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Acceptance of marginalized couples

Shaquela Hargrove

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Acceptance of Marginalized Couples

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Abstract

Marginalized couples (i.e., those seen as dissimilar from the socialized standard) are still not completely accepted (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). Almost 50% of Americans still disapprove of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) couples (Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage, 2015) and almost 13% disapprove of interracial/interethnic couples (Newport, 2013). When these couples perceive stigma due to their relationships, negative outcomes such as higher levels of depression, can occur (LeBlanc, Frost, & Wight, 2015). Previous research has identified personal factors that are similar for the acceptance of both types of marginalized couples: non-White, Republican, politically conservative, men, less educated, more religious, and older adult individuals were less accepting of both types of relationships (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2005). Couple composition also affects acceptance, such that Black/White couples were less accepted than Asian/White couples (Eliason, 1997; Herek, 2002; Lewandowski, 2001). This study sought to discover if acceptance of LGB couples could predict the acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples. The participant pool consisted of 152 Mississippi State University students who were taking a psychology class and were recruited via SONA systems. Multiple regression analyses and Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric tests were conducted to test the 3 hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. Political conservatism and religiosity correlated significantly with both attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples and LGB couples. Hypothesis 2a was not supported. Black/Black couples were significantly supported more than White/White couples. Hypothesis 2b was partially supported. Heterosexual man/Bisexual woman was accepted more than Gay man/Bisexual man. Hypothesis 3 was fully supported with attitudes toward LGB couples predicting attitudes towards interracial/interethnic couples. Future studies should use a larger sample size and examine other types of marginalized couples (e.g., age gap couples).

Acceptance of Marginalized Couples

Introduction

Marginalized couples are couples who are viewed by society as different from the socialized standard; the standard includes same race/ethnicity, heterosexual, and similar age couples (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). It should be noted that when it comes to interracial and interethnic couples, there is a difference between the two, as ethnicity is the culture or background a person identifies with, while race is generally physical traits (e.g., skin color, eye color; Cornell & Hartmann, 2007). However, several studies use interracial and interethnic interchangeably to capture a broader spectrum of interactions between different people (Brown & Shalett, 1997; Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010; Wang, 2012). Therefore, this study treated the two terms synonymously.

Examples of marginalized couples include interracial/interethnic and/or same-sex couples. Literature suggests that individuals in marginalized relationships can experience varying amounts of stress due to perceived marginalization. This stress can lead to a host of negative outcomes for the individual or couple. More stressors are associated with higher levels of depression, increased risk of suicide (LeBlanc, Frost, & Wight, 2015), less relationship investment, and less relationship satisfaction (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006). The current focus is on interracial/interethnic and same-sex couples, as both types of relationship are still contentious in society today. Roughly, 13% of Americans still disapprove of interracial/interethnic relationships (Newport, 2013), while 45% disapprove of same-sex couples (Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage, 2015). These statistics demonstrate the necessity of research on marginalized couples, which could increase acceptance of such pairings and decrease negative outcomes among the couples who are marginalized.

There is some literature on which personal characteristics are associated with acceptance of one type of marginalized relationship over another one. The first goal of this study is to identify which personal factors are related to acceptance of interracial/interethnic relationships and Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) relationships; moreover, we want to uncover which factors are related to acceptance of both. Previous research has shown that individuals, in general, were more likely to accept both interracial/interethnic and LGB relationships if they were non-white (Perry, 2013a; Perry, 2013b) and less religious (Perry, 2013b; Sherkat & Creek, 2010). Further, Haider-Markel & Joslyn (2005) suggest there are characteristics, such as political conservatism and religiosity, that are similar in those who accept interracial/interethnic and LGB couples. People who were more politically conservative and more religious were likely to not be accepting of either interracial/interethnic or LGB relationships (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2005).

In addition to the personal characteristics, our second goal is to evaluate the effects of couple composition (i.e., different combinations of couples based on sex, sexual orientation, race) on the acceptance of these marginalized relationships individually and similarly. Black/White couples have been found to be less accepted than White/White and White/Asian couples (Lewandowski, 2001). It is important to look at this because it can help researchers identify what specific values are associated with acceptance and what types of couples are more accepted than others. A third goal aims to discover how the acceptance of these marginalized couples correlate with one another and how varying levels of acceptance of one can predict the level of acceptance of the other. This is necessary because existing similarities among those who accept or reject interracial/interethnic and LGB couples can be used to tailor educational programs to inform multiple groups of individuals.

Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity appears to play a prominent role in acceptance of interracial/interethnic and LGB couples. In a study of online dating, 65% of White women stated a racial preference for dating only within their race (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011). The data showed White women excluded 92% of Black men, 77% of Latino men, and 93% of Asian men as potential dating choices (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011). In addition, only 4% of White women dated exclusively outside of their race. Of those who dated interracially/interethnically, the distribution of their racial dating preferences is unbalanced. Unlike White women, the data shows mixed findings for Black women. Only 45% of Black women—less than White women—appeared to solely date within their race (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011). However, in an alternative study, Ken-Hou and Lundquist (2013) found that Black women had the highest rates of homophily, or only seeing their own race as potential options. Regarding Asian women, 40% of Asian women dated exclusively outside of their race, with this group being the lowest homophily of all the races included in the study (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011). Furthermore, Asian women and Latinas (11% and 33% respectively) were less likely to exclude White men as potential dating partners than Black women (76%).

The literature on acceptance of interethnic and interracial couples varied for men. Harris and Kalbfleisch (2000) found that 87% of Black men were opposed to dating a White woman, while other studies showed that Black men, and men in general, are more open to interracial relationships (Fiebert et al., 2000; Firman, 2008). Black women, Latinas, and Asian women were excluded by 97%, 48%, and 53% of White men, respectively, as potential dating partners (Robnett, 2011). Based on the mixed results, it appears that race plays some role in acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples. The current study seeks to potentially reconcile and clarify the impact of race on couple acceptance.

