A Thematic Review of Contemporary Accounts of Black and of White Residents in North-East Wales Towards Black/White Interracial Relationships

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2019

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester for the degree of Master of Philosophy, April 2019.

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by Andrew D. Cairns

April 2019

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

Signed: _____ Date:_____

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my invaluable supervisory team, Prof. Mandy Robbins and Dr Sahar Hamid for their endless support, wisdom, and inspiration throughout the writing of this thesis. Your guidance and patience have helped make this long journey smoother and more enjoyable! I'd also like to extend my thanks to Dr Nikki Lloyd-Jones and Dr Iolo Madoc-Jones for your helpful advice and support in refinement of the methodology chapter and helping me to (eventually) clearly understand qualitative research.

Thanks must also go to a number of my very supportive colleagues at Wrexham Glyndwr University, who have provided insights, ideas, inspiration, enthusiasm and support, the depths of which I could not have ever anticipated - thank you to Jo Turley, Sue Horder, Emily Karim, Dr Libby Gaskell, Dr Joanne Pike, Prof. Pam Richards, Simon Stewart, Hayley Dennis, Stewart Milne, Lucy Jones, Jo Prescott, David Sprake, Andy Phillips, Dan Shires, Steve Dutton, and Vanessa Wharton.

I of course extend enormous gratitude to my participants for so generously offering their time and sharing the details of their personal lives so honestly. Without you, none of this would have been possible! Finally, I thank my family for being supportive of me on this journey and for putting up with my pre-occupation for research for the last few years!

Last, and certainly not least, I would like to thank my wife, Doreen Cairns, and my son, Jeremy – thank you for always being there and for being your wonderful selves – you've given meaning to every step of this long journey and I dedicate this to you both!

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Abstract

Exploring accounts of relations between racial groups has been identified as a key focus within the social sciences, with the views expressed towards intermarriage between members of particular groups often presented as a barometer for wider intergroup attitudes. Studies concerning interracial relationships have been particularly rare in Wales and remain unexplored within North Wales; this study seeks to address this gap in the knowledge base. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six Black participants, six White participants, and one participant of mixed Black/White heritage, all residing within North-East Wales, to explore accounts relating to Black/White interracial marriage. Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis and identified six overarching themes: Contact, Lack of Contact, Positive Views, Negative Views, Culture, and Colour-Blindness. Results indicated that the personal views of both Black and White participants towards the concept of intermarriage were mostly positive, though sources of societal opposition in the local area were also identified. Gradual increases in the racial diversity of the region were linked to greater levels of acceptance of people from racial minorities, though it was also noted that the social networks of both White and Black participants were relatively homogeneous, suggesting there are limited opportunities for contact to take place between the two groups. Cultural factors had considerable influence for Black participants and some accounts were provided relating to social exchange theory. Whilst the results cannot be generalised to the entire population of North-East Wales, or to the racial groups that participants came from, they provide rich detailed data on individual and societal views of Black/White interracial relationships in a region of the UK where studies of this type have been unprecedented.

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Introduction

Maintaining contemporary accounts of race relations has been considered an important factor in the social sciences, especially considering the ever-changing nature of social attitudes (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1970). British researchers felt that the relations between various racial and ethnic groups in the UK would continue to be increasingly important in the twenty-first century (Gilroy, 1987; Solomos, 1989) and evidence from more contemporary sources corroborates this. More than two thousand incidents of racism were reported to police across England and Wales in the thirty-eight days after the EU referendum results were announced (Burnett, 2016), and evidence indicates Black Britons continue to face disadvantage in education and employment, as well as being at greater risk of becoming a victim of violent crime (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016). Similar conditions are presented in Wales where 87% of Black and minority ethnic (BAME) people felt racism was still an important issue in the country; more than 80% having personally experienced racist discrimination in the period between 2010 and 2015 (Race Council Cymru, 2015). A study conducted by Robinson (2003), in Powys, indicated that around 1-in-5 Black residents felt the local White Welsh population were ‘very racist’, and expressed the sentiment that, compared with more diverse areas of the UK, people in Powys were lacking in racial literacy. This lack of racial experience took on a more insidious nature in a later study (Robinson & Gardner, 2006), where Powys residents often de-emphasised their overtly expressed bigotry by attributing it to a ‘rural naivety’, or as harmless fun. Such discursive strategies are anything but innocent and are rather examples of colour-blind racism, as discussed by Bonilla-Silva (2002), in the USA. Its presence was also confirmed in the UK by several contemporary commentators (Adjaye, 2015; Eddo-Lodge, 2017; Hirsch, 2018), who describe White Britons’ reluctance to talk about issues relating to British race relations. Views on interracial relationships and marriage between groups are considered to provide valuable insights into social attitudes towards various racial groups, with the opinions towards intermarriage presented as a barometer for wider social attitudes towards a range of racial and ethnic groups (Childs, 2008).

Wales offers valuable insights into contemporary race relations as it has seen a large increase in its BAME population in recent years, the Black and mixed-race population having doubled in size between 2001-11 (Evans, O'Leary, & Williams, 2015). The North-East of Wales in particular is only just starting to see increases in diversity, with a total BAME population of just over 2% (Statistics for Wales, 2011). The region also holds some notoriety in the race relations arena, as the town of Wrexham was the last place in which a major race riot took place in Wales, at the Caia Park estate, in June 2003 (Evans, 2015). Despite these factors, there has been a relative dearth of studies conducted in the region relating to societal accounts concerning intergroup relations; with a study of views on Black/White interracial marriage specifically being unprecedented.

Childs (2005a, 2008) provided a valuable presentation of attitudinal accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships in the USA, with accounts from White and Black individuals described with comparison and contrast made within and between the two racial groups. Black and White groups were chosen in her study as they remain the most visually salient and have previously attracted the greatest amount of social opposition compared to other racial combinations (Billingsley, 1992; Skinner & Hudac, 2017). Childs' study was qualitative in nature, with the use of semi-structured interviews allowing detailed descriptions of her participants' experiences to be explored and analysed. The use of interviews has been argued as particularly appropriate for Black participants, as the opportunity provides a voice to groups frequently disregarded in narratives related to race relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993).

A review of literature relating to interracial intimacy, race relations and social interactions from the USA and the UK, as well as other European, Caribbean, and African nations, highlighted several themes pertinent to the overall paradigm and useful in forming research questions for study in North-East Wales. The Contact Hypothesis is perhaps the most important amongst these, presented as a powerful facilitator in developing positive intergroup relations (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003) and has been proven effective in a large

number of studies (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In order for more positive intergroup evaluations to take place, contact between the groups must occur frequently (Saegert, Swap & Zajonc, 1973) and be of a suitable quality (Allport, 1954). The amount of contact between groups provides an indication of the social distance between them, with interracial contact acting as one of the most powerful facilitators of interracial intimacy (Golebiowska, 2007). Therefore, exploring the number of cross-racial friends and acquaintances of North-East Wales residents, as well as the frequency of interracial interaction between groups, would provide an insight into the social distance between Black and White groups.

As discussed above, racism remains a salient issue in contemporary Britain. Based on Childs' (2008) assertion that racial attitudes can be exposed by opinions towards interracial intimacy, we would expect oppositional attitudes to manifest as opposition to these relationships. This opposition often occurs in the form of 'border patrolling', whereby individuals are discouraged from crossing the 'border' between racial groups (Dalmage, 2000). For border patrolling to function it is therefore important to identify exactly which groups individuals belongs to, which itself connects to their individual social identity (Tajfel, 1979). Individuals, and groups, seek to achieve positive self-conceptions (Tajfel & Turner,1979) and may behave in a discriminatory manner towards other groups in asserting this distinctiveness (Turner, 1978). Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) intersects closely with Social Identity Theory in its assertion that societies invariably form group-based hierarchies, with the position of particular groups in a hierarchy often justified through the use of legitimising myths (Sidanius & Pratto, 2011). In relation to Black/White interracial relationships, border patrolling forms one of the most common forms of opposition, with legitimising myths presented as justifications for such opposition; the nature of these myths often being different among White and Black groups. White opposition tends to focus on aversive reactions to and racist evaluations of Black people, with concerns raised about potential loss of status for White individuals entering interracial relationships (Frankenberg, 1993), as well as concern expressed for the wellbeing, and social categorisation, of children produced as part of such unions (Bonilla-Silva, 2002, 2010; Collins, 2004). This type of

opposition forms a colour-blind racist discourse, as Whites attempt to de-emphasise the salience of race and deflect the issue as the oppositional views of an anonymous society, or the alleged confusion and frustration experienced by mixed-race children. Black oppositional views are somewhat different in nature, tending to be more reactionary towards the potential for White racism; focussing on the loss of Black people as a valuable resource from their communities (Childs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008), or erosion of their cultural traditions (Dalmage, 2000). Concern for the safety of Black individuals entering interracial relationships was also deployed as justification for opposition, with risks including increased levels of overt racism and sexual fetishisation (Twine, 2010), based on sexual stereotypes of Black people (Collins, 2004). In North-East Wales, therefore, it would be pertinent to identify oppositional views towards interracial unions, and towards minority individuals generally, and how subtle these are. This would indicate the nature of racist opinions in the region, especially relevant in the case of colour-blind racism, which has been presented as particularly insidious in intergroup interactions (Bonilla-Silva, 2002).

Research from the mid- to late twentieth century suggested interracial relationships between Black and White people were based on exchanges of status between dyadic partners. Social Caste Theory, discussed by Davies (1941) and Merton (1941), suggested interracial pairings tended to occur between a Black partner with high socio-economic status and a lower class White partner. The former 'exchanges' the status attached to their social standing with the White partner's racial status such that an equitable exchange takes place. Whilst there has been a body of research that supported this assertion in interracial unions between Black men and White women (Gullickson, 2006; Sassler & Joyner, 2011), the theory was criticised for its inability to account for relationships between White men and Black women (Torche & Rich, 2016); with Black women having a tendency to consistently 'marry down', even in co-ethnic relationships (Kalmijn, 1993). Rather than the exchanges of status described, it has been suggested that various tangible and intangible resources are shared between partners, creating an interdependence that helps strengthen intimate relationships (Thibaut & Kelley, 1978). Indeed, rather than engaging in exchanges of socio-economic status for racial status, interracial partners

often pair to maintain high levels of wealth, or education, possessed by both partners (Gullickson, 2006; Muttarak, 2004; Rosenfeld, 2005). Interracial couples tend towards a self-conception of their relationships as being no different from those of co-ethnic couples (Root, 2001; Rosenblatt, Karis & Powell, 1995) and several studies indicate social exchange is no more likely in interracial relationships than in their co-ethnic counterparts (Foeman & Nance, 1999; Muttarak, 2004). Exchangeable status resources are also considered less important in the establishment of interracial relationships than increased levels of intergroup contact (Spickard, 1989). Despite the lack of support for social exchange theory in interracial relationships in more recent times, contemporary accounts from British Black communities have indicated that socially mobile Black men are aggressively pursued as romantic partners by young White women of much lower social standing (Twine, 2010). The sentiment was also expressed that Black/White unions involving a Black partner from overseas, particularly from African nations, were based more in a desire to gain entry and permission to stay in Britain, than on genuine intimacy (Gross, 2013). With these sentiments in mind, it is worth understanding whether the residents of North-East Wales perceive such exchanges of status to be taking place in interracial unions and what the exact nature of these exchanges are. Perceptions that such relationships may potentially being used to exploit the White partner may well lead to adverse reactions, possibly even outright racism, towards interracial relationships, further reinforcing the need to identify whether or not it is occurring.

The theories outlined above indicate there are several important questions that need to be answered about societal perceptions of Black/White interracial relationships. If these views are truly a barometer for wider racial attitudes and inclusiveness, the insights gleaned from interviews in a qualitative study may go some way to indicating the relative acceptance of people in North-East Wales at a time when race relations are becoming increasingly salient in contemporary Britain.

Chapter One - Social Exchange Theory

This chapter introduces the origin, definition and basic functions of social exchange theory and how it operates within human social interactions. After providing analysis and critique of the theory, its application in explaining exchanges in intimate relationships will be explored and, specifically, Black/White interracial relationships.

Social exchange theory is a social psychological perspective introduced in 1958 by George Homans. Homans gave his definition of the theory as "the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons" (1961, p.13). The theory was explored, from quite different perspectives, by Blau (1964), Emerson (1976) and Thibaut and Kelley (1959; 1978). Further contextual support for the theory was offered by Foa and Foa (1974) and Walster, Walster and Berscheid (1978); whilst criticisms have been presented by Miller (2005) and Zafirovski (2005), as well as Lawler and Thye (2009).

Homans (1974) summarised the workings of the theory into three propositions: success, stimulus and deprivation-satiation:

1. Success proposition: When an individual realises their actions are rewarded, they tend to repeat those actions (p.16).
2. Stimulus proposition: The more frequently a specific stimulus has led to reward in the past, the more likely an individual will respond to it again (p.22-23).
3. Deprivation-satiation proposition: The more frequently in the recent past an individual has received a specific reward, the less valuable another portion of the reward becomes (p.29).

In addition, Homans proposed that an individual is more likely to perform actions resulting in more valuable rewards (p.25) and, when provided with alternative choices, they will choose the options that lead to more valuable and probable rewards (p.43).

Homans' propositions are reinforced by the results of an experiment conducted by Crosbie (1972), in which college students were rewarded, on compliance with specific requests, with Tandem notebooks; an item judged to have a 'reward value' for the students. The experiment found students were more likely to comply when given a notebook than when they received nothing (supporting the success proposition); students complied more when they were rewarded with two, rather than one notebook (supporting the value proposition); and students' levels of compliance declined proportionally to the number of notebooks they had acquired (supporting the deprivation-satiation proposition). These findings are supported further by psychological research, which would classify Crosbie's notebooks as an extrinsic reward, one that is external to the process students were asked to complete (Thomas, 2009), contributing to their compliance toward requests. Similarly, the deprivation-satiation proposition would be classified as 'overjustification', the tendency for individuals to become less intrinsically motivated to complete tasks when they receive excessive extrinsic rewards (Lepper, Greene & Nisbett, 1973; Rosenfeld, Folger & Adelman, 1980).

Whilst Crosbie's experiment confirms aspects of Homan's work, he also recognised his hypotheses were tested by rewarding participants with a physical item; one that can be assessed as having a perceived value without complicated interpretation. Whether Crosbie would have observed similar results through conveyance of an intrinsic and less tangible reward, such as social approval, is not known. As intrinsic reward is subjective, and the magnitude of the reward dependent on what motivates specific individuals, a range of responses would likely be observed, reliant on the reward chosen.

Social exchange compares human social interactions with a marketplace, the economic perspective investigated extensively by Blau (1964) who posited that, in social interactions, individuals seek to maximise personal rewards. Indeed, Social Exchange Theory suggests people make a mental assessment of the 'worth' of relationships based on subjective assessments of the 'costs' (such as time, money, maintenance of the relationship) subtracted from the 'rewards' (examples being love,

acceptance, attention). Should this assessment result in a positive 'worth' then the relationship is considered valuable, whilst a negative 'worth' would act detrimentally towards perceived relationship value (Monge & Contractor, 2003). Blau also argued that, in addition to perceived 'costs', interactions themselves are 'costly' in that they take up time, energy and commitment and could potentially lead to undesirable emotions or experiences; hence why individuals need to gain more from interactions than they offer.

The twelve theoretical propositions of Ivan Nye lend further support to Blau's theory and suggest individuals will seek to maximise rewards obtained from social interactions, whilst minimising costs. In situations where rewards and costs are considered equal, a course of action leading to alternative benefits such as security, social approval, or financial gains will be viewed more favourably (McDonnell, Strom-Gottfried, Burton & Yaffe, 2006).

In his assessment of social exchange, Emerson (1976) suggested exchange theory is not a theory in itself; rather a frame of reference that focusses on the movement of valued resources through the process of social interactions. He stated that the continued flow of these resources was only guaranteed when resulting in a valued, contingent return; more commonly referred to as reinforcement (Skinner, 1948). However, Emerson included in his discussion the limitation of exchange theory that lies in its preoccupation with the often unique actions and decisions of individuals and the ensuing confusion in attempting to interpret them. He concluded that exchange theory would be better suited to longitudinal analyses of social relations that may give an improved picture of the dynamics of how resources are exchanged between individuals.

Thibaut and Kelley (1978) further developed the idea stated in Emerson's (1976) conclusion, in their exploration of the connection between Exchange Theory and intimate relationships (an example of the kind of longitudinal exchange relation Emerson suggested). In the development of their Interdependence Theory, Thibaut and Kelley (1978) suggest partners become dependent on the resources (love,

affection, attention) exchanged in their relationship, though they tend to favour exchanges leading to shared rewards; strengthening the relationship overall. Therefore, it is suggested that the pursuit of individual gains, as discussed by Blau (1964), becomes less of a priority within intimate relationships and is replaced by desire for relationship success. A caveat to this would be those cases where partners are more preoccupied with the maintenance of equity within their relationship than with the success of the relationship overall. A study by Seligman, Fazio and Zanna (1980) found those who focussed more on achieving and maintaining equity within their relationship experienced feeling less trust and romantic love towards their partner and felt their involvement was less likely to ultimately end in marriage.

The type of resources exchanged in social interactions were described in the Resource Exchange Model of Foa and Foa (1974), which stated there are six categories of resource exchanged: love, money, information, status, goods and services – and they are exchanged at different rates contingent on how particularistic each is considered to be. Love is usually the most important resource in romantic relationships, followed by information and service; with money and goods among the least valued resources (Berg & McQuinn, 1986). This is at odds with the viewpoint of Sternberg (1988), who stipulated that different types of loving relationships exist and, depending on the specific type, persons will exchange differing combinations of intimacy, passion and commitment. The evolutionary perspective offered by Buss (1988) adds another perspective to the argument by stating that resource exchange is an integral part of human evolutionary psychology and forms part of the mechanism through which human beings meet their reproductive functions. In short, males tend to exchange resources such as money, goods and shelter which indicate they have a vested interest in their partner and offspring, whereas females tend to exchange sexual intimacy and, as a result, reproduction. Walster, Walster and Berscheid's perspective (1978) argued there is an exchange of rewards (affection, information, status) in all social interactions and the magnitude of affection or liking toward a person will reflect how rewards received are evaluated against those they provide.

Whilst Blau explored the quasi-economic perspective of exchange theory, studies by Homans (1974) and by Thibaut and Kelley (1978) focused on exchanges between persons at the dyadic level, or amongst small groups (Cook & Rice, 2003; Emerson, 1976). Social exchanges are therefore particularly relevant within this study, relating to intimate relationships, and will be discussed later in the section.

Critique of Social Exchange Theory

Considerations made to more intangible exchange resources frequently appear within critical accounts of exchange theory and the main criticisms focus on the reductionist nature of the theory, simplifying human interactions down to solely rational processes, arising from economic theory and behaviourist aspects of psychology (Miller, 2005; Zafirovski, 2005). Miller (2005) further assesses the shortcomings of the theory, particularly in relation to intimate relationships, in that it assumes relationships occur in a linear process; that they always favour openness and that their ultimate goal is intimacy, despite this not always being the case in reality. A study by Fletcher, Rosanowski and Fitness (1994) however, found people think about their relationships in simple terms, through an experiment where they assessed the appropriateness of a number of different positive and negative adjectives to describe their relationships, whilst facing the distraction of memorising a six-digit number. The experiment tested the principle of automatic processing and found that those with stronger relationship belief were much quicker at making the aforementioned assessments. In a separate study, Fletcher and Fitness (1996) found that the same examples of automatic processing were more common in longer-term relationships, than more recent ones, where more careful, considered processing was exhibited.

Generalising the suggestions of Miller and Zafirovski, discussed above, Cosmides and Tooby (1992) stipulated that exchange theory oversimplifies the exchange of physical – or non-physical – resources in human relationships and does not give adequate consideration to their diverse and complex nature; better describing the shorter-lived, more superficial relations that exist in economically driven interactions (Cook, 2005). Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) echo the considerations

above, adding that evaluation of rewards (and what is perceived as rewarding) is unique between individuals and it is almost impossible to find instances where human social behaviour does not seek a reward of some kind. Lending further support to the argument, Duck (1994) conveyed the view that the complexity of relationships cannot be encapsulated within a marketplace mentality and it is wrong to equate personal relationships with impersonal business transactions.

Indeed, much earlier research into exchange theory (Homans, 1958; Emerson, 1974) gave little attention to the relationships between emotion and exchange relations; an area that was explored in detail by Lawler and Thye (2009) and Lawler (2001) in their development of Affect Theory. They found the exchange process was sensitive to the emotional expressions of actors and behaviours could be exchanged in the same way as other resources, such as those referred to by the Resource Exchange Model. For example, if an actor displayed positive behaviour as gratitude towards another in return for a favour, then the implication is made that this favour will be reciprocated in the future.

Lawler and Thye (2009) go on to state that whilst this broader range of exchanges has a positive effect on reciprocal relationships, it can have the opposite effect in negotiated relationships (which they suggest are more dispassionate and economically focussed), where such behaviour may expose information that could be used as leverage in future situations. In a similar vein, the theory does not adequately consider macro-social phenomena, such as how social interaction occurs within larger social groups or institutions (Zafirovski, 2005), where several additional variables such as institutional power, authority and coercion can affect the exchanges taking place.

The final aspect of criticism of exchange theory explores its assumption that all people are fundamentally selfish and approach relationships primarily for personal gain (England, 1989). As suggested by Miller (2005), earlier in this discussion, and supported by Berger and Roloff (1980), exchange theory assumes human beings will always behave in a rational manner, regardless of the situational advantages that can

be gained through temporary irrationality, such as in the example of the Prisoner's Dilemma (Poundstone, 1993). Exchange theory does not account for a fundamental aspect of human social behaviour; the ability to exhibit altruism. Rubin (1973) stated that "Human beings are sometimes altruistic in the fullest sense of the word. They make sacrifices for the sake of others without any consideration of the reward they will obtain from them in return," (p.83). Further support for this statement is offered by psychologists, such as Brown (1986), who demarcate 'true' love and friendships, in which participants exhibit altruistic behaviour, from those focussing more on the anticipated rewards of social interactions. Conversely, evolutionary psychologists state that altruism is ultimately a selfish behaviour, linked to the human systems of reproduction and group membership. For example, Phillips *et al.* (2008) state that females must commit considerable time and energy to the process of reproduction and therefore seek out partners who exhibit altruistic behaviour and are more likely to make long term commitments; this is widely accepted in the field of evolutionary psychology (Buss, 2000; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Regan *et al.*, 2000; Trivers, 1985). Another branch of criticism warns that people behave altruistically in order to gain some personal benefit, either to reduce their own feelings of negativity when faced with unpleasant social situations (as described by the negative state relief model (Cialdini, Darby & Vincent, 1973; Manucia, Baumann & Cialdini, 1984)), or in pursuit of social reward (Kenrick, Bauman & Cialdini, 1979). Indeed, social exchange theory itself states altruistic behaviour will only take place when perceived benefits outweigh costs to the agent (Maner *et al.*, 2002).

The focus on individualism, discussed above, is also identified by England (1989), though analysis went further by identifying the theory lacks consideration of group solidarity. Exchange Theory places importance on the thoughts, actions and exchanges of the individual and undervalues external pressures linked to group membership; an aspect of criticism that is useful to consider within this research given the strong group solidarity between African Americans (Huddy, 2003) and the collectivist nature of African societies (Argyle,1967; Ma & Schoeneman, 1997). For the former, solidarity takes the mechanical form (Durkheim, 1893); individuals are connected by their socio-economic and cultural similarities. They also exhibit a formal

type of solidarity in which individuals, who are not necessarily familiar with one another, come together under the auspices of an institution (Beer & Koster, 2009). It could be interpreted that African Americans are connected by shared experiences of overt and institutionalised racial discrimination and they are connected under the quasi-institution of their collective racial identity.

Application in Romantic Partnerships

The emotions of actors in social interaction brings an additional facet to exchange theory that is particularly relevant to its application in discussing intimate relationships. Interdependence emerges as an important theme and as central to the maintenance of successful relationships (Thibaut and Kelley, 1978). The nature of exchanges change with increasing relationship interdependence, in order to minimise differences in outcomes between both partners, and these outcomes are maximised by expanding the rewards they inter-exchange. Therefore, it could be said that individual interests have been subsumed by the need for relationship success, as the pursuit of individual benefits reduces, or is abandoned altogether.

Providing a sociological perspective, Clark and Mills (1979) categorised romantic relationships into two distinct groups, communal relationships and exchange relationships. Participants in the former seek to maximise mutually beneficial rewards, whilst those in the latter favour individual benefits. These categories are an excellent companion to a similar pair of categories introduced by Berscheid (1986) relating to equity of exchanges between dyad members, namely open-field relationships and closed-field relationships. In the former, participants are free to dissolve their involvement in the relationship should exchanges become inequitable; whereas the latter involve bonds that are comparatively difficult to break (such as marriage), forcing participants to tolerate inequitable exchanges.

Equity, defined in this example as benefits received from relationships, proportional to the individual's contributions (Walster, Berscheid & Walster, 1973), is considered to encourage interdependence, whereas exchanges that create inequity disrupt social interactions and threaten interdependence (Berscheid & Walster, 1969). Short

periods of inequity are tolerated, so long as equity is maintained in the long-term. Murray, Holmes and Griffin (1996; 2003) further build upon this idea with their theory of 'mutual absorption', or the almost exclusive attention romantic partners reserve for one another. One aspect of mutual absorption is the idealisation that one partner projects on the other, seeking to create their own 'perfect' relationship and overlooking their partners' shortcomings (and inequitable exchanges) as a result.

The fundamental form of exchange theory assumes all relationships are of the 'exchange' type and participants selfishly pursue their own interests. This may indeed describe some types of impersonal (perhaps business) relationships; however, those in communal relationships do not tend to keep a mental tally of who has done what and for whom (Clark, 1984). Rather, they assess one another's needs and provide for each other, recognising that one may need more than the other, at particular points in, or for the duration of, a relationship (Clark *et al.* 1986).

Fiske (2004) further supported this in his criticism of the theory's implication that individuals within a couple would reciprocate each and every reward, leading to an overall equivalence of outcomes. He went on to explain that familial relationships would fall under the 'communal' umbrella, hence why parents would not normally expect 'payment' from their children in exchange for their upbringing. A number of other researchers also agree that communal relationships operate through a different set of norms than the operant psychological nature of exchange relations (Clark & Grote, 1998; Piliavin, 2009).

Moghaddam *et al.* (1993) stated that the wider form of reciprocity operating in communal relations is seen, in some form, in all known cultures. This highlights another shortcoming of the original theory, in that the context of culture and the cross-cultural differences in the norms and social rules that operate in relationships is not given adequate attention (Zafirovski, 2005). Actions leading to a positive relationship response in one culture may easily lead to indifference, or even a negative reaction, within a distinctly different culture. The foundation for this argument is supported in a study by Buss *et al.* (1990), where the preferred

characteristics of a romantic partner were ranked by individuals from 37 different cultures. The characteristics considered most important varied considerably, especially between cultures that could be described as 'traditional' versus those seen as 'modern'. This level of variation among differing groups lays the groundwork for the suggestion that the kinds of exchanges taking place socially exhibit similar variation. However, in the conclusion of their study, Buss *et al.* (1990) stated there was a strong positive correlation across all the cultures examined, indicating that 'kindness' and 'understanding' were the most desired characteristics of a potential mate. The sample size was sufficiently large (N=9,474) for the result to be particularly significant. Their findings suggest a 'psychological unity' across the human species, transcending potentially divisive factors such as nationality, religion and ethnicity – giving some degree of support to the earlier work on exchange theory.

Application in Black/White Interracial Relationships

Having discussed the relation of exchange theory to intimate relationships and touched on issues concerning its interpretation in cross-cultural situations, the intersection of these two themes must be further explored; how research into American and British Black/White interracial relationships incorporates the theory and whether it is justified or refuted in each case.

A branch of Exchange Theory was developed by Davies (1941) and Merton (1941) that explored the operation of social exchange within interracial marriages, referred to as Social Caste Theory, as it was based on the idea of a hierarchy, where different racial and ethnic groups inhabited different levels; intersecting very closely with Social Dominance Theory, discussed by Sidanius and Pratto (2001). Much of the application of social exchange theory within interracial marriage focusses on the idea of this racial hierarchy, where Whites occupy a dominant position above Blacks, and ethnicity as a symbol of 'status' is off-set against educational attainment or access to financial and social capital (Fu, 2001; Gullickson, 2006; Hou & Myles, 2013; Kalmijn, 1993; Yancey & Yancey, 2007). In most cases the subject of this analysis is the pairing of Black males and White females, where the latter exchanges her racial status (supposedly elevated to a higher position within society's racial hierarchy) for the

economic and intellectual capital of the Black male; usually possessing a higher socio-economic status than his partner. The findings of many studies seem to corroborate this, providing data to indicate that Black males in interracial pairings tend to possess higher qualifications or earning potential than their White counterparts (Gullickson, 2006; Walker, 2005; Watts & Henriksen, 1999), or provide opinions reflecting perceptions that Black males enter into interracial pairings for superficial reasons (Childs, 2008), a view seemingly held with considerable conviction by Black women on both sides of the Atlantic (Childs, 2005b; Twine, 2010). A recent study by Torche and Rich (2016) confirmed that, between 1980-2010, White women were around three times more hypergamous within interracial marriages than among co-ethnic pairings and, as White women's educational level increased, so too did their avoidance of Black men.

Research has suggested Black, and other minority, women exchange good looks and access to sex for financial support provided by White men (Sassler & Joyner, 2011) and historically speaking, during the slavery period in the USA, female slaves were often able to leverage improved living conditions and even luxuries from slave masters and overseers in exchange for sexual access (Yarbrough, 2005). Similarly, and intersecting with Racial Motivation Theory (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993), some studies suggest Black males are able to use their ethnic identity as an exchange resource, however the views communicated by participants in this study tended towards internalised racial stereotypes concerning their alleged sexual prowess (Childs, 2005a; Katz, 1996). There also exists an interpretation that Black males enter into relationships with White women to punish western society for sins committed by instigating slavery (Fanon, 1967), whilst Whites submit to Black partners as a form of absolution for these sins (Spaights & Dixon, 1984). The authors themselves explain this is a more pathological view of interracial relations, allegedly held by some among the US population, though it feels too extreme to be treated with any academic credence. This is especially true in the face of numerous discourses from Black/White interracial couples who view themselves as no different to co-ethnic couples and were attracted to one another for the same reasons (common interests, values) as any other couple in society (Childs, 2005a; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.,* 1995).

The Social Caste Theory of Davies (1941) and Merton (1941) implies an exchange of economic and educational resources, as well as racial identity as a form of status. However, research suggests physical attractiveness of individuals can also be considered an exchangeable resource within interracial relationships. In a study conducted in the USA, by Murstein *et al.* (1989), a panel of judges rated the physical attractiveness of partners within several Black/White interracial pairings. Despite both partners rating one another as equally attractive, the judges consistently rated the African American partner, whether male or female, as more attractive. The authors of the study interpreted this result as the Black partner having to possess more attractive physical features in order to compensate for their skin colour, which is given less value by western society, thereby exchanging their good looks with the higher racial status provided by a White partner. Similar results were found in an investigation by Wu, Chen and Greenberger (2014), who found interracial daters were rated as more attractive, both by their partners and by third party observers, when compared with people dating within their race.

Research by Lewis (2012), which focussed on the attractiveness of facial features between races, sought to explain the disparity in the number of Black male-White female marriages when compared to White male-Black female marriages, which has been widely discussed (Foeman & Nance, 1999; Gaines & Ickes, 1997; Passel *et al.*, 2010). The study suggests distal aspects of evolutionary psychology, relating to facial features and skin pigmentation, lead to Black women being perceived as less attractive than other races, whereas Black men are perceived as more attractive than other races. However, the final model of the study found Black women who were interracially married to White men tended to be rated as more attractive, giving some support to the findings of Murstein and colleagues. Evaluation of skin pigmentation and its effect on social interactions was also explored in a 2014 study by Keels and Harris; who found Blacks possessing a darker complexion tend to have fewer interracial relationships, both platonic and intimate. An interesting finding from the study noted that those with the darkest complexions had slightly increased chances of forming interracial relationships; suggesting perhaps that the

relative scarcity of such dark colouration may be exoticised by, and appear fascinating to potential partners; as stipulated by Racial Motivation Theory (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993).

