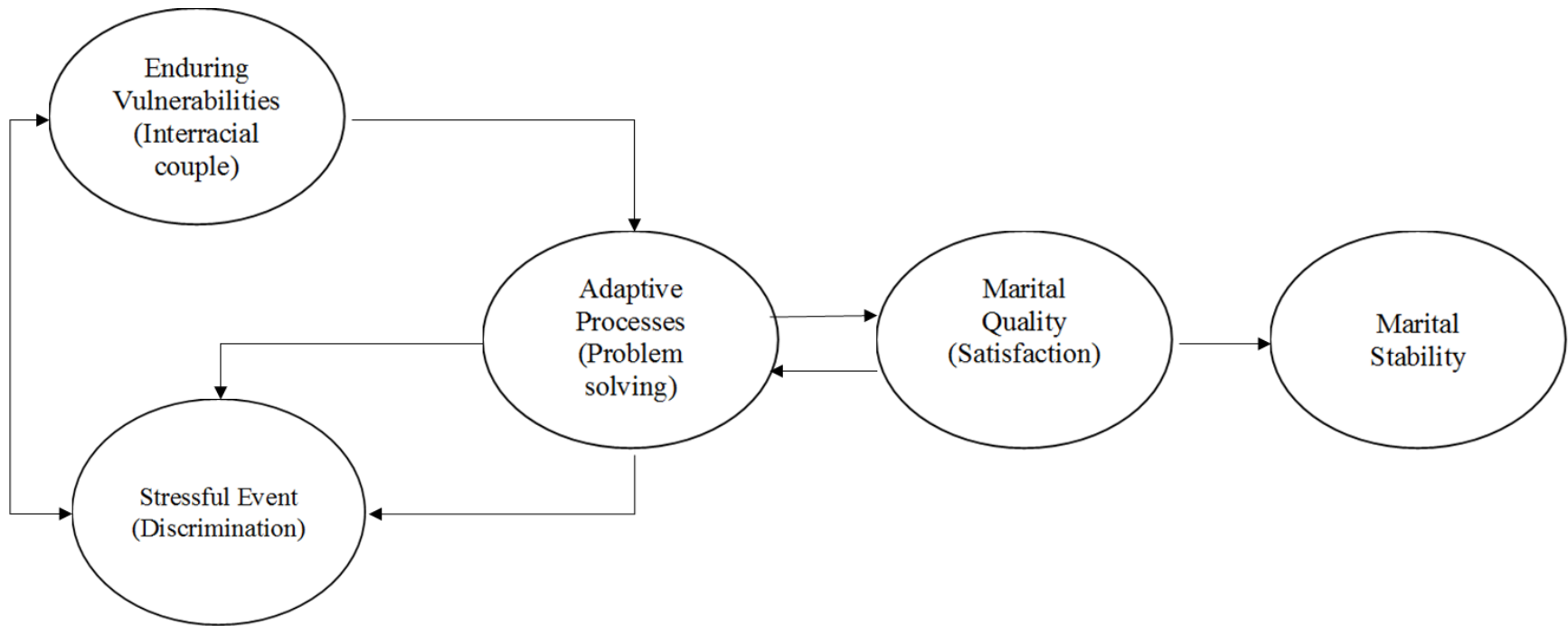
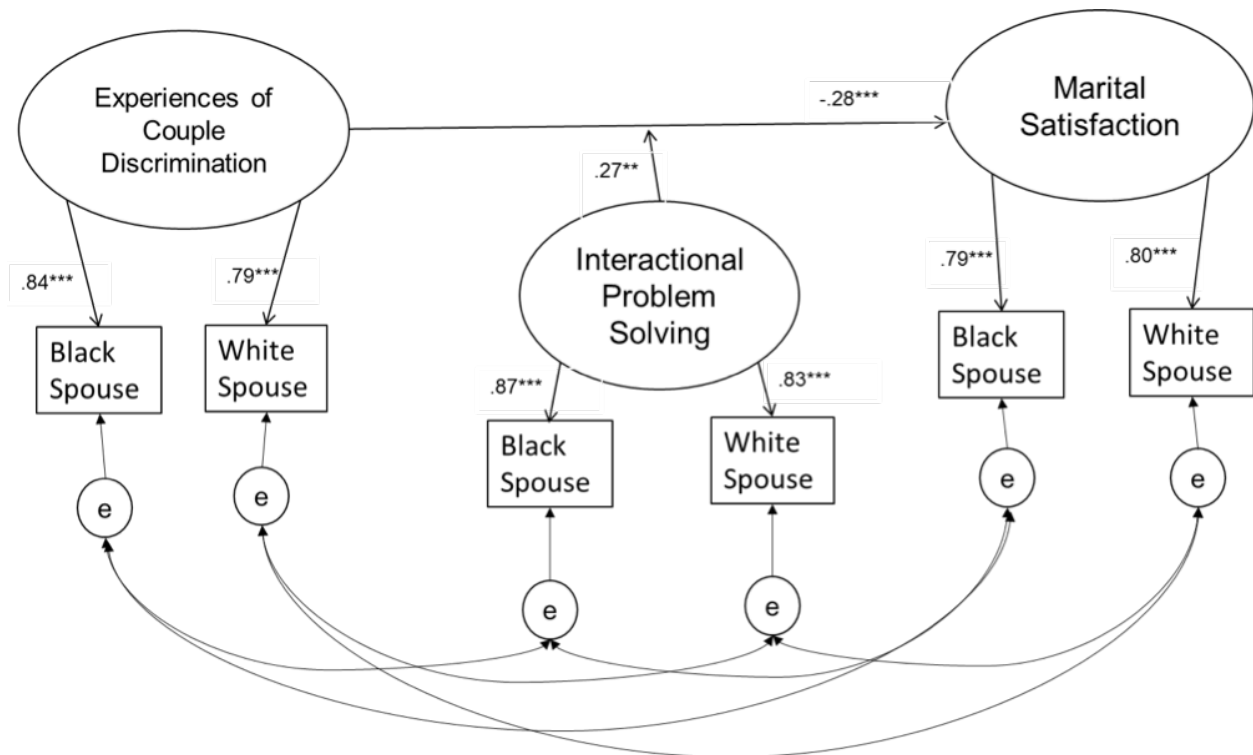