However, it's possible that individuals might actually date intraracially/intraethnically but still accept other people dating interracially/interethnically. In a study of White individuals' attitudes toward interracial dating, women were more likely to approve of other interracial/interethnic couples, with the men being more likely to also be interested in being personally involved in such relationships (Herman, & Campbell, 2012). Taken together, it appears the literature is mixed, regarding women's racial dating preferences. Specifically, their preferences might be different because in some studies (Robnett et. al., 2011) are using data from online dating profiles rather than asking participants whether or not they are actually dating outside of their race as much as their profiles suggest.

Regarding acceptance of same-sex couples, there may be race differences. Researchers found that African Americans were more opposed to LGB marriage than Whites or persons from other ethnicities (Sherkat, 2010). In addition, Blacks were also 11% more likely than Whites to condemn homosexual relations as "always wrong" and 14% more likely to see those warranting "God's punishment" in the form of AIDS (Sherkat, 2010). Moreover, compared to White women, African American women reported greater prejudice against both Gay men and Lesbians, with more prejudice against Gay men than Lesbians (Vincent, Peterson, & Parrott, 2009). Black and Hispanic people were more likely, on average, to have negative attitudes towards homosexuality (Guittar & Pals, 2014). Due to reports of strong negative views toward homosexuality, in general, it is surprising that African Americans were 10% more likely than Whites to support a law prohibiting anti-gay job discrimination (Lewis, 2003). These findings may be attributed to African Americans' deeply Christian roots (Lewis, 2003). In Christianity, with fundamentalist values, it is common for followers to believe homosexuality is wrong, yet noting that one should "love the sinner, but hate the sin." (Altemeyer, 2003). However, other

work has demonstrated no significant racial differences in homophobia; thus, we can conclude that the results are mixed (Walch, Orlosky, Sinkkanen, & Stevens, 2010). Another study showed that White men held slightly more positive views of same-sex couples (Guittar, 2010), although men in general hold more negative views of bisexual individuals than women (DeBruin & Arndt, 2010). Overall, both Black men and women were the least accepting of LGB couples.

Religious Affiliation and Involvement

Results have shown that religious affiliation may also play a role in acceptance of interracial relationships. Perry (2013a) found that White religiously unaffiliated individuals are more accepting than White Evangelical Protestants (EP), while White Catholics, Mainline Protestants, and “other” unnamed religions had similar rates of support to EP’s for interracial marriage for daughters. Of note, there was no focus on sons. While EP’s reported about the same degree of comfort with their White daughters dating outside of their race as other religions including Catholic, Mainline Protestants and “other” religions, Perry observed that Mainline Protestants were significantly less likely than Evangelicals to have been in an interracial relationship when it came to their personal relationships (Perry, 2013b).

In addition to religious affiliation, church attendance may significantly affect acceptance of interracial relationships as well. Some results have shown that people who attend church more often are less likely than others to approve of interracial dating and 23% of the people who self-labeled as “very religious” were less likely to have interracially dated than the individuals who self-labeled as “not religious at all” (Perry, 2013b). However, it seems that the racial composition of a church plays a huge role, although results are somewhat mixed. One study showed that attendance of a multiracial church did not have a significant effect on the acceptance of interracial marriage (Yancey, 2002). However, other research yields mixed findings. Some

work has found that those whose church consists of 50% Blacks were twice as likely to support interracial romance as those who attend an all-White congregation (Johnson, 2005). Perry (2013a) found similar results, in that Whites who attended more racially diverse congregations were more likely to approve of interracial relationships than those who attended more racially homogenous congregations. This was true, although acceptance of interracial relationships was not significantly affected by frequency of church attendance (Perry, 2013a). Perry (2013b) also found that individuals who engaged in prayer and sacred text reading more frequently outside of religious services were more likely to have interracially dated.

On the side of homosexuality, attendance of a multiracial church was a significant factor of acceptance of LGB couples and families, such that attending a multiracial church lead to increased acceptance of such relationships (Perry, 2013c). Literature also suggests that individuals who attend a Protestant church more frequently were less accepting of LGB people (Sherkat & Creek, 2010). Low church attendance in individuals who did not identify with a religion was a partial explanation as to why they had more accepting views of LGB individuals. Furthermore, some religious traditions construct homosexuality in men as sinful and essentially ignore homosexuality for women. For example, sex between women in the Christian Bible and other religious texts is almost completely invisible (Chonody, 2014). There are limited views regarding bisexuality in a lot of religious texts and churches (Toft, 2014). In society, some people believe that bisexuality is just a transitional phase (i.e., a phase in one's life where they are still "experimenting" but will eventually become either strictly heterosexual or strictly homosexual; MacDonald, 2012). Like some of the findings of specific religion on interracial marriage acceptance, a greater percentage of mainline Protestants and Catholics supported gay sex, marriage, and adoption when compared to Evangelicals (Perry, 2013c).

Because of the significant correlation between religion/church attendance and the acceptance of both interracial/interethnic and LGB relationships, future intervention to reduce prejudice and discrimination toward marginalized couples could be tailored towards religious environments. This study sought to further the understanding of the relationship between religion, religiosity, church attendance, and acceptance of interracial/interethnic & LGB relationships.

Individuals' Own Sexual Orientation and Interracial Relationships

Limited research has looked at whether sexual orientation is related to acceptance of interracial or interethnic couples. Regardless, individuals' sexual orientation has shown to have some correlation with acceptance of interethnic/interracial couples, such that LGB individuals are more accepting of interracial/interethnic relationships (Perry, 2013b). In comparison, interracial relationships have been linked to acceptance of LGB couples, such that those in interracial relationships were found to be more accepting than intraracial couples of LGB unions (Perry, 2013d). One reason why these marginalized couples might be more accepting of one another is because both may have experienced some form of discrimination because their relationship does not fit the societal mold of a "normal" relationship, in this case, a heterosexual same race couple.