Such fascination with a racial 'other', may have some roots in psychological theory surrounding motivation. Evidence for this is offered by Wilson and Lassiter (1982) who utilised an experiment with children to examine the effects of extrinsic constraints. They found children who received mild threats against playing with an alluring toy actually became more interested in the item than they had in the absence of perceived sanctions. Whilst much of Kouri and Lasswell's racial motivation theory focuses on the fascination with physically and culturally different others, the influence of a society hostile to interracial relations cannot be ignored in terms of its potential to influence a person's interest and motivation to become socially and intimately involved with people of other races.

The studies by Murstein *et al.* (1989), Lewis (2012) and Wu *et al.* (2014) are marred by several issues. Foremost among them is that they base their findings on participants' perceived attractiveness of the physical characteristics of others; something that is subjective and should be interpreted with caution, especially around such a sensitive topic as race. McClintock (2014b) offers additional findings to refute beauty-exchange within interracial relationships, as couples appear no different to those within wider society. Omitted from all aspects of the discussion is the effect of conditioning in western society, through both the media and wider societal opinion, to accept specific standards of feminine beauty, which tend to be overwhelmingly represented by characteristics possessed by White women (Childs, 2009). Other research indicates that whilst physical attraction, along with shared interests, are important for around 70% of those in interracial marriages, race was not highlighted as an important factor (Lewis, Yancey & Bletzer, 1997), providing a combination of support and opposition to the studies mentioned above.

Exchange of socio-economic resources between Blacks and Whites through intimate relationships appears to be common across a number of cultural contexts,

as suggested earlier by Buss *et al.* (1990) and has been studied where such relationships have formed between Blacks and Whites across a range of nations and cultures, covering Africa, Europe, and the USA.

Within African contexts, numerous sources indicate a strong desire, held by African Blacks, to acquire some social or economic capital from associations with Whites, or the opinion that Black Africans will behave differently (read contemptuously) towards their ethnic fellows having taken receipt of this 'status' (Abbide, 2011; Gross, 2013; Sherman & Steyne, 2009; UNESCO, 1974; van der Walt & Basson, 2015). Indeed, within African societies, Whites appear to be frequently constructed as idealised racial 'others' (Pattman & Bhana, 2006) who are able to provide access to wealth, status and opportunities to travel outside of Africa (Gross, 2013). However, many of these articles paint Africans rather too Machiavellian in their approach to interracial relations to be considered universally representative. This is especially true when we consider that Africans who enter into interracial marriages tend to have higher levels of educational attainment and fit better within the supposed exchange model discussed earlier (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; ONS, 2014).

The British sphere shares similarities with the African findings, especially among Caribbean communities, where there is agreement that Blacks can achieve financial and status advantages that would not be available to them with a Black partner, and also that White women from lower social classes aggressively pursue upwardly mobile Caribbean men, not only for economic gain, but also for sexual adventure (Twine, 2010). This is undermined somewhat by studies highlighting, for the Black Caribbean population, there is no link between intermarriage and higher socio-economic status, as there exist similar intermarriage rates across the social strata of the UK (Muttarak, 2004).

In the USA, where the link between intermarriage and social exchange (or status marrying) is a sentiment held with particular conviction, especially among the African American female population (Childs, 2005a; 2008), intermarriage between Black men and White women is seen as a compounding factor in the phenomenon

known as the ‘marriage squeeze’ (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000), or the loss of marriageable (higher socio-economic status) Black men from the African American community, reducing the chances of Black women from the same social class finding a suitable partner. The problem appears particularly injurious when some figures suggest eligible, well educated Black women outnumber their equivalent male counterparts in a ratio of around 100 to 1 (Norment, 1994) and is exacerbated by the paucity of interracial relations between White men and African American women; many such women stating the opinion they are not considered attractive by the standards of White American society (Childs, 2005b).

Contrary to the views of those, above, concerning the supposed social exchanges between Whites and Blacks in the American setting (Childs, 2005a; 2005b; 2008; Crowder & Tolnay, 2000); there are multiple studies, that have taken place within the USA, indicating partners in Black/White interracial relationships bring similar levels of economic and educational resources to their relationships (Gullickson, 2006; Kreider, 2000; Muttarak, 2004; Pavela, 1964; Rosenfeld, 2005;). Qian also suggested, in a 1997 study, that educated minority people are more likely to enter into interracial relationships to maintain socio-economic compatibility than exchanging their resources for White racial ‘status’. This sentiment echoes the assertion made by Staples (1979) that many Black women would not be prepared to settle for anything less than a mate with a similar level of education.

The application of exchange theory to interracial relationships must be subject to several additional criticisms. Fundamentally, a number of researchers agree that exchanges occur in all romantic pairings, regardless of race, and rather than exchanging intangible status symbols in the forms of race, education or wealth, interracial couples exchange significant levels of affection and respect, which contribute to the survival of their relationships within a frequently racist society (Cerroni-Long, 1984; Gaines *et al.*, 1999). There is much research portraying interracial relationships between Blacks and Whites as problematic (McClintock, 2014a) and a compelling argument is made by Kalnasy (2014), in the suggestion that researchers discriminate against interracial couples simply through studying them;

the comparison with and contrast against co-ethnic couples implying interracial couplings are extraordinary to the extent they require scientific analysis. A riposte to Kalnasy's suggestion is put forward by Forry *et al.* (2007) who state that the study of Black/White couples is made all the more imperative due to the history of legislation levelled against them and the ongoing contemporary stigmatisation with which they are associated. Indeed, rather than acting as 'academic discrimination' such studies, when conducted using methodologies that avoid pathologising or exoticising interracial relationships, allow the academic community to maintain an accurate picture of racial attitudes in a constantly changing environment (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1970). This is especially true when the incidence of interracial marriages and co-habitations, and acceptance of them, are considered a barometer for the wider racial attitudes of society (Childs, 2008) and such measurements should continue to be taken until the point that, as Frankenberg stated in the dedication of her 1993 book, literature discussing attitudes toward race and interracial intimacy can be read as a historical text rather than an account of the present.

More recent research contributes to the demystification of interracial relationships and highlights that they lead to equal, if not greater, satisfaction than their co-ethnic equivalents (Gurung & Duong, 1999; Troy, Lewis-Smith & Laurenceau, 2006; Wu *et al.*, 2014). In addition, Killian (2001) and Donovan (2004) explain that partners in interracial pairings share strong feelings of commitment and negotiate their differences (racial or otherwise) through patience, compromise and the establishment of new relationship rules; intangible, emotional resources that are exchanged in order to maintain the stability and satisfaction of the relationship overall; linking back to the theory of interdependence established by Thibaut and Kelley (1978).

Some areas of research indicate socio-economic status has little relevance within the selection of an interracial or co-ethnic partner. Wang and Kao (2007) investigated whether any interaction takes place between these two variables and found, in the vast majority of cases, they were completely unrelated. Blacks who come from a higher socio-economic background were found to be more likely to

marry a White partner, though this would be easily accounted for due to their increased level of contact with Whites as a result of their higher status, as well as the social similarity (and smaller social distance) it infers. A number of other scholars came to the same conclusion and agree that socio-economic status is less important than interpersonal contact in the formation of intimate relationships (Blau, 1977; Fujino, 1997; Hallinan & Smith, 1985; Spickard, 1989). Wong (2002) explored this line of inquiry further, concluding that the frequency of intermarriage would not be increased either by increasing the socio-economic endowments of Black males, nor increasing their contact with White women. Rather, the most important limiting factor in the formation of interracial marriages is the social taboo surrounding them and that, should these sanctions be removed, intermarriage rates could increase by as much as 74%.

The effect of society's stigmatisation of intermarriage is significant within this argument and a strong rebuke of status-exchange is offered by a historical account from Romano (2003). In the USA during the 1940s and 1950s many Blacks felt that marrying Whites would actually lead to their lives becoming more difficult, as their marriage would change nothing about the discrimination society subjected them to, yet their interracial partnership would make them a more visible target for such discrimination. Whilst Blacks infrequently gained status from these intimate liaisons, Whites were much more likely to lose status; shunned and ostracised by White society and left with no option but assimilation into Black communities. The economic and social penalties suffered by intermarried Whites is also offered as a reason why few White men in America choose Black women as marriage partners (Blackwell, 1991). Apparent concerns from White communities about potential loss of status appear in the findings of McNamara, Tempenis and Walton (1999), whose study into the varying attitudes toward interracial marriages from different family types found that fragmented White families tend to display the greatest hostility towards these relationships. The authors suggested the root of this reaction may lay in the desire for couples not to make the same limiting mistakes other members of these families had made previously; though applying exchange theory to this example provides a whole new perspective. Those from fragmented families tend to be of

lower socio-economic status and as such, any gains in status they have achieved are likely to be fragile and particularly precious, leading to particularly vigorous defence against anything that may threaten these gains. As discussed earlier, society tends to punish Whites socially and economically for intimate relations with Blacks and this may therefore go some way to explaining why this type of White family opposes interracial relations so vehemently.

Particular consideration should be given to the overt focus of exchange theorists on the pairing between Black males and White females, as they provide a better fit to the model than the pairing of White males with Black females. In fact, research indicates Black women tended to 'marry down' not only in interracial relationships, but also in co-ethnic couples, a phenomenon that has continued to increase (Kalmijn, 1993), and that there is often only weak correlation with Exchange Theory in White male-Black female pairings (Torche & Rich, 2016). Additional historical agreement is offered by Staples (1973) in his account that a number of celebrated cases involved marriage between famous Black women and White men who were not their equal in terms of fame and wealth. Kalmijn's study, discussed earlier, took place during a period of greater economic and educational inequality between men and women and therefore it could be argued that the majority of relationships were economically beneficial to women at the time; a suggestion that is further reinforced by Kalmijn's (1993) finding that White women at the time tended to 'marry up' in co-ethnic marriages, as well as interracial marriages.

Rather than most interracial marriages and relationships displaying inequity of social class between their members, research indicates that, as in most marriages, partners share similar levels of status (in terms of education and social class) and therefore 'status marrying' in the interracial arena can be considered a myth, as it is no more likely to occur in interracial marriages than within co-ethnic marriages (Foeman & Nance, 1999; Rosenfeld, 2005; Yancey, 2002). Similarly, Muttarak (2004) found, within the British Caribbean community, intermarriage does not strictly correlate with higher socio-economic status, as similar rates of intermarriage between Whites and Blacks occur at all levels of the social strata.

Chapter Discussion

The early work of Homans, Blau and Emerson indicate that there is a credible application of Exchange Theory to human social interactions. Whilst it appears repugnant to de-personalise interactions between persons and reduce individuals to the role of profit-maximising agents within a marketplace of intangible resources, it is true that many examples of human behaviour are based on subconscious calculations of what may be gained from them; whether the obligation that a favour will be returned in the near future, or merely for the pleasure of receiving social approval. Evolutionary psychological theory would support the tenets of exchange theory, in its summation that human exchanges of physical and interpersonal resource, whether tangible or intangible, are linked to desired mate characteristics in human reproductive behaviours. The study by Buss *et al.* (1990) lends further support in its suggestion that the most desired of these characteristics appears to be universal across nationalities, cultures and racial groups.

There is also, however, the argument that the theory cannot be easily applied to human social interactions, or intimate interpersonal relationships, especially interracial pairings. As Emerson (1976) stated in his critique of the theory "… we must understand that it is not a theory at all. It is a frame of reference within which many theories – some micro and some more macro – can speak to one another, whether in argument or mutual support," (p.336).

Whilst it is true many social interactions are based on mental evaluations of cost, reward, profit and risk, even when exploring exchanges of intangible resources such as love and affection within intimate relations, it is when this very application of the theory is attempted that its credibility is brought into question. Within romantic pairings there are many more examples of behaviour that display altruism, selflessness and disregard of individual opportunities, that would be dismissed as irrational behaviour by the exchange theory and evolutionary psychology. As the discussion above elucidates, the success of intimate relations is maintained by a combination of rational and irrational behaviours, as well as a level of

interdependence where small scale social exchanges are reciprocated continuously, though not always at a constant rate or in equal magnitude (Thibaut & Kelley, 1978).

The abandonment of personal reward becomes particularly pertinent when discussing interracial relationships, as making the first step in establishing such a pairing is, theoretically, in conflict with the fundamental workings of exchange theory. Whilst there is much more acceptance of interracial relations in western society today, there is still opposition and, as such, the risk of losing social acceptance and facing isolation from family, friends and the wider community. The influence of these risks work within interracial relationships already, as some interracially-involved adolescents have a tendency to avoid public displays of affection (Vaquera & Kao, 2003) and there are cases where some adult interracial couples temporarily disassociate from one another in specific social situations, or locations where they may attract negative attention (Killian, 2012); both examples of avoidance strategies that could be considered responses to the 'risks' of intimate interracial involvement. Inversely, lines of theory could also interpret these risks of social sanctions as a motivating factor. Evidence indicates that intrinsic interest can be augmented through the use of extrinsic constraint (Wilson & Lassiter, 1982) and social disapproval of Black/White interracial relationships could contribute to making them more alluring. In turn this may feed into racial motivation theory (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993) as the disapproving society constructs the minority racial group as different, leading some to develop a fascination with their perceived difference, rather than aversion.

Exchange theory, interpreted at the most basic level, implies the minority partner would have to bring to the relationship a resource (e.g. wealth, beauty) that would justify and compensate for the risk of reduced social approval and 'balance' the exchange. A number of studies (Fu, 2001; Gullickson, 2006; Hou & Myles, 2013; Kalmijn, 1993; Lewis, 2012; Murstein *et* al., 1989; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Sassler & Joyner, 2011; Torche & Rich, 2016; Wu *et al.*, 2014) support the suggestion of Davies (1941) and Merton (1941) that minority partners exchange more abundant socio-economic resources, appealing physical characteristics, or sexual access, for the

'superior' racial status of a White partner, though this is infrequently the case; humans do not rigidly operate to the norms by which the theory itself operates; this is widely supported by numerous studies in which members of interracial pairings stated their motivations for entering a relationship were no different to co-ethnic couples (Bauer, 1998; Childs, 2005a; Donovan, 2004; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Watts & Henriksen, 1999). Further support is presented by Murray, Holmes and Griffin (1996; 2003) who state that romantic couples, in the development of their relationship, enter a state of almost exclusive mutual attention and overlook the faults and shortcomings of their partner, thereby suggesting that desire for one another becomes more influential than the potential risk of social exclusion by associating with a partner from another racial group.

Whilst some examples exist where exchange theory seems to appropriately apply to interracial couplings (particularly those from studies within various African settings), they are likely to either be coincidence, or an indication that the relationship is based on more superficial grounds than genuine love. A more rounded explanation, featuring a combination of different theories would be more appropriate in exploring intimate relations between ethnic groups, as several examples provide evidence that exchange theory is not supported – especially interracial marriages featuring Black women, who tend to 'marry down' in terms of socio-economic status and defy the forms of status exchange described by Social Caste Theory.

A broader and more comprehensive picture can be developed through considering social exchange alongside other social psychological theories, such as the Contact Hypothesis and social identity theory, which further explain the interracial relationship dynamics that the exchange theory is not able to when considered in isolation. In 1967, W. E. B. Du Bois made the assertion, after gathering data from more than thirty Black/White interracial families, and more than nine thousand interviews, that interracial marriage was not most common among those with the least prestige and material wealth, but rather was more common among those who had more frequent contact.

Chapter Two - Contact Hypothesis

The Contact Hypothesis is widely regarded as one of the most effective interventions for the amelioration of conflict and improvement of relations between groups (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003). Development of the theory is frequently credited to Allport (1954) who stated that interpersonal contact, taking place under appropriate conditions, would reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members, who subsequently gain appreciation and better understanding of out-groups. The ability of Allport's theory to account for prejudice reduction and improvement of intergroup attitudes is widely supported (Aberbach & Walker, 1973; Ellison & Powers, 1994; Gibson, 2004; Hamberger & Hewstone, 1997; Holtman, Louw, Tredoux & Carney, 2005; Meer & Freedman, 1966; Robinson, 1980; Sigelman & Welch, 1993; Swart, Hewstone, Christ & Voci, 2010; Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2010; Williams, 1964; Yancey, 1999) and a recent meta-analysis of 515 studies confirmed the presence of a strong, highly significant, negative relationship between contact and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

The process through which the contact hypothesis functions can be conceptualised into three stages; the first of which consists of exposure between groups providing opportunities for learning about out-groups which in turn leads to reduced prejudice (Allport, 1954; Triandis, 1972). These experiences and observations impact on the second stage of the process where they form the basis by which evaluations of out-group members are made (Pettigrew, 1998), which can be positive, negative, or neutral. In the final stage, having been exposed to out-group members and made evaluations of them based on interpersonal exchanges, re-evaluations of out-groups can be made that will either be positive (and presumably lead to improved relations with the out-group), negative (impairing relations with the out-group), or may not change at all. Where the goal is to improve relations between groups, it becomes important not only that evaluations and re-evaluations are of a positive nature, but also that generalisation takes place; ensuring positive sentiment is extended to the out-group as a whole and does not stop at the individual level,

where specific out-group members are seen as exceptional and opinions of the wider out-group remain unchanged (Everett & Onu, 2013).

This chapter seeks to explore the impact of the contact hypothesis on interracial relations and more specifically on its positive, or negative, affect in the establishment of interracial romantic relationships. Despite the credit granted to Allport for development of the theory; studies of interpersonal collaboration, with the intention of reducing interracial hostility and prejudice specifically, were explored from a sociological standpoint almost a decade earlier by Williams (1947); his study is mentioned later in this section. Similar findings from the same era were discussed by Bobo, Kluegel and Smith (1996) who highlight a considerable decline in the proportion of White Americans perceiving Blacks as less intelligent; Fifty-three percent of Americans held this perception in 1942, yet 80% disagreed by 1956. The authors noted that this period predates the African American Civil Rights Movement and therefore attribute the decline in these perceptions to contact between Whites and Blacks during the Second World War; a viewpoint that is supported and widely discussed by Romano (2003), in particular how negative viewpoints of African Americans decreased during the wartime period, only to increase again in the wake of the conflict. A similar picture also played out in Britain during the same time period (Olusoga, 2016).

The conditions under which intergroup contact occurs are pivotal to its success in improving relations between groups. Allport (1954) recognised that simply increasing the amount of contact between groups did not always lead to more positive intergroup sentiment, despite laboratory findings that “mere exposure” increases liking between strangers proportional to the number of times they meet (Saegert, Swap & Zajonc, 1973). If contacts do not occur under appropriate conditions, little change may occur in reciprocal majority and minority group perceptions. Aronson (1980) evidences this in his discussion that Whites in the USA experience frequent contact with Blacks who hold lower status occupations; the frequency of these contacts may act to reinforce stereotypes of Black peoples’ relative inferiority held by Whites. Sustained contact, without appropriate conditions, may potentially

exacerbate negative feelings between groups, leading to increased prejudice and hostility (Homans,1974), especially in situations where the minority group are in competition with the dominant group for resources (employment, housing) or there is a considerable increase in their population size (Dustmann & Preston, 2001; Törngren, 2011). Indeed, Yinger and Simpson (1973) confirmed the paradoxical nature of intergroup contact in their summation that prejudice can be the result not only of a lack of contact with members of minority groups, but also as a result of such contact.

In order to surmount the potential obstacles of "mere exposure" to improved intergroup relations, Allport (1954) proposed that contacts should take place under specific conditions that would encourage positive interactions. Optimal contact conditions must have strong institutional support and feature personal, informal interactions between people of equal status who are encouraged to co-operate in working toward superordinate goals (Forsyth, 2009; Ratele & Duncan, 2003). The purpose of facilitating interactions such as these is to encourage individuals to re-categorise their perception of out-groups and to begin thinking in terms of "we", rather than "us and them" (Desforges *et al.*, 1991; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1999; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1988).

The contact hypothesis was tested in residential settings by Festinger, Schachter and Back (1950) who made observations of the number of friendships formed between women living in a housing development consisting of several buildings arranged in quadrangles. Residential propinquity and the effects of "mere exposure" played an important role here, as the authors findings indicated that the women were more likely to establish friendships proportional to the magnitude of contact they had with neighbours; women made the most friends with others living within their own building, fewer among their own quadrangle and fewer still among those who lived in separate quadrangles. This also takes place in desegregated interracial housing developments; several studies confirmed that residence within integrated housing led White Americans to have more favourable views of their Black neighbours and these views developed at a faster rate than those living in more segregated

residences (Deutsch & Collins, 1951; Pettigrew, 1998; Powers & Ellison, 1995; Yancey, 1999); this was also found to extend to other racial groups both within and outside the immediate neighbourhood (Stolle, Soroka & Johnston, 2008; Sturgis, Brunton-Smith, Read & Allum, 2011). However, the presence of Blacks within a majority White neighbourhood can have the opposite effect and present more of a worry to White families than other minority ethnic groups, especially when the White family have children under the age of eighteen (Emerson, Chai & Yancey, 2001). Similarly, it was found that White families were much less likely to purchase homes in neighbourhoods consisting of more than a 15% Black population, and this probability remained low even when controlling for some of the typical reasons Whites give for avoiding Black people (Emerson, Chai & Yancey, 2001; Farley & Frey, 1994), suggesting that symbolic racism may be playing a part, rather than perceived group threat.

Emerson, Kimbro and Yancey (2002) found that attending a racially mixed school had a significant positive effect on interracial attitudes and led to more racially diverse social circles later in life than residence within a racially mixed neighbourhood. Their findings are consistent with the Allportian contact conditions, as students share a relatively similar status within the school environment and have more opportunity for interpersonal contact than two people who live in the same neighbourhood yet are otherwise unfamiliar. The school environment also permits interracial contact to occur at a younger age, which has been shown to increase the likelihood of making casual interracial contact in adult life (Sigelman, Bledsoe, Welch & Combs, 1996), especially for African Americans (Ellison & Powers, 1994). Co-operative activities within a classroom environment can lead to increased self-esteem, morale and empathy across racial lines and impact positively on the performance of minority pupils without compromising the performance of majority-group students (Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979). One of the most successful examples of cooperative activity resulting in improved interracial contact was the “Jigsaw Classroom”, in which pupils are divided into groups, each working on a specific element of an overall project. All groups and, by extension, all pupils become interdependent on one another in

piecing together their expertise to successfully complete the project that forms an overarching superordinate goal (Aronson & Patnoe, 1979).

Johnson and Jacobson (2005) discussed how religious settings provide opportunities for intergroup contact, further influenced by a paradigm of acceptance of one's fellows as equals. Evidence to support this comes from studies in the USA which found those who attend church for intrinsic reasons were less prejudiced than those who attend for extrinsic reasons (Batson, Schoenrade & Ventis, 1993; Hunsberger, 1995). Hadaway, Hackett and Miller (1984) found that almost two-fifths of White Americans attended churches alongside Black members and that they tended to have more racially progressive views than those who only lived in the same neighbourhood as Blacks.

Competing in team sports provides an environment where participants share equal status and must co-operate to meet a superordinate goal. Brown, Brown, Jackson, Sellers and Manuel (2003) studied the effects of contact between White and Black athletes who participated in individual or team sports and found that White athletes competing in team sports expressed less racial prejudice than those who took part in individual sports.

Adults are most likely to associate with someone from another racial group within their workplace (Estlund, 2003) and research indicates not only the positive relationship between contact and positive intergroup attitudes, but also the fluid nature that the presence of optimal conditions, or lack thereof, can have on the outcomes of such contact. Minard (1952) found, among coal miners in West Virginia, White and Black miners existed as an integrated community of equal status colleagues whilst below ground, yet were the complete opposite above ground when the norms of society (the proxy for Allport's institutional support) did not permit White and Black miners equality. Similarly, those serving in military occupations exhibited the same phenomenon. The shortage of combat troops for the US Army during World War II led to the decision to allow Black soldiers to volunteer for combat duty. Concerned with troop morale at the prospect of serving in integrated units, the

army conducted an opinion survey and found that 62% of White soldiers in segregated units were uncomfortable with the prospect of serving alongside Black soldiers. White soldiers who were already serving in semi-integrated units only reported 7% dissatisfaction with the proposal (Williams, 1947). Both the examples above met the optimal contact conditions theorised by Allport; soldiers and miners, occupationally speaking, were of equal status; it was necessary for them to co-operate with one another to meet common goals and, given their highly dangerous occupations, a great deal of personal interaction, through trust and teamwork would have been necessary. Aptly, in a discussion of co-operation between White British soldiers and servicemen from other parts of the British Empire, during WWI, Winston Churchill made the statement *"Comradeship in danger will do what the education of centuries would never effect"* (Olusoga, 2016:441).

It is practical at this point to discuss the psychological groundwork of the contact hypothesis and how its intended results are achieved. As discussed earlier, the most fundamental step in the process is learning about other groups through interpersonal contact; Allport (1954) and Triandis (1972) suggested the outcome of this learning experience would be reduction in prejudice against out-groups. Stephan and Stephan (1985) state that intergroup contact aids in decreasing the levels of "intergroup awe", or anxiety that occurs when faced with potential contact with out-group members, and subsequently acts to lessen negative viewpoints held against the out-group. Finally, Stephan and Finlay (1999) anticipate that intergroup contact permits in-group members opportunity to empathise with the concerns of out-group members and better understand situations from their perspective. Examples of the process in action were presented by Hewstone (2003), who observed a reduction in anxiety between Hindu and Muslim groups in Bangladesh and between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland as a result of contact scenarios. Evidence indicates that students with lower levels of interracial anxiety are more likely to date students from other races during college; those who date interracially during their time at college also report lower levels of in-group bias and interracial anxiety as a result (Levin, Taylor & Caudle, 2007). Tausch *et al.* (2010) describe similar findings across the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland as Hewstone (2003), yet also found that

prejudice reduced not only between the two groups involved, but also generalised to include racial minorities.

The ability to achieve generalised positive attitudes towards entire out-groups is an important outcome of the Contact Hypothesis (Hewstone & Brown, 1986); should generalisation fail to occur, positive attitudes may be attributed exclusively to individual out-group members, who are then considered an 'exception to the rule', whilst perceptions of the out-group as a whole remain unchanged (Rothbart & John, 1985). Pettigrew (1997) agrees and adds that empathy and a sense of identification with the out-group are essential in surmounting the cognitive barriers to generalisation. It is suggested that empathy with another person leads to a perceived merging between the self and the 'other' in the construction of an individual's self-representation (Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991) and that the more out-group members are viewed as part of a common group, the less salience is given to intergroup differences, resulting in reduced prejudice and in-group bias (Dovidio *et al.*, 2004).

Development of positive attitudes from intergroup contacts into more generalised positive attitudes is evidenced by Cook (1984) and by Wilder and Thompson (1980). The former utilised a study where interracial friendships were established in advance of introducing White participants to egalitarian social policies intended to reduce prejudice and discrimination. In all cases, White respondents who made friends with Black participants were more supportive of anti-prejudice policies than those from a control group. Wilder and Thompson (1980) conducted a survey with 471 White British participants regarding their views of Black people from the West Indies. Participants with friends of other races were more likely to report feeling sympathy and admiration for Black West Indians than those who did not have such friends. The positive group were also more likely to have liberal attitudes towards immigration policy, more likely to feel that immigration was good for Britain, that immigrants' rights should be extended, and that the process of naturalisation should be made easier. Notably, participants felt the same regardless of the racial or ethnic

group they were questioned about – their attitudes, favouring Black Caribbean people, had generalised, not only to all Caribbean people, but to all immigrant groups.

The discussion, above, elucidates on the importance of empathy and feelings of familiarity toward out-group members as pivotal in achieving generalised prejudice reduction. Developing empathic feelings towards out-groups allows better consideration of situations and behaviours from the perspective of the out-group member (Eberhardt & Fiske, 1996; Swim & Stangor, 1998) and a number of studies have shown that empathy in role-playing exercises is effective as a means of reducing prejudice (Batson *et al.*, 1997; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; McGregor, 1993; Stephan & Finlay); and are effective at reducing prejudice regardless of the age, gender, or race of participants (Aboud & Levy, 2000). In addition to reducing prejudice, it is argued that Whites can also benefit by developing 'racial literacy' through their intimate contacts with Blacks, and that witnessing everyday acts of racism, from a new perspective, helps recast their vision of 'Whiteness' and of themselves as White people (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006).

Prejudice reduction can also be achieved very effectively through the establishment of laws, regulations and social norms encouraging fair treatment (Oskamp, 2000). Studies have shown that even one person's support for egalitarian policies is sufficient motivation for others to follow suit (Blanchard, Lilly & Vaughn, 1991), including the most prejudiced individuals (Monteith, Deneen & Tooman, 1996). For example, in a 2001 study by Stangor, Sechrist and Jost, White students who found their friends to be less racist than they had initially anticipated displayed a swift, significant fall in their own levels of racial prejudice. Effective longer term prejudice reduction can be achieved by making individuals aware of inconsistencies in their values, attitudes and behaviours within an allegedly equal society (Rokeach, 1971). Realisation of these inconsistencies leads to internal feelings of discomfort (or cognitive dissonance), which most people naturally try to avoid (Festinger, 1957) and, as a result, tend to alter their perceptions of out-groups. Utilisation of cognitive dissonance to reduce prejudice has been successfully used in studies seeking to reduce anti-gay, anti-Asian, and anti-Black prejudice (Hing, Li & Zanna, 2002; Leippe

& Eisenstadt, 1994; Monteith, 1993), though this strategy assumes an individual will be suitably motivated by such negative feelings to alter their perceptions of the out-group. Examples could feasibly occur where an individual is unmoved by inconsistencies in their values and attitudes, or they may hold a particular out-group in so little regard they have no motivation to alter their perceptions. This is suggested by Williams and Eberhardt (2008) in their discussion of perceptions of race as either biological or cultural constructs. Individuals who view race as a biological construct view those from other groups as inherently different and are more accepting of racial disparities in society as relatively unproblematic, natural and unlikely to change. In contact scenarios, those with a biological perception of race were less willing to maintain contact with someone from another racial group and it was suggested this may stem less from a sense that such interactions may be uncomfortable than a deeper cognitive evaluation that out-group members are simply not worthy of attention. This line of theory could plausibly be read into the findings of Bobo (2004) who found that very few White Americans (5%) stated they felt sympathy or admiration for their African American counterparts.

The establishment of cross-group friendship proves an effective method of improving relations between groups (Levin, van Laar & Sidanius, 2003; Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns & Voci, 2004; Pettigrew, 1997) and it is suggested that the quality of these interactions are further augmented through self-disclosure (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe & Ropp, 1997). Miller (2002) describes self-disclosure as the voluntary interpersonal sharing of information that is of a personal or intimate nature and goes on to explain that its use in interpersonal interactions reduces prejudice through the promotion of familiarity and perceptions of similarity, leading to reciprocal trust between in-group and out-group members. Disclosure of intimate information also implies trust and confidence in the recipient and, as Petty and Mirels (1981) argue, people tend to trust and have more liking for those who show trust in them. Recipients of personal information may also feel a greater personal attraction to the provider and thereby disclose more information about themselves, leading to reciprocal interpersonal attraction (Berg & Wright-Buckley, 1988; Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969). However, a caveat to this states that an element of trust must already

exist in order for disclosure to take place (Altman & Taylor, 1973); an example of this occurring within a study by Pattman and Bhana (2009), in discussions with Black South African schoolgirls regarding their interracial contacts at school. When interviewed by a White male researcher the girls animatedly discussed, at considerable length, their conflictual experiences with Indian girls at school, however when they were interviewed by a female Indian researcher very little was mentioned of these experiences and the girls generally communicated in a much less familiar manner – they did not have as much trust for the female researcher due to their negative experiences with people from her particular racial background. A further warning states self-disclosure will only be effective if the recipient understands, accepts and appreciates what they have heard and responds appropriately (Reis & Shaver, 1988); further indicating the importance of empathy within interpersonal contact.