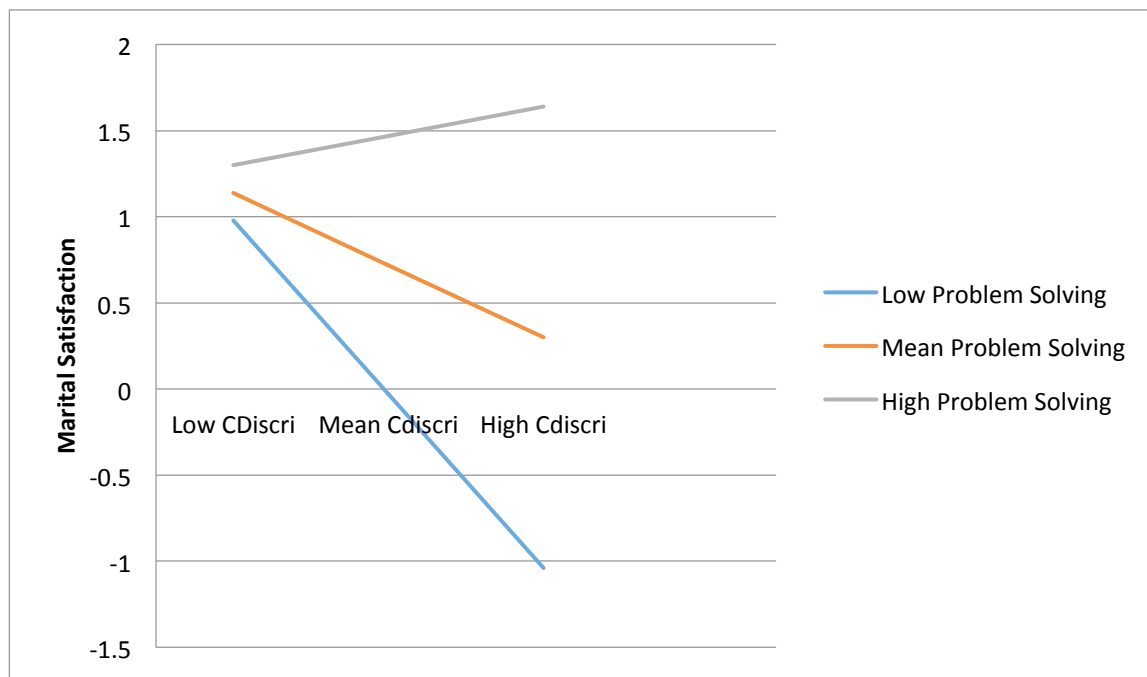