Couple Composition

Composition of interracial/interethnic and LGB couples seems to also play a factor in acceptance. White undergraduates reported that relationships between White men/Black women and White women/Black men were observed to be slightly less compatible than those of intraracial relationships between White men/White women (Lewandowski, 2001). Relationships between Asian Americans and Whites were perceived as having the same compatibility as

intraracial relationships existing between White intraracial couples (Lewandowski, 2001). A similar study was done at Historically Black College/Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), and found that Asian/White relationships were seen as more favorable than Black/White relationships (Field, 2013). These findings indicate that the composition of couples, in regards to race, affects acceptance, such that not only are interracial/interethnic couples less accepted than intraracial couples, but also the racial makeup of the relationship play a role in acceptance (e.g., Black/White couples are less accepted than White/Asian couples).

In general, although acceptance is the highest it has ever been for homosexuality, acceptance of lesbians and gay men were higher than for bisexual individuals (Eliason, 1997; Herek, 2002). In a separate study, both men and women had relatively positive views or neutral views towards bisexuality, possibly indicating a lack of understanding of the nature of bisexuality (Puchlopek, 2012). Bisexuality is an important component of the stigmatized group because although some people approve of it, from the small amount of research on the topic, bisexual individuals are often stigmatized within the LGB community (Welzer-Lang, 2008) and are often seen as in a phase or seeking attention (Alarie & Gaudet, 2013; Boyer, & Galupo, 2015). This demonstrates that composition of couples based on sexuality could be an important factor for acceptance, such that with race and sex held constant, couples involving bisexual individuals could be less accepted than other couples.

Taken together, couples that are interracial with one partner being Black and those involving bisexual individuals should be the least accepted. Those who accept interracial/interethnic relationships might also accept LGB relationships since both are marginalized, and up to this point, there have been some similarities in the personal factors that are correlated with acceptance of both.

Acceptance of Interracial/Interethnic Couples Compared to LGB Couples

One might expect that someone who accepts interracial/interethnic relationships might also accept LGB relationships since they are both marginalized groups; this does not seem to always be the case. Some literature identifies that most people who accept interracial/interethnic relationships tend to be men (Yancey, 2002; Perry, 2013b), non-White (Perry, 2013b), younger (Yancey, 2002; Perry, 2013b), from the western United States (Perry, 2013b; Yancey, 2002; Johnson, 2005), more politically liberal (Eastwick, 2009; Yancey, 2002; Perry, 2013b; Johnson, 2005), and highly educated (Johnson, 2005). As for LGB couples, the Pew Research Center found that individuals who are White, liberal, younger, democratic, religious unaffiliated and women were more accepting (Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage, 2015). Generally, previous literature shows that people who attended multiracial churches, non-Whites, those with a higher education (Perry, 2013a), women, and non-Republicans were more likely to endorse and accept same sex marriages (Perry, 2013c; Horn, 2007). Sex, religiosity, and ethnicity showed significant effects on acceptance: women, less religious beliefs, and those of Western ethnicity are more accepting of both male and female LGB sexuality (Collier, 2012). Thus, it is possible that there may be differences in acceptance of interracial and interethnic couples compared to acceptance of LGB couples.

Purpose

Limited literature has explored the similarities in acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples and LGB couples. There are conflicting findings about how certain personal factors influence acceptance of marginalized relationships, and little research on how the acceptance of one group influences the acceptance of another. By looking at polls, opposition to LGB marriage was found in individuals who are men, non-White, Republican, older, politically conservative,

less educated, and more religious (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2005). Further, similar factors may affect opposition to interracial relationships as opposition to LGB marriage, with some differences; for example, participant sex may not be an influential factor. Religiosity is a significant role in acceptance of LGB and interracial marriages such that highly religious individuals are more likely to oppose both LGB marriage and interracial marriage (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2005).

The current study seeks to find which personal characteristics are associated with attitudes toward LGB versus interracial relationships. Second, this study aims to determine how the composition of couples affect acceptance of LGB and interracial relationships both individually and as co-dependents. Lastly, this study aims to uncover whether or not the acceptance of one influences the acceptance of another. This research is important because although interracial/interethnic and LGB couples have gained significant support and acceptance over recent years, there are still many who oppose marginalized couples. Figuring out which factors are associated with opposition could lead to programs tailored for specific groups to educate them on prejudice and the harms caused by discrimination. The three research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How do personal factors such as religiosity, self-identified race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and political conservatism influence support and acceptance of interracial/interethnic and LGB couples?

RQ2: How does the couple composition affect acceptance of certain interracial/interethnic and LGB couples?

RQ3: When controlling for personal factors, how does acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples influence acceptance of LGB relationships and vice versa?

There are also three major hypotheses for this study:

H1: Individuals who are more educated, LGB, White, less religious, female and politically liberal will be more accepting of interracial/interethnic and LGB couples.

H2: The composition of the relationship will affect acceptance.

H2a: Couples that consist of an interracial least one Black or African American partner will be perceived with more opposition.

H2b: Couples that consist of at least one bisexual partner will be perceived with more opposition than two lesbian/gay or heterosexual individuals.

H3: Participants who are more accepting of interracial/interethnic couples will be more accepting of LGB couples.

Method

Participants

Participants included 152 undergraduates from Mississippi State University. The participant pool consisted of a majority of female (67.1%, $n = 102$) and White (64.5%, $n = 98$) participants. The inclusion criteria to participate in this study was to be a Mississippi State University student over the age of 18, able to read and respond to items in plain English, and be currently enrolled in a psychology course. The average age of the participant pool was 20.60, ($SD = 3.81$). As for education level, freshmen made up 34.9% ($n = 53$) of the pool, sophomores made up 23.0% ($n = 35$), juniors made up 23.0% ($n = 35$), and seniors made up 18.4% ($n = 28$). Heterosexual individuals made up a large majority of sample (88.8%, $n = 135$).