Clearly the quality of contact is just as, if not more important, than the quantity of contact. Voci and Hewstone (2003) observed increasingly positive intergroup attitudes, along with lessening subtle prejudice and intergroup anxiety, between Italian students and African immigrants. The more contact the groups had, and the higher the quality of that contact, the better the relations between the groups became. Anxiety experienced at the prospect of contact with an out-group is a major obstacle contact scenarios must manoeuvre around, as it is necessary for individuals to reduce anxiety if they are to become more comfortable in the presence of, and interacting with, members of other groups (Allport, 1954). This becomes particularly pertinent within the arena of interracial contacts, as many people, particularly in American society, feel discomfort in the presence of people from other racial groups (Dalmage, 2000). Where interracial contacts do occur, much of the anxiety felt by Black people links to their expectations of White peoples' racist behaviour towards them. White people also feel anxiety in contact scenarios, as they fear potentially coming across as biased against, or even racist towards Black people (Plant, 2004). Evidence has shown the establishment of intergroup friendships is effective in reducing such anxiety (Pettigrew, 1998), especially when supported by the types of self-disclosure discussed above (Tam *et al.*, 2006; Turner, *et al.*, 2007).

However, where anxiety is not effectively reduced, or becomes exacerbated by the anticipation of rejection or discrimination during intergroup contacts (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), it can lead to individuals responding adversely (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Yook & Albert, 1999), and developing an aversive strategy to deal with out-group members. This includes avoiding contact where possible (Plant, 2004; Wilder & Simon, 2001) and increased dependence on simplified and expectancy-confirming perceptions of out-group members, reliant on stereotyping, when making evaluations of them (Wilder & Simon, 2001). Deployment of an avoidance strategy additionally forecloses the opportunity for further contact that may prompt revision or correction of perceptions, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, which Newcomb (1947) labelled as "autistic hostility". Worse still, contact scenarios that lead individuals to become defensive and fearful of others run the risk of damaging intergroup relations, rather than improving them (Farley, 1988).

Limitations of the Contact Hypothesis

Criticism can be levelled at the most basic principles of the contact hypothesis; Pettigrew and Tropp's 2006 meta-analysis of more than 500 empirical tests of the theory indicated that 94% of cases led to a reduction in prejudice as a result of intergroup contact. However, despite this impressive success rate, prejudice, hatred and intergroup anxiety still occur, suggesting that contact alone is insufficient in ameliorating negativity between groups. Indeed, within most real-world contexts prejudice is fuelled by conflict and competition between groups of unequal status, such as Israelis and Palestinians, Whites and Blacks, or long-time citizens and recent immigrants (Esses, Jackson & Armstrong, 1998). A more pertinent argument for the context of this thesis is provided by Plous (2003) stating that whilst the contact hypothesis suggests strategies that may be effective in overcoming more overt forms of prejudice and discrimination; many of the incidents that take place in modern times are more subtle and fall into the colour-blind category of racism (Childs, 2005a). Subtle prejudices are more difficult for intergroup contact to overcome, as they tend to be widespread, ambiguous in nature and take place outside of awareness as a part of normal thought processes (Plous, 2003). The insidiousness of modern, 'subtle'

forms of racism is highlighted in its ability to disrupt the effects of dissonance-induced re-categorisation, discussed earlier, through fabrication of perceptions that minority groups are deserving of their disadvantaged position in society (Cummings & Pinnel, 1978).

Conflict is not always a catalyst for negative racial evaluations, as demonstrated by the findings of Hodson (2008) who found that White prison inmates held more positive attitudes toward their Black counterparts, proportional to the amount of contact they experienced with them. This occurred in spite of the environmental context that was frequently rife with conflict and dominance. In most cases, however, increasing contact between groups in conflictual circumstances has the potential to increase prejudice, rather than reducing it, and will be discussed further.

The first stage of the contact hypothesis is to provide an opportunity for group members to encounter one another, highlighting one of the largest interracial issues presenting a problem for the contact hypothesis; that of segregation. It would be difficult for racial groups to engage in the kind of meaningful interactions that lead to improved interracial attitudes when these groups are socially and residentially distant.

Based on data from the 1980 USA Census, African Americans are the only group classified as 'hypersegregated' from Whites (Massey & Denton, 1993) and remained so through to the 1990s (Denton, 1994; Farley & Frey, 1994). A similar picture has also been observed in South Africa (Childs, 2015; Lemanski, 2006; Oldfield, Parnell & Mabin, 2004; Sherman & Steyn, 2009). Such considerable social distance limits chances, both geographically and psychologically speaking, for Whites to develop meaningful relationships with African Americans (Bonilla-Silva, Goar & Embrick, 2006; Myrdal, 1944), who are themselves branded with an 'oppositional identity' (Ogbu, 1978). The resulting lower propinquity between White and Black Americans is unsurprising, yet stark nontheless; a survey conducted by Sigelman *et al.* (1996) found more than 70% of White Americans had no Black friends whatsoever,

and those who did only had very few. Marsden (1987) adds that only 8% of adults reported “discussing important matters” with someone from another race, whilst Bobo (2004) observed from polling data that only 5% of Whites reported “very often” feeling sympathy or admiration for Black people. Golebiowska (2007) discovered that those living in rural areas were more likely to hold views supporting anti-miscegenation than their urban-dwelling counterparts and a 1992 survey by Bobo, Johnson, Oliver, Sidanius and Zubrinsky found that almost 40% of non-Black Americans in Los Angeles county opposed residential integration with Blacks. Data such as this is not altogether surprising from countries such as the USA and South Africa, as they have historically put in place legislation mandating the segregation of races. It is, however, more unexpected to observe similar findings in the UK; a 2014 report from the Social Integration Commission indicated, from a sample of more than four thousand people, that integration of minority ethnic groups into wider British society has been poor and communication with people from other ethnic groups was around 40%-50% lower, for all ethnicities, than would be expected if there were no residential segregation. However, this report fails to explain the reasons for the proportionally greater numbers of marriages and co-habitations between Blacks and Whites in Britain, compared with the USA, indicated by the 2011 UK Census (ONS, 2014) and other studies (Model & Fisher, 2002; Feng *et al.*, 2013).

The consequences of physical and social separation are fewer opportunities for individuals or groups to establish initial contact. The proportional population of groups becomes salient as theory suggests that group size has an effect on the likelihood of establishing contact, with minority groups establishing more cross-group contacts as there are numerically fewer members of their own group to associate with (Blau, 1977). The effects of group sizes were explored in observations of multiracial classrooms conducted by Hallinan and Smith (1985), who noted that as the number of Black pupils in a class increased, so too did the rate at which White pupils chose Black pupils as friends. Similarly, as the proportion of Black pupils decreased, the likelihood of a Black pupil befriending a White pupil increased, as their opportunity to make same-race friends lessened. As could be anticipated, it was found that racially balanced classrooms provide optimal conditions for positive

contact between White and Black students, though a caveat is offered by Katz (1964) who states that such friendliness may be mediated by status differences, as inequalities can lead to prejudice against the lower status group and thereby lower the self-esteem of Black pupils, increasing their reluctance to interact with White pupils. Indeed, Hallinan and Smith (1985) did find that the establishment of cross-race friendships was equally likely as same-race friendships at the beginning of the year, yet as the academic year progressed, the likelihood of Black pupils seeking out interracial friendships decreased. Similar findings were observed in residential settings, where it was found that Blacks were more likely to encounter Whites in their neighbourhoods than the inverse; and that this led to little difference in Blacks' commitment to interracial contact regardless of whether they had interracial friends or not (Sigelman *et al.*, 1996). For Whites, having a Black friend was significantly associated with greater support of inter-race contact, though, as Welch argued, this may be due to Blacks having little control over the level of interracial contact they are exposed to as a result of their being a numerical minority in the USA.

Having considered the exposure stage, the next step in the contact hypothesis is that of the contact encounter itself and whether the conditions it provides lead to positive or negative evaluations of out-groups. As discussed above, ensuring the quality of intergroup contact is of an adequate standard to encourage intergroup friendship, and re-evaluations of out-groups that are generalisable, is key to the success of the contact hypothesis. Allport (1954) recognised that merely increasing the amount of contact would be insufficient in ameliorating prejudice and discrimination between groups and that "Theoretically, every superficial contact that we make with an out-group member could by the 'law of frequency' strengthen the adverse associations that we have" (p.264). Support for this viewpoint comes from Aronson (1980), as noted earlier, that a high level of low-quality contact with out-groups does little to change intergroup attitudes and instead acts to perpetuate stereotypes of minority groups. More fundamentally, as discussed earlier in Williams and Eberhardt's (2008) exploration of racial attitudes among individuals harbouring biological or cultural perceptions of racial difference; there may be situations where individuals simply do not care about an out-group enough to warrant any change in

their opinion of, or attitude towards them. Where particularly strong prejudice is exhibited, it may be difficult to motivate individuals to make contact with out-groups in the first place and, where contact is possible, may make the establishment of positive conditions more difficult (Everett & Onu, 2013).

Paolini, Harwood and Rubin (2010) go a step further in their discussion of negative contact, which they argue is a greater predictor of prejudice as it increases the saliency of out-group members' social group considerably. Barlow *et al.* (2012) confirm this in an exploration of prejudice experiences in Australia and the USA, though fortunately negative contact, whilst indeed powerful, has been found to be less common than positive contact (Paolini *et al.*, 2014).

Tailoring optimal contact conditions to ensure the success of intergroup contact is therefore of vital importance and an extensive list of different factors were discussed by Dixon, Durrheim and Tredoux (2005) that intersect with the conditions originally laid out by Allport (1954). However, each new contact scenario will involve different people, from different backgrounds, each with different cultural and social experiences; ensuring that adequate conditions are in place to cater for all possibilities and combinations quickly becomes unachievable. A number of studies (Pettigrew, 1986; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006; Stephan, 1987) came to the same conclusion and warned that some forms of the contact hypothesis are rendered meaningless as the proliferation of various contact conditions are undeliverable within real-life scenarios. As part of their meta-analysis of the contact hypothesis, Pettigrew and Tropp (2000, 2006) found greater contact was correlated with lower expressed prejudice and there were very few examples to the contrary. As such, they stated that contact conditions were not absolute prerequisites for positive contact, but they merely help facilitate it. They also suggest the contact hypothesis be approached from a new angle and, rather than focus on conditions that were deemed necessary to promote positive contact, attention should be given to avoiding situations that may lead to negative contact. The fundamental conditions they proposed were that contact opportunities should occur frequently; avoid causing

anxiety or threat; and encourage the development of friendships between the groups involved.

Within the race relations arena, the presence of racial discrimination creates fundamental problems for the contact hypothesis in terms of generating opportunities that provide an appropriate environment for participants. The initial inequality in social status between White and Black groups compelled Cohen (1972) to suggest that equal status contact would be insufficient and an inversion of relative social statuses would be necessary to enable Black participants to overcome traditional White dominance. Plant (2004) alluded to the increased anxiety that Black and White groups felt toward one another in anticipation of being subject to racism, or being judged as racist. Warning has also been given that African American experiences of discrimination can inhibit the effectiveness of positive contact and how emotionally close they feel to Whites (Tropp, 2007).

All of these findings, relating to social distance between Whites and Blacks, support earlier studies indicating a pathologisation of Blacks within regions that have the largest Black populations (Pettigrew, 1957) and that the magnitude of anti-Black prejudice is positively related to the proportion of the population that is Black (Fossett & Kiecolt, 1989). The research, above, seems to suggest that forms of subtle racism, such as avoidance and stereotyping, seem to occur simultaneously with forms of contact that do not meet the facilitating conditions recommended earlier (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006). The latter would certainly contribute to explaining why negative feelings towards Blacks seem to increase proportional to their overall share of the population; yet other studies have stated that Whites have very little personal interactions with Black people, suggesting that symbolic racism, in the form of stereotyping, is also playing a part. However, the perception of Blacks collectively as a threat to the White population may be acting as a third factor that exacerbates the attitudes discussed above.

Facilitating positive intergroup contacts is likely made more difficult in cases where groups oppose and compete with one another over physical resources, or

social capital such as political power (Brewer, 1999). A classic example of competition leading to group conflict and hostility is the Robbers Cave Experiment, conducted by Sherif and colleagues (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961). Boys were divided into 2 equal size and status groups, based on assessments of their similarity, and these newly established in-groups were then set into competition with one another through a series of tasks and games. Success was rewarded with valued prizes and this soon led to the development of negative attitudes and hostility between the groups. The final stage of the experiment placed the, now hostile groups, into scenarios where teamwork and intergroup collaboration were necessary for success; subsequently leading to a great reduction of tensions between the groups (Sherif *et al.*, 1961). Sherif was able to conclude that, as the groups were as equal in status as possible at the beginning of the experiment, individual differences did not contribute to intergroup conflict and that the major contributory agent was competition over valued resources that were available to only one group. In line with the Allportian contact hypothesis, Sherif *et al.* (1961) also confirmed that solely increasing contact with an outgroup was ineffective in reducing negative attitudes and improvements to intergroup relations could only take place in conditions where groups are encouraged to collaborate in order to meet superordinate goals, or tackle a shared threat (Sherif, 1966).

Placing groups into competition, as in Sherif's experiment, encourages a stronger affiliation and preference for members of the in-group (Giannakakis & Fritsche, 2011). Functional theory on intergroup behaviour (Sherif, 1966; Sherif & Sherif, 1953) constructs in-groups as positively interdependent in pursuing superordinate goals, whilst negative interdependence, in the form of competition, characterises relations between groups. Whilst Allport (1954) felt that preferential evaluation of the in-group was not necessarily an implication of negativity towards the out-group, much contemporary research on intergroup relations, prejudice, and discrimination accepts the presence of a reciprocal relationship between in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination (Brewer, 1999). An investigation of the differentials between discriminatory behaviours in a number of European countries was made by Quillian (1995), who found that the average level of expressed prejudice

was strongly related to the perceived group threat a minority group posed to the host population. Törngren (2011) made a similar discovery in Mälmo, Sweden, where increased exposure to immigrant groups led to higher levels of prejudice and perceptions of group threat; this was further reflected in the findings of Dustmann and Preston (2001), who found the same to be true in the UK for the period 1983-90. It is interesting to note that a more contemporary study, conducted in the UK by Ford (2008), found no evidence of elevated hostility from the working classes, and those dependent on state resources, towards people from minority ethnic groups, despite these groups traditionally being in competition for resources. Particular out-groups also become salient within specific contexts; Duckitt and Mphuthing (1998) found very strong negative intergroup attitudes between Black South Africans and White Afrikaners, though found no correlation between Black South Africans' in-group identification and their attitudes towards English Whites, or to White people in general.

Where perceived group threat and segregation intersect, an interesting phenomenon takes place, particularly within the USA. Gallagher (2003) found that many White Americans made estimations of minority population size that were considerably higher than their actual proportions and in turn made similar extreme underestimations of the size of the White population. For example, more than half of White Americans believed the Black population was more than 30%, whilst almost one-in-seven believed they made up more than 50% of the population (Nadeau, Niemi & Levine, 1993). This phenomenon was recognised by Allport (1954), who suggested that segregating groups from one another enhances the visibility of minority groups, making them appear both more numerous and threatening. This becomes pertinent where competition with minority groups for material resources and social capital creates an impression that dominant group privileges are being eroded (Bonilla-Silva, 2001) and explains why many White Americans, whilst supporting the principles of racial equality, oppose egalitarian policies such as affirmative action and school desegregation (Alba, Rumbaut & Marotz, 2005; Bobo, 1983; Bobo & Zubrinsky, 1996; Fossett & Kiecolt, 1989; Giles & Evans, 1985; Nadeau, Niemi & Levine, 1993).

It is argued, certainly within the American context, that policies such as affirmative action are interpreted as a threat to the hegemonic control Whites possess in society and such challenges invoke prejudice against the Black population that benefit from these policies (Bobo, 1998). Blalock (1967) made links between expressed prejudice and group conflict theory, stating that competition for material goods increased the relative size of minority groups to that of the dominant group and increasing numbers lead to potential political mobilisation, thereby further threatening to undermine their dominance. Bobo (1983) explored this in a study of White Americans' attitudes to desegregated school busing; he found that Whites simultaneously endorse the principles of equality between Whites and Blacks, whilst opposing specific policies (such as busing) that would establish such equality, arguing that Whites are responding to integrationist policies as a threat to their social world and the resources they see as exclusively theirs. Bonilla-Silva *et al.* (2006) discussed this in their exploration of Whites' construction of their self-segregated social world in which they build positive viewpoints of themselves and judge other groups as negative in comparison. Bobo (1983) suggested that contact between races will lead to general racial attitudes improving, but would have little effect in contexts where the potential for political threat was great. This line of theory was further supported by Jackman and Crane (1986) who agreed that intimate contact led Whites to develop an emotional acceptance of Blacks, but had no effect on the persistent conservative attitudes that lead Whites to defend their privilege and endorse inequalities between groups that would undermine the establishment of optimal contact conditions. Blumer (1986) confirms this with the suggestion that prejudice between groups does not form as a result of cross-group interactions, rather it forms part of a collective attitude directed from one group to another. Considering the discussion above, we are brought back to the fundamentals of the contact hypothesis itself, criticised by Dixon *et al.* (2005) for its assumptions that prejudice exists as an irrational property in the minds of individuals, rather than the collective rationalisation of political disadvantage that forms much of the contemporary colour-blind discourse on interracial relations.

The final stage of the process consists of out-group re-evaluations formed as a result of the contact scenario. Many of the factors that would affect these evaluations have already been discussed above, but what has not been explored is the generalisability of evaluations to entire out-groups as a result of contact with individual members of those groups. Where generalisation does not occur successfully, out-group individuals in contact encounters are considered 'exceptions to the rule' and perceptions of the out-group they belong to remain unchanged (Rothbart & John, 1985).

To summarise, contact between groups is initially made difficult through physical and social distance created by segregation, racial prejudice and discrimination. The contact hypothesis also suffers in its attempts to create optimal conditions for positive interpersonal contacts to take place, failing to account for the sheer number of conditions that may be necessary to cater for every possible combination of cultural, class or economic background. As discussed, suggested improvements to the contact hypothesis recommend, rather than engaging in a proliferation of optimal contact conditions, researchers should focus efforts on avoiding situations where tension, conflict and competition may occur between groups as reduction of these factors has been shown to be just as effective as putting positive conditions in place. Placing members of groups into scenarios where they are encouraged to work co-operatively towards achieving a common goal, as originally recommended by Allport, is identified as pivotal in improving race relations through interpersonal contact. Whilst the importance of direct interpersonal contact has been reinforced in the discussion above, a number of alternative forms of contact, taking a more indirect approach towards intergroup exposure have also been explored through research.

Developments of the Contact Hypothesis

Segregation acts as a mediating factor on intergroup relations (Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006; Myrdal, 1944), as it is difficult for individuals to make meaningful contact with people from other groups when they are unlikely to ever come into contact. In order to circumvent this practicality issue, much research has been conducted into

alternative contact strategies that do not rely on direct interpersonal contact (Dovidio, Eller & Hewstone, 2011).

First among these strategies is the extended contact hypothesis. This theory suggests that positive intergroup perceptions can be established through awareness that another member of one's in-group has a cross-group friendship; experimental research has confirmed that more positive out-group attitudes occur as a result of observing cross group friendships within the social circles of one's own group (Wright *et al.*, 1997). An advantage of this theory over the fundamental contact hypothesis is that it can be implemented on a much larger scale, as the need for each individual to establish a cross-group relationship is not necessary; merely the presence of such relationships within one's social world. However, Crisp and Turner (2009) indicated that segregation still acts as a powerful mediator on this theory; particularly within segregated environments it is feasible that individuals may have no contact with other groups and also do not know anyone else who has made such contact either.

Fortunately, another alternative form of intergroup contact manoeuvres elegantly around the segregation problem; vicarious contact relies solely on individuals' observing interactions between in-group and out-group members (Mazziotta, Mummendey & Wright, 2011). Technological advancements such as greater access to television, multimedia and the internet now allow vast numbers of people to observe cross-group interactions without having to leave their homes (Collins, 2004) and evidence has shown that positive media portrayals have the potential to improve intergroup attitudes (Schiappa, Gregg & Hewes, 2005). This effect is not limited to visual forms of media, as Cameron, Rutland, Brown and Douch (2006) found in an intervention involving school children. Pupils aged between 5 to 11 years old displayed considerably more positive views towards refugees (compared to a control group) after being read stories involving the formation of friendship between an in-group member and a refugee. Printed media also presents one of the limitations of vicarious contact; Williams and Eberhardt (2008) conducted a study into the racial attitudes of people who held biological or social interpretations of racial difference and found that mere discussions of racial issues within both the lay

and scientific media could have significant consequences for race relations within society, especially where scholars pursue theories of relative racial inferiority through the lens of inherent biological difference. Obviously, where contact with out-groups is facilitated through various forms of media, attitudes towards out-groups will only improve if the media portrayals of those out-groups are positive. Where negative portrayals exist then this form of contact will be ineffective in improving intergroup relations (Ramasubramanian, 2013), and within the field of race relations, a broad research base exists discussing the negative media portrayals of Black communities and interracial relations (Bell, 2015; Childs, 2009; Collins, 2004; Gallagher, 2003).

Crisp and Turner (2009) also developed a novel form of contact requiring nothing but the input of an in-group individual, and circumvents both the issues of segregation between groups as well as the influential effect of negative out-group representations in the media. Their theory relies on individuals simply imagining a positive contact experience with an out-group member and does not require interaction, or previous contact experience. The theory was tested across a number of studies, with positive results in each case (Turner, Hewstone & Voci, 2007), though it is also argued imagined contact is not as powerful or long-lasting as direct intergroup contact (Fazio, Powell & Herr, 1983), especially when the desired goal is prejudice reduction (Turner *et al.*, 2007).

The final alternative contact strategy involves communication between groups through the use of electronic devices such as computers or mobile phones (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006) and incorporates those who play video games online with people from other cultures or backgrounds (Forde & Kenny, 2014). Such contacts have led to successful improvements in intergroup relations in the religious arena through studies of electronic contact between Christians and Muslims (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012; White, Abu-Rayya & Weitzel, 2014), and between groups generally (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006). In order for this strategy to be effective however, individuals must be willing to initiate contact with people from out-groups in the first place. In the context of interracial communications, research has been conducted into the potential for users of online dating websites to

communicate with people of other races and the odds that interracial relationships will occur as a result of these interactions. Results indicated that a large proportion of White users completely eliminated Black users from their search criteria when seeking out a partner (Mendelsohn, Taylor, Fiore & Cheshire, 2014; Robnett & Feliciano, 2011), whilst Blacks were around ten times more likely to initiate, and reciprocate, contact with Whites than the inverse (Mendelsohn *et al.*, 2014).

Alternative contact strategies, whilst building upon some of the shortcomings of the contact hypothesis, are not without their own limitations. Segregation appears as a recurrent mediator, not only denying opportunity for individuals to observe interactions among their fellows and out-group members, but also through the social effect of segregation; sometimes in-group members are simply not motivated to make contact with out-group members, as observed in the study by Mendelsohn *et al.* (2014). Imagined contact, whilst an effective solution where segregation and intergroup anxiety are particularly acute, remains relatively ineffective when compared to direct interpersonal exchanges. Finally, the use of various forms of media as a vector for changing intergroup attitudes is dependent on representation of the out-group in a positive or negative light (Ramasubramanian, 2013).

Overall research suggests that intergroup contact, under the right conditions, can have a profound impact on relations between groups, the likelihood of friendships forming across the borders of said groups, and the odds that anxiety, prejudice and discrimination in cross-group interactions will be reduced. One result of reductions in negative feelings is the development of interpersonal attraction (Berg & Wright-Buckley, 1988; Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969), which is cited as an important aspect in the formation of all romantic partnerships, regardless of race (Branden, 1988). Having explored examples where the contact hypothesis and its alternatives have met with success or failure in practice, examples will now be examined where the theory contributes to the formation of interracial romantic relationships.

Contact Hypothesis and Interracial Romantic Relationships

W.E.B. Du Bois asserted, in 1967, having collected data on thirty-three interracial families, that intermarriage was more likely to take place between those who had the most contact, rather than being more common amongst the class with the least prestige and property. A number of scholars agree with the assertion that contact between groups is more effective than social or status exchanges in influencing the formation of interracial relationships (Blau, 1977; Spickard, 1991; Fujino, 1997; Hallinan & Smith, 1985). Golebiowska (2007) goes as far as to state that interracial contact is a greater facilitator of interracial marriage than any other political or socio-demographic factor; a point reinforced by the observation that the relative infrequency of interracial relationships is attributable more to the low incidence of cross-race contact, than personal preference towards particular racial or ethnic groups (Shin, 2014).

Where there are more numerous opportunities for meaningful, positive contact we expect to see the rate of interracial dating and marriage increase considerably (Root, 2001). Desegregation in the USA has created the potential conditions for people of various groups to interact with one another more freely and this is especially true amongst young people (Aldridge, 1978; Crystal, Killen & Ruck, 2008). Research has found that the more racially diverse a school environment, the higher the reported rate of interracial relationship formation; Carver, Joyner and Udry (2003) found that almost half of White students' relationships, within schools that were less than 20% White, were of an interracial nature. Where schools were more than 80% White, the rate of Whites' interracial dating dropped to just 6%. Emerson *et al.* (2002) observed that people who had schooled in a racially diverse environment were approximately five times more likely to be interracially married than those who attended more racially homogeneous schools. Similar findings are presented by Amoateng and Kalule-Sabiti (2014), stating that a high proportion (76.3%; N=1210) of Black South African students approve of interracial dating and that previous intimate contact with other races was strongly associated with approval levels. It is interesting to note from their study however that those who lived in majority Black neighbourhoods and had attended majority Black schools were equally

as likely to endorse interracial dating as those whose social worlds were more integrated.

Context plays an important role in the approval particular groups have towards interracial relations; Brooks and Neville (2016) studied the attitudes of American college students towards interracial dating and found increased interracial contact actually led Black male participants to report greater attraction toward Black women. The authors noted however that all the young Black men who took part in the study were enrolled on African American Studies programmes and their experiences may therefore have imbued them with a greater solidarity and affinity with their racial fellows. A similar picture was presented by Walker (2005), though her sample of students was taken from a traditionally African American university, with a majority Black population. Walker's example highlights the saliency of group size and its affect on interracial dating attitudes; the larger group (Black students in this example) have less need to seek romantic contact outside their group, as the relative population size increases their chance of encountering someone of their own race who satisfies their preferences in a partner (Blau, 1977).

Whilst Emerson *et al.* (2002) argue that an integrated school environment has a greater effect on interracial relations, and the chances of becoming romantically involved across racial lines, than living in an integrated neighbourhood, the importance of such residential and social propinquity is not disregarded (Aldridge, 1978). Research has shown that interracial contact in residential settings encourages learning about out-groups (Triandis, 1972) and, under optimal conditions, this can lead to more positive evaluations of out-groups (Stephan & Stephan, 1985) and can contribute to the incidence of interracial dating and marriage (Fujino, 1997; Spickard, 1991). Whilst residential contact does lead to increased levels of interracial relationship formation (Benson, 1981; Emerson *et al.*, 2002), it appears to be mediated by a number of factors. Group size dynamics, as discussed earlier by Blau (1977), influence the establishment of such relationships as a smaller minority population results in less opportunity for an individual to find a suitable partner from their own racial group; research has indicated that there exists a greater proportion

of interracial marriages within regions where minority populations are smaller (Feng, Boyle, van Ham & Raab, 2013; Kalmijn, 1993). White opposition to neighbourhood integration and interracial marriage also plays a disruptive role; Bobo *et al.* (1992) found that almost 40% of non-Black Americans objected to residential desegregation which would bring them closer to Black people, whilst 30% objected to intermarriage with Blacks. Opposition to interracial marriage has been shown to be higher in the USA than the UK for both Whites (Tizard & Phoenix, 1993) and Blacks (Modood *et al.*, 1997; Patterson, 1997) and this may go some way to explaining why the rate of British Blacks marrying Whites is around 2.5 to 6 times greater than that for African Americans (Model & Fisher, 2002), findings from 2001 indicated that up to 48% of Blacks in Britain had a White partner (Feng *et al.*, 2013).

The most common arena for the occurrence of interracial contact is the workplace (Estlund, 2003) and examples have already been explored where co-workers are brought into closer propinquity through working environments that minimise status differences and necessitate co-operative working in pursuit of superordinate goals (Minard, 1952; Williams, 1947). Case studies have shown that a number of interracially married partners met within integrated working environments in the USA (Childs, 2005; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995) and the UK (Benson, 1981). As discussed in the previous chapter on Social Exchange Theory, a number of examples were discussed in which famous, wealthy Black women had met, and married, White males who were not their equal in financial, or social, status and yet maintained healthy relationships (Staples, 1973). Romano (2003) contributes further to this discussion, explaining that many such women found their fame in the music and entertainment industry, which itself brought people of different races and cultures together. Music in particular gave people a 'common ground' through which to relate to one another, creating the type of reciprocal feelings of respect, appreciation, and admiration that lead to the development of intimate platonic, or romantic, relationships. Particular forms of employment also profoundly impact acceptance and incidence of interracial marriage; studies conducted with servicemen and women in the USA indicated that White service personnel were between seven- and eight-times more likely to marry a Black spouse than their civilian counterparts

(Farley, 1999; Heaton & Jacobsen, 2000). Farley (1999) suggests that the military provides an environment with a low tolerance of racism, status equality among those of the same rank, and a context where regular co-operation is necessary to achieve common goals; providing all the ideal preconditions for positive cross-race relations to occur and develop. Further accounts supporting this line of theory were provided by military interracial couples in a study conducted by McNamara *et al.* (1999), who reported facing considerably greater levels of hostility towards their marriages in the civilian world than in military settings.

Quality of interpersonal contact is important in the establishment of interracial relationships; ease of talking to someone from another race was cited as the most important factor for both Black men and Black women when selecting a spouse (Lewis *et al.*, 1997). The establishment of positive intergroup relations early in life significantly increases the odds that a person may enter an interracial relationship or marriage in future (Emerson *et al.*, 2002). The reciprocal exchange of self-disclosed intimate information forms much of the quality aspect of interactions leading to the development of interpersonal attraction (Berg & Wright-Buckley, 1988; Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969) and is cited as an important aspect in the formation of all romantic partnerships, regardless of race (Branden, 1988). Studies indicate cross-race interpersonal contact can lead to improved relations and intimate relationships even within contexts where negative interactions between groups have been substantial; Mojapelo-Batka (2008) observed in interviews with Black/White interracially married couples, in South Africa, that interpersonal contact had a powerful effect, bringing individuals together when discomfort, and even vehement hatred, had been expressed toward the other racial group earlier in their lives.

Regardless of whether individuals encounter and make interpersonal contacts within residential, educational, or within workplace settings, the theory discussed above indicates that the frequency, quality and context of interpersonal contact are vital in the formation of positive evaluations of individuals from racial (or other) out-groups. Reciprocal intimate exchanges made through interpersonal contact, over an extended period, can lead to mutual interpersonal attraction, which itself acts as an

important step in the development of romantic relationships and, eventually, marriage.

Chapter Discussion

Positive contact, as hypothesised by Allport, when taking place under appropriate conditions, results in more harmonised interactions between racial groups and creates the conditions where intimate relationships are able to form and thrive. Establishment of optimal conditions for improved contact to take place is simultaneously the backbone and the greatest limitation of the contact hypothesis. The meta-analysis of more than 500 applications of the contact hypothesis, conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), highlighted the strong connection between intergroup contact and observed reduction in feelings and expressions of prejudice. However, they also discuss the tremendous proliferation of facilitating conditions that researchers have presented as prerequisites to positive contact and warn the theory may become undeliverable within 'real-world' contexts.