Figure 2 Standardized Coefficients of Common Fate Moderation Model ($n = 178$ couples)



Notes. $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$. $R^2 = .76$, $p < .001$. Model controls for age, income level, duration of marriage, number of children, religiosity, childhood intergroup contact and group (Black husband-White wife or Black wife-White husband).

Figure 3 Problem Solving Moderating Experiences of Couple Discrimination and Marital Satisfaction



Notes. CDISCR = Experiences of couple discrimination.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables.

Variables	Black Spouses		White Spouses	
	<i>M</i> or %	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> or %	<i>SD</i>
Experiences of couple discrimination	2.14	.81	2.03	.74
Problem Solving	25.04	.90	25.09	.84
Marital Satisfaction	5.14	1.05	5.04	1.04
Age	31.78	4.38	31.94	4.13
Religiosity	12.97	3.45	13.12	3.21
Childhood Intergroup Contact	2.51	1.01	2.12	.88
Religion				
Christian	70.1%		70%	
Hindu	0%		.6%	
Islamic	9.6%		10.2%	
Jewish	1.1%		1.1%	
Other	19.2%		18.2%	
Income Level				
\$19,999 or less	1.1%		1.1%	
\$20,000-\$29,999	7.3%		6.8%	
\$30,000-\$39,999	8.4%		8.5%	
\$40,000-\$49,999	9.0%		10.7%	
\$50,000-\$59,999	20.2%		19.2%	
\$60,000-\$69,999	15.7%		15.8%	
\$70,000-\$79,999	7.9%		7.3%	
\$80,000-\$89,999	7.3%		6.2%	
\$90,000-\$99,999	5.6%		6.8%	
\$100,000 or Above	17.4%		17.5%	
Education Level				
7 th grade or less	.6%		0%	
8 th grade	.6%		0%	
Some high school	2.8%		2.3%	
High school graduate/GED	14.6%		14.1%	
Some College	20.2%		13.6%	
Associate's Degree	12.9%		18.6%	
College Graduate/Bachelor's Level	35.4%		39%	
Master's degree or equivalent	10.7%		10.7%	
Doctorate Degree or equivalent	2.2%		1.7%	

Table 2 Summary of Intercorrelations between Study Variables.

<i>Model Variables</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. B Couple discrimination	-															
2. W Couple discrimination	.71**	-														
3. B Problem Solving	-.14	-.09	-													
4. W Problem Solving	-.02	-.07	.73**	-												
5. B Marital Satisfaction	-.22*	-.24*	.51**	.41**	-											
6. W Marital Satisfaction	-.21*	-.22*	.42**	.50**	.67**	-										
7. Group	.19+	.16+	.07	.13	-.03	-.09	-									
8. Number of children	-.06	-.10	.05	.04	-.16+	.04	-.01	-								
9. Length of marriage	-.08	-.11	.01	-.00	.14	.13	-.14	.33**	-							
10. B Age	-.06	-.03	.23*	.18+	-.05	.00	.31**	.08	.25**	-						
11. W Age	-.07	-.07	.18+	.18+	-.03	.02	-.10	.20*	.40**	.65**	-					
12. B Income	-.02	-.08	.06	.03	.01	.06	-.01	-.05	.17+	.19+	.17+	-				
13. W Income	.05	-.09	.02	.05	.04	.09	-.07	.03	.19+	.17+	.15+	.41**	-			
14. B Religiosity	.06	-.08	-.04	.05	.26**	.38**	-.17+	.09	.06	-.17+	-.01	.03	-.08	-		
15. W Religiosity	.18+	.03	-.03	.04	.27**	.26**	-.03	.13	.13	-.15	.02	.03	.01	.78**	-	
16. B Intergroup Contact	.04	.04	-.08	-.05	.05	.05	.07	.00	-.03	-.03	-.04	-.13	-.05	-.02	.00	-
17. W Intergroup Contact	-.04	-.02	.02	.04	-.03	-.02	.08	.01	-.12	.13	.05	-.03	.44**	-.13	-.07	.01

Notes. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. (two-tailed). B = Black spouses, W = White spouses

Table 3 Summary of Unstandardized and Standardized Results of Common Fate Moderation Model Predicting Marital Satisfaction