Materials

Vignettes: Different compositions of Interracial/Interethnic and LGB couples were created for the purpose of this project. A description of the couple was presented along with each

vignette describing a couple that are around the same age, from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, and about as educated as each other. Each vignette described both partners' race (Black or White) and their sexuality (heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual). Because of the complexity of this study, the variables were limited to just Black /White, Black/Black, or White/White for race; and Lesbian/Lesbian, Gay man/Gay man, Heterosexual man/Heterosexual woman, Lesbian/Bisexual woman, Gay man/Bisexual man, Heterosexual woman /Bisexual man, Heterosexual man /Bisexual woman, Bisexual woman /Bisexual woman, Bisexual man /Bisexual man, or Bisexual man /Bisexual woman couples for sexuality. Vignette 1 is presented below as an example of what the participants saw:

Christina, a lesbian woman, and Brittany, a lesbian woman, have been dating for two years. Christina is a middle-class Black woman, while Brittany is a middle class White woman. They are both 20 years old, and are heading into their second semester of their junior year at MSU. They are both majoring in Psychology and have similar career goals: to become psychiatrists. They met in their General Psychology class at the beginning of freshman year. Personality-wise, Christina and Brittany are both fun-loving and intelligent. Christina adores playing soccer, painting, and grabbing a bite with her friends. Brittany likes going bowling with her friends, reading interesting books, and watching television. When it comes to mutual hobbies, Christina and Brittany both love cheering on their university's football team, volunteering at the local animal shelter, visiting their families, going out to eat with their friends, and playing board games.

In addition to the vignette describing the couple, participants saw two pictures of the supposed couple, which can be found in the Appendix. For example, for the vignette above, the participant saw pictures 002 and 233. The images were pulled from the Chicago Face Database and chosen because they were in the neutral category and from their respective racial group and sex (Ma, Correll, & Wittenbrink, 2015). The 36 Vignettes are listed in Appendix A and their corresponding pictures are listed in Appendix B.

Couple Acceptability: To assess for acceptability, subjects were asked 3 questions with each vignette. The same scale type was given for both questions 1 and 3, “How acceptable, or socially appropriate, do you find this couple?” and “How acceptable, or socially appropriate, do you think it would be for this couple to show affection in public (i.e., holding hands, hugging, kiss on the cheek, etc.)?” The scale for these ranged from 1 (Completely Acceptable) to 5 (Completely Unacceptable). For question 2, “How satisfied is this couple with their relationship?” the scale ranged from 1 (Very Unsatisfied) to 4 (Very Satisfied). This scale can be found in Appendix C.

Religiosity: The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire was used to assess religion and religious endorsements. Coefficient alphas were found to be between .94 and .95, with split-half reliability between .90 and .96.) (Plante & Boccaccini, 1997). There are 10 items featured in this measure. This questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Sample items include “I pray daily.” and “I consider myself active in my faith or church”. Higher scores on this scale indicate greater religiosity. The internal reliability for this study was high ($\alpha = .93$). This scale can be found in Appendix D.

Political Conservatism: The Liberalism/Conservatism Scale was used to assess participants’ political ideology. This scale consists of 4 items and uses a seven-point Likert scale

and ranges from 1 (Very Liberal) to 7 (Very Conservative). Sample items include “How would you describe your political outlook?” and “How would you describe your political outlook with regard to social issues?” Lower scores on the Liberalism/Conservatism Scale indicate more liberal views while higher scores demonstrate more conservative views. This scale can be found in Appendix E.

Attitudes Toward Interracial/Interethnic Couples: Attitudes Toward Interracial Marriage Scale ($\alpha = .96$) was used to gauge participants’ attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples (Moran, 2014). There are 20 items in this scale and a seven-point Likert scale is used which ranges from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 7 (Strongly Disagree). Lower scores indicate more negative attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples. Sample items include “I believe that interracial couples date outside their race to get attention.”, “Interracial marriage interferes with my fundamental beliefs.” and “As long as the people involved love each other, I do not have a problem with interracial marriage.” The Attitudes toward Interracial Marriage Scale had a strong internal reliability for this study ($\alpha=.95$). This scale can be found in Appendix F.

Attitudes toward Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Couples: To assess participants’ attitudes toward Lesbians, Gay men, and Bisexual, participants answered the Index of Homophobia (Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuality; alpha coefficient for reliability = .90) (Fisher, Yarber, & Davis, 2011b). This scale has 25 items and uses a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1(Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). Scores range from 0 to 100 where higher scores indicate higher levels of homophobia (Fisher et al., 2011b). Sample items include “If I saw two men holding hands in public I would feel disgusted.”, “I would feel at ease talking with a homosexual person at a party.”, and “It would disturb me to find out that my doctor was

homosexual.” The internal reliability for this study was strong ($\alpha=.95$). This scale can be found in Appendix G.

Personal factors: Race, education level, sexual orientation and sex was assessed by a demographic questionnaire. Participants were asked to report their race with the question, “Which describes your race?” Responses included “Asian,” “Black,” “Caucasian,” “Native American,” “Arab/Middle Eastern,” “Multiracial,” “Hispanic/Latino.” Education level was reported by asking participants, “Which best describes your year in school?” Responses included: “Freshman,” “Sophomore,” “Junior,” “Senior” and a “Other” that gave them the opportunity to fill in the blank. To assess sexual orientation, individuals were asked, “Which best describes your sexual orientation?” Responses included “Heterosexual,” “Bisexual,” “Pansexual,” “Asexual,” “Autosexual,” “Demisexual,” “Lesbian,” “Gay,” and “Other” that had a fill in the blank option. Participants were asked to report their gender and were asked, “What is your sex?” Responses included “Male,” “Female,” “Intersex,” “MTF” and “FTM.” The demographic questions used in this study can be found in Appendix H.