Nonetheless, contact between groups is an effective strategy in ameliorating prejudice and discrimination, with the strongest results appearing where individuals are required to work co-operatively towards superordinate goals under high risk conditions, such as the military (Farley, 1999; Heaton & Jacobsen, 2000; Williams, 1947) and mining (Minard, 1952). Equal status contact scenarios allow opportunities for in-group members to learn about out-groups as well as gaining sympathy and appreciation of their points of view. In turn, this leads to a cognitive dissolution of barriers between "us" and "them", contributing to re-evaluations of out-groups that are more positive (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008). In the UK, for example, a study conducted in the 1970s found the majority of Black/White interracial couples in London had met in socially integrated settings (Benson, 1981). Whilst the opportunity for, and quality of, contact is vital in improving relations between groups, it is also important that the individuals taking part are seen as typical representatives of their social group thereby ensuring that positive re-evaluations are generalised to the whole out-group and not just to specific individuals (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

Establishing a social network that is racially diverse early in life has been shown to have a positive effect on interracial relations and increases the likelihood of dating and marrying across racial lines in adulthood (Carver *et al.*, 2003; Emerson *et al.*, 2002). Research into affective attachment explains that people develop strong emotional attachments to sub-groups they feel they belong to and are more comfortable forming social ties with other members of such groups in future as they find them emotionally satisfying and fulfilling (Lawler, 1992). People also have a tendency to prefer conditions that they have chosen previously, even when selecting alternatives could prove advantageous (Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988; Tversky, Slovic & Kahneman, 1990). This suggests that individuals who have grown up in a diverse racial environment are more likely to feel comfortable in similar conditions when they reach adulthood and feel less trepidation when interaction with other racial groups is necessary.

Opportunities for contact with other groups, as well as the quality of contact, are salient in ensuring that positive outcomes are achieved (Allport, 1954). Evidence has shown racially diverse friendship circles lead to greater admiration and sympathy shown towards members of minority groups (Pettigrew, 1997) and that opposition to integration and marriage with minorities was greatest amongst those residing in areas more homogeneously in favour of dominant groups (Bobo *et al.*, 1992; Golebiowska, 2007). Segregation and prejudice are major mediating factors on the effectiveness of interpersonal contact; the former making it more difficult, if not impossible, to establish interracial contact, and the latter reducing individuals' willpower to make contact, or reinforcing social sanctions against it. Perpetuation of prejudice occurs where contact between groups is socially discouraged, leading to reliance on assumptions and stereotyping of out-groups, which in turn leads to increased prejudice and less motivation to interact with out-group members. Groups that are in conflict, or view one another with suspicion, are unlikely to experience high levels of inter-group dating or marriage, as can be interpreted from the very low relative marriage rate for Whites and Blacks in the USA, compared to the UK (Model & Fisher, 2002). Similarly, those who live in highly segregated regions are unlikely to come across people from other racial groups (Crisp & Turner, 2009), negating the

opportunity to develop meaningful cross-group relationships that may develop into more romantic exchanges. Desegregation therefore becomes particularly pertinent when considered through the lens of research indicating that most marriages tend to form within local areas, regardless of the mobility of individuals nationally or internationally (Lewis & Oppenheimer, 2000; South & Crowder, 1999).

The mitigating factors created by segregation and prejudice can be somewhat circumvented by non-face-to-face contact strategies, though these are not without their own shortcomings. Extended contact, whilst allowing generalisations of positive out-group re-evaluation, relies on the presence of enough racial diversity for an individual to know of someone else in a cross-race friendship (Aron *et al.*, 1997). The theory behind imagined contact seeks to manoeuvre around the segregation problem, and does so with some success, though results indicate it is not as effective or as long-lasting as actual interpersonal contact (Crisp & Turner, 2009). Electronic contact through systems such as email and the internet are effective, as well as forms of vicarious contact, such as viewing interracial social exchanges and out-group representations through various forms of media. Lienemann and Stopp (2013) for example, found a correlation between representations of interracial couples in the media and acceptance of interracial relationships. Both vicarious and electronic contact however, are mediated by prejudice; negative media representations can lead to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and over-representation of particular groups in the media can lead to unrealistic perceptions of group size (Gallagher, 2003). Research has indicated that Black/White interracial couples infrequently appear in the media and their representations are often less than positive when they are portrayed (Childs, 2005, 2009; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995).

To conclude, under the right circumstances, intergroup contact can significantly impact on interpersonal contact between racial groups and on the formation of interracial friendship and romantic relationships. The development of a diverse social network early in life makes a considerable difference, though should not be considered as an absolute prerequisite, with many examples cited where members of interracial couples have come from highly segregated, racially

homogeneous environments, or have previously felt strong antipathy towards a racial out-group (Dalmage, 2000; Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995). Prejudice forms much of the opposition to interracial contact, romantic or otherwise; for example, Wong (2002) suggests the elimination of social sanctions against Black/White interracial marriage would lead to more accelerated growth in marriages between Black men and White women than either improving the socio-economic status of Black men, or bringing them into contact with White women in the same frequency as they come into contact with Black women. Contact is deemed less important than the elimination of discriminatory practices that obfuscate the establishment of such contact and its development into something more intimate. Prejudice is a powerful obstruction to improved interracial relations and in modern times has advanced from more overt forms of racial abuse to more sophisticated, indirect, colour-blind forms of racism, deployed by Whites to prevent threats to their social dominance and the privileges their social hegemony infers. An exploration of this phenomenon, made through the lens of social identity theory and social dominance theory, will be made in the next chapter.

Chapter Three - Social Identity and Social Dominance Theory

The previous chapters discussing Social Exchange and the Contact Hypothesis have explored the concept of social hierarchy, with differing racial groups inhabiting higher or lower positions relative to one another, which impact on factors such as socio-economic status and opportunity in general. This chapter seeks to explore the theory behind the creation of this hierarchy and how society directly, and indirectly, enforces the subtle boundaries between groups and can consequently affect the development of intimate inter-group relations, as well as in-group attitudes towards such relationships. Closely related to, and intertwined with, racial hierarchy is the phenomenon of 'modern racism' or colour-blind racism, explored in depth by Bonilla-Silva (2002; 2010; Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2001; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006) and Bobo (1983; 1996; Bobo & Smith, 1998), and also discussed by other researchers (Childs, 2005a; 2009; 2014; 2015; Dalmage, 2000; Herman & Campbell, 2012; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Williams & Eberhardt, 2008).

This chapter will discuss and critique social identity theory and social dominance theory, before exploring the strengths and shortcomings of both theories when applied to the literature on interracial relationships.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory was formulated from the results of experimentation conducted during the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971) and is concerned with an individual's perception of themselves based on their membership of particular social groups (McLeod, 2008). Tajfel (1979) suggested such groups are important sources of pride and self-esteem; conferring a sense of belonging within the social world. Exactly what constitutes a 'group' appears quite subjective and individuals often belong to several different groups, influencing their outlook in differing contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Allen (2010), in her discussion of social identity, distinguished six particularly important social categories, namely gender, race, social class, sexuality, ability and age.

One of the key assumptions of social identity theory is that individuals are motivated to strive towards a positive self-concept and achieve what Tajfel and Turner (1979) referred to as 'positive distinctiveness'. This further generalises to social groups, whose members seek to enhance the status of their groups, placing particular emphasis on the most positive group characteristics as well as altering their behaviours and opinions to meet the norms and expectations of groups (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Reynolds, 1997; Mackie, 1986; McLeod, 2008; Turner, 1991; Turner, Wetherell & Hogg, 1989), a process dubbed as 'self-stereotyping' by Turner (1982). Considerable gains to group positive distinctiveness can be achieved through comparisons with another group, or an 'out-group', that further enhance the image of the in-group, whilst denigrating and even discriminating against the out-group. Tajfel and Wilkes (1963) recognised that the social stratification resulting from such categorisation makes salient distinctions of 'us' and 'them' that form the foundation of in-groups and out-groups and significantly alters the evaluations that people make of one another.

The process of forging the 'us and them' paradigm consists of three stages, namely 'social categorisation', 'social identification', and 'social comparison' (Davey, 2015; McLeod, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the first stage people are categorised into social groups so they can be more easily identified and understood. Through this process, the theory suggests people come to understand themselves better and can define appropriate behaviours in relation to the groups they and others hold membership of. Individuals can, and do, belong to more than one group simultaneously and alter their behaviours accordingly within differing contexts (Turner, 1991); for example, an individual may align their social behaviour towards an association with 'professionals' whilst they are within a workplace setting, but this behaviour and outlook may markedly change within a less formal context, such as when socialising with friends. In the second, 'social identification' stage, individuals adopt the identity of the groups they associate with and align their behaviours and opinions with those that they perceive as typical of that group. As a result, members are likely to develop an emotional significance to group identity and become dependent upon it for their self-esteem (Brown, 2000). Once individuals have become categorised and have identified themselves with a group, the final stage consists of comparisons made against out-groups and, in order for self-esteem to be suitably maintained, the in-group must compare favourably against others. This forms the conditions under which prejudice and discrimination develop, as in-group members tend to make negative evaluations of out-group members in order to enhance their self-esteem and strengthen in-group cohesion as differences between its members are minimised (Davey, 2015). It has been proposed that there is a reasonably direct relationship between in-group bias and self-esteem, suggested by Hogg and Abrams (1990), whereby successful discriminatory behaviours result in elevated self-esteem; an assertion that Routledge (2010) agreed with in his discussion of the psychological motives of racism. Depressed and threatened self-esteem are also considered to promote discrimination against out-groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1990).

Negative evaluations of out-groups often make use of stereotyping, defined by Stallybrass (1977) as over-simplified constructions of particular categories of a

person or institution that are shared by large numbers of people and often, though not always, accompanied by prejudiced behaviour. Tajfel (1982) proposed that this phenomenon (social categorisation) formed part of a normal cognitive process; in our tendency to group things together we usually exaggerate the differences between groups, as well as the similarities between the constituents within a group.

Despite the potential complexity in defining the existence of social groups, as well as the criteria for gaining membership of them, Tajfel *et al.* (1971) found that in-group biases were exhibited even at the most basic levels, through the results of their experiments with artificial 'minimal groups'. The participants in their study, schoolboys aged 14-15 years old, were divided into two random and arbitrary groups and asked to allocate monetary rewards randomly between groups. Despite the fact that the participants were unable to personally gain from a particular course of action, were unable to communicate with any other participant, and were unaware of the group membership of their fellows, they exhibited significant in-group favouritism in the allocation of rewards. Due to the minimal nature of the experiments it is accepted that social structural factors, such as relative deprivation, frustration, or competition for finite social resources cannot explain the phenomenon (Hornsey, 2008).

Further support for Tajfel's findings were presented by several researchers (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Locksley, Ortiz & Hepburn, 1980) who found that the same strong preference for one's own in-group was exhibited even when participants were informed of their group membership. The tendency for in-group bias appears particularly robust, with the findings of more than 24 independent studies, utilising a wide range of participants from both sexes and a variety of age groups and nationalities, leading to virtually the same results; arbitrarily categorising people into distinct groups creates the conditions for intergroup bias and discrimination to develop (Brown, 1988). Simply making individuals aware of the presence of an out-group is sufficient to create discriminatory behaviour (Tajfel *et al.*, 1971) and this does not change even when participants are made explicitly aware that out-group members are treating them fairly (Diehl, 1990). However, when the power dynamic shifts and participants are led to believe their outcomes are under the control of out-

group members, they display much more favourable behaviour towards them (Rabbie, Schott & Visser, 1989), suggesting that context plays an important role in how groups evaluate and respond to one another.

Indeed, Tajfel and Turner (1979) recognised the predictive power of the social identity theory to prognosticate a number of intergroup behaviours, based on perceived status differences between groups, the legitimacy and stability of those differences, and the potential for intergroup mobility. The theory suggests variation in social behaviour will take place along a continuum between completely interpersonal behaviour (determined exclusively by the individual characteristics and interpersonal relations between two or more people) and intergroup behaviour (determined only by the memberships of social groups that apply to two or more people), though behaviour that takes place at either of the extremes is unlikely in most real-world examples and the majority of interactions will result from a compromise between the two (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Where group membership becomes more salient in terms of intergroup behaviours, individuals undergo a process of 'depersonalisation' and 'self-stereotyping', where unique idiosyncrasies are abandoned in favour of the perceived stereotypical characteristics of an in-group (Turner, 1982); a prime example of this, discussed by Tajfel (1978), of soldiers in opposing armies fighting one another outside of view (artillerymen, for example); the lack of any contact further reinforcing the 'us and them' paradigm.

The achievement of positive distinctiveness, for both individuals and for groups, is one of the key assumptions of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and in some examples individuals have been found to endorse activities that would maximise the positive distinctiveness of an in-group, in comparison to an out-group, even when this is at the expense of personal self-interest (Turner, 1978). Based on this assumption, the theory states there are a number of ways for groups who are classified as 'low status' to strive for more positive distinctiveness and these are dependent on the legitimacy given to, and the stability of, intergroup status differences and the ease with which an individual can potentially move between groups. In situations where the boundaries between groups are relatively permeable,

the simplest method of enhancing status is to engage in 'mobility strategies' (Haslam, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979); distancing from and dis-identifying with the current 'low status' social group and attempting to maximise similarities with a new 'higher status' group. However, where boundaries between groups are impermeable, making it relatively impossible for an individual to simply move from one group to another, they must instead seek to enhance the status of their group and attempt to achieve this through the use of 'social creativity' behaviours (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Brown, 1978). A number of these strategies can be implemented with the intention of enhancing the status of a group, relative to another group that possesses higher status, by altering the dimension through which their group is evaluated. These include focussing on particular dimensions where the in-group appear relatively good and devaluing those that reflect poorly; making downward intergroup comparisons that are more complimentary to the in-group; and embarking on social change as an endeavour to disrupt the existing status hierarchy. African Americans present as an appropriate reference group for these behaviours, having exhibited all three of the aforementioned social creativity behaviours during the period of the twentieth century; the "Black is Beautiful" movement consisting of a positive re-evaluation of African features, culture and traditions in response to the discrimination faced from the majority (White) group in the USA (Tajfel, 1974; 1978; Miller, 1983). The "Respectability" movement similarly sought to refute the negative stereotypes of African Americans through reinforcing more conservative social behaviours and seeking to place themselves above the White majority in terms of civility (Collins, 2004). African Americans also engaged in an extensive campaign to affect social change, through the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

The final form of social behaviour suggested by social identity theory is that of 'social competition'; where in-groups pursue positive distinctiveness in direct competition with an out-group, utilising in-group favouritism as a catalyst to achieve their goal; frequently taking place in cases with impermeable group boundaries, but relatively unstable intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Groups may be in competition over finite physical resources, as was the case in Sherif's Robber's Cave

experiment (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961); alternatively, the desired resources may be more intangible and take the form of self-esteem, or perceived social status (Turner, 1975). Ferber's (1999) discussion of White supremacist publications found the recurring theme that out-groups, constructed as 'others' along racial, ethnic and religious lines were seen as actively undermining, and a dangerous threat to the maintenance and control of the White social world. Particularly relevant within the context of racism is the notion, presented in social identity theory, that groups have a tendency to 'lash out' at other groups when their position on the status hierarchy is considered to be illegitimate (Hornsey, Spears, Cremers & Hogg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Brown, 1978); this appears accurate to the extent that the security and legitimacy of a group's social position is more proximal a predictor of intergroup bias than the level of an individual's self-esteem. In the examples explored by Ferber, White supremacists felt the social and political gains made by Blacks and other minority groups threatened the legitimacy and security of White hegemonic control and as such felt the need to 'lash out' by distributing publications that offered denigrating comparisons and presented them as a threat to the future of the White social world.

In-group favouritism is a powerful phenomenon and, as discussed earlier, the minimal group studies of Tajfel and his colleagues indicated that such favouritism is exhibited even when the majority of social structural factors are negated; additional studies also confirmed that this favouritism occurs between arbitrary and non-arbitrary groups (Brewer, 1979; Hogg & Turner, 1987). Social competition is the positive distinctiveness strategy which has received the greatest analytical attention (Ouwerkerk, Ellemers & de Gilder, 1999; Haslam, Ellemers, Reicher, Reynolds & Schmitt, 2010) and has been strongly associated as a causal factor for both overt and more subtle forms of racism by Bonilla-Silva (2000; 2001; 2002; 2006; 2010) and Childs (2005a; 2009; 2014; 2015).

Critique of Social Identity Theory

Whilst Tajfel's theory is particularly useful in explaining the phenomenon of social group formation and the likely interactions between them, it is not without

limitations. Among the most important of these limitations is the consideration given to the formation of social groups and how this alters the behaviour of individuals as context shifts. Whilst Allen (2010) listed six particularly common characteristics used to socially categorise individuals, the additional possibilities appear endless and many such factors may have antagonistic relationships to the extent that one characteristic supersedes others. For example, according to Williams (1947), as discussed in the Contact Hypothesis chapter, American soldiers serving in racially integrated units during the Second World War tended to be more comfortable with the prospect of serving alongside their Black countrymen than those soldiers who had served in segregated units. In the former units, whilst soldiers could easily be, and likely were, socially categorised along racial lines, within the context of military service and combat duty this characteristic becomes less salient when compared with nationality. For soldiers in the integrated unit racial factors had become less important than the overriding, and unifying, membership of their shared American nationality. Where a characteristic supersedes others in this way, it is referred to as a 'cross-cutting categorisation' and a number of studies have shown such categorisations to be particularly effective in reducing discrimination against out-groups, especially where that categorisation has been along racial lines (Brewer, 2000; Goar, 2007; Marcus-Newall, Miller, Holtz & Brewer, 1993).

Expanding upon the discussion of social categorisation, it is also important to consider the legitimacy of criteria that constitute group membership, the typical behaviour and expectations of those groups, and how closely individuals feel they identify with them. Brown (2000) provides empirical evidence where distinct groups, whom the theory suggests should make efforts to differentiate themselves from one another, actually exhibited increased intergroup attraction and lower levels of in-group bias. Viewed through the lens of the Contact Hypothesis, this finding is hardly surprising; similarities between the groups help to create the type of optimal conditions that are vital for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice. This poses a problem for social identity theory, as it highlights the strong emphasis placed on the importance of the perceived stability and legitimacy of group boundaries and the existence of an intergroup status hierarchy (Brown, 1984). Fundamentally, this

suggests that not everyone holds the same perceptual evaluation of out-group members and those with a low identification with the norms of their in-group are less likely to adjust their behaviours and outlook in order to comply; indeed group identification has a tendency to be much more dynamic than social identity theory assumes (Turner, 1982).

The individual self-concept of social identity presents such a great limitation to the theory that an additional concept, Self-Categorisation Theory, was developed to address the issue (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987); concerning itself with individuals' concept of their own uniqueness in comparison to other individuals and the impact of this on their definition of their group memberships. Turner and his colleagues nominated three levels of self-categorisation, namely 'human identity', 'social identity', and 'personal identity', which respectively form a hierarchy of importance from superordinate to subordinate. They also suggested that the groups exhibit a 'functional antagonism', such that as one level becomes more salient the others become less so. Self-categorisation theorists critique the traditional notion that stereotypes are fixed mental representations, the content of which remains constant despite changing contexts. For example, the stereotypes of Americans, held by Australians, shifted markedly depending on the use of Iraq as a secondary reference group (Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Hayes, 1992), highlighting the malleability of individual stereotypes. At a more fundamental level however, it must be recognised that social categorisations are not isolated constructions and that they only become psychologically 'real' when compared to and differentiated from a reference group (Festinger, 1954); in other words, the cognitive existence of a social group is completely dependent on an individual's compulsion to believe that it exists. In a similar vein, additional criticism has asserted that the theory incorrectly focusses on the vague concept of social identity rather than concentrating on individuality, which itself plays an important role in interpersonal relations and the subsequent adoption of group identities; whilst the accepted norms of groups are themselves malleable through the discussions and actions of the individuals they consist of (Hornsey, 2006; Postmes & Jetten, 2006; Postmes, Spears, Lee & Novak, 2005). Replacing individual identity with that of a

collective group also obscures the magnitude of tolerance that in-group members have for heterogeneity and dissent within in-groups (Hornsey, 2006). Huddy (2001) expands on this, from the political science perspective, and posits that more distal historical and cultural factors play an important role in identity formation, rather than comparatively simplistic group designation. A prime example of this, and the manner in which intergroup interactions do not inevitably lead to conflict, was presented in a study observing the interactions between White New Zealander and Polynesian children (Wetherell, 1982). The latter group were found to be considerably more generous towards out-group members, displaying cultural practices that placed more emphasis on cooperation than intergroup competition.

The relationship between social identity theory and self-esteem highlights additional weaknesses in the theory; Hogg and Abrams (1990) suggested a reciprocal relationship between intergroup discrimination and self-esteem, whereby threats to self-esteem promote discriminatory behaviours and in turn those behaviours elevate the self-esteem of the agent. Support for this paradigm has been mixed, with studies indicating that it is too simplistic a model to explain a complex series of intergroup behaviours (Long & Spears, 1997); a meta-analysis by Rubin and Hewstone (1998) indicated that in-group bias raised self-esteem on more occasions than low self-esteem led to discriminatory behaviour. Turner and Oakes (1997) argue that the emphasis on self-esteem misinterprets the difference between personal and social identity and the pursuit of positive distinctiveness is not as simple as a desire to gain self-esteem exclusively. Indeed, collective self-esteem appears just as important in mediating social identity and group boundaries as personal self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990) and the relationship between the two concepts appears less significant when the forms of discrimination deployed are indirect (Aberson, Healy & Romero, 2000). Acknowledgement has also been made that the self-esteem hypothesis fails to recognise additional strategies of maintaining positive distinctiveness, such as social creativity and individual mobility, that were articulated in social identity theory (Ellemers & Barreto, 2001; Turner, 1999; Turner & Reynolds, 2001). Social identity theory has been more widely criticised for its inability to consistently predict intergroup behaviours (Duckitt, 1992; Hogg, & Williams, 2000;

Ouwekerk, Ellemers & de Gilder, 1999), though it is suggested that interpretations of the theory must be accompanied by sound understanding of the social context within which interactions take place (Tajfel, 1984), as suggested by Huddy (2001).

Social Dominance Theory

Whilst the work of Tajfel and colleagues sought to provide a theory for the formation of social groups, related intergroup behaviours, and the creation of a social hierarchy; social dominance theory concerns itself with those intergroup behaviours that encourage the maintenance and ongoing stability of group-based social hierarchies. The theory was originally formulated by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) and makes the observation that, within societies producing an economic surplus, the organisation of human social groups tends to take the form of group-based social hierarchies; maintained through discriminatory intergroup behaviours such as unequal allocation of commodities in favour of dominant groups, or subjecting subordinate groups to systemic discriminatory conditions. For example, subordinate groups often face a disproportionate level of incarceration, even when rates of criminality are controlled for (Mauer, 1999; Miller, 1996; Nelson, 2000). The theory suggests these social hierarchies are trimorphically structured, based on age (adults normally having higher status than children), gender (men having greater power and status compared to women), and a series of culturally defined arbitrary groups that may be universalistic or particular to certain societies; commonly based around demographics of ethnicity, nationality and religion. Whilst the nature of arbitrary groups and the magnitude of intergroup inequality may vary across different societies, and alter across time, it is accepted that social hierarchies occur universally among humans (Lenski, 1984), with links to both human evolutionary and reproductive psychology (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001).

Social dominance theory proposes that group-based inequalities are maintained through the use of three major intergroup behavioural strategies, namely institutional discrimination, aggregated individual discrimination, and behavioural asymmetry (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The latter of these behaviours states that members of groups positioned lower in a social hierarchy exhibit favouritism or

deference towards a more dominant outgroup, which not only maintains the inequality of the social status quo, but encourages individuals from subordinate groups to accept these inequities as normal (Moss, 2016). Further to this there is also evidence that stereotypes of inferiority, utilised to label subordinate groups, can contribute to under-performance of these groups within educational and occupational settings, further perpetuating hierarchical inequality (Croizet & Claire, 1998; Spencer, Steele & Quinn, 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Justification for these discriminatory intergroup behaviours is presented through a series of cultural ideologies, broadly accepted across a society, that the theory labels as 'legitimising myths', and can include stereotypes, attributions, shared representations, or predominant social discourses (Sidanius & Pratto, 2011). These myths tend to belong to one of two broad paradigms; those of 'hierarchy-enhancing myths' and 'hierarchy-attenuating myths' (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the former contributing to increasing the magnitude of inequality between groups, whilst the latter have the opposite effect. The antagonistic nature of these myths provide a better representation of the dynamics of intergroup behaviours, taking place in the real world, as they account not only for ideologies that support oppression of, and dominance over, minority groups, but also those ideologies that seek to ameliorate inequalities between groups (such as civil rights organisations). Sidanius (1992) argued that legitimising myths help to drive the processes of hierarchical discriminatory practices and gave a number of examples of these behaviours, such as 'paternalistic myths' (hegemony of the dominant group is beneficial to society and subordinate groups are incapable of true independence), 'reciprocal myths' (suggesting the dominant and subordinate groups are in fact equals, distracting from intergroup inequalities and making the argument that they are no longer salient) and 'sacred myths' (the hegemonic group have a religion-approved mandate to govern over all others). Legitimising myths can also share similarity in a number of contexts, the work of Sidanius and Pratto (2011) asserting that, across a number of different societies, local subordinate groups were frequently labelled as lazy, incompetent, criminal, dangerous, and dependent on social welfare schemes.

The likelihood that a particular individual endorses one of these paradigms is dependent upon their own personal ideology and whether this is aligned with a desire for greater, or lesser, inequality in intergroup relations. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) branded this psychological positioning as an individual's 'social dominance orientation' (SDO) and suggested that those with a desire for greater intergroup inequality possess a higher SDO and are therefore more likely to cognitively align themselves with hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. Conversely, those who are driven towards more equitable intergroup relations are deemed to possess a lower SDO and are more likely to endorse hierarchy-attenuating ideologies. It is asserted that gender also plays a role in relative SDO levels, with the Invariance Hypothesis suggesting than men usually possess a higher SDO than women (Sidanius, Pratto & Bobo, 1994). Research has indicated that people with similar SDO come together to form like-minded groups, and that individuals' views alter accordingly to meet the expectations of the dominant, or most desirable in-group, in a similar way to the processes discussed in social identity theory. For example, members of institutions that extol hierarchy-enhancing views tend to share the same ideology (Sidanius, Liu, Shaw & Pratto, 1994) and fulfilling hierarchy-enhancing roles encouraged the practical execution of these ideologies in the form of institutional discrimination (Michinov, Dambrun, Guimond & Méot, 2005; Pratto, Stallworth & Conway-Lanz, 1998). Higher levels of discrimination are also exhibited, on the individual level, by those with a higher SDO and greater identification with their superordinate in-group (Overbeck, Jost, Mosso & Flizik, 2004); a strong positive correlation was also found between SDO and perceived group threats (Quist & Resendez, 2002) and negative affect toward lower-status groups (Levin & Sidanius, 1999). The same phenomenon appears within certain educational settings, somewhat in contradiction to the body of research suggesting that higher education is inversely related to levels of discriminatory behaviour (see for example, Baars, 2009; Batson, Qian & Lichter, 2006; Bobo, 1996; Dustmann & Preston, 2001; Feng *et al.*, 2012; Ford, 2014; Pew Research Centre, 2010; Quillian, 1995; Wilson & Jacobson, 1995). For example, individuals are more likely to adopt a social dominance orientation after studying law for an extended period; a topic deemed more likely to legitimise myths and promote inequality than topics such as psychology, which tended to diminish an individual's SDO over time (Guimond,

Dambrun, Michinov & Duarte, 2003; see also, Sidanius, Pratto, Martin & Stallworth, 1991).

Links between discriminatory behaviours and SDO were confirmed in laboratory settings, such as Kemmelmeier's (2005) findings that, in a rape trial, perceptions of guilt were associated with SDO only when the defendant was Black. Almost in parallel with the minimal group research on discrimination, conducted by Tajfel and colleagues in the development of social identity theory, Amiot and Bourhis (2005) found individuals with a greater SDO level were more likely to show bias in their allocation of resources or costs to other participants, despite the nature of their minimal group testing. The effect explained by social dominance theory in maintaining the hierarchical structure of societies was elegantly displayed in the findings of a study by Danso and Esses (2001), who found participants' performance on arithmetic tests improved when the experimenter was Black rather than White; suggesting dominant groups will strive to assert their hierarchical position when members of a subordinate group are placed in authoritative roles.

A combination of SDO magnitude and factors dictating an individual's position within the social hierarchy (in this case gender and race) were also shown to influence selection in job interviews. Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius and Siers (1997) found that White applicants, men and those deemed to have a high SDO were more often recruited into hierarchy-enhancing roles, whilst women and low SDO candidates were selected for hierarchy-attenuating roles disproportionately. An additional study found that ethnicity acted to moderate these results for White applicants, with Black and Hispanic individuals hired disproportionately into hierarchy-attenuating roles, regardless of gender or SDO level (Pratto & Espinoza, 2001). The effect is similarly observed in the interactions between groups, such as the tendency for high power groups to prefer discussions of what they have in common with low power groups, rather than exploring the power differential; thereby creating the perception among low power groups that difference will be addressed, despite this remaining unlikely (Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio & Pratto, 2009). This particular type of intergroup behaviour is particularly important in the discussion of colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2000;

2001; 2002; 2006; 2010), which will be discussed in more depth later. Indeed, this type of behaviour was identified in the classical work of Pareto (1935) as one of the two major strategies employed by dominant groups to enforce their hegemony, that of fraud; force being the alternative strategy.

The discussion above indicates that there exist some parallels between the social identity and social dominance theories, such as the establishment of collective group ideologies developed with the intention of progressing a 'positive distinctiveness' for all collective members. In the former of the two theories this individuation helps to maintain the coherency of social groups through the use of status, bestowed through either material or intangible means, to differentiate an individual from those members of an out-group, whereas the latter of the two theories relies on positive distinctiveness to maintain the stability of a social hierarchy. However, at this point the two theories diverge; Sidanius and Pratto (2011) assert that one of the fundamental epistemological assumptions of the social dominance theory is that the power differentials between groups are more salient than the respective status held by those groups. For example, they explain that segregation, within occupational or residential settings, is effective in bolstering the inequality between groups that supports the overall social strata, but segregation cannot be facilitated through the status held by the hegemonic group; only the power wielded by such a group grants this ability. Power itself is not necessarily utilised effectively by the most powerful groups, as particular types of actions performed by subordinate groups, even on a small-scale, can potentially bring about change in societies; the African American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s eventually brought about considerable social change for Black citizens in the USA, through a series of boycotts and non-violent protests, despite the indisputably greater power wielded by the White-controlled government of the era.

Critique of Social Dominance Theory

Social dominance theory is often presented as an 'umbrella' theory, able to explain a broad range of social behaviours and predict their forms based on the positions of individuals on the social hierarchy (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle,

1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993; 1999; 2001; Sidanius, Cotterill, Sheehy-Skeffington, Kteily & Carvacho, 2017). Opposition to this stance has come from a number of quarters (Huddy, 2004; Reicher, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Tunçgenç, 2010), all in consistent agreement that a single theory, including social dominance theory, is unable to solely explain the full range of human social behaviour. A common assertion in opposition to the theory is that it does not adequately consider the effect of social structural factors and the impact they have on intergroup behaviour between differing levels of a social hierarchy (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Schmitt, Branscombe & Kappen, 2003; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). For example, Turner and Reynolds (2003) contend that the antagonistic relations between hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating legitimising myths can be more appropriately accounted for within social structuralism, relating to individuals' (and groups) social position and their acceptance or rejection of that position. In another example, and in contradiction of the invariance hypothesis, Schmitt, Branscombe and Kappen (2003) found that women's beliefs about inequality more closely followed social identity concerns, such that when they find themselves in positions of greater dominance they become more comfortable with the prospect of inequality; this is logical in the sense it serves their self-interests and secures their status and relative positive-distinctiveness. This also closely relates to the regulatory focus theory of Higgins (1997; 2008), which suggests that social dominance takes place as a function of individual's goal-oriented need to overcome others. Consistent with this argument, some have asserted that social identity theory, which has more potential to include social structural factors within its scope, is a more appropriate lens through which to view these intergroup behaviours (Huddy, 2004; Reicher, 2004).