Paths	Unstandardized B	SE B	Standardized β
Measurement Model Estimates:			
Experiences of Couple Discrimination: Black spouses	1.21	.11	.84***
White spouses	1.00	0	.79***
Problem solving: Black spouses	1.16	.09	.87***
White spouses	1.00	0	.83***
Marital Satisfaction: Black spouses	.96	.07	.79***
White spouses	1.00	0	.80***
Structural Model Estimates: (Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction)			
Experiences of Couple Discrimination	-.42	.13	-.28***
Problem solving	.75	.10	.62***
Problem solving x Experiences of Couple Discrimination	.59	.20	.27**
Control Variables:			
Group	.10	.13	.01
Number of children	.04	.04	.06
Length of marriage	.002	.001	.14
Age: Black spouses	-.02	.02	-.10
White spouses	-.02	.02	-.09
Income: Black spouses	-.10	.11	-.30
White spouses	.11	.11	.33
Religiosity: Black spouses	.15	.06	.28*
White spouses	.01	.06	.02
Childhood Intergroup Contact: Black spouses	.15	.06	.16
White spouses	.11	.06	.11*

Notes. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $R^2 = .73$, $p < .001$. Group: Black husband-White wife or White husband-Black wife.

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Appendix A - Experiences of Couple Discrimination (Adapted from Trail, Goff, Bradbury, & Karney, 2012)

For the following items, please indicate on a scale of never to most of the time, how often have you experienced the following examples of discrimination based on yours and your partner's identity as an interracial couple.

Never 0	Rarely 1	Sometimes 2	Most of the time 3
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1. How often have you and your partner experienced being treated as inferior because you are in an interracial relationship?
2. How often have you and your partner experienced people acting as if they are afraid of you or your partner?
3. How often have you and your partner experienced being treated with less respect than others because you are in an interracial relationship?
4. How often have you and your partner experienced people acting as if you are dishonest because you are in an interracial relationship?
5. How often have you and your partner experienced being called names or insulted because you are in an interracial relationship?
6. How often have you and your partner experienced being threatened or harassed because you are in an interracial relationship?

Appendix B - Interactional Problem-Solving Inventory (IPSI;

Lange, Hageman, Markus, & Hanewald, 1991)

The following questions ask about conflict with your partner. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale below:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. We have little trouble in choosing a solution for a given problem.
2. When I tell my partner which points I wish that he/she would change, my partner takes notice.
3. After we have discussed a particular problem, I often feel that my point of view has not been properly acknowledged.
4. When I mention something that bothers me, I often get the feeling that my partner does not take me seriously.
5. In our relationship there are many problems which we are unable to solve.
6. Before deciding upon a solution for a particular problem, we first view the matter from different angles.
7. When I propose a solution to a problem, my partner often dismisses it out of hand.
8. Our quarrels often end up in discussions about who is right and who is wrong.
9. When we disagree, my partner tries to meet my wishes as best as he/she can.
10. When we are having an argument about a particular matter, we often end up including totally irrelevant issues.
11. If my partner in one or other way has disappointed me, I talk to him/her about it.
12. When we quarrel, I often get the idea that we do not understand each other.
13. After a quarrel I often have the impression that we missed each other's points.
14. I almost never express small irritations because I am afraid that this will damage our relationship.
15. If I do not expect my partner to accommodate my wishes, I do not bother to express them.
16. Often we cannot agree about what, at a certain moment, is the main point of the problem.
17. Quite often we are at odds because we interpret each other's irritations incorrectly.

Appendix C - Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4; Funk & Rogge, 2007)

The following series of questions are about your relationship with your partner.

1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner.

Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Almost Completely true	Completely true
0	1	2	3	4	5

3. How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
0	1	2	3	4	5

4. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
0	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D - Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS – 5; Huber & Huber, 2012)

The following questions ask about your practice and beliefs about religion. For each question, please respond using the scale below:

1. How often do you think about religious issues?

Never	Less often	A few times a year	One or three times a month	Once a week	More than once a week	Once a day	Several times a day
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2. To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?

Not at all	Not very much	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very much so
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3. How often do you take part in religious services?

Never	Less often	A few times a year	One or three times a month	Once a week	More than once a week
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4. How often do you pray?

Never	Less often	A few times a year	One or three times a month	Once a week	More than once a week	Once a day	Several times a day
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5. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?

Never	Less often	A few times a year	One or three times a month	Once a week	More than once a week	Once a day	Several times a day
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