Design

The design of the vignettes that appeared in the study was a 2 (race: black or white) x 2 (sex: male or female) x 10 (sexual orientation: Heterosexual/Heterosexual, Lesbian/Lesbian, Gay/Gay, Heterosexual woman/Bisexual man, Heterosexual man/Bisexual woman, Lesbian/Bisexual, Gay man/Bisexual, Bisexual man/Bisexual man, Bisexual woman/Bisexual woman, Bisexual man/Bisexual woman) between-subjects design. There was a possibility of 36 outcomes. This study used only four names (Christina and Brittany for the women & Eric and Michael for the men—one for each of the two sexes). The names were chosen by discussing with my colleagues of two typical names for each sex that would be fairly neutral. There are two

names for each because some of the vignettes feature same sex couples. It is important to note that the names Christina and Michael were used for all of the vignettes with both sexes as a couple.

Procedure

All participants were recruited via SONA Systems, an online participant recruitment system set up by the Department of Psychology. Participants were granted 1 credit hour that could be used towards their class of choice. To complete the study, the student clicked the link that took them to the survey on Qualtrics, a survey website. Before beginning the survey, participants were shown a consent form and asked if they wanted to participate. They were also prompted to print the consent form for their personal records. If they answered “no,” they were thanked for their time and the survey ended. If they answered “yes,” they were then shown 3 vignettes out of a possible 36. Qualtrics was set to show the vignettes not only randomly, but also equally—each vignette was viewed approximately the same number of times. After completing this portion of the study, participants were prompted to answer all measures mentioned earlier, as well as several other ones that were not essential for this study. Once participants completed all the scale items, they were prompted to complete the demographic information. Once completed, the participants were given the debriefing form, thanked for their participation, and granted 1 hour of credit.

Results

There were 208 participants who completed more than one item in the survey. However, this number was reduced to 152 once participants were removed who were identified to be lazy responders: those who took less than 15 minutes to complete the survey, those who had

incomplete surveys, and those who had a significant amount of missing data (i.e., more than 1 scale had missing data).

Descriptive Statistics

In general, participants were accepting of interracial/interethnic couples ($M=5.24$, $SD=1.27$), with the mean acceptability score falling above the midpoint. Conversely, participants held slightly negative attitudes toward LGB couples ($M=63.32$, $SD=18.65$), mean scores also falling above the midpoint with higher scores leading to more homophobia. The sample reported being high in religious practice ($M=30.60$, $SD=8.52$) and somewhat politically conservative ($M=16.99$, $SD=5.75$).

A bivariate correlation was run to determine what personal factors (religiosity, political conservatism, sex, sexual orientation, race, and education level) were associated with attitudes toward interracial/interethnic and homosexuality. Religiosity, $r(151) = -.17$, $p = .04$ and political conservatism, $r(151) = -.40$, $p < .001$ were both significantly negatively correlated with attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples. People who were more religious and/or politically conservative were more likely to hold negative attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples. It is important to note that sex had a significance of $p = .05$, meaning that whether a person identified themselves as male or female was marginally significantly related to how much they accepted interracial/interethnic couples with females being more accepting.

Religiosity, $r(151) = .46$, $p < .001$ and political conservatism, $r(151) = .57$, $p < .001$ significantly positively correlated with attitudes towards LGB couples. This demonstrated that the more religious and more politically conservative the individual was, the less accepting of LGB couples they were. Sex, $r(150) = -.19$, $p = .02$ and sexual orientation: $r(151) = -.21$, $p = .01$, both significantly negatively correlated with attitudes toward LGB couples. Males and

heterosexual individuals were less accepting of LGB couples. Descriptive information for the variables can be found in Table 1.

In the bivariate correlation, attitudes towards interracial/interethnic couples were related to attitudes toward LGB couples. The correlation demonstrated that they were significantly negatively correlated $r(151) = -.60, p < .001$. Individuals who were less accepting of interracial/interethnic couples were also less accepting of LGB couples. Correlations between the personal factors and attitudes towards interracial/interethnic and LGB couples are presented in Table 2.

Table 1:

Descriptives of Personal Factors and Attitudes Toward Interracial/Interethnic and LGB Couples

Variable	Mean	SD
Attitudes Toward Interracial/Interethnic Couples	5.24	1.27
Attitudes Toward LGB Couples	63.32	18.65
Religiosity	30.60	8.52
Political Conservatism	16.99	5.75

Table 2:

Correlations Between Personal Factors and Attitudes Toward Interracial/Interethnic and LGB Couples

Variable	Attitudes Toward Interracial /Interethni c Couples	Attitude s Toward LGB Couples	Educat ion	Sexual Orientation	Race	Religio sity	Sex	Political Conservatis m
Attitudes Towards Interracial/In terethnic Couples								
Attitudes Toward LGB Couples	-.60**							
Education	-.02	-.02						
Sexual Orientation	.11	-.21**	.10					
Race	.07	-.07	-.14	-.08				
Religiosity	-.17*	.46**	.14	-.1	-.12			
Sex	.16	-.19*	.16*	-.01	.14	.10		
Political Conservatis m	-.40**	.57**	-.04	-.13	.14	.45**	.01	

* = $p < .05$ **= $p < .01$

After determining which factors were significantly correlated with acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples and LGB couples, two linear regressions were run with personal factors and both attitudes towards interracial/interethnic and LGB couples to determine if the previously mentioned personal factors could predict both attitudes toward interracial/interethnic and LGB couples.