The context in which social hierarchies exist is indeed an important factor for consideration and has been explored by theorists who find it difficult to grasp the concept, suggested in social dominance theory, that individuals from low-status groups will engage in behaviours that negatively impact on their in-group as a means to maintain the social status quo (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Rather, the consideration of social identity theory, relating to the perceived legitimacy of social systems, is more relevant here, with a number of examples showing that behavioural

asymmetry does not operate unless the social system is perceived as stable and legitimate (Levin, Federico, Sidanius & Rabinowitz, 2002; Sidanius, Levin, Federico & Pratto, 2001). It was also found that those with low-status but a high SDO acted in a similar fashion to their low-SDO counterparts where group relations are unstable and that they rejected the status-quo more often than low-SDO individuals when there was a high level of perceived injustice (Federico, 1999; Rabinowitz, 1999).

These assertions contribute to the overall criticism that social dominance theory is ineffective in explaining social change (Huddy, 2004; Reicher, 2004) and social stability facilitated by behavioural asymmetry. Levin, and colleagues (Levin *et al.*, 2002), further add to the social structural argument, stating that behavioural asymmetry is more appropriately explained by collective self-interests and identity influenced by position in, and understanding of, the social structure (see also Turner & Oakes, 1997). Rubin and Hewstone (2004) offer an explanation from a slightly different perspective, stating that the deferential behaviours of subordinate groups are actually instances of consensual discrimination that typically occur when intergroup status is stable and perceived legitimate. This can be interpreted in one of two ways; first, that the subordinate group understand their position in the social hierarchy and see it as legitimate, therefore presenting no reason to behave differently. Alternatively, this deference to the dominant group could be seen as a coping strategy, or survival mechanism, necessary for life within a social setting where they hold less power than the more dominant group. Bonilla-Silva (2001) observed this type of behaviour in his investigation into African American endorsement of colour-blind racist ideology; accounts from African Americans indicating that tackling indirect forms of racism did not sufficiently lead to enough social change to justify the potential trouble that could be caused as a result of confrontation. An additional contribution to this perspective is offered by Weiner (2012), viewed through the lens of Attribution Theory (and also supported from a social structural perspective (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009)); suggesting that individuals may view their subordination as an aspect of society that is perceived as both stable and beyond their internal control, leading to reduced self-esteem and pride in the culture of their in-group. Lacking from this discussion however, is the question of

whether this exhibited behaviour is constant or dependent upon the social context. The behaviour exhibited by a subordinate group member may be aligned with out-group favouritism towards a dominant group whilst under that group's scrutiny, but it may be possible that this behaviour is not exhibited when members of the dominant group are not present. Davis (1997), for example, found that the political opinions disclosed by African Americans were often different when they spoke to an interviewer who was a fellow African American, rather than a White interviewer, suggesting a need to appear compliant with the socially accepted paradigm when in the presence of a dominant group (White American) member.

In their original construction of social dominance theory Sidanius and Pratto (1993) asserted that human societies, where there exists an economic surplus, have a tendency to form group-based hierarchies consisting of dominant and subordinate groups, with all historical examples of attempts to establish egalitarian societies ending in failure. Turner and Reynolds (2003) provide an example that does support this assertion; that of Marxist socialism, as per the political movement of early twentieth century Russia. Marxism indeed rejects the social status quo through its opposition of conservatism, racism, sexism and a number of other inegalitarian positions, yet despite this it still endorses a group-based social hierarchy in which workers dominate over capitalists. However, the phenomenon of hierarchy formation has been presented as a 'tendency' of human existence and has been linked to evolutionary psychology through the use of male and female reproductive strategies (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), also suggesting that the phenomenon will remain constant across context and time. Tunçgenç (2010) disagrees with this position and suggests that this viewpoint suffers from informal inductive fallacy; incorrectly assuming that systems and phenomena that have occurred in the past will continue to take place in the future. She also criticises the fatalism of the theory's suggestion that oppression will effectively never end and adds that, within the gendered system of social dominance theory, that it is also too reductionist in its attribution of reproduction as the sole determinant of male dominance. The gendered system is also linked back to the social structural argument, in that women

have made considerable gains in social equality in the era since industrialisation (Tunçgenç, 2010).

Ray (2003) provides political criticism of social dominance theory, suggesting that researchers in the area choose to ignore more conservative theory and states that SDO is unable to provide new knowledge, being more tautological than predictive of social behaviours. Ray discusses social dominance theory's preoccupation with the thoughts of individuals, rather than their actions, which frequently do not correlate (La Piere, 1934) and argues that there is no relation between political orientation and racism (Ray, 1976; 1983; Ray & Heaven, 1984); that the notion of social inequality is rejected by the more well-adjusted members of society (Ray, 1972a); and that, broadly speaking, communities view the rejection of social dominance as deviant (Ray, 1972b).

Relevant to the discussion of contemporary forms of racism, such as colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Childs, 2005a), the theory also has difficulty in accounting for the more implicit forms of negative affect between social groups. Johnson, Olson and Fazio (2009) theorised that many individuals attempt to portray an egalitarian self-image on the conscious level, whilst holding implicit racialised attitudes at the automatic level, that can be unconsciously drawn out through the use of implicit association tasks. Social dominance theory, focussed as it is on the assumption that social groups desire to overcome others through prejudicial behaviour, is therefore unable to account for these types of underlying racial attitudes; testing of an individual may suggest that they possess a low SDO, indicative that they are unlikely to endorse intergroup inequalities, despite subscribing to racist ideology at the unconscious level.

Application of Social Identity Theory and Social Dominance Theory in Black/White Interracial Relationships

The determination of individuals' positions within a social structure is dictated by their social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and racial identity specifically has proven to be a determinant by which powerful categorisation takes place (Goar &

Sell, 2005). Categorisations of Blacks within the American context has been almost universally downwards in comparison to Whites and have included constructions of them as culturally pathological (Henry, 1994; Steele, 1998; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003), possessing a unique and problematic cultural style (Majors & Billson, 1993), and an identity that is oppositional to societal norms (Ogbu, 1978; Valenzuela, 1999).

Consistent downward racial comparisons, such as those discussed above, have formed the foundation for several additional paradigms, relevant to Black/White interracial relationships, congruent with social dominance theory, and could be interpreted as legitimising myths created with the intention of problematising intimate relations between persons of these two racial groups. These myths can be targeted at one, or both racial groups and some are more overtly racist in nature than others, occurring across a broad range of times and locations, from colonial Africa and the antebellum Southern USA, to more contemporary race relations across the USA and Europe. They include perceptions of Blacks as highly sexualised, or endowed with abnormal sexual anatomy or abilities (Abidde, 2011; Adjaye, 2015; Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Arnfred, 2004; Bell, 2015; Bhana & Pattman, 2010; Childs, 2005a, 2009; Collins, 2004; Ferber, 1999; Frankenberg, 1993; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Morgan & Bennett, 2006; Njoroge, 2011; Ray, 2015; Reid & Walker, 2005; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001; Soomer, 2000; Walsh, 2012), a stereotype that is also generalised to Black/White interracial relationships (Childs, 2008, 2009; Dalmage, 2000; Ferber, 1999; Frankenberg, 1993; Nordahl, 2014; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995); and perceptions that Blacks, particularly Black women, are unattractive (Childs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Collins, 2004; Dalmage, 2000; Lewis, 2012; Pattman & Bhana, 2006; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990).

Other forms of legitimising myths are targeted specifically at Whites, such as the perception that Whites enter intimate relations with Blacks as a result of psychological instability (Dalmage, 2000; Ray, 2015; Romano, 2003; Watts & Henriksen, 1999), and the evaluation, made by some amongst Black communities, that Whites are sexually deviant and wish to enter intimate relations with

dishonourable intentions (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Nordahl, 2014; Ray, 2015; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001; Twine, 2010). Black people can also take particular umbrage with in-group members who choose to enter intimate relations with Whites, one of the most frequent negative responses to interracial relationships from Blacks being the labelling of those persons as 'sell-outs', or 'race traitors' (Childs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Collins, 2004; Dalmage, 2000; Davies, 1997; Gross, 2013; Kennedy, 2004; Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Ray, 2015; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001; Schafer, 2008; Sherman & Steyn, 2009; The Black Collegian, 1993; Twine, 2010; Walsh, 2012; Wilson, 2012).

Fitting with the discussion of modern, less overt forms of racism, are the examples of legitimising myths that negatively evaluate interracial relationships; commonly appearing in discursive White narratives about Black/White interracial intimacy, that present their apparent concerns for the plight of mixed-race children growing up in a racist society (Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Bell, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2002, 2010; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006; Childs, 2008; Collins, 2004; Donovan, 2004; Frankenberg, 1993; Oriola, 2008; Pryor, 2010; Ray, 2015; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; St Jean, 1998; Twine, 2010), with some focussing particularly on the issue of those childrens' racial identity and, presumably, how society will categorise them (Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Bell, 2015; BBC News, 2004; Childs, 2005a; Ferber, 1999; Foeman & Nance, 1999; Frankenberg, 1993; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Olusoga, 2016; Oriola, 2008; Pryor, 2010; Root, 2001; St Jean, 1998; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006; UNESCO, 1974; Watts & Henriksen, 1999).

Scholars suggested that public opinion towards interracial relationships can act as a barometer for broader social relations between racial groups (Childs, 2008; Gross, 2013; Jolley, 2012) and as such, a number of clues leading to the motives for opposition or discomfort with these kinds of relationships can be found in the broader literature on this topic. Initially, it is helpful to view previous research through the lens of social identity theory, where the assertion has been made that out-group individuals tend to be viewed as part of, and representative of, their

broader, unified social group and, as a result, interactions and evaluations are made on the basis of group membership (Miller & Brewer, 1984); leading to the suggestion that prejudice itself is the result of 'collective attitudes' directed from one group to another, rather than stemming from the interactions of individuals (Blumer, 2000). This tendency grows in strength as the relative size of in-groups becomes larger and more depersonalised, and the rules and customs that dictate in-group loyalty begin to take the form of moral authority, eliciting more contemptuous responses to potential transgressions of the status-quo (Brewer, 1999).

Brewer (1999) goes on to explain that such vehement responses can come about as part of the perceived threat to intergroup differentiation caused by greater interdependence between two separate social groups. Social identity theory suggests positive conceptualisation of self is linked to clear group boundaries and therefore, increased co-operation with members of another group would undermine the very basis for self-identification. In cases where individuals have a vested interest in membership of a particular group the threat to their positive distinctiveness can profoundly override their desire to pursue superordinate goals and resist co-operation with other groups, even at the expense of in-group self-interest (Brewer, 1999). It is, however, important to keep in perspective that negative affect between groups is very much context-dependent, such as the example discussed in a South African study by Duckitt and Mphuthing (1998). Their findings indicated that, for Black South Africans, there was a significant interrelationship between in-group identification and negative evaluations of White Afrikaners; however, the same feelings were not generalised to other English-speaking Whites residing in South Africa, or to Whites generally. This is consistent with Huddy's (2001) argument that historical and cultural factors play an important part in the formation of social identity and the interactions that occur between particular groups; the historical relationship of Black and Afrikaner South Africans under Apartheid would unsurprisingly lead to negative affect that Whites of differing ethnicity would likely be spared from. Remaining within the African perspective, and giving further consideration to culture, Triandis (1995) argued, in a cross-cultural study, that collectivist societies (such as many societies throughout the African continent)

display greater in-group interdependence and more distrust of out-group members when compared with more individualistic societies. For example, a study conducted in Nigeria, gauging the attitudes of young people towards inter-tribal marriage, found that tribal endogamy was favoured more amongst rural youths who held more conservative viewpoints, closely related to traditional Nigerian cultural practices, than young people from more progressive or metropolitan areas (Abasiekong, 1976). Contrary to this argument however, are the findings of Ugwuegbu (2011) who reported public views amongst Nigerians that support for inter-tribal marriage was considered important in cementing a united and cohesive nation. The historical perspective of these two studies must not be overlooked however, with the former study taking place only a few years after the end of the Biafran conflict, so it is less surprising that in-group preference was more prevalent at the time, when compared with the latter, more contemporary study.

The construction of White racial identity uncovers a number of ideas that form the foundation of both overt and more discreet forms of racialised thought and the downward social comparisons made towards Blacks and other minority ethnic groups. Bonilla-Silva *et al.* (2006) explain that Whites have a tendency to perceive their culture and lifestyle as the 'correct' and 'normal' way of doing things, conditioning Whites into evaluating other cultures as inferior, or different (in a negative sense), and permitting these attitudes to be perpetuated and legitmised. As a result, people from non-White racial groups are constructed as culturally different to the extent that Whites begin to perceive them as difficult to relate to, or to form meaningful relationships with (Bhana & Pattman, 2010; Childs, 2005a). Simultaneously, Whites construct themselves as 'raceless' and 'cultureless', ignoring the salience of their race as part of their social identity and attributing these characteristics to other groups as a means of labelling their 'difference' (Farough, 2004; Garner, 2007; Feagin & McKinney, 2005); or from the social identity theory perspective, constructing a highly visible means to define in-group membership. A prime example of this was discussed by Salusbury and Foster (2004), in which White, English-speaking South Africans (discrete from Afrikaners) constructed themselves as without distinct culture and attributed this to other racial groups as a characteristic of their difference. In essence,

Whites choose to ignore the racial and cultural nuances of their own group as part of their construction of positive distinctiveness; they use the culture and race of others as a visual marker of difference, that is negatively evaluated in comparison to their own behaviours and which are not defined as a distinct culture, but are labelled merely as 'normal'.

The clear demarcation between the Black and White racial groups, along with the characteristics denoting membership to these groups, creates a perilous situation for interracial couples; race is utilised as a highly visual and (often) unambiguous indicator of ones social identity, and therefore the interracial dyad becomes a relatively easy target for racism and other forms of opposition. Relevant to the functionality of social identity theory is the phenomenon referred to as 'borderism' (Dalmage, 2000; Mills, 2008), a unique form of racist behaviour, directed at individuals in interracial relationships, or those making an attempt to claim membership of more than one racial group (such as mixed-race people). The phenomenon is effectively a policing of the 'border' between the two groups and frequently features the recurring themes that individuals should not associate or be intimate with others from outside their own group, as well as attempts to categorise people of mixed heritage into one distinct racial identity – usually into the minority group, rather than the White group (Dalmage, 2000). Borderism is consistent with the expectations of intergroup relations suggested by the social identity theory; positive distinctiveness is dependent upon a clearly defined and well-maintained social identity, race being one of the building blocks of this identity. Intimate relations between groups, especially the production of mixed race offspring, acts to disrupt and potentially deconstruct the clearly defined border between the groups and is therefore viewed, by some, as a threat to the distinctiveness of a particular group, something that has been documented among both White (Ferber, 1999; Romano, 2003) and Black (Childs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Dalmage, 2000) communities, with the latter often suffering from intensified levels of racism as a result (Dalmage, 2000).

In cases where couples form across the constructed racial border, there have been examples where there is an apparent change in society's perceptions of an

individual's identity; in cases of marriage and intimate contact between Blacks and Whites, the White partner frequently 'loses', or is 'disowned' from their White identity and viewed as 'too Black', whereas the Black partner, through their intimate association with a White person, is viewed as 'not Black enough' by other members of their racial in-group (Orbe, 1999). This shifting of in-group boundaries between specific people and contexts was recognised by Allport (1954), who also stated that groups could become more, or less inclusive depending on local conditions and individual needs. For example, Luke and Carrington (2000) observed that members of interracial couples suffered detrimental effects to their relationships with friends, family and co-workers as a result of their choice of partner (a trend that is discussed in a number of accounts from interracial couples (Dalmage, 2000; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995); and as a result such couples often tended to live in majority Black, or integrated neighbourhoods (Datzman & Gardner, 2000)). Research indicates this trend in neighbourhood habitation is attributable to Black communities tendency to be more inclusive and supportive of interracial couples (Datzman & Gardner, 2000; Fears & Deane, 2001; Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Njoroge, 2011; Passel, Wang & Taylor, 2010; Porter & Bronzaft, 1995; Watts & Henriksen, 1999). However, this perspective has not always been supported, with some accounts suggesting that non-White racial groups are less supportive of interracial couples (Oriola, 2008), including strong opposition from some members of majority-Black churches (Bell, 2015; Childs, 2005a). Opposition towards interracial marriage from members of the Black community takes a number of forms, as discussed earlier, such as assertions that interracially involved Blacks are traitors to their race (see for example, Childs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008), with links also made to the 'marriage squeeze' phenomenon, in which Black women take particular umbrage with Black men who enter relationships with White women, as this is seen as reducing the number of eligible partners within a society where they already have difficulty finding an appropriate marriageable male (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000). Inversely however, there are a number of examples in which the blame for opposition towards interracial romance is deflected back onto minority communities, with the suggestion made that Whites are willing to enter meaningful relationships with Blacks, but are not given the opportunity to do so (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006; Childs,

2005, 2008, 2015; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995). This stance also extends to the suggestions that Blacks are in fact more racist and actively oppose interracial relations, whilst being too culturally different to form meaningful relationships with (Childs, 2009). Shifts in societal perceptions of racial identity can also take the form of genetic or biological arguments, a particularly pathological account from Ferber's (1999) review of White supremacist propaganda suggesting that White women who had engaged in sexual relations with Black men were irreversibly changed, on a chemical level, as a result of their exposure to Black males' semen and should no longer be considered a fully White person.

This discussion indicates that social identity theory is an appropriate framework through which to view individual and group opinions towards Black/White interracial relationships, with a number of the predicted behaviours taking place when particular persons take objection towards such relationships. Tajfel and Turner's (1979) theory states that social competition will take place between groups where group boundaries are impermeable (this is almost always supported in the case of the Black/White racial divide) and intergroup relations are relatively unstable. This brings groups into competition over resources that may be physical, or linked to more intangible forms of status; research has shown that Whites, as a result, frequently oppose legislative manoeuvres that would bring greater equality between groups, despite extolling egalitarian views to the contrary (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1976; Bobo, 1983; Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Levine & Campbell, 1972). Meanwhile, the use of borderism allows individuals from both sides of the group boundary to police any attempts to transgress constructed group membership norms or progressive attitudes that may deconstruct the boundary paradigm entirely, exhibiting behaviours that discourage group mixing that could be interpreted as forms of 'lashing out' at those who are attempting to move into a group, or position in the social hierarchy, that is not deemed legitimate (Hornsey, Spears, Cremers & Hogg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Brown, 1978).

White opposition in particular tends to focus on the problematisation of interracial romance, with reference made to the difficulties that the White partner

will suffer, as well as the loss of status, tradition, and opportunity (Frankenberg, 1993; Jaynes, 2010; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995). Whites also have the greatest tendency to deploy apparent concerns for the welfare of mixed race children as an oppositional discourse against Black/White intimacy, stating that these children will struggle to adopt an identity, face rejection from both parents' racial groups and suffer the same levels of racism that other minority groups experience (Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Bell, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2002, 2010; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006; Childs, 2008; Collins, 2004; Donovan, 2004; Frankenberg, 1993; Oriola, 2008; Pryor, 2010; Ray, 2015; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; St Jean, 1998; Twine, 2010). However, the experiences of interracial couples and of mixed race people themselves refute these assertions and confirm that children of mixed heritage are just as happy and healthy as other children (Bell, 2015) and embrace their identity as mixed race people (Phinney & Rotherham, 1987; Poston, 1990; Poussaint, 1984). Whites also attribute a lot of their opposition towards interracial relationships as due to the perceived lack of approval from society, though the exact source of the disapproval tends to remain anonymous, suggesting a reflection of their own apprehensions onto the wider society as a means to rationalise their opinion, without personally appearing overtly racist (Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006; Childs, 2008). Evidence has also been presented that loss of status, especially relative to the other family groups that make up their neighbourhood, is a particularly strong concern that White families have with regards to interracial relationships (Johnson & Warren, 1994). Families from lower socio-economic backgrounds have been shown to be the group most vehemently opposed to interracial couples (McNamara *et al.*, 1999) and this assertion is supported from a historical social structural perspective by Romano (2003), who explained that several disadvantaged immigrant groups (Slavs, Jews, Eastern Europeans) in the USA, had ceased to be considered as racially distinct from other White Americans in the years following World War Two and had made a great deal of social gains as a result; however, these groups also strongly opposed interactions with Black Americans as they feared association with them could potentially threaten, or even reverse, the gains made. This is consistent with the workings of social identity theory, that states a disadvantaged group would need to find another group, lower in the social hierarchy, against which to make disparaging

comparisons and augment their positive distinctiveness in the process (Tajfel, 1979). Overwhelmingly the focus appears to be on threats to the defence of Whites' hegemony as the dominant group in the social hierarchy and the most severe losses for White partners occur when they become disowned from their familial and social groups as a result of their association with a Black partner (Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Frankenberg, 1993; Root, 2001).

On the other hand, Black opposition tends to take one of two forms; the first being aligned with the social competition paradigm, whilst the latter is rooted in more social structural factors. Black opposition to interracial relations, as a form of social competition, has a greater focus on the movement of people as a 'scarce physical resource'. Black women have seen an ever-reducing opportunity to find a partner from their own racial group, and of marriageable status, due to factors such as poor educational opportunities, discriminatory employment practices and unreasonable levels of incarceration (Bennett, Bloom & Craig, 1989; Childs, 2005b). When Black males of marriageable status then engage in interracial relations, rather than selecting a Black partner, these women respond to this social pressure by opposing these types of relationships, sometimes vehemently (Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995). Similarly, there are fears among these communities that their members who become involved with Whites will be 'lost' from the neighbourhood (Childs, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; McConnell-Green, 2010; Twine, 2010; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006) and also suffer a loss of their distinctive culture (Dalmage, 2000). Supporting this, Romano (2003) presents an example where initial Black familial opposition towards their relative's White partner receded when consideration and respect for Black culture was exhibited.

Another aspect of Black opposition towards interracial relationships is related to social structural issues and frequently returns to the theme of Black responses to the potential for racism or discrimination from White society. For example, there are accounts of Black families having concern for the safety of their relatives and fears that they may be mistreated by racist members of a White family (Childs, 2005a, 2008); that the Black partner in an interracial relationship and, by extension, the

other members of their family will be subjected to intensified racism, due to the highly visual nature of a Black/White interracial pairing (Dalmage, 2000; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Twine, 2010); and concerns that the motives of the White partner are spurious and that their interest in a Black person is driven by fetishised stereotypes of Blacks and a deviant White sexuality (Nordahl, 2014; Twine, 2010), fuelling the stereotype within some African societies, labelling Black women in relationships with White men as prostitutes (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Ray, 2015).

The forms of Black opposition discussed above, are also very much dependent upon the type of outlook individuals subscribe to with regards to interracial relationships and marriage. Doering (2014) explored support and opposition from the African American community towards intermarriage with Whites through a series of letters that had been written to major American newspapers from the 1920s through to the 1990s and found there were two antagonistically opposed schools of thought on the subject, one aligned with an integrationist agenda that stated there could only be benefits to greater contact, and intermarriage, with Whites. On the other hand, some from the African American community subscribed to more separatist viewpoints on this matter and described the problems these types of relationships caused, not only for the couples involved, but for the wider Black community; the remnants of these viewpoints still being exhibited today and evidenced in the discussion, above.

Despite the powerful use of race as an indicator of group membership and the utilisation of borderism as a means of policing the constructed boundary between these groups, the common view held by members of interracial romantic dyads is the desire to be seen as a 'normal' couple and not through the lens of their racial identities (Bauer, 1998; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Nordahl, 2014; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Watts & Henriksen, 1999), as these respective identities rarely become salient in the daily activities of their lives as a couple (Bauer, 1998; Donovan, 2004; Killian, 2012; Lewis *et al.*, 1997; Yancey & Yancey, 1997), unless society makes it so within particular settings (Childs, 2005a).

The discussion above indicates that social identity plays an important role in the evaluations different groups in society make of interracial partnerships, with oppositional attitudes fuelled by a combination of social structural factors and anxieties created by perceived social competition between racial groups. Justification for these attitudes is then facilitated through the use of a number of stereotypes that can be interpreted as the type of legimitising myths created to perpetuate the clear division between groups, discouraging the mixing of the two and maintaining the stability of the existing social hierarchy. However, the question of identity, and concerns about the destabilisation of the social hierarchy caused by the existence of mixed race offspring, also presents the potential undoing of this status-quo. Mills (2008) presents a compelling argument in support of this, stating that the celebration of interracial intimacy as an erosion of long-established racial boundaries is spurious when some people, including those in interracial relationships, do not accept that these boundaries exist. Indeed, the very definition of what constitutes an interracial relationship is contingent upon the individual's self-conceptualisation of their own identity. For example, the mixed race child of Black and White parents may adopt the identity of the Black or White parent; may embrace their own identity as a person of combined racial heritage; or alternatively may refuse to be categorised within the socially accepted paradigm on racial identity at all. Mills (2008) discusses this further, stating that society frequently misinterprets the intersection of skin colour and race, categorising people based purely on their visible differences and ignoring the subtle nuances of race. For example, two individuals who are racially different, yet have similar skin tones (such as an African-American and a Latino) would be considered 'the same', whilst two individuals who are racially similar, yet with different skin tones (such as a light-skinnned African American and a dark-skinned African American) may be categorised as different.

Chapter Discussion

A combination of the research of Tajfel, and colleagues (Tajfel, *et al.*, 1971), on social identity; and the work of Sidanius and Pratto (1999) on social dominance theory, together form a useful framework through which to view the attitudes society holds towards intimate relationships between Blacks and Whites. Social identity

theory accounts for the formation of social groups categorised by race and offers an explanation for the complex nature of membership to these groups and how individuals can potentially move between groups, whether of their own accord, or through the perceptions of society that re-evaluates their racial identity under certain conditions. Examples include instances where whites have been disowned from their race, or have become re-evaluated as being 'less white', as a result of their intimate association with a Black partner (Ferber, 1999; Frankenberg, 1993), and also cases where Blacks have been considered race-traitors and less invested in their racial identity when they become romantically involved with a White partner (Childs, 2005b; Collins, 2004; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Root, 2001).

With boundaries established between the racial groups, the 'borders' between these groups are then patrolled through the use of discriminatory behaviours that form the 'borderism' phenomenon (Dalmage, 2000), discouraging individuals from considering romantic relations with those from a group different to their own and deploying a number of stereotypical justifications to rationalise this approach. It is here that social dominance theory becomes relevant, particularly in the use of legimitising myths utilised to maintain the status quo; Dalmage's (2000) 'border patrollers' deploy these legitimising myths to discourage intimate mixing between the groups that would lead to greater interdependence and a weakening of each individual groups' positive distinctiveness. The type of myths deployed have been discussed earlier, but tend to focus on the themes of Blacks as violent and with uncontrolled, pathological sexuality, whilst Whites are portrayed as racially discriminatory or, in the cases of those who do enter interracial relationships, rebellious, sexually deviant, or psychologically unstable.

White opposition towards interracial intimacy appears to be much greater than the opposition from Black society (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Djamba & Kimuna, 2014) and is consistent with the broader pattern of opinions that indicate Whites' desire for a greater social distance between themselves and Black people (Bobo & Zubrinsky, 1996; Krysan, 2002; Quillian, 2002), such as favouring residential areas with a lower Black population (Lewis, Emerson & Klineberg, 2011) and opposition of policies

seeking to bring about greater equality between the races in education or employment (Bobo, 1983, Bobo & Kluegel, 1993). Scholars such as Childs (2005a) and Bonilla-Silva (2010) assert that Whites' position as the dominant racial group in the social hierarchy is the basis for the increased opposition they have towards interracial unions, as they are a threat to the maintenance of White hegemonic power in society. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) also stated that the dynamics of power were also important in the function of social dominance theory and provide further reasoning for why White society would discourage individuals from their group from associating with other groups, lower on the social hierarchy. Where society has re-evaluated the White partner in an interracial dyad as lower in value, or placed completely outside the group, this creates a threat to the ongoing positive distinctiveness of a family group, as the couple and their children may be presented less opportunities in life as a result of their intimate involvement, hence the apprehension that has been exhibited from some white families in these cases (Levin *et al.*, 2007; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001). White families rely on a number of legitimising myths to discourage their relatives from entering relationships with Blacks, the most common being the problematisation of Black/White couples generally (Frankenberg, 1993; Hernton, 1988), the perception of disapproval from an anonymous 'society' (Childs, 2005a), and concerns for the safety and welfare of mixed race children (Bell, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Twine, 2010). Whilst some of these rationalisations present realistic issues for interracial couples within institutionally racist societies, these problems are a reflection of the risks posed by racism itself, rather than dangers presented by Blacks specifically. However, Whites tend to deflect the responsibility for their views onto society itself, blaming broad public opposition for creating the discomfort that they personally feel towards such relationships and creating a personal image of themselves as egalitarian, despite internally subscribing to racialised stereotypical thoughts; branded as 'modern' or 'colour-blind' racism (Bonilla-Silva *et al.*, 2006; Childs, 2008), as many Whites subscribe to the discourse that 'race doesn't matter' and the 'there is no problem with interracial relationships', yet feel apprehension and discomfort when one of their own relatives enters into an interracial marriage.

Whilst White opposition towards interracial relationships is mostly based around the defence of their hegemonic power and maintenance of their positive distinctiveness at the top of the social hierarchy, Black opposition is more reactionary and based on experiences and expectations of racism directed towards them by society. Oppositional attitudes tend to fall within one of two distinct themes; those related to social competition and those related to social structural factors. The former focusses on Black family members as a physical resource, with concerns around their movement away from Black neighbourhoods and the potential loss of culture that can occur as a result (Childs, 2005a; McConnell-Green, 2010; The Black Collegian, 1993; Twine, 2010; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006), as well as the 'marriage squeeze' phenomenon, in which interracial marriages between Black men and White women are seen as a contributory factor, along with discrimination, educational disadvantage, and disproportional incarceration, for the shortage of marriageable Black men available for upwardly mobile and highly educated Black women (Collins, 2004; Kennedy, 2004; Model & Fisher, 2002; Porter & Bronzaft, 1995; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995). Meanwhile, the latter aspect of Black opposition is concerned with social structural factors and the potential for exacerbated racist behaviour being elicited from White society as a result of a relative entering an interracial partnership. These concerns include the potential that their relative will be mistreated and subjected to racism by their White in-laws (Childs, 2005a, 2008), that the White partner has dubious, often sexualised, motives for their romantic interest in the Black partner (Twine, 2010), and that elevated levels of racism will be experienced by the Black member of the interracial couple, as well as their extended family (Dalmage, 2000; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995; Twine, 2010). Ultimately, the most common reasons for Black discomfort towards interracial intimacy are reactions to experiences with, or expectations of White racism, either in the form of overt discriminatory behaviours or from the pressures created by an institutionally racist society that actively keeps Blacks at the lowest level of the social hierarchy. Whereas White opposition appears to be influenced by an implicit aversion towards Blacks, the same does not appear to be true for Blacks themselves, as they are often more supportive of interracial couples and the mixed race children they produce (Njoroge, 2011; Passel *et al.*, 2010;

Porter & Bronzaft, 1995; Ray, 2015; Romano, 2003; Watts & Henriksen, 1999) and do not share the same desire for social distance that Whites exhibit (Lewis *et al.*, 2011).

Despite the support for both social identity and social dominance theories in the scholarly discourse on interracial relationships, their application here is still undermined by the same limitations discussed earlier in this chapter. For example, social identity theory focusses on the development of social categories and the categorisation of individuals into a particular group dependent upon a range of physical and social characteristics. However, this process is undermined when an individual believes that a particular categorisation holds little salience, or even that they do not consider it to exist at all. In the case of interracial couples, many accounts state race is not a salient issue within their relationships and does not affect their everyday lives in any way (Bauer, 1998; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Nordahl, 2014; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995). Research has also suggested that the mixed race offspring of interracial couples also act to undermine the current status quo, as their racial identity can often appear ambiguous, despite historical practices in the USA where they were automatically categorised as Black (Childs, 2005a; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006; Watts & Henriksen, 1999). This ambiguous identity could result in disruption to the positive distinctiveness of particular groups and the racial hierarchy itself, as the boundaries between groups become less clearly defined, though some research has suggested that mixed race people of Black and White parentage may actually form a completely new level within the broader hierarchy, disrupting the status quo for both the White and Black groups (Dalmage, 2000; Spickard, 1989; Wardle, 1992).

In line with discussions around both the social identity and social dominance theories, and just as relevant in its application in understanding attitudes toward interracial relationships, it must be kept in perspective that no single theory is capable of exclusively explaining patterns of human behaviour (Huddy, 2004; Reicher, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Tunçgenç, 2010). The attitudes that are held about intimate pairings between White and Black people are very much dependent upon the social and political context in which they exist, the legacy of historical interactions between groups, and the cultural norms of a broad range of differing nationalities,

ethnicities and cultures. These contexts are not absolute and are in a state of constant flux, with social norms that appear acceptable at one point in time becoming aberrant as time passes; the policies of segregation that forcefully separated White and Black people in the USA and South Africa presenting perfect examples. Similarly, the fatalistic approach of social dominance theory, suggesting that the social status-quo forms an insurmountable inevitability, is lent less credence in light of the growing societal acceptance of interracial couples (Bobo, Kluegel & Smith, 1996; Ford, 2008, 2014; Krysan, 2002) and ever increasing number of people that are entering into them (ONS, 2014; Njoroge, 2011; Passel *et al.*, 2010).

Chapter Four - Methodology and Methods

It is appropriate at this stage to disclose my personal philosophical view of the research topic, as some of the assumptions that have had to be made in order to complete the research are somewhat at odds with this philosophy. For example, engagement with race and ethnicity as a research topic relies upon an assumption that racial categories exist and influence individuals who do, or do not, belong to those categories. As the previous discussion of literature has illuminated, racial categories do have a profound impact upon the quality of life of individuals and how they are perceived by others in society. My own personal philosophy differs from this considerably as, whilst I also accept the existence of racial and ethnic categories, the meaning I attach to these categories does not extend past the appraisal of physiological differences and the geographic origins of an individual.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the accounts of Black and White people, living in North East Wales, relating to Black/White interracial relationships. A review of literature within this field led to the formation of three pertinent research questions, deemed relevant for further exploration, namely:

(i) Do accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships in North-East Wales suggest a small or large social distance between Black and White groups in the region?

(ii) Do accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships in North-East Wales expose overt and more subtle racist views that are expressed in the region?

(iii) Do accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships in North-East Wales suggest that social exchange/status marrying is taking place?

Contemporary studies of race relations stress the importance of exploring accounts concerning interracial marriage as they act as a barometer for broader racial attitudes within society (Childs, 2008). Whilst race relations in the UK have been

extensively researched, there is a relative dearth of scholarly writing on accounts relating to interracial relationships, particularly in Wales, with most research having been conducted in the more diverse South of the country (Race Council Cymru, 2015). Research conducted in Wales indicates that race appears as much of an issue as in other parts of the UK, with almost 90% of BAME respondents to a Race Council Cymru (2015) study indicating they had experienced racism between 2010 and 2015. More subtle forms of modern racism also appear to be present in various regions throughout Wales, with racialised attitudes and discriminatory behaviour often attributed to an 'innocent' rural mindset (Robinson, 2003; Robinson & Gardner, 2006) and the (albeit inaccurate) social construction of Wales as a more racially tolerant country than neighbouring England (Evans, O'Leary, & Williams, 2015). These facts, taken alongside the doubling of the Black and mixed-race population of Wales between 2001-11 (Evans, O'Leary, & Williams, 2015) and the BAME population of the Wrexham county increasing to more than 2% by 2009 (Statistics for Wales, 2011), imply a study of this type within the local region is particularly timely. This statistical evidence indicates that the North of Wales is in the infancy of increasing ethnic diversity and, therefore, exploring the accounts of local people is all the more important, especially as the last major race-related disturbance in Wales took place on the Wrexham Caia Park estate in June 2003 (Evans, 2015). Indeed, a study exploring accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships in the North East of Wales is both unprecedented and timely.

Research Design

As the purpose of this study is to thematically review participants' accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships, it was deemed that a qualitative methodology would be most appropriate, permitting interpretation of "...participants' perceptions, understandings or accounts..." (Smith, 2003:2) of the research topic. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the most appropriate tool for this study, as they have the flexibility to permit sections of the interview to be participant-guided; allowing them to raise interesting topics that may not have featured in the original interview schedule, as well as providing the interviewer opportunities to probe particularly interesting parts of the interview in more depth

(Smith & Osborn, 2003). Consideration was given to the concerns raised by Kvale (1996) that interview schedules with less structure are exposed to the risk of researchers inadvertently influencing the direction of interviews to meet their own interests, rather than listening to what participants are actually saying. Therefore, the freedom of the interviewee to dictate the direction of the interview, without diverging too far from relevant discussion, was considered important. Such flexibility, and the maintained openness of the researcher to new ideological constructions, is consistent with the post-positivist paradigm in that humans are adaptable yet incapable of gaining knowledge *a priori* that was bound to a particular context and social reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The nature of this paradigm dictates that an understanding of reality and associated knowledge is not separated from the individual and is rather socially constructed by our presence and socialisation within a particular social context (Berger & Luckman, 1967). This concurs with the positivist position that a social world, with a range of conventions and norms, exists and influences individuals as they navigate their way through it (Houghton, 2011). This is particularly relevant in light of research relating to social identity, which dictates that people often belong to multiple social categories, the valence of which varies with the ever-changing social context (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Particularly relevant to this study, amongst the various social categories, are race (Allen, 2010) and culture (Huddy, 2001); both factors are foundational in the structure of an individual's social identity and impact on evaluations of their own personal reality and perceptions of the world.

Despite the assertion made that the paradigm of racial views is ever shifting (Sedlacek & Brooks, 2007), the post-positivist ontology appears more appropriate as the constantly changing landscape of race relations fits with the assumption that reality can never be perfectly understood and that "every scientific statement must remain tentative for ever" (Popper, 1959:280). Individuals have an interdependent relationship with their social categories such that the overall social structure can be altered over time; simultaneously, reflections on the membership of particular social categories may alter the behaviours of individuals (Marsh & Stoker, 2002). Therefore, it is important to also consider the social constructionist stance, as the views and

experiences of individuals dictate the nature of their constructed reality (Miller, 2007).

The resultant data from interviews provides a rich account of participants' experiences within particular contexts and how they responded to these situations. The use of these narratives is particularly useful in the interviews with participants from Black communities in North-East Wales, and gives a voice to participants from demographics that frequently go unheard (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). As the research questions were developed from engagement with literature, the salience of the theories discussed suggests that a deductive approach would be most appropriate for interpretation of the collected data (Tuckett, 2005). However, a hybrid approach will instead be taken, whereby an inductive approach is simultaneously deployed, so that interesting new information, that is not related to the theoretical framework informed by the literature review, can potentially emerge from the data.

Participants

This thesis forms an exploration of accounts relating to Black/White interracial relationships amongst residents of the North East Wales region, a geographic area where such a study has not taken place previously and increasing diversity of the local population raises the importance of conducting this type of inquiry. In order to ensure the views expressed were accurate representations of experiences from this region, only participants who were normally resident within the North East Wales region were selected to take part. Use of this geographic parameter helped to circumvent the issue, discussed by Kalsbeek (2000), regarding the dispersed nature of minority groups which can negatively impact when sampling amongst rare population groups. All those who did take part lived within a thirty-mile radius of the town of Wrexham.

Additional eligibility criteria were imposed whereby only participants identifying ethnically as White, or as Black (Caribbean, African, or other Black backgrounds) were considered. The rationale for this decision was based on evidence from literature that Black/White interracial pairings have historically been more

opposed than any other combination of racial or ethnic groups (Billingsley, 1992; Skinner & Hudac, 2017) and the extensive literature covering societal attitudes towards these particular interracial couples. Perspectives from both Black and White participants were deemed appropriate as they provide perspectives from ethnic backgrounds that form both 'origin groups' of the interracial pairings under investigation; an interesting contrast and comparison of the views from each group having been made previously by Childs (2005a; 2008) in the USA. The use of targeted sampling, the parameters of which have been discussed above, permitted easier access to these groups, particularly the Black groups, and created a sample population balanced on race (in the sense of a White/Black binary) and gender. The importance of this sampling strategy when exploring social phenomena amongst relatively inaccessible social groups (due to their small population in this case) has been discussed in literature (Watters & Biernacki, 1989). It is important to note that this sampling technique consequently led to a sample population amongst which 50% of the participants were Black. As such, this clearly does not form a representative sample of the local population, yet this would have been inappropriate to pursue given the very small ethnic minority population locally.

In addition to targeted sampling, that formed the foundation of the overall sampling strategy, snowball sampling was utilised to help identify additional suitable participants. This technique has been explored as a particularly useful method of gaining additional participants from rare population groups that may be difficult to access (Browne, 2005) and has previously been utilised successfully in recruiting participants to discuss views on interracial relationships (Craig-Henderson, 2006). This method was particularly useful among the local Black populations, as many of these participants tended to know most of the other Black people living in the area.

Beyond the controlled parameters discussed above, the sampling technique sought to capture as broad and diverse a range of experiences and thoughts on Black/White interracial relationships as possible. Therefore, no other factors others than race, gender, and residency were controlled for and a maximum variation sampling technique was utilised dynamically alongside the targeted and snowball-

sampling techniques. Making use of the maximum variation sampling method permitted the flexibility in decision-making about which factors should be varied (Sandelowski, 1995) and broadened the possible experiences and contexts that could be explored through augmenting diversity amongst the eligible participants (Suri, 2011).

An overall sample size of twelve participants was originally planned, with six representatives from the White category and six from the Black category. Both categories were bisected along gender lines, with three male and three female participants in each race category. An additional participant was included in the overall sample, as it was decided that the insights expressed provided a valid perspective against which contrasts and comparisons could be made. The participant also did not fit into one or other of the racial categories, as they identified as mixed race (White and Black Caribbean). This sample size was deemed most appropriate given the availability of time and resources with which to complete the study.

Demographic information for each of the individuals who form the final sample has been provided in Table 1, below. This will permit a better understanding of the sample profile and the positionality of each individual in relation to the research context and to one another's experiences. It should be noted that all participants have been assigned a pseudonym to ensure that their identity is protected in line with ethical principles.

Table 1

Participant Profile Information

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Type of Employment	Relationship Status	Previous Interracial Relationship?
Alan	45	Male	White	Student	Married (same race)	No
Alice	40	Female	Black	Nurse	Married (interracial)	No
Ben	24	Male	Black	Student	Dating (interracial)	Yes
Christine	42	Female	White	Administrator	Married (same race)	No
Danny	27	Male	White	Administrator	Dating (same race) (same sex)	Yes
Elin	22	Female	White	Student	Dating (same race)	No
James	40	Male	Black	Nurse	Married (same race)	No
Linda	36	Female	Mixed (Black/White)	Administrator	Married (interracial)	Yes
Mark	29	Male	White	Nurse	Married (same race)	No
Nina	34	Female	White	Student	Married (interracial)	No
Nuria	22	Female	Black	Student	Dating (interracial)	Yes
Peter	32	Male	Black	Administrator	Dating (same race)	No
Victoria	60	Female	Black	Nurse	Married (same race)	No

Research Context

As mentioned in the participants section, above, residence within a thirty-mile radius of Wrexham is an essential criterion for the selection of appropriate participants. This section will provide more general demographic information about the region and permitting a clearer understanding of the context within which this research takes place.

The county areas which form the North-East Wales region have particularly small numbers of residence from BAME backgrounds; Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire having minority racial populations of 2.2%, 1.6% and 3.4% respectively, and placing them amongst the least diverse counties in Wales as a whole (Welsh Government, 2019). The socio-economic profile of North-East Wales places the region somewhat below the national average; whereas 16.6% of the UK population work in low-skilled or elementary forms of employment, these figures were 17.2%, 22%, and 23.6% for Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham respectively (ONS, 2018). Politically, Wrexham has remained a Labour stronghold for an extended period,

having elected candidates from the party in every election since 1935 (UK Political Info, 2015). The results of the EU Referendum indicate that a majority (59%) of the electorate in Wrexham voted to leave the bloc (BBC, 2017).

Materials

Interviews were recorded with an Olympus VN-711 sound recorder to ensure all aspects of the interview could be reviewed during analysis. On completion of the interviews, text was transcribed into word processing software, supported by the use of NCH Express Scribe transcription sotfware (version 6.06). Transcripts were then uploaded and thematically analysed using Nvivo (version 11).

Procedure

Having agreed a mutually convenient time and location, participants were invited to take part in a semi-structured interview, lasting an average of 80 minutes (the shortest interview was completed within 37 minutes, whilst the longest was 161 minutes). The time and location for the interview was agreed with participants in advance of the interview, to ensure their experience was as comfortable and positive as possible. Involving participants in the decision-making process of where interviews will take place is important and a discussion of its impact in making individuals feel more comfortable and freely share their views and opinions has been made by Ellwood and Martin (2000). Most interviews took place in various locations on the main campus of Wrexham Glyndwr University, whilst a few took place in alternative locations, mutually agreed with participants in advance.

Before commencing the interview, participants were provided with an information sheet, summarising the study, its purpose, and what would be expected of them during their participation. Informed consent was gained from each participant and documented on consent forms. During this process, informal discussions took place with participants in order to help establish and build rapport in advance of commencing the interview (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Some participants took this opportunity to ask questions about the purpose of the study, as well as the researcher's motives for conducting such a study. This further augmented the

building of rapport and catered to ethical considerations, as transparent explanations of the researcher's interests in the area were offered and participants could better understand how their views and experiences may contribute towards the research. Careful consideration was made of the answers given to ensure that information disclosed would not be so detailed as to potentially bias or otherwise shape the answers participants may give to questions during the interview (Adams & Cox, 2008).

As part of the interview process, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions relating to their experiences of Black/White interracial relationships. Following the advice of Smith and Osborn (2003), the interview schedule was designed with broad, introductory questions at the beginning before moving onto more specific in-depth concepts towards the end of the interview. This permits participants to become more comfortable discussing their views about a particular topic before broaching more personal, or potentially controversial questions (Adams & Cox, 2008). Care was taken to ensure that all questions were as open as possible, prompting participants to provide rich descriptions of their experiences and opinions on particular topics. More restrictive, value-laden, or leading questions, which would result in limited responses (Adams & Cox, 2008; Smith & Osborn, 2003), were avoided to ensure the data collected would remain as detailed as possible. Where appropriate, such as in situations where participants answered a question vaguely, or where a new interesting topic was introduced, follow-up questions were utilised to further probe these topics. The nature of these probes were very unique to individual participants and dependent upon the direction in which their specific interview progressed. At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions, or to raise any additional topics that had not already been covered in the interview, that they felt were relevant.

Consent to the recording of discussions was obtained from all participants in advance of commencing interviews, in line with ethical considerations. The recording device utilised was particularly small, compact and unobtrusive, which helped to alleviate the risk of participants feeling intimidated by the prospect of the interview being recorded (Adams & Cox, 2008). Use of a sound recorder also ensured an

accurate record of the interview was made and permitted the researcher to give their full and undivided attention to listening to and probing the answers of respondents, without the distraction of note-taking (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). Audio files from completed interviews were transferred electronically to the researcher's laptop and saved in a secure location, backed-up to a secondary, and equally secure, location.

Limitations

At this point it is appropriate to identify several limitations of the study. Firstly, as a qualitative study, using a relatively small sample size (N=13), the results produced, whilst providing rich descriptive data on the experiences of participants, would not be generalisable to the broader racial/ethnic groups involved, or to the population of North-East Wales. Similarly, given the nature of the research topic, some individuals may have had a particular interest in the area which influenced their decision to take part; this is reflected in the fact that almost half (N=5) of the participants were in Black/White interracial relationships.

The background of the selected participants may also act as a limitation, as all participants were connected either with Glyndwr University (as members of staff, or students), or with healthcare professions within the North-East Wales region. Individuals from healthcare and higher education backgrounds tend to endorse more liberal and inclusive ideologies, so this could have potentially 'skewed' the data in some way (Berry, 2010; Kiersz & Walker, 2014).

Finally, the limitations presented by the researcher should be disclosed. Data collection and analysis have been approached with an open mind and onus placed on presenting the 'voice' of individual participants. However, it must be reflected upon, as a White male researcher, in a Black/White interracial relationship with a Black African woman, my experiences could potentially influence the interpretations of participants' accounts. Care should also be taken in the interpretation of accounts from Black participants, as despite remaining open and understanding of these participants experiences, it is not possible, as a White male, to experience the world from the perspective of a Black participant. In order to circumvent this, the analytical

approach towards the data was simultaneously inductive and deductive, placing the 'voice' of the participant at the centre of the process.

Data Analysis

The process of qualitative data analysis is concerned with organising raw collected data and creating order, structure and meaning from it (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). During this process researchers must proactively engage with the data collected, remaining flexible in their approach to emerging patterns and themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) and treating their engagement with transcripts with as much importance as the eventual outcomes (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). 'Immersion' in the collected data is cited as an important step in which the researcher familiarises themselves with the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002) and the themes that emerge from it. Recommendations have been made that the analytical process should commence from the beginning of the transcription process (Bird, 2005; Riessman, 1993), treating it as an interpretative process in its own right, rather than simply transforming spoken words into written transcripts (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Engagement with relevant literature at this stage is also recommended, given its potential to augment a researcher's sensitivity to more subtle themes that may be present within the data (Tuckett, 2005). Taking these assertions into consideration, the process of identifying important parts of dialogue from each interview was completed at the same time as audio files were transcribed, with notes collected in a journal that could be referred to during the rest of the analysis (Nowell, Morris, White & Moules, 2017). Engagement with literature at an early stage in the research process (the review of literature was completed before data collection took place) helped to form the research questions and aided the identification of nuances that appeared in the data.

Completed transcripts were imported into NVivo (version 11) for qualitative analysis. Bazeley (2007) recommends the use of this particular system and states that utilising computerised systems permits more thorough, methodical working and allows the researcher to give their full attention to the analytical process. Thematic analysis was chosen as the most appropriate for analysis of the data and to address the various research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) comprehensively highlight the accessibility and theoretical flexibility of thematic analysis and make a compelling argument for its use as a standalone methodology, providing a clear and auditable account of the process is provided (see also Nowell *et al*., 2017). Analyses of thematic analysis made by Braun and Clarke (2006) and by King (2004) argue that it is particularly appropriate in exploring the differing perspectives of research participants, with contrast and comparison, whilst also allowing potential new insights to emerge that were not originally anticipated by the researcher. Given the nature of this study in comparing the views of White and Black residents of North East Wales towards the prospect of Black/White interracial relationships and the intention to compare and contrast the overall findings with previous literature, thematic analysis was deemed appropriate. In selecting thematic analysis as a standalone analytical tool, a number of other methodologies were discounted. Narrative analysis was discounted early on, as participants were not providing an in-depth account of their past experiences with the phenomenon of Black/White interracial relationships, with links made to the overarching cultural context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Rather, participants were providing accounts of their experiences with a range of different aspects relating to the research topic and these accounts took more of a 'vignette' form, rather than detailed historical accounts. Ethnography was also eliminated as an appropriate methodology, as participants were not observed within their 'natural environment' (Brewer, 2000), and were rather invited to a neutral location for interviews to take place. Phenomenology was considered appropriate for a short period of time, as participants were describing their experiences relating to Black/White interracial relationships, which appeared to fit well with a phenomenological methodology (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Van Manen, 1990). After careful consideration, this methodology was also rejected, as participants were not exploring the phenomenon of Black/White interracial relationships in the level of depth appropriate for a phenomenological analysis. Experiences and attitudes were being shared about various broad ranging aspects of societal and personal responses to these types of relationships, covered by three separate research questions. Therefore, thematic

analysis as a standalone methodology was considered the most appropriate to identify common themes amongst these broad-ranging topics and condense the data into an appropriate form to address all the research questions.

Transcripts were carefully read line by line and codes developed from the data using a hybrid deductive and inductive approach, whereby statements, which were evident within the text (Thomas, 2003), were carefully analysed and elements of accounts that were similar in nature grouped together. This ensured the eventual themes identified from the data were strongly linked to the original data (Patton, 1990), confirming their reliability. Hybrid approaches, making use of both inductive and deductive approaches towards the same set of data, have been used previously and the case made that this combination of approaches provides additional rigour to a thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This also appraises the position that researchers can never truly approach data from a purely inductive standpoint, as the analysis rarely takes place without the influences of an overall epistemological assumption (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Within this study, some reference does need to be made towards the original research questions, as the topic of race, within any society, is a large and multi-faceted one (McCaffrey, 2008), however the importance of presenting a reliable account of the participants' views was considered of sufficient magnitude that the inductive approach was equally dominant in the development of codes as the deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Swain, 2018). The coding process, whereby statements that the researcher felt were relevant to the research topic were coded with descriptive labels, was approached in an iterative manner, whereby the emergence of new codes required the re-reading of transcripts to ensure that examples of the new coded phenomenon were not missed during previous readings. This cyclical, "back and forward", method was utilised until all transcripts were analysed fully and no further codes generated from the raw data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once coding of the original transcripts was completed, a careful analysis of the generated codes was made to determine whether any patterns emerged among them, or whether some codes could be collected under an overarching 'parent' code.

For example, codes such as ‘Food’, ‘Gender Roles’, and ‘Tradition’ were later collected under the parent code ‘Cultural factors’. This process occurred within two broad steps, the first of which was possible simply by reorganising codes within the NVivo programme to amalgamate related codes under new parent codes. However, the analysis reached a stage where the sorting of codes and development of themes was made more difficult by the linear nature in which NVivo lists coded items and a ‘distance’ was felt between the researcher and the context of the data, in a similar manner to the discussion by McLafferty and Farley (2006). At this point it was considered more helpful to create a thematic map (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by spreading out labels with the names of codes, and their definitions, printed on them and creating groups of related themes and an indication of how the emerging themes related to one another. These were documented with a series of photographs, both as a reflective record and a safety mechanism in case labels were accidentally displaced mid-analysis. The resulting thematic map was then drawn out in a computer software package to make it easier to interpret. At the end of this process, the range of codes developed into six overarching themes, which contained the information to address the research questions.

With six candidate themes developed, the next stage of the analysis was one of refining each individual theme through exploring the content of each, both in terms of codes and the associated excerpts of text, to ensure that data was adequate and detailed enough to support the proposed theme. Particularly useful here was Patton’s (1990) dual criteria of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity; ensuring that themes consisted of coherent data and that clear demarcations could be made between the data that formed separate themes. Some content within individual themes was reassessed as part of this process, but at the end of the analysis, the six distinct themes remained and a clearer picture began to emerge of the relationships between themes and their relation to the overall paradigm generated by the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Swain, 2018).

In the last stage of the analysis, the themes were further explored and refined to develop a definition for each, offering a description of the ‘essence’ of what they

actually are and the particular aspect of the data they captured and described. It is at this stage that important sub-themes were identified, adding an additional level of structure to larger and more complex themes, whilst simultaneously indicating any hierarchy of importance within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, it became clear that 'relationship mechanics' was an appropriate sub-theme within the 'culture' theme, as the relationship norms included within the sub-theme were influenced by individuals' culture. An important aspect of this stage is the establishment of definitions clearly summarising what individual themes included and did not include and, to test whether this state had actually been achieved, the recommendation of Braun and Clarke (2006) was implemented; the scope and content of each identified theme being encapsulated within a few sentences of descriptive text, recorded in a reflective journal for reference.

Reflexivity

Scholars agree that no research can ever be completely free from the biases, assumptions, and character of the researcher and we are not able to separate ourselves from activities we are intimately involved with (Sword, 1999). Therefore it is important that reflexivity is considered by the researcher; making an acknowledgement that the decisions and actions made during the research process have an impact upon the meaning and context of the results and outcomes (Horsburgh, 2003) and that this occurs continuously throughout the entire research process (Alvesson & Sköldburg, 2009). Berger (2015) suggests reflexivity be approached by gaining an understanding of the researcher's role in the generation of knowledge, carefully assessing how their personal biases and experiences impact their research, and ensure balance is maintained between the personal and the universal. Scholars agree this is a more complex process than simple reflection and involves evaluations of how we think about our experiences and how we conduct our research (Hibbert, Coupland & MacIntosh, 2010). Monitoring the effect of the researcher's positionality is argued to improve the accuracy and credibility of findings by taking account of the effect their assumptions and experiences can potentially have on research outcomes (Cutcliffe, 2003). Pillow (2003) asserts that this places researchers in a non-exploitative position, in relation to their research subjects,

circumventing some of the concerns regarding power dynamics between the researcher and the 'researched'. A number of authors expand on this point and state that this position helps to 'decolonise' the discourse of the researched 'other' as, despite the study findings always being interpreted through the cultural lens of the researcher, the resulting effects of this on the outcomes are always monitored (Frisina, 2006; Smith, 1999).

The positionality of the researcher can impact the overall research process in several ways; the first being the access to participants in the first place. Participants that perceive a researcher to have similar characteristics, or experiences, to themselves may be more willing to share their insights, as they perceive the researcher to be potentially sympathetic to their situation (De Tona, 2006). Personal characteristics such as gender and race can also similarly affect the researcher-participant relationship, impacting on the extent and depth of information individuals may be willing to share (Berger, 2015). The researcher's background and perceptions of the world are deemed to have an impact on their use of language, the manner in which interview questions are posed, and the theoretical position taken when analysing findings; all of which influence the shaping of outcomes and conclusions made (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006).

As a White, male researcher, these considerations could have made interpretation of accounts from Black participants more precarious, due to the differences between the researcher and participants along the lines of ethnicity and culture (and gender, in the case of Black female participants). However, my personal background, as someone who is interracially married to a West African woman, has travelled to West Africa, and has extensively experienced West African cultural norms and behaviours, helps to partially circumvent some of these issues. Disclosing this information to all participants, usually during the informal discussions prior to the interviews, helped to clarify my position in relation to the research topic and, in the case of Black participants, helped in building rapport. This was especially the case with Black participants who were West African, as they felt more at ease speaking to a researcher who had some understanding of their background and its cultural

nuances. A number of personal experiences outside of research have clarified this phenomenon to me and West Africans readily accept westerners who have experiences with their particular countries and peoples, bestowing upon such persons a position as 'honorary' member of their particular in-group, frequently utilising familial terms in the process. An example of this ready acceptance into African cultures after intermarriages, albeit from Kenya rather than West Africa, is discussed by Njoroge (2011). Whilst this knowledge may have been advantageous in interviews with African participants, appraisal is made that this would have been inappropriate in interviews with Black participants from other backgrounds, such as those identifying with Black Caribbean, or Black British identity and, therefore, additional care would need to be taken in conducting these interviews and analysing the resultant data.

Possessing 'insider' knowledge about particular groups has been cited as offering a number of advantages in qualitative research; access to participants becomes somewhat easier, and the researcher possesses some prior knowledge relating to the research topic, and a better understanding of the more nuanced responses to questions that participants from these groups may provide (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006; Padgett, 2008). Despite these advantages, care must be taken to ensure there is a balance between using familiarity to better understand participants' perspectives, without imposing the researcher's experiences upon them (Pillow, 2003). Daly (1992) argues that familiarity which brings the researcher and the researched into too close a proximity runs the risk of some insights being overlooked, due to either assumptions being made by participants about the extent of the researcher's 'insider' knowledge, or by the researcher taking similarities for granted and missing more implied pieces of information. With a view to minimising the effect of this phenomenon, care was taken throughout the data collection process in listening attentively to the answers participants gave to all questions, and where responses were vague, or stated in indirect terms, clarification was sought through the use of additional probing questions or prompts.

In addition to the strategies discussed above, a reflective journal was kept throughout the data collection, transcription, and analysis stages of the study to record relevant thoughts, decisions, and interpretations, as recommended by Smith (1999). This provided a constant monitoring and 'self-supervision' of positionality and enhances the validity and reliability of the study by providing an audit trail of interpretations and analytical decisions.

Methodological Quality

In assessing the quality of this research it was deemed appropriate to scrutinise the research process through the lens of three principles suggested by Yardley (2000). The first of these tenets states the importance of possessing a sensitivity to the context in which the research takes place. This has been achieved through extensively consulting literature, from multidisciplinary sources and from a number of different inflexions, that discuss societal attitudes towards Black/White interracial relationships, as well as the psychological, sociological, political, and historical influences that have shaped such perceptions. The research questions were developed from the most commonly occurring themes within this literature and therefore also influenced the nature of the questions formed during the construction of the interview schedule. Further sensitivity to context has been exhibited by making use of detailed extracts from participants' accounts to support the conclusions that are drawn; these extracts not only evidence the inductive nature of the analysis which took place, but also provide useful reflexive evidence, as the participants' accounts clearly support the presented findings. Triangulation was utilised in the presentation of participants' accounts, ensuring that evidence to support conclusions was drawn from multiple interviews and linked back to examples in the literature, thereby avoiding 'anecdotalism' and enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

The second of Yardley's principles discusses commitment, rigour, transparency, and cohesion. Commitment is demonstrated by an extended engagement with the research process and material, evidenced in this case by the detailed, in-depth interviews that took place with all participants (lasting an average of 80 minutes), providing participants the opportunity to present detailed discourses

on their experiences with the research topic. Areas of uncertainty were almost always probed by follow-up questions to ensure the experiences discussed were clearly conveyed to and understood by the researcher. At the end of each interview, participants were asked whether they wished to discuss any other relevant topics which may have come to mind; none of the participants presented any new experiences and most agreed that they had discussed a large number of issues during the interview process. The rigour of this study has been supported by the earlier discussion, describing the rationale for the selection of the sample and why it was deemed most appropriate to answer the research questions. It is further supported by evidence of the thoroughness of the analysis, whereby a state of theoretical saturation (lack of new themes emerging from the data) occurred towards the latter stages (Seale, 1999). Coherency and transparency have been achieved through the clear and systematic description of the research process, such that another researcher could replicate the study with a similar sample and in a similar context. Whilst this study can indeed be replicated, it must be clearly stated here that the ontological assumptions underlying the research, namely that reality is interpreted within the minds of individuals, suggests that the perceptions and experiences of the individual are fundamentally unique to them, despite any broad similarities they may share with others. Therefore, it would not be expected that the results of this study could be generalised to the whole population of North-East Wales, nor to any of the particular ethnic groups included in this study. They do however provide valuable accounts of the research topic from the perspectives of the individuals who took part.

The third and final aspect of Yardley's model is concerned with the impact and importance of the research findings. Whilst the results of a qualitative study such as this are impossible to generalise to whole populations, they provide a valuable insight into the experiences and perceptions of the participants and contribute to the knowledge-base of research into interracial intimacy. Sedlacek and Brooks (1970) stated that, due to the ever-changing nature of the social context, it is important to ensure studies into racial attitudes remain contemporary in order for them to be of worth, especially given the rapidity with which social relations can change. Viewed alongside the findings of other scholars, who have reported various incidences of

racism against minority groups, especially in the more rural areas of Wales, and the strategies adopted in attempts to negate the offensive character of racist incidents that do occur (Robinson, 2003; Robinson & Gardner, 2006), the outcomes of such a study would be particularly useful in building a picture of racial attitudes in the North-East Wales region. This is especially true in light of Childs' (2008) assertion that attitudes towards interracial couplings can provide an indication of broader societal attitudes towards minority groups generally and contradicts the mythical construction of Wales as a tolerant country that consistently offers a warm welcome to people from all backgrounds, races, and cultures (Evans, O'Leary, & Williams, 2015).