Hypothesis 1:

A linear regression analysis demonstrated personal factors contributed to a significant amount of overall variance in attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples, $R^2=.20$, $F(6, 139)$

=5.74, $p < .001$). Specifically, political conservatism, $\beta = -.40$, $t(145) = -4.17$, $p = .047$ and sex: $\beta = .16$, $t(145) = 2.04$, $p = .043$ significantly predicted attitudes towards interracial/interethnic couples. The remaining personal factors were not significant (religiosity, $p = .97$; sexual orientation, $p = .40$; race, $p = .86$; education, $p = .30$). Male and more politically conservative individuals were less accepting of interracial/interethnic couples. Regression analysis for attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples is exhibited in Table 3, both of which are listed below:

Table 3:

Regressions of Personal Factors and Attitudes Toward Interracial/Interethnic Couples

Variable	B	SE	β	t	P
Religiosity	.001	.01	.004	.04	.97
Political Conservatism	-.09	.02	-.40	-4.17	<.001**
Sex	.43	.21	.16	2.04	.04*
Sexual Orientation	.28	.33	.07	.85	.40
Race	.04	.23	.02	.17	.86
Education	-.09	.09	-.08	-1.04	.30

* = $p < .05$

** = $p < .01$

For attitudes toward LGB couples, linear regression analyses showed that a significant portion of the variance in attitudes toward LGB was accounted for by personal factors, $R^2 = .45$, $F(6, 139) = 18.86$, $p < .001$. Political conservatism, $\beta = .44$, $t(145) = 5.58$, $p < .001$; religiosity, $\beta = .25$, $t(145) = 3.33$, $p = .001$; sex, $\beta = -.23$, $t(145) = -3.55$, $p = .001$; and sexual orientation, $\beta = -.21$, $t(145) = -3.19$, $p = .002$ significantly predicted attitudes toward LGB couples. Race and education were not significant (race, $p = .47$; education, $p = .75$). Participants who were more politically conservative, more religious, male, and heterosexual held more negative attitudes toward LGB couples.

Table 4:

Regressions of Personal Factors and Attitudes Toward LGB Couples

Variable	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Religiosity	.54	.16	.29	3.33	.001**
Political Conservatism	1.44	.26	.44	5.58	<.001**
Sex	-9.05	2.55	-.23	-3.55	.001**
Sexual Orientation	-12.66	3.97	-.21	-3.19	.002**
Race	2.05	2.82	.05	.73	.47
Education	.35	1.08	.02	.32	.75

* = $p < .05$ **= $p < .001$ Hypothesis 2a:

Non-parametric analyses (Kruskal-Wallis tests) examined if there were differences in acceptance of couples based on three racial compositions. The race combinations were re-coded to include only 3 options: Black/Black, White/White and White/Black couples. The questions presented with the vignettes were then averaged to create 3 acceptability variables, with 1 for each vignette a person saw. The Kruskal-Wallis tests yielded significant differences in acceptance, $\chi^2(2)=8.17$, $p=.02$, with a mean rank score of 62.05 for Black/Black couples, 83.68 for White/White couples, and 83.51 for White/Black couples.

Pairwise comparisons demonstrated that acceptance of Black/Black couples was significantly higher than White/White couples ($p=.02$) and Black/White couples ($p=.01$). Acceptance of White/White couples was higher than acceptance of Black/White couples, though not significantly ($p=.99$).

Hypothesis 2b:

Sexual orientations were re-coded to 10 groups: Lesbian/Lesbian, Gay/Gay, Bisexual woman/Bisexual woman, Bisexual man/Bisexual man, Bisexual man/Bisexual woman,

Lesbian/Bisexual, Gay/Bisexual, Heterosexual/Heterosexual, Heterosexual woman/Bisexual man, Heterosexual man/Bisexual woman.

To assess for acceptance of couples based on differences in sexual orientation of the two partners, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. Due to the previous finding that the race of the individuals in the couple influences acceptance, race and sexual orientation was included as factors. The ANOVA yielded a significant main effect for sexual orientation $F(9,151)=2.19$, $p=.03$. Both race: $F(2, 151)=2.05$, $p=.13$) and the race by sexual orientation interaction: $F(18, 151)=1.11$, $p=.39$) were not significant. Tukey post-hoc demonstrated that Heterosexual man/Bisexual woman couples were significantly more accepted than Gay/Bisexual couples ($p=.02$).

Hypothesis 3:

A multiple regression analysis was then used to determine if after controlling for sex, race, sexual orientation, education, political conservatism, and religiosity, attitudes towards LGB couples could still predict attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples. In the first step, each of the aforementioned personal variables mentioned earlier were entered. This model accounted for approximately 20% of the variance in attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples, $R^2=.20$, $F(6,139)=5.74$, $p<.001$. After controlling for these personal factors, attitudes toward LGB couples still significantly predicted attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples above and beyond the relationship between the personal factors and attitudes toward interracial/interethnic couples, $\beta = -.618$, $t(145) = -7.01$, $p<.001$. A significant amount of variance in attitudes towards interracial couples was accounted for by attitudes toward LGB couples, $R^2=.41$, $F(1,138)=49.13$, $p<.001$. Individuals who were more accepting of interracial/interethnic couples were also more accepting of homosexuality. Statistics for this hierarchical regression are listed in Table 4.

Table 5

Personal Factors and Attitudes Toward LGB Couples as Predictors of Attitudes Toward Interracial/Interethnic Couples

	Variable	Mean	SD	b	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1:	Religiosity	30.45	8.67	.001	.01	.01	.07	.94
	Political Conservatism	17.10	5.78	-.09	.02	-.42	-5.02	<.001**
	Sex	1.68	.47	.41	.21	.15	2.00	.05*
	Race	.69	8.24	.01	.01	.06	.82	.41
	Education	2.25	1.13	-.08	.09	-.07	-.93	.35
	Sexual Orientation	.43	8.21	-.006	.01	-.04	-.49	.63
Step 2:	Attitudes Toward LGB Couples	63.68	18.70	-.04	.01	-.60	-7.04	<.001**

* = $p < .05$

** = $p < .01$

Discussion

The results indicated that there were similarities in which personal factors were associated with acceptance of interracial/interethnic and LGB couples (religion and political conservatism). Hypothesis 1 was partially supported, such that only religiosity and political conservatism were associated with acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples, while sex, sexual orientation, religiosity and political conservatism were associated with acceptance of LGB couples. Hypothesis 2a was not supported. Couples were less accepted if both partners were White than if the couple featured 2 black partners or if it was interracial. As for LGB couples, Hypothesis 2b, was partially supported. The vignettes yielded significant results, such that Heterosexual man/Bisexual woman were more accepted than Gay man/Bisexual man. Hypothesis 3 was supported. Attitudes toward LGB couples successfully predicted attitudes towards interracial/interethnic couples. Those who accept interracial/interethnic were more likely to accept LGB couples.