Chapter Five - Results

In forming answers to the three research questions that emerged from a review of literature surrounding attitudes towards Black/White interracial relationships, six overarching themes were developed. These overarching themes consisted of a combination of related sub-themes, which will be discussed in detail in discrete sections. The major themes were Lack of Contact, Contact, Positive Views, Negative Views, Culture, and Colour-Blindness. A full thematic map can be viewed in Appendix E. The first and second of these themes provide useful insights addressing the first research question; whether participants accounts suggested a greater or smaller social distance between Black and White people in North East Wales and how this may affect attitudes towards intermarriage. The third and fourth themes provide accounts facilitating discussion of the second research question; namely whether there are accounts of overt and subtle forms of racism relating to Black/White interracial relationships being expressed in North-East Wales. The fifth theme addresses the final research question; whether people in North East Wales perceive the phenomenon of social exchange, or status marrying, to be taking place in relationships between Black and White people. The sixth theme that emerged, Colour-Blindness, does not relate directly to the research questions, but provides numerous examples where participants expressed colour-blind ideology, or a de-emphasis of race in discussions about interracial relationships. This de-emphasis undermines the racial element of racist discrimination and creates perceptions that racial disadvantage is attributable to the shortcomings of specific groups, rather than as a result of structural racist discrimination. The potential insidiousness of these ideologies therefore makes their identification particularly important.

Lack of Contact

This theme focusses on the relative lack of racial and ethnic diversity in North East Wales compared to other parts of the UK and how this limits opportunities, particularly for White people, to engage with Black people. The lack of diversity was particularly stark for participants who had experience of living in more multicultural parts of the UK, such as Alan (a 45-year-old White Male), who described the surprise

experienced moving to the Wrexham area and finding it to be such a racially homogeneous location:

> And I don't know if you're aware of [East Midlands city], but its been multicultural for generations… So to be around that area and then come to North Wales in the nineties was a shock… Because, at that time, Wrexham was very White.

He goes on to explain that this is particularly characteristic of the area and diversity is only just starting to increase in the Wrexham area:

"The diversity is not here and that has always been a characteristic of Wrexham… And that's why I would argue that it's in its early stages of having different cultures here."

Alan was particularly knowledgeable in this regard, as he had not only spent many years living in the Wrexham area, but had also lived and worked in several large metropolitan UK cities, where there was a much greater level of racial and ethnic diversity. His observations were echoed by other White participants, such as Christine (a 42-year-old White female), who had spent her majority of her life in the North-East Wales region. She described the lack of diversity of her school environment whilst growing up in the area:

"Erm, where I grew up, it was very, very White. It wasn't until… junior school where erm, er, is it mixed race? A mixed-race young man was introduced to the community, which was very White British."

The lack of diversity was not limited to her youth and she described its continuation through to her years as a young adult:

"So, where I live, where I've grown up, even when I was in university it was very White."

The perceived lack of people from ethnic minorities observed by White participants, unsurprisingly, was repeated in accounts of how frequently they see Black/White interracial couples in their respective communities. Several White participants described these types of couples as a particularly uncommon sight in North-East Wales. For example, when Danny (27-year-old White male) was asked how frequently he saw Black/White interracial couples in his community; he stated they were:

"Not very common actually for me, no. Not common."

Mark (29-year-old White male) also felt that Black/White couples were a rare sight in his neighbourhood and the presence of a minority person alone would be particularly noticeable. When asked how common a sight Black/White couples were in his community, he said:

"Not very common at all. Erm, where I live in particular erm, its uncommon enough that you notice if someone of a different skin colour [was present]."

Nina (34-year-old White female) lived in a small village in North East Wales with her African husband and, having moved from a large metropolitan city with rich racial and ethnic diversity, described the relative dearth of Black/White couples locally:

"Very, very unlikely. I think there is only one couple that er, we know, and [neighbour's name] is originally from [village of residence], where we are living now."

The very small population of Black and minority ethnic groups residing in the North East Wales region was an observation not made exclusively by White participants and was also an experience conveyed by several Black participants. Peter (32-year-old Black male) had moved to the UK from Africa and had served in the armed forces, as well as a number of administrative roles, and found that his

regiment in the army was quite undiverse and this was something that also extended to broader civilian life:

"Er, not many, er, ethnic minorities live around here, so, mostly friends from the army are all Welsh and White..."

The lack of people from similar racial backgrounds led some to feel they were the only Black person in most of the locations and social situations they found themselves; Ben (24-year-old Black male), who had moved to the area from Africa with his family at a young age, growing up and schooling in the local region, describes such an experience:

"Because of course, er, [town south of Wrexham] and [adjacent village] is, doesn't have that many Black people around and, plus, I have grown up in this area just being the only Black person everywhere I have gone..."

This phenomenon was common to the discourses of several other Black participants too; James (40-year-old Black male) worked locally as a registered nurse and moved to the region, from Africa, with his wife and children more than ten years ago. He stated:

"I used to think I was the first Black here! You understand? When I came to town, when I was in [North Shropshire village] I came into town and couldn't see any Black person."

Peter described a similar experience and suggested the lack of diversity might discourage other Black people from visiting the area:

"Y'know, its a very nice town, but [Black people] don't want to come because, because town, the sight of walking in town and you are the only Black person and they walk and you don't see any other person..."

This feeling of unease was not limited solely to Black participants; Linda (36-year-old Mixed race female), who was of a mixed White British and Black Caribbean background, had been born and had grown up in the region and was very knowledgeable on the experience of Black and minority people in the local communities. She also expressed having experienced these feelings of unease during her youth:

> I did feel, y'know, there were some times that we felt a little bit odd. I suppose as a teenager you're growing up, you're aware. In college, you're growing up and aware that you're literally the only different coloured face, y'know.

Despite creating a feeling of isolation for some, the lack of diversity had a more ambiguous effect in other arenas. Alice (40-year-old Black female) had moved to North-East Wales from Africa and had been married to her White husband for more than ten years. She had one child from her marriage and had been living for some time in a small local town that had particularly low racial diversity. She spoke about the very small numbers of Black people living in her community, yet all those present were interracially married to White people, suggesting that the social distance, in their individual cases at least, must have been relatively small:

"...there is not many Blacks, it was only myself… three Blacks and though all three are married to White men."

Alice's experience appears somewhat anomalous, however, as when the participants were asked about the diversity of their social circles, accounts suggested that very few had acquaintances or close relations with anyone outside their own racial group. Danny's response to this question seemed ambiguous and he rephrased his answer part-way through as he seemed reluctant to admit that his social group was undiverse. When asked whether he knew many people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to his own, he said:

"Y-yes I do, [sighs], not, not a lot, but there were erm, er, I've got er, a couple of school friends, well not friends, that I was in school with."

Elin (22-year-old White female) had been born in North-East Wales and was a student at the local university; she was more direct in her response to the question regarding the diversity of her friendship group:

"Yeah. Erm, not very diverse at all to be honest."

Mark expressed the perception that social factors created more diversity within his social group than compared with racial differences:

"I'd say [my social circle] is socially quite diverse, erm, but racially not very diverse at all."

A similar account was provided by Black participants, with James providing the following response to the question about the diversity of his social circle:

"It depends on if its Blacks or Whites. Erm, which is Whites, very limited, so erm, no just a small. But if its Blacks, yes, I'd say its large."

Ben was the only participant to state he had few friends from his own racial group, though this may be attributable to his local upbringing, where there were few opportunities to encounter other Black people. He said:

"I would rather just speak to older people and its like where, race, I only have two Black friends, but otherwise the rest of them are just White friends."

These accounts suggest social distance remains quite large between White and Black people in North East Wales and there is little meaningful contact between the two groups. This lack of contact appears to influence a secondary phenomenon, in which numerous participants, both White and Black, referred to political

correctness and concerns over appropriate racial terminology to deploy in contemporary society; this was particularly true in the case of those with mixed racial heritage. Concerns such as these may further compound the lack of contact between groups, as the potential to inadvertently offend someone, by using incorrect terminology, may discourage interaction with individuals from other groups completely. Participants expressed uncertainty in several ways:

> I'm always very wary of what to say, because you don't want to upset people and because… you know, there's political correctness and, like, when my Dad was brought up terminology that was used then was very different to the terminology that is in use today! (Christine).

"...I can imagine that might transfer through to if they had children, who are mixed race or… I'm not sure of the politically correct name..." (Elin).

"...White middle-class don't seem to have a problem, or at least they would never dare say there was a, they had anything against someone of a, a Black person, or people of colour, however you're supposed to describe them nowadays." (Mark).

"To be honest its quite complicated because these days we're so different, and you're always so scared to say something wrong about someone who's different, you don't want to use the wrong word." (Nuria).

Overall, the lack of contact between Black and White people in the region was quite common both within participants' superficial and intimate social interactions; as discussed above, several individuals stated they had very few or no friends and acquaintances from different racial groups to their own and in some cases this created an uncertainty about how best to describe and interact with people from outside their own group.

Contact

This theme is concerned with experiences that are somewhat the opposite of those discussed above. Positive contacts with out-groups were mentioned by several participants as important prerequisites for positive attitudes and for broader and more accepting world views. These participants had more diverse social circles and felt the diversity of North East Wales was beginning to increase as more people from different backgrounds move into the area. One result of this increasing diversity, and increasing acceptance, was that intimate interracial relationships between Black and White people were perceived to be increasingly common and particularly prevalent amongst the younger generation and among Black people who have moved to the region. Interracial relationships were described as positive learning experiences for both partners and have the particularly powerful effect of increasing the White partner's awareness of, and sensitivity to racism faced by their Black partner within North East Wales society.

Having alluded to the lack of diversity in the Wrexham area, Alan mentioned the importance of having grown up in a very multicultural area as a strong influence in his inclusive views on race:

> ...in [East Midlands city] when I was growing up. I think we were exposed to more culture than Wrexham, erm, we obviously saw people from different ethnic groups, even if I didn't have family there of different ethnic groups that they base in the likes of [East Midlands city], we'd go to their stores to buy the different foods, we'd go to their shops, taste different meals.

Interactions with people from different groups who have moved into the locality were appraised as enriching experiences by some, with Christine recalling interactions with a Muslim student at the local university:

"...we used to sit and chat for ages about his religion and what he was doing at the university and it was interesting to learn those different things, you know."

A similar sentiment was expressed by Elin in her experiences meeting other people during the annual International Eisteddfod, where performers from around the world congregate to share music and song:

> ...I went to school in [town in North Wales] and we used to get involved with the Eisteddfod and things like that quite a lot, so… I was kind of used to the whole culturally diverse and all that kind of thing.

Given the limited racial and ethnic diversity of the local region, several participants highlighted the impact that international travel had on changing perceptions of other cultures and how this frequently changed individual's perspectives of people and places for the better:

"...my Dad went travelling as well and erm, probably educated him seeing the world and wasn't confined to one place erm, so yeah, I think its about educating and seeing the world from outside your village." (Danny).

> ...and then once the person goes there, then the person's mentality starts to change, you say, 'Oh God, I didn't know it was like this!'. I had a girl from my work side who went to [West African country] and came back and she wants to go again! She's asking what are we doing here!? (James).

"...people who've travelled, they have just like, the different view; they're more, they don't have the set mind on things. They're more open minded to explore." (Nina).

The comments above indicate travelling and experiencing different cultures has a profound positive effect on the traveller's world view and their acceptance of various out-groups they meet in the process. Nuria (22-year-old Black female) was a student at the local university and had extensive experience in this regard, having lived both in Africa and in several European countries during her upbringing. She was currently in an interracial relationship with her boyfriend, who came from another European country. She expanded upon the point made concerning travel experiences,

explaining that growing up in a different country helps to normalise interactions between different groups and, with time, makes more intimate relations between groups equally unremarkable:

> ...our parents they took us from Africa to Europe for a better life and etcetera, so we grew up meeting and knowing all these people with different backgrounds. So now that we are like, in the age I would say to get married, or to have a proper relationship… we end up seeing that none of us is interest with someone from our original country.

In the previous section, participants discussed the lack of diversity characteristic of the local region; yet discourses also featured the recognition that this is gradually changing as more groups arrive and settle in the area. This was noticed particularly by participants who were people of colour:

"...I think its lately that I see a lot of Blacks. When I came here first, I remember people were looking at me, you understand?" (James).

"I think there's a lot more [Black people] in the community, obviously there's a lot still of Black families, but there's so much more than when I moved here in 1993." (Linda).

"There are quite a number [of Black/White couples] these days. Its only that its a small community in [town south of Wrexham], but there are quite a number of people whom I see Black and White, you know." (Victoria).

Despite the stated increases in diversity locally, the voices of White participants were relatively absent in accounts relating to social circles featuring richer diversity and this was something reserved, somewhat unsurprisingly, given local population dynamics, to Black participants:

"...I've got people from [East Asian country], y'know, people from [another East Asian country] and also those from Wales, so its quite diverse really." (James).

"...a lot [of friends from different racial/ethnic groups] as well. I would say, and my closest friend, we must be only two from the same country; and then the rest is from different countries." (Nuria).

"Yes, in this country, yes, I've met quite a lot of people from different groups." (Victoria).

The increase in contact between Black and White groups locally led some participants to feel that intimate relationships between individuals from the two groups were becoming increasingly common. White participants were less likely to be aware of local Black/White couples, but tended to express the sentiment that relationships of this type were more common amongst younger people:

"...I'd expect to see maybe more younger, or middle-aged relationships with that, rather than old ones..." (Elin).

"...it seems like I know so few [Black/White couples] on reflection, its just younger people I suppose." (Mark).

"...my perception is that it would be the younger generation that… would have interracial relationships because of my perception of the older generation and how… the few experiences I've had of the older generation has been negative." (Danny).

This was not, however, a sentiment expressed exclusively by White participants and Black interviewees also felt that interracial relationships were more prevalent among the youth:

"...interracial relationships would exist more, to me, in my opinion, in younger people, because at the end of the day, we're just more ready to explore." (Ben).

"Its young people, open-minded people… people who doesn't see the colour..." (Nuria).

Not everyone agreed that interracial relationships were a phenomenon reserved for the younger people of Britain today. Some felt that relationships between Black and White people are occurring across a broader range of age demographics:

> ...you'll go there and you'll see what I would consider probably first-generation immigrants, which in [East Midlands city] was originally the Caribbean countries, before any other, they were the first generation to come in and you'll see what are now 78-year-old [Black] men married to 78-year-old White women. So, no, I can't see that age really has an impact in that particular environment. (Alan).

"Ages? Oh, I think of this intermarriage, I think these days its all ages." (Victoria).

Age was not the only factor participants felt influenced the prevalence of Black/White interracial relationships. Accounts from exclusively Black interviewees highlighted the feeling that intimate relationships of this type were particularly common amongst people from their own racial and ethnic groups:

"So for the Blacks, people that I know, that were living in [town in central North Wales], all had White husbands." (Alice).

"So the Black guys I know, they are all dating White girls." (Ben).

"...even in Wrexham I think… there's probably like… ten Black girls there, but they're all in interracial relationships..." (Ben).

"A lot [of Black/White couples]! Especially in my age! My Mom's generation I will say one in a million, but in my age its a lot!" (Nuria).

"...out of my Mum and her two siblings, they've all got, they're all mixed partners and then all of the kids, we've all married White… husbands, wives, so they're all mixed..." (Linda).

Several participants, some already in interracial relationships, and some who had experienced them vicariously, explained that intimate relationships, especially between different cultures, were helpful in bringing groups closer. The understanding and appreciation of a worldview experienced through the lens of another culture, and the reciprocal sharing of culture between the individuals involved gives a new facet to interracial relationships; presenting them as valuable learning experiences. In some cases, this was described as an exciting chance to experience something completely new, whilst an intimate relationship develops:

"...with my boyfriend, for example, I'm always getting to know new things, its amazing! And then you end up always finding something that its so similar to the way you [do things]..." (Nuria).

> Its an exchange of culture… because when a Black person goes out with a White person they change cultures, they swap, and so you get to taste the food, you get to go to their country… and you get to see how they live life. (Ben).

It was also presented as helping to make relationships more interesting and apparently less mundane than a co-ethnic relationship:

"[interracial relationships] kind of gives you… something to be working on, something to be talking about; things are not boring, you're continuously learning something different." (Nina).

Interracial relationships were also discussed as setting a precedent for more acceptance from the host [White] society, smoothing the process of integration, and

reducing the narrow-minded viewpoint that some people have concerning out-groups:

"...the more other people who marry Black girls, or Black men marrying Whites, the more that integration and more people understand each others' culture, and then accept each other and integrate properly." (James).

"...the more people… had encounters with Caribbean people they understood, so I suppose its educational, there should be more Black mixed-race relationships just to improve everyone's Brexit dumbness, we'll do that and everyone will be a bit more clever." (Linda).

An important facet of this educational experience was the tendency for White spouses and intimate others of Black participants to become more sensitive to and aware of incidences of racism and ignorance towards other cultures. In Nuria's case, she and her boyfriend experienced several racist comments whilst on holiday where both White and Black people expressed disdain and opposition towards their relationship. Whilst Nuria could dismiss most of these comments fairly easily (having had, like most Black people, extensive experiences with racism throughout her life), it was not as simple for her boyfriend, who was gaining his first experience receiving this kind of abuse and found it quite uncomfortable:

> ...for example, my boyfriend, this was the first time this happened to him; he's 23 years old. For a person with 23 years old seeing all that and feeling that, he end up saying actually, 'Now I do understand a little bit of, like, what Black people are saying these days', and I say, 'Yeah. What you felt today some people have feel their whole life!'.

Alice was another African woman who had married a local White man and spoke about the knowledge her husband gained from their experiences travelling to her country of origin and seeing that many of the classic stereotypes about Africa were inaccurate and unfounded. This armed him with the knowledge and experience,

upon returning to Britain, to challenge narrow-minded and bigoted views others express towards Africa, its peoples, and cultures:

> ...a lot of people are ignorant. Because, sometimes, my husband will say some people think that still, in Africa, we live on trees. They believe we stay in mud huts. [He] said, 'No, you guys are ignorant, you don't know what you're talking about!'.

Negative Views

The Negative Views theme was large and complicated, consisting of multiple sub-themes exploring oppositional attitudes towards out-group members and to intimate relationships between individuals from different racial and ethnic groups. Examples of overt racism were discussed here, as well as more subtle forms of discrimination and racism that were indirect, or colour-blind in nature. Experiences of opposition towards intimate relationships between Black and White people were also discussed in this section, along with perceived sources and motivations for this opposition. Among White people, opposition was perceived most likely to originate from family members, particularly the older generation, of an individual potentially entering a relationship with a Black person. On the other hand, opposition from Black people was characterised by worries concerning the erosion of culture and traditions (particularly amongst African respondents), or resentment towards White people due to the history of enslavement and the resulting discrimination that has continued to the present.

Alan made a comparison between his experiences in cities in the North of England and his time in the Wrexham area and felt that, despite the lack of diversity in the former, there was less overtly expressed bigotry in that area than he had observed in North East Wales:

> ...comments weren't made about ethnicity, even in [North-East city], because it is a bit of a backwater… But you never used to hear the comments there

> that you hear in Wrexham… And there are rather a lot of bigoted views in Wrexham.

Mark works as a nurse at one of the local hospitals and described a similar picture of narrow-mindedness amongst people he had come across as part of his work within a busy local healthcare setting. Service users frequently held very negative and sometimes hostile views towards his Black colleagues, and he described an unspoken expectation from these individuals that his views, as their racial in-group fellow, should concur with their own:

> ...you see it with patients on the ward… quite a racist outlook towards some of the Black agency nurses and things, which is concerning because they will say something expecting you to respond in like and… well, no, that's not on!

When Danny was asked about the feelings of people within his village towards Black/White couples, he felt that race was the most salient factor in people's, typically negative, views and the presence of a minority person *per se* would be the main point of consternation for local people, overshadowing the fact that the person may or may not be in an interracial relationship:

"...the people in my village… it wouldn't be that it was an interracial couple, it would be the fact that there was a Black person, it would be… more racial than about the [interracial relationship]..."

The salience of race for the local White population was not lost upon Black people who had moved into the area and accounts are given of bigoted views they have come across during their time living in the region. The negativity in this case focusses on perceptions of superiority that local Whites feel over Black people and that the newcomers are either lacking in intelligence, sophistication, or that they are simply of a lower class and can be looked down upon:

"When they see a Black with a [White person)… Black woman or Black man… or whichever way, some of the people they tend to look down upon them..." (Victoria).

> I think its all down to the family really. The way they've been brought up and what they've been told about Black people… Because some people think that Black people don't have, y'know, sense… Black people are daft. That's what some people think. (Alice).

Bigoted views are potentially damaging to interracial relationships, especially in their early and more fragile stages. Nina described the first few occasions she met the man who is now her husband and described the way in which her peers teased her about the relationship, making use of stereotypes about Black men; particularly views of them as dangerous, violent and criminal. This was enough to put doubts in her mind about whether her husband would be a suitable partner:

> ...I didn't want to go out with him and my friends were making horrible jokes that erm, he is most probably a drug dealer because of the way that he dressed, with his trousers being pulled down a bit at the back.

Fortunately, overt forms of prejudice and discrimination were relatively rare, and several Black participants stated they had experienced very few incidences of this behaviour in North East Wales; with some mentioning they had no experiences with this at all. However, not all forms of racism observed were overt; various incidences of more subtle racism were divulged as interviews progressed. Behaviours interpreted as subtly racist included staring at a minority person, or mixed couple, disparaging comments made covertly between two or more observers, or subtle negative changes in social interactions. Instances of subtle forms of hostility were described by both White and Black participants:

"Some people will be looking at you strangely, y'know. Or some people will be whispering, but you wouldn't hear what they are saying, but you would definitely know that… some sort of communication is going on there about you..." (Alice).

> ...we do notice sometimes, if I go somewhere with my Mum's friend, she's obviously Black, and I do notice certain people will sit there and you can tell they change their behaviour and I can't say for certain that that's why they change it, but you usually have an inkling if it is. (Elin).

"...I expect it would be… under their breath, 'Oh, look at that!', if there was to be an unease, or a prejudice, a negative prejudice anyway." (Mark).

Nina described the change in social interactions observed when peers first realised she was interracially married to an African man:

"I came across… I don't want to say people dismissing me… as they found out that my husband is an African, their perception about me changes immediately."

When asked to confirm exactly how their behaviour changed in these instances, she said:

"...they're not any more interested in anything that I have to say… because they will say you always have this different point of view."

In some of the experiences discussed, subtle racist behaviour took the form of probing questions, which sought to try and corroborate stereotyped perceptions that individuals held relating to interracial couples, or subtly made a point of a minority person's 'otherness' and made the suggestion they perhaps did not belong in the local area:

"...when people used to ask me about my heritage they'd ask me in the most like indirect way, 'So... where are you from?'" (Linda).

"They ask these innocent questions [about interracial couples] because… they don't know and they don't think before they ask, they just ask." (Nuria).

"I had someone ask me is my husband an Islamist? Which I could not even kind of understand the thinking… I didn't know if she was asking me about terrorism, or is she asking me about Islam?" (Nina).

The example given by Nina, above, provides an interesting example of typically colour-blind strategies employed by White people when making enquiries of this type; her husband's status as a Muslim man is utilised in place of his race to more indirectly highlight their view that an interracial relationship is unusual and, in this case, perhaps perceived as threatening. This was not the only example of colour blind racism that became apparent during the interviews and an account was given by Linda, from her family history, in which a White relative was disowned by their parents for the transgression of entering a relationship with a Black man. Despite this, in later years they were able to happily live next door to a Black couple without any issue yet had still not communicated with their estranged daughter. Race was allegedly unimportant to them, until it became an intimate issue for their children:

> ...they've got Black neighbours, there's Black people in the community… the neighbours have remarked effectively to my Auntie that there's no issues there and I bet they would be shocked that they… cut off their daughter twenty years because she went out with a Black man and she hasn't met their grandchildren; they haven't even met their grandchildren.

Another account of colour-blind racialised thought came from Mark. This seemed unusual, as throughout the interview process he repeatedly expressed a very liberal and accepting outlook, had no qualms with interacting with people from any racial or ethnic background, and had no objections towards interracial relationships and marriages. However, he effectively made the admission that any prejudices he may have had against anyone were grounded more in cultural differences rather than race specifically. The de-emphasis of race as an indicator of difference and the increased salience of culture instead, indicates a classic example of colour-blind

racism. Mark expressed the following when asked whether he would feel differently towards Black/White interracial couples if either of the partners were from overseas:

> Maybe you'd see more of a difference if you had a very westernised Black person, you probably wouldn't in general conversation, or you happened to be doing things with the couple, because they're just you in a different skin colour… whereas I think if they're from overseas, White or Black, you're probably going to come across things just because of the cultural difference. So you might treat them differently because, from more of a cultural perspective, I don't think it would change.

He went on to say:

"I think probably my prejudices are more cultural than they are skin colour, if I had to think about it."

Some of the hostilities described were directed towards Black/White couples specifically, or towards the prospect of them occurring. Whilst every participant in the study almost exclusively expressed their approval for and comfort with interracial relationships, a number described actual experiences, or potential for disapproval to be shown towards them in the local region, both from White and Black communities. White opposition tended to be characterised by an aversion towards accepting Black people into the family group; members of White families being identified as one of the main barriers towards these relationships. Alan felt the White population of Wrexham would have particularly strong reservations about relationships between White and Black people:

"...I can only go on assumptions of what I would assume to happen and the people I know would be very negative. Very negative."

He felt that local people would be very doubtful of the feasibility of an interracial relationship and would actively interrogate and problematise various facets of the relationship:

> ...but here I think people would ask, why are you marrying outside your culture? Why is that relationship going on? How is it going to affect your children later on? I can imagine those sort of questions being asked locally, again, due to the very nature of this particular area.

These suggestions are not completely without foundation and several Black participants gave accounts corroborating Alan's expectations:

"...if you look at our community here, its a farming community, so I think a lot of people will have mixed reaction because of the level of education." (James).

"...and White people they were looking at me and you could listen to them… and they was thinking 'What is she doing with this [White] boy?' and all 'Oh, my God!'". (Nuria).

"...some people sees you as from a different planet! So for them to accept you as the same as they are, some people, its a bit difficult for them." (Alice).

Opposition to interracial relationships from family members was discussed by several participants as one of the greatest barriers towards the establishment and ongoing maintenance of these relationships. Some participants' accounts discussed this from a more general viewpoint:

"...the fear of not being accepted as well, that's a barrier to just, like, to not be accepted by a family, of you to do that… so the family would be one definite, big, big, huge barrier." (Ben).

Mark expanded on this point and confirmed that it would be more difficult to face opposition from family members in comparison to opposition from society, which could be more easily disregarded:

> I thought maybe the barriers would come first from family… because society is kind of irrelevant, if there's no legal barrier, society's almost irrelevant because you can isolate yourself enough from society for it to not matter to you. Its hard to do so with family without cutting yourself off.

A number of perspectives placed the source of familial opposition more frequently with White families:

"I think the barriers are the opposition from each other's families, which I said already, will be from the White backgrounds..." (James)**.**

"I can imagine that some… White people might think, 'oh, what's my family going to think?' in terms of the older generation and might be a bit apprehensive..." (Danny)**.**

"I think that, the White… its not the lady or man would not want to be in that relationship, but it would be the pressure from the family, giving advice and saying 'are you sure?'" (Peter)**.**

However, others felt opposition could equally originate from Black families as it could from White families:

"They can face [opposition] from the in-laws. Both ways. They could be the African in-laws, or it could be the English in-laws..." (Victoria)**.**

With a picture established where White families were perceived to be more opposed to the acceptance of interracial relationships in their family groups, participants expanded upon this and specifically stated that the older members of these families were the most likely to oppose interracial unions:

"And there are rather a lot of bigoted views in Wrexham… particularly some of the people I know, of a more older generation" (Alan).

"...there was a girl I was seeing and she said that her grandfather was racist. I mean it would be expected, because obviously the generation where he comes from." (Ben).

"...where I live there's a lot of older generations and… I could imagine they could have a different view than I would." (Danny).

"I know some people possibly feel that [older] generation tend to be a little bit racist perhaps." (Elin).

Interviewer: "...what age groups do you think are more opposed to [interracial relationships]?"
Nuria: "Forties, fifties; its getting old"

Additional comments from Ben gave some insight into his perception of why people of this generation are more opposed to interracial unions, and attributes this opposition to their socialisation during a period in the UK when relationships of this type were more restricted and seen as taboo:

"...but I believe older people, they still have those remnants which are closer towards… the times when things were restricted."

Not all opposition to Black/White interracial relationships was attributed to White people and their families. Several accounts described feelings of opposition that originated from Black individuals or members of extended families. Some feelings of opposition had deeper underlying drivers, and will be discussed shortly, though the more general examples of opposition are presented below:

> ...I remember when I was in [college in North East Wales], this one girl used to tease me, she used to say, 'oh, you only like White girls!', and she was Black. She's like, 'look at you, you're a brother and you only like White girls!' (Ben).

"...there's certain places where… say as an example, if I go to Birmingham and I'm with a White girl, some [Black] girls are salty about that… They are nasty about it." (Ben).

Nuria's experiences initially disclosing her interracial relationship, with her White boyfriend, to her family, raised initial reservations and curious and somewhat cautious questions. When asked whether she felt there was more opposition to Black/White unions from Black or from White people, she said:

> ...from my side, I would say Black...because of my family, it was hard in the beginning. They didn't say, 'I don't approve', but they have like… I would not say stupid questions, because I think I consider them innocent, so I am just saying innocent questions.

Victoria (60-year-old Black female), a more mature African woman with a son in his late teens when she initially arrived in the UK, described a stronger personal opposition to him entering relationships with local women. This was somewhat in contradiction to her more accepting views of interracial relationships for other people, outside of her immediate family. However, she expressed a strong opposition to this for her son, and her reasoning was based in a perceived incompatibility between the youth culture of the UK and that of her country of origin:

> ...when I first came here, I told my son… don't marry a British. When he first came here I told him A, B, C, I told him the reasons why. I told him, British girls, from the age of twelve, they'll be sleeping with men. They can go out, come back any time, which we don't accept in our culture.

The influence of culture formed an underlying driver for Black opposition to interracial relationships and, as most of the Black participants in this study were from African backgrounds (due to the nature of the population demographics of the region), this was a particularly important issue, especially where it would appear that aspects of cultures were being eroded, or abandoned completely. Showing adequate respect for one's culture was seen as important by Black participants:

> We have got a lot of respect in my culture. If I come here, I know that my daughter-in-law will make tea, will make a meal… but, its these different cultures that makes people not want to [enter interracial relationships], I think. (Victoria).

> I think for them, its respecting where you came from… African people, they feel like… in the world, our culture is not that important and, European culture, all the people don't know about it and then maybe they are scared that, we mixing up, that our culture is gonna be gone. (Nuria).

James also discussed this and mentioned that preservation of culture was even more salient for Africans with traditional royal bloodlines, where there were additional considerations around the inheritance of Chieftaincy titles and whether a young African would choose to abdicate in favour of an interracial relationship:

> ...let's say the guy being a Black guy from Africa and the lady being White, some of the feeling of the family would be that, if he marries, where's our family lineage? Especially if he is the only boy, they give birth in Europe, in Britain, how are you going to come back home to come an inheritance? So, [they will] feel bad about that, they will want that, especially if you are from a royal family, they will feel that where is the family? Its all gone! They will never come back home and want to be part of that culture again because of where they were born… they won't come back and want to be a Chief… so, yes, they can have oppositions.

In addition to cultural considerations, the historical importance of the trade in African slaves, as well as colonial occupation of African countries, and the subsequent difficulties resulting from these actions, formed an important and powerful driver of Black opposition to interracial relationships. This was seen as something which placed a border between Black and White people, still in place in the present day, and transgressions across this border, by entering intimate relationships with White people was seen as disrespectful of what ancestors were subjected to, a form of betrayal, or of 'sleeping with the enemy':

"I mean obviously slavery, that is something that is quite unique to certain groups." (Linda).

> ...when segregation was a case it was like, what I would be doing now would be seen as a wrong thing by the elders, my elders, and my great-great grandparents… because they'd be like, you don't know what they put us through. (Ben).

> ...if it was in the village, and a White guy was to come and marry a Black lady, I think it would be more accepting, they wouldn't see it as wrong. Though, yes, some of the very old people could see something wrong with it, either to do with slave trade, or something... (James).