Limitations

There were some major limitations to this study. First and foremost, this study was correlational, thus causation cannot be drawn from the data. Next, during the creation of the survey on Qualtrics, the 25th item on the Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuality was not included by accident. Thus, the full ranges of responses intended when the scale was developed were not captured in the survey. Another limitation was the lack of a measure that specifically captured attitudes of LGB couples. The Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuality was used to assess for attitudes towards LGB couples, however, this scale assesses attitudes towards homosexuality, or how much homophobia a person experiences.

Another significant limitation was the sample size. The originally projected number of necessary participants was 1000 to get a well-rounded view of the vignettes. The study featured only 152 participants, which was less than ideal, although, there were some significances between different couple compositions. Because the study was not appropriately powered, the results should be interpreted with caution.

Participants acceptability of the couples featured in the vignettes might have also been affected by the pictures presented with them. Although the pictures were chosen because they had been normed for attractiveness from previous sampled and represented neutral facial expressions (Ma, et al 2015), participants might have perceived the images differently than anticipated. For example, participants might have thought a face looked harsh, thus rated them more negatively. Subjects were not asked to rate the pictures; thus, we cannot be sure what effect they had on the participants.

Future Research and Implications

Future research should look into establishing a better form of measurement for the attitudes of individuals towards Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual at the couple level, rather than just at the individual level. This would be beneficial because conceptually when people think of the word couple, the focus is on the dyad (the individual and their partner) rather than either's individual identity. For example, a white man dating a black woman does not have an interracial individual identity. Each person in the partnership has a separate racial identity. However, their relationship would be classified as interracial. This idea of partners together, who happen to differ by race, is captured in the Attitudes Toward Interracial Marriage Scale. On the other hand, two homosexual men in a relationship are identified by who they are sexually attracted to rather than who they are as a couple. The Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality delves more into homosexuality as it pertains to the individual. Revising the scale to include more couple related questions such as, "I believe gay men date because they are in love," would improve the assessment of attitudes toward LGB couples. Currently the Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality ask items such as "I would feel comfortable working with a gay man." When questions such as the latter are asked, participants consider the individual alone in the absence of their partner. Thus, the scale does not capture attitudes toward the partnership.

Also, this survey should be conducted with a larger sample size to strengthen the power of the analyses. This would yield a more accurate assessment of acceptance of interracial/interethnic couples and LBG couples. In addition, research should examine other marginalized groups, such as the age gap couples (Lehmiller et. al., 2006). Other marginalized couples exist that have received scrutiny, yet the literature offers limited acknowledgement of them.

In light of the limitations, this study has several strengths. First, this research highlights a relationship between two significant personal attitudes (attitudes toward interracial/interethnic and LGB couples) that has received little attention in the literature. The findings of this study suggested an association between the two attitudes even after accounting for personal factors such as political affiliation. These results could be used to create tailored messages to increase support of marginalized relationships.

This study also exhibits a further need for research into this topic, because discrimination and prejudice of these types of relationships have been linked to several negative outcomes (e.g., stress, less relationship satisfaction) (LeBlanc et. al., 2015; Lehmler et. al., 2006). By solidifying which personal factors are associated with acceptance of these marginalized couples, educational programs on the harms of relationship prejudice and discrimination can be created to benefit those in and not in an LGB or interracial/interethnic relationship.

Conclusion

Marginalized couples are still confronted with bias, prejudice, and discrimination which can lead to negative outcomes (e.g., depression) for the members of the couples. This study examined how personal factors (sex, race, education, sexual orientation, religiosity and political conservatism) were related to acceptance of interracial/interethnic and LGB couples. The results indicated that there were several factors that were similar for persons who accepted both types of relationships. Programs can be tailored to either help reduce individuals' bias against these types of relationships, or to help the marginalized couple find effective ways to combat the actual or perceived stigma towards their relationships.

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Appendix A

1. Black Lesbian/White Lesbian

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Appendix B

Pictures used for Vignettes

Christina



002

Brittany



013

Eric



046

Michael



248

Christina



238

Brittany



233

Eric



254

Michael



245

Appendix C**1. How acceptable, or socially appropriate, do you find this couple?**

- 1 - Completely Acceptable
- 2 - Somewhat Acceptable
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Somewhat Unacceptable
- 5 - Completely Unacceptable

2. How satisfied is this couple with their relationship?

- 1 – Very unsatisfied
- 2 – Unsatisfied
- 3 -Satisfied
- 4 - Very satisfied

3. How acceptable, or socially appropriate, do you think it would be for this couple to show affection in public (i.e., holding hands, hugging, kiss on the cheek, etc.)

- 1 - Completely Acceptable
- 2 - Somewhat Acceptable
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Somewhat Unacceptable
- 5 - Completely Unacceptable

Appendix D**Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire**

Thomas G. Plante and Marcus Boccaccini

Santa Clara University

Reference: Plante, T.G., & Boccaccini, M. (1997). The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire. *Pastoral Psychology*, 45, 375-387

Please answer the following questions about religious faith using the scale below. Indicate the level of agreement (or disagreement) for each statement.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = agree 4 = strongly agree

- _____ 1. My religious faith is extremely important to me.
- _____ 2. I pray daily.
- _____ 3. I look to my faith as a source of inspiration.
- _____ 4. I look to my faith as providing meaning and purpose in my life.
- _____ 5. I consider myself active in my faith or church.
- _____ 6. My faith is an important part of who I am as a person.
- _____ 7. My relationship with God is extremely important to me.
- _____ 8. I enjoy being around others who share my faith.
- _____ 9. I look to my faith as a source of comfort.
- _____ 10. My faith impacts many of my decisions.

To score, add the total scores. They will range from 10 (low faith) to 40 (high faith)

Appendix E

Liberalism/ Conservatism Scale

Political Conservatism: The Liberalism/Conservatism Scale will be used to measure participants' political ideology. This scale consists of 4 items and uses a seven-point Likert scale and ranges from 1 (Very Liberal) to 7 (Very Conservative). Sample items include "How would you describe your political outlook?" and "How would you describe your political outlook with regard to social issues?" Lower scores on the Liberalism/Conservatism Scale indicate more liberal views while higher scores demonstrate more conservative views.

Very Liberal (1) Liberal (2) Slightly Liberal (3) Moderate: Middle of the Road (4) Slightly Conservative (5) Conservative (6) Very Conservative (7)

1. How would you describe your political outlook?
2. How would you describe your political outlook with regard to economic issues?
3. How would you describe your political outlook with regard to social issues?
4. How would you describe your general political outlook?

Appendix F

Attitudes toward Interracial Marriage Scale

(The Influence of Acculturation and Attitudes toward Interracial Marriage)

Attitudes Toward Interracial Marriage Scale (alpha coefficient for reliability = .96) (Moran, 2014)

Interracial marrying is described as the marrying of two people from different races. Almost everybody knows about or has seen interracial relationships, and there are differences among people in how they view such relationships. The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of what people think and feel about interracial relationships. Please read each item carefully and consider how you feel about each statement. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly						Strongly
Agree						Disagree

- 1) I believe that interracial couples date outside their race to get attention. ____
- 2) I feel that interracial couples have little in common. ____
- 3) When I see an interracial couple I find myself evaluating them negatively. ____
- 4) People date outside their own race because they feel inferior. ____

- 5) Marrying interracially shows a lack of respect for one's own race. ____
- 6) I would be upset with a family member who married outside his/her race. ____
- 7) I would be upset with a close friend who married outside of his/her race. ____
- 8) I feel uneasy around an interracial couple. ____
- 9) People of different races should associate only in non-dating settings. ____
- 10) I am offended when I see an interracial couple. ____
- 11) Interracial couples are more likely to have low self-esteem. ____
- 12) Interracial marriage interferes with my fundamental beliefs. ____
- 13) People should only marry within their race. ____
- 14) I dislike seeing interracial couples together. ____
- 15) I would not pursue a marriage with someone of a different race regardless of my feelings for him/her. ____
- 16) Interracial marriage interferes with my concept of cultural identity. ____
- 17) I support marriage between people with the same skin color, but not with a different skin color. ____
- 18) I can imagine myself in a marriage with someone of a different race. ____
- 19) As long as the people involved love each other, I do not have a problem with interracial marriage. ____
- 20) I think interracial marriage is a good thing. ____

Scoring Having placed a number representing the continuum from 1 to 7 in each of the twenty spaces above, reverse-score items 18, 19, and 20. For example, if you selected 7 for item 18, replace it with a 1; if you selected 1, replace it with a 7, etc. Next, add your scores and divide by

20. Possible scores range from 1 to 7 with 1 representing the negative attitudes toward interracial dating.

Appendix G**Index of Homophobia (Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality)**

Index of Homophobia (Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality; alpha coefficient for reliability = .90) (Fisher, Davis, C., Yarber, & Davis, S., 2011b).

This questionnaire is designed to measure the way you feel about working or associating with homosexuals. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows.

- 1 Strongly agree**
- 2 Agree**
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 Disagree**
- 5 Strongly disagree**

1. ___ I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual.
2. ___ I would enjoy attending social functions at which homosexuals were present,
3. ___ I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbor was homosexual.
4. ___ If a member of my sex made a sexual advance toward me I would feel angry.
5. ___ I would feel comfortable knowing that I was attractive to members of my sex.
6. ___ I would feel uncomfortable being seen in a gay bar.
7. ___ I would feel comfortable if a member of my sex made an advance toward me.
8. ___ I would be comfortable if I found myself attracted to a member of my sex.

9. ___I would feel disappointed if I learned that my child was homosexual.
10. ___I would feel nervous being in a group of homosexuals.
11. ___I would feel comfortable knowing that my clergyman was homosexual.
12. ___I would be upset if I learned that my brother or sister was homosexual.
13. ___I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was gay.
14. ___If I saw two men holding hands in public I would feel disgusted.
15. ___If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would be offended.
16. ___I would feel comfortable if I learned that my daughter's teacher was a lesbian.
17. ___I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my spouse or partner was attracted to members of his or sex.
18. ___I would feel at ease talking with a homosexual person at a party.
19. ___I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my boss was homosexual.
20. ___It would not bother me to walk through a predominantly gay section of town.
21. ___It would disturb me to find out that my doctor was homosexual.
22. ___I would feel comfortable if I learned that my best friend of my sex was homosexual.
23. ___If a member of my sex made an advance toward me I would feel flattered.
24. ___I would feel uncomfortable knowing that my son's male teacher was homosexual.
25. ___I would feel comfortable working closely with a female homosexual.

3,4,6,9,10,12,13,14,15,17,19,21,24

Appendix H**Race:**

Which describes your race?

- a. Asian
- b. Black
- c. Caucasian
- d. Native American
- e. Arab/Middle Eastern
- f. Multiracial
- g. Hispanic/Latino

Education Level:

Which best describes your year in school?

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior
- e. Other_____

Sexual Orientation:

Which best describes your sexual orientation?

- a. Heterosexual
- b. Bisexual
- c. Pansexual
- d. Asexual
- e. Autosexual
- f. Demisexual
- g. Lesbian
- h. Gay
- i. Other: Specify_____

Sex:

What is your sex?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Intersex
- d. MTF
- e. FTM