> So when someone who is in their sixties, who actually remembered a lot about the war [independence of home country] and their parents being slaves, see a daughter, like a daughter marrying [European nationality] guy, they take an offensive way. Because like, they're respecting what happened to us. (Nuria).

Positive Views

Diametrically opposed to the previous theme, Positive Views cover perceptions that interracial relationships and people of colour are accepted in the local area, even in some cases treated with curious fascination due to their visual difference. A large proportion of participants viewed Black/White unions in a positive

light and could potentially see themselves, under the right circumstances, entering such a relationship. Participants who were already part of a Black/White couple, could see themselves entering a similar relationship if they had to 'do it all again'. Some views expressed here stated that Black people were more accepting of these relationships. Participants gave their views of interracial couples, and perceived views of society:

"I don't mind [someone being in a Black/White couple]. I will encourage that person. Provided that person will treat you with respect." (Alice).

"...I think generally in the community everybody's quite happy to see [Black/White couples] and everything..." (Elin).

> I was living with a White girl some time ago and she was living with me and my family, and my mother accepted her like she was her own daughter, she fed her and everything… its a good thing, y'know, its nice that we live like this now. (Ben).

"I think more people would be shocked by a gay couple moving in next door than a Black couple, who are Black and White, or whatever..." (Linda).

"...probably not a bad reaction [from society to Black/White couples]… it would kind of depend what sort of… for instance… thinking of middle-class churches, if an interracial couple were to walk through the door, no one would bat an eyelid." (Mark).

"I wish I could see more of it [Black/White couples]… its gives more exposure to people, it gives more understanding to people of the other side, especially from the White side." (James).

"I will really embrace [Black/White couples] because I will see it as another chance of putting my children in their multicultural context." (Nina).

In some cases, people of colour who had moved to the area were received, not with outright negativity, but with a fascination for their visual difference, further compounded by the fact they were likely to be one of the first minority individuals (or families) to have moved into a relatively racially homogeneous area. For example, Christine described the fascination that young people felt when a Black boy joined their school:

"...this lad that came into junior school, we went 'Wow! There's a Black boy in the village!' kind of thing. It was just, you saw them on the telly and that was it, Wrexham was very White Welsh."

Linda described a similar story when her mother was completing teacher training in a small community in Mid-Wales. She was treated with equal fascination and gained somewhat of a celebrity status as the only Black person living in that particular community, with some individuals going out of their way to help her in her everyday activities:

> ...she was the first, probably the first Black person to have visited there and she was doing the teacher training and she said it was like being a celebrity. She said the milkman used to go out of his way to like do his rounds and then pick her up as she was walking, so she used to get a lift on the milk float...

The fascination that the local population have with the physical differences of Black people also had the potential to make them appear particularly alluring and sexually attractive. Danny mentioned that his current partner expressed envious feelings that he had not had the same sexual experiences with a Black partner that Danny had previously experienced. His partner found it difficult to verbalise exactly why he wanted to select a partner based solely on the colour of their skin, and concluded that his main motivation was that he found them more physically attractive:

> ...so I've been with somebody that's Black previously, and my partner hasn't, and he said to me on numerous occasions, 'oh, its not fair, you've been with a Black person and I want to!'. And I was like, 'What? Why would you want to choose somebody because of the colour of their skin?'. He's like, 'I dunno, they're just… they're more attractive I think'.

Linda expressed a similar view when asked about whether, under different circumstances, she could still see herself entering a similar interracial relationship. She felt that her visual differences, as a woman of mixed Black and White backgrounds, gave her a sufficiently 'exotic' appearance allowing her to easily attract attention from the opposite sex, due to the relative racial homogeneity of the local area:

> ...I wouldn't have a problem in getting a new beau, because I would still be viewed as a little bit different, a little bit more exotic, y'know, but its that isn't it?… when you live in an area like this… its the opposite isn't it, of racism, its they're drawn to you because you're something different.

Having moved from a metropolitan area of England where the sight of people from different racial groups and mixed race children were so common as to become unremarkable, Nina described the local fascination with racial difference as more frustrating and, in an emotional recounting of her children's experiences being on the receiving end of this, often unwanted, attention, it also took on an insidiously threatening nature:

> I used to struggle with people really liking my children for the way they look… [they] won't see them as individuals, they will see them by the way they look, so they nice because they dark. Or they nice because they have this sort of hair… this was something that I didn't come across when I was in [Large metropolitan English city].

She went on to describe how the attention her children received, especially the unsolicited touching of hair, was quite distressing for her daughter:

> ...so many people start touching my children's hair, or commenting on my children's hair, and they will be doing this to a point where my daughter is actually not very happy with it. She didn't want to plait her hair when she moved here… she wanted to have a really big Afro because she just wanted to be herself. She didn't want people to be saying anything about her hair style… she just kind of wanted to be left alone… you can see its quite sensitive… [feeling emotional disclosing this – tears in her eyes].

Embedded within the expressions of positive societal and personal evaluations of Black/White couples was the feeling that Black families were generally more accepting of interracial relationships than White families. The quote from Ben, above, already mentions how a White girlfriend was readily accepted into the family home and his mother treated her as one of her own children. A similar story was related by Linda who told the story of her aunt, disowned by her parents for the transgression of entering a relationship with a Black man and wanting to marry him. Having been disowned, she was taken in and accepted by her spouse's parents and, despite having separated from their son, she remained good friends with them to the present day:

> ...[my aunt's] family cut her off, they kicked her out at age 17 because she was going out with 'that Black man' and my Grandma and Granddad took her in and then they got married, lived together for twenty years and, even though they're not together now, they're still really, really good friends.

James also felt opposition to Black/White couples was more likely to come from White families, rather than Black families:

> ...if its in the village, and a White guy was to come and marry a Black lady, I think it would be more accepting, [Black people] wouldn't see it as wrong.

> Though, yes, some of the very old people could see something wrong with it, either to do with slave trade, or something, but… I think the more opposition would come more from the White background than the Black background.

Ten of the thirteen participants, when asked whether they could see themselves entering an interracial relationship, stated it was possible, and they would have no issues with it. This included participants that were already in interracial relationships; who stated that if they 'have to do it all again' they could still see themselves entering a similar relationship with someone outside their own racial in-group. Participants responses to this question included:

"...with my experience, how I've been treated, from [husband's name] extended [family], even his aunties. Oh, its amazing. So what would I change? I won't change anything. No." (Alice).

"I wouldn't mind at all [entering a relationship with someone from another race]. As far as I love the person, I will never have a problem at all." (James).

"I would never say no based on skin colour… I can't see a reason why I couldn't or shouldn't fall in love with someone who was Black..." (Mark).

"I wouldn't change anything; and we had some horrific difficult times during our marriage… I wouldn't change it for anything." (Nina).

"...if I could do it again [entering an interracial relationship]… I'll definitely do it again! Yeah, definitely." (Nuria).

Culture

The theme Culture consists of two major sub-themes, that of Cultural Factors, and Relationships Mechanics; the former is concerned with cultural norms given importance by respondents and often felt the traditions and perspectives they included should be shown an adequate level of regard and respect. The latter consists

of the factors participants considered important for intimate relationships to be successful and to be maintained. It is suggested these are interdependent, as the expectations individuals have of their relationships are formed from their socialisation within a set of cultural norms, whilst simultaneously these cultural norms are conveyed and monitored through their relationships with others.

Embedded within the Relationship Mechanics sub-theme was the secondary sub-theme, Exploitation, which discussed interviewees perceptions of the potential for those entering interracial relationships to have underlying ulterior motives, or a desire to gain status, or more tangible rewards, as a result of a relationship with an out-group member.

As mentioned in the previous section, tradition was significant for some participants, particularly those from African backgrounds, where there were individual, or familial, concerns expressed about the potential erosion or loss of cultural norms. This was especially relevant in the case of intimate relationships, with importance placed on the institution of marriage:

"...to [the] majority of Africans I know, they tend to value marriage more than my White friends." (Alice).

"I guess its just the way I was brought up that you got married, bought a house, had kids, and did it the traditional way..." (Christine).

> ...I explain all these [African wedding traditions] to my boyfriend from the beginning and, when I told my grandmother who was my boyfriend, she said, 'Is he going to do [the traditional ceremonies]?'. Like, the tradition, because its really important to her! (Nuria).

Despite the importance of these traditions, suggesting a strong commitment from the couple, made over an extended period, there were some accounts, when probed with specific questioning, that alluded to experiences where some interracial

relationships featured less genuine motives. In these cases, forms of exploitation appeared to be taking place whereby one, or both, of the partners in the relationship were gaining from their intimate association with a person from a racial out-group, either in elevated status, or access to more tangible benefits, such as greater quality of life, leverage in gaining residency rights, or sexual gratification based in racialised sexual stereotypes.

Status, particularly when conveying a self-image of a libertarian and inclusive political persona, was one of the factors underlying these relationships and Alan described suspicions that this may have been a motivating factor for young White women involved in relationships with Black men, that he observed vicariously, during his experiences at a university in the North of England. He described their relationships with these men as allowing them to stand out from the crowd and appear simultaneously both rebellious and libertarian. He went on to speak about what he perceived the motivations of these young women to be:

> ...it was a rebellion to show how they saw society and wanted to be part of a political correctness… and I do wonder if that was because they were inclusive, but wanted to be different or rebellious, or if they wanted to shock their fathers.

He expanded on the more exploitative nature of this and that the Black partner in these relationships was reduced to a symbol of the young women's desire to be viewed as a left-wing, non-racist person:

"...And I do wonder if its like a badge of honour, a badge of status, a badge of rebellion, 'I am different, I have not only got this left-wing ethos, I'm out there demonstrating it'."

This reduction of the minority partner to the status of an accessory was also described in the account given by Danny. He described his experiences in the Manchester Gay Village, where young Black gay men were voraciously pursued as

sexual partners by gay White men, as interracial relationships in the gay community were somewhat *en vogue*:

"...a couple of years ago when I always used to go to Manchester, to the Gay Village, it was kind of a fashion statement for a White person to [date] a Black person."

This pursuit of gay Black men by their White counterparts appeared to be particularly aggressive in nature and was a phenomenon that Danny felt was growing in the gay community:

"...everybody was trying to go for the Black person, the Black lad… I see [it] more and more, especially in same-sex. Well, male same-sex."

When questioned on why he thought this phenomenon occurred, Danny could not understand why Black men would be desired as sexual partners based solely on their race and repeated his observation that it appeared to be a fashion statement to be seen with a Black partner. This suggests a similar reductionist view of the Black partner as was described in Alan's account and demotes them to the status of a political badge of honour, or a highly desirable fashion accessory.

Other accounts of exploitation described the desire for more tangible rewards than gains in status and participants described cases where gaining permission to stay in the UK from immigration services was seen as an outcome achievable by entering an interracial relationship:

"...some people came here for instance and they stayed and they marry the British people so they could get the permission to stay here." (Victoria).

> ...there is a specific type of boys living in [West African country] who base their income on interaction with tourists, especially with White ladies… they act as if they fall in love with someone when they come to [West African country] on holidays. So [these boys] go to marry this way and travel to Europe, but

> they're not honest with their partners and they've only done this so they can be invited to Europe… rather than for the actual marriage. (Nina).

Exploitation was not always immigration-based but motivated by more general material gain that could be gleaned from a partner of a different race. Linda described an occasion in Liverpool where she came across an African woman living with an older White man, who she appeared to be using for material gain, whilst showing him little respect. Linda described how this was uncomfortable to observe:

"...the way she spoke about getting a White man was like winning the lottery and it was… I didn't like her attitude."

She described how it was clear the relationship was not based on genuine feelings and more on material outcomes; the woman had seemingly trapped the man into this arrangement through bearing him a child:

> ...she didn't like him, she was with him because he was a doctor and he was rich… he was in the house pottering around and these women would just talk, bad-mouthing him… it was so 'I'm just here for the money!', y'know?

Some of the exploitation was linked to sexualised driving factors and featured in the account already mentioned above from Nina. In addition to describing the manner in which young African men feigned love with visiting White women in order to convince them to marry and convey them to a better life in Europe; she suggested that some of these women travelled to this specific country with the intention of being pursued in this way and engage in 'adventures' with the young local men:

> ...the women who go there on single holidays, they are also looking for some kind of adventures...I always see a lot of British ladies who go there and they enjoy being there and erm… kind of [being] chased by those young African males...

Not all participants felt that exploitation often took place in interracial relationships and described their feelings that contemporary relationships were based more in love and affection and that a marriage was not genuine if was based on gaining a material or status-based profit:

"...if you're married to someone, you are not married to the person because of something." (Alice).

"...people generally don't get married for that anymore, its more… they just want to get married and that's kind of it." (Elin).

"...couples I know here, they're not wealthy. They're more or less the same, you know." (Victoria).

Indeed, most participants felt most relationships did not feature exploitative profit-seeking and rather cited a broad range of factors (race being absent) they felt were pivotal to the success of relationships or were important characteristics when seeking an appropriate partner. Three factors appeared more frequently than any others, and the first among these was trust:

"I think the first thing is trust… If you trust someone… wherever the person goes, or whatever the person do, you wouldn't be suspicious." (Alice).

"I think being truthful with each other. I don't think… holding things back is very good at all..." (Elin).

"...its also about trust, to trust the other person, to be able to agree on something and… do this together, work through it together..." (Nina).

In addition to trust, having shared values was considered an important factor in successful relationships, and this was especially important in the case of bringing up children together:

"I think its that connection between each other… I think its in that similarity of characteristics really..." (Alan).

"...I think its quite good to have similar values, to an extent." (Elin).

"...has that person got similar, or nearly similar, views of yours that you can bring up your kids in that way." (James).

"...having similar values, although it doesn't have to be that close; as soon as you have a kid you know that your values are completely different." (Linda).

"Its really important for me that we at least both have the same mentality..." (Nuria).

Lastly, one of the most important factors for successful relationships was the presence of genuine romantic love and feelings of intimacy for a partner:

"A successful relationship? Obviously loving each other." (Christine).

"...I think the first thing is to tell yourself, and be convinced in your mind, that you love the person. I think that is the most important thing." (James).

"Marriage should be love. Not choosing someone for the sake of money, basically should be if you love someone then, yes, that's it. Whether it is disabled, able-bodied, but if there's real love, you don't think of anything else." (Victoria).

Colour-Blind Ideology

'Colour-blind Ideology' was a recurring theme which appeared in ten out of the thirteen participants' accounts and therefore was identified as an important phenomenon that characterised many of the experiences and perceptions of interracial relationships and more general contact with people from different racial groups. The nature of the statements made tended to either attempt to de-

emphasise the importance of race in relation to other characteristics or values, or were shrouded behind an uncertainty of appropriate terminology, compounded by concerns relating to political correctness.

In some cases, the de-emphasis of race appeared to be related to participants experiences living and growing up in diverse areas of the UK, or from having diverse personal friendship groups:

"I went to school with people who are, want of a better word, mixed race. And, we didn't treat them any differently, again, it was just something that happened." (Alan)

"I don't look to somebody, think that, oh, I'm friends with them because they're Black, or I'm friends with them because they're White, I just have friends. I'm just easy like that." (Ben)

"Its like I said, the nationality really doesn't matter. Its just… how good as a friend the person is, so, yes, its, they're, they're really close." (Nuria)

For participants who had less diverse social groups in their upbringing and adult lives (though this was not always the case in all examples), the de-emphasis of race was different in nature and characterised by more of a distancing from the acknowledgement of race; particularly the 'colour' element of the phenomenon:

"I don't really look at the colour, I look at the person and who I'm dealing with really." (Christine)

"And, colour and… colour doesn't mean anything erm, to me." (Danny)

"...but I don't see people for what they look like, or where they're from as such, I kind of view them as the person and how they treat me themselves." (Elin)

"But its still a human, so, this is what you're trying to focus on, don't see the colour, don't see all this tradition things, just see its a human. That's it. Its gonna be easy." (Nuria)

In some of the instances where this distancing from the appraisal of skin colour was expressed, it tended to be accompanied by concerns relating to the appropriate terminology through which to refer to individuals and whether errors in this regard would lead to offence. This was particularly true for individuals of mixed racial heritage and, in this case, the uncertainties were expressed by both White and Black participants (see examples on p.126). Alan's views on the topic raised an important point concerning the potential insidiousness of political correctness, as its use in de-emphasising race, or encouraging avoidance of discussing the topic, could work to conceal the views of bigoted people and undermine discussions and activities that could challenge such views:

> ...some of the people I know are of the certain generation, and older generation, would use very inappropriate language towards them as well, erm, and would think nothing of it, because they just do not understand… where we are today, erm… and they would, they would probably refer to is as political correctness. But I don't think political correctness actually exists, because you are either inclusive regardless of what happens and whatever the influence is, or you're not.

Whilst the experiences with racism that were expressed by participants were, thankfully, quite rare and usually more aversive and discreet than more virulent forms of racism, there was an interesting example of colour-blind racist ideology that was expressed in one account. Whilst it was only one example, it was felt appropriate to highlight this, as it was quite unexpected coming from the participants who expressed it. Mark's outlook towards racial minority groups had been consistently accepting and liberal throughout the discussions, and his views were very closely aligned to the principles of his Christian faith. It is likely that the statement he made was inadvertent and may likely cause some discomfort had the nature of the

statement have been relayed back to him. Therefore, it was particularly interesting to see an admission that any prejudices he may have held against a group of people would be based in their culture, rather than in biological characteristics (a viewpoint which is a defining characteristic of modern, colour-blind racism):

> Yeah, it would be cultural rather than erm, a prejudice from skin colour on that point I think. I think probably my prejudices are more cultural than they are skin colour, erm, if I had to sort of think about it, I suppose.

Participants did sometimes indirectly make appraisals of the effects that colour-blind racial ideology could have on society and its impact on their own personal lives. For example, Christine questioned why, despite having such an accepting outlook towards other groups, why her friendship group was so racially homogeneous:

"Its not something that's important, but at the same time, now we're talking I'm quite curious as to... why my friendship base is very White?"

Similarly, Mark made a statement indicating how racist ideologies could be shrouded behind the de-emphasis of, and reticence in discussing issues of race. Therefore, whilst people within his middle-class social circles may not overtly express racist opinions, their silence on the topic does not necessarily confirm they hold liberal views:

> I think erm, there's circles I probably move in, its really a non-issue, erm, there's, I'd say probably the more socially mobile, White, middle-class don't seem to have a problem, or at least would never dare say there was a, they had anything against someone of a, a Black person, or people of colour, however you're supposed to describe them nowadays.

Nina's experiences in the region, as a person who was a member of an interracial family, have made her particularly familiar with the range of racial issues

that individuals can face when moving into the area. She described some of the difficulties of marginalisation that her family faced when they first moved to Wales, which further highlights the damaging nature of the de-emphasis of race. For example, in a society that asserts the irrelevance of race, how can a family unit be treated with apprehension by the community because its adult members come from different racial groups?:

> So I think it took about two years for people in my village to actually start interacting with us and asking us questions and erm, and kind of allowing us into this small circles of friendships. So it took a while I think to earn their erm, trust, I would say.

Chapter Six - Discussion

The qualitative approach adopted for the study produced numerous detailed descriptions of experiences of Black/White interracial relationships in North-East Wales, observed from the perspective of both White and Black people living in the region. The accounts, presented in the results chapter, have allowed all three research questions to be adequately addressed and this chapter will provide a deeper discussion of the accounts conveyed, accompanied by a comparison with literature presented in the previous chapters. This discussion will address each research question in turn, before exploring the final theme which emerged during data analysis; Colour-blindness. Whilst this theme was unassociated with any of the research questions, it is no less salient and, as will be discussed, has an important position in the overall paradigm.

Social Distance – Contact and Lack of Contact

The emerging picture of social distance between Black and White groups in North-East Wales suggests there is still significant distance between them. The primary factor attributable to this is the very low number of Black people living in the local area; supported both by official figures and by the statements of participants. Statistics collected from the Wrexham county in 2009 indicate BAME people accounted for only 2% of the total population (Statistics for Wales, 2011); the amalgamation of all 'non-White' people under this category would therefore suggest that, for Black people specifically, the figure would be lower still. This was supported in accounts given by participants. White interviewees, despite expressing very liberal and accepting views towards Black people and interracial relationships, stated there were very few people of colour within their close friendship circle, or within their broader social circle. Some of the participants opined the lack of diversity in the region, having moved from large, ethnically diverse conurbations in England; Alan and Nina being prime examples, both stating they were particularly surprised by the prevalence of racial homogeneity in North-East Wales. Indeed, accounts from interviewees such as Mark and Danny, give the impression that Black people are such an uncommon sight locally that their presence attracts considerable attention; this is

before consideration is given to the possibility of intimate relationships occurring between them and the majority (White) population. A lack of diversity amongst Whites' social groups is not unusual in the literature; the findings of Sigelman *et al.* (1996) indicated that the majority of White people had very few minority friends or acquaintances. However, a reassuring difference between the findings of that study and those conveyed by participants in this thesis, was that Whites held more accepting views of Black people than their American counterparts, despite a similar perceived level of separation.

Black participants were able to corroborate that their presence does indeed attract attention from White people, and they also confirmed the relative dearth of people from Black backgrounds currently residing in the area; several giving accounts that, when first moving here, they felt like the only Black person present. In addition to the sense of conspicuousness this generated when in public, others felt this acted to reinforce their visual difference, as described in Linda's account of her time in school and college as a young woman of mixed Black and White heritage. The isolation and discomfort created was also proposed, by Peter, as a compounding factor on the relative lack of Black people in the region, creating reluctance amongst potential newcomers to move into the area.

These feelings appear to have had an effect on the social circles of Black participants. It would be anticipated, given the racial population dynamics of the area, that Black people would have more opportunity to meet and have meaningful contact with White people in North-East Wales. However, this did not appear to be the case for many of the Black participants, who stated that many of their friends were from similar Black backgrounds and there were considerably fewer White people in their social networks. There were exceptions to this; Ben, for example, stated that he had very few friends from his own racial group, which he attributed to having grown up in the local area. This would be consistent with the assertion made by Blau (1977) that more cross-group interactions would be instigated by minority individuals when their share of the overall population was relatively small. However, most of the contact Black participants appeared to have with Whites was in the

workplace, where they reported interacting amicably with a broad and diverse range of people from both BAME and from a range of White European backgrounds. Estlund (2003) suggested this was the most likely arena for interracial contact to take place, and North-East Wales appears no different.

The local result of poor contact between groups, and a general lack of diversity in the region, appears to have manifested in a feeling of unease relating to 'political correctness', particularly concerning the most appropriate terminology to use when referring to people of colour. The issue became more complex when the topic of mixed race people was introduced, with some Black participants being unsure of the most acceptable terms of reference. This concern was expressed more frequently by Whites and links to previous research suggesting that White people feel anxiety during interactions with Black people and do not want to appear racist (Plant, 2004).

Despite the seemingly negative conclusion drawn so far, there were numerous positive accounts suggesting, despite the current lack of diversity in North-East Wales, this was something that is gradually changing as more people from a diverse range of backgrounds are choosing to make the region their home. Such accounts included that of Linda, who described the much increased number of local Black families compared to the early 1990s; and Victoria, who reported that she saw a lot of Black and White people as intimate couples in her neighbourhood, despite the provincial nature of the region. Previous researchers have described similar phenomena, in which Black individuals tend to enter interracial couplings more often when their relative population size is small, as there is less opportunity to meet someone from a similar racial background (Feng *et al.*, 2013; Kalmijn, 1993). Indeed, several Black participants discussed very diverse social circles they had developed during their time in North-East Wales and these contacts had been made across races, ethnicities, and nationalities. It was noted that White voices were mostly silent on this aspect of local race relations and their social circles were much more homogeneous. This had not always been the case for some of the participants, as several mentioned having had very diverse social circles when they resided in other

parts of the UK. Nina and her family had lived in one of the most culturally diverse parts of the UK and felt some considerable discomfort with the lack of diversity when they first moved to North-East Wales. Alan articulated a similar experience explaining that his arrival in a racially homogeneous Wrexham, having been brought up in a very diverse city, was disconcerting.

Consistent with the increasing diversity of the area, participants from both White and Black backgrounds felt interracial relationships were becoming more common in the region and were particularly prevalent amongst the youth; echoing previous literature in this area (Childs, 2015; Ford, 2008; Pew Research Centre, 2010; 2017). Whites in the sample were less likely to know someone locally who was part of a Black/White couple, so their viewpoints were based more on assumptions that this phenomenon was more common amongst the young, whilst Black individuals in the sample did tend to know of, sometimes several, mixed couples living locally. In fact, participants from Black backgrounds frequently expressed the sentiment that interracial relationships were particularly common for their racial group, with Ben stating that most of his contemporaries were in relationships with White partners. Recent research suggests this would be likely, as Whites are the group that Black people, who date outside their race, tend to couple with most frequently (Craig-Henderson, 2006; 2011; Edmonds, 2018).

Contact between groups was cited as an important driver towards acceptance of minority individuals and interracial couples in the local area, especially in cases where local people had travelled to other countries and been exposed to different cultures. James, for example, described the change in attitude of a young work colleague, who had travelled to his West African country of origin and had her perceptions of Africa changed completely. This is supported by the fundamental workings of the contact hypothesis, as argued by Allport (1954); the woman in question, through contact experiences in a different country, developed an ability to see the world from the perspective of others and disregard inaccurate stereotypes endorsed previously.

The contact experiences for interracial couples were arguably even more powerful, as participants, such as Nuria and Ben, described sharing and exchange of cultures and, in Nuria's case, the surprise at finding similarities between them. Finding common ground in this way helps to normalise and humanise out-group partners and reduce feelings of 'intergroup awe', as described by Stephan and Stephan (1985). Sharing of culture between partners could also be considered a form of intimate self-disclosure, forming an important facet of the cognitive re-evaluation taking place in contact scenarios (Miller, 2002; Wright *et al.*, 1997).

Achieving empathy with other groups was also considered important in smoothing the integration process of minority individuals into the community and was expressed by several participants, including James and Linda. This stresses the importance of the final stage of the contact process, whereby positive views become generalised to encompass entire outgroup populations (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). This generalisation had clearly taken place among some of the White spouses of the Black interviewees, as they described their partners' new-found sensitivity towards racism and began to challenge the bigoted views of others.

Overall, it appears there is still a large social distance between White and Black people in North-East Wales, supported by accounts that the Black population of the area is particularly small and by the lack of ethnic diversity within the social and friendship circles of the White individuals interviewed. Despite this, however, it is suggested that the social distance between the groups, whilst relatively large compared to more diverse metropolitan areas of the UK, is still closer than between White and Black groups in other parts of the world (such as the USA). This is supported by statistics from the 2011 UK Census (Statistics for Wales, 2012), reinforced by Williams (2003), which indicate, despite Black people being present in small numbers across North Wales, they are dispersed widely across the various counties in the region. This dispersal is rather different from the American paradigm, where Black people tend to be 'hypersegregated' from Whites (Massey & Denton, 1993; Denton, 1994; Farley & Frey, 1994) and, if this were taking place in North-East Wales, we would expect to see the Black population concentrated into a particular

area. As this is not the case, it suggests that Black people here do not face as many social barriers as their American counterparts and have been more integrated into local communities. This is supported by the accounts given by Black participants that they tended to have quite diverse social circles and came across people from a range of backgrounds.

In addition to spatial propinquity, participants described the increasing occurrence of coupling between White and Black individuals and that, whilst they may attract considerable attention from local people, they were, for the most part, unopposed and were more supported by the younger generation. This suggests that not only are Black people being integrated into the local communities of North-East Wales, they are being accepted to a level where they are increasingly seen as acceptable romantic partners.

The presence of Black people and interracial couples was not seen as acceptable by all levels of society, however, with some accounts stating there was potential for considerable hostility towards them and greater opposition expressed by older people in local communities. These attitudes are explored in more detail in the section below.

Overt and Subtle Racism – Positive Views and Negative Views

Researchers during the last two decades have presented accounts that the White population of the UK is more tolerant of Black people than the White population of the USA and that this contributes to a greater rate of intermarriage (Alba & Foner, 2015; Coleman, 2004; Feng *et al.*, 2013; Janmaat & Keating, 2017; Model & Fisher, 2002). The personal views of participants in this study tended to concur with this sentiment and expressed an approval for and acceptance of Black people and interracial couples that was sometimes projected onto wider society. This was not just the case for White interviewees, as almost all Black participants gave similar endorsement to interracial couples and described examples of acceptance and accommodation of these relationships within their own families, much like the examples among African-Americans, described by Childs (2005a).

Both contemporary accounts, and older stories from the personal or family histories of interviewees, described less of an outright opposition towards minority people, expressed from the local population, and more of a fascination with their obvious visual difference. Whilst this elicited curiosity from many people, it also led some to feel endearment towards them and pro-actively offer support as they went about their daily activities. Examples of such friendly inclusiveness among the Welsh population have been reported in literature, with examples dating as far back as the 18th century (Williams, 2002).

In some cases this curiosity with visual difference manifested in a more intimate form, with White people developing a sexual attraction towards Black people as a result, as described in Danny's interview, and typical of the attraction described by Kouri and Lasswell (1993) in their discussion of Racial Motivation Theory. Sometimes this 'exoticisation' was exploited by Black people to maximise their own personal allure, as discussed in another study in Wales (Robinson, 2003). Linda utilised a similar self-construction of herself in her discourse relating to the, hypothetical, search for a future partner and stated that her 'exotic' appearance, as a woman of mixed racial heritage, would give her an advantage in the local market for intimate relationships. This phenomenon is somewhat concerning, as it suggests a sexual objectification of Black people, something that has been broadly discussed in literature in the USA (Childs, 2005a; 2009; Collins, 2004; Craig-Henderson, 2006; 2011; McNamara *et al.*, 1999; Root, 2001) and the UK (Adjaye, 2015; Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993). Danny's account described attraction towards Black men based solely on their physical features, as they were described as 'more attractive', and Linda's discussion suggested an internalisation of this sexualised, 'exotic' view of Black women.

Objectification and fascination with difference also took the form of uncomfortable invasions of personal space, reflected in Nina's discourse concerning the attention that local White people paid to her mixed-race children, several touching their hair without prior consent. Having moved from an area where children

of mixed heritage were relatively unremarkable, the sudden increase in interest, despite the best intentions and goodwill of the instigator, created a reinforced sense of physical difference for her children which was as distressing as it was frustrating. This behaviour features amongst research on 'micro-aggressions' endured by Black people (Kang, 2015; Nadal, Metereko, Vargas, & Wideman, 2016) and has been shown to create uncomfortable feelings of difference and 'othering' when endured by young Black children (Houston, 2015).

Beyond these ambiguously positive views that are laced with, possibly racialised, underlying themes, other views of interracial relationships were more directly positive. Almost all participants were accommodating towards the prospect of relationships between Whites and Blacks and felt that many people in their communities, particularly the young, were equally supportive. Despite the general trend for positive views from all participants, the sentiment emerged from several interviews that Black families tended to be more accepting and had fewer reservations about interracial couples; many citing examples of them within their own extended families or having viewed them vicariously amongst their social groups. Examples, such as Nuria's interview, went as far as to give the impression that interracial pairing was so common that it was rare to see co-ethnic relationships amongst her Black friends. Greater acceptance of Black/White interracial relationships amongst Black groups has been widely discussed in literature and observed not only among Black people in the USA (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Childs, 2008; Djamba & Kimuna, 2014; McNamara et al., 1999; Romano, 2003; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt et al., 1995; Spickard, 1989) and the UK (Phillips & Phillips, 1998; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993), but also in other parts of Europe (Rodriguez-Garcia, Solana-Solana & Lubbers, 2016) and in some African societies (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Njoroge, 2011; Ray, 2015). In some cases, this acceptance provided a safe environment for White partners who faced sanctions from their own families due to their involvement with a Black partner (Dalmage, 2000; Root, 2001; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993). This was the case with a relative of one participant, who had been disowned by her parents after expressing her wish to marry her Black fiancé; she had sought refuge with, and been

accepted by, her partner's parents and still maintained an amicable relationship with them despite having separated from their son.

The personal opinions of interviewees towards Black/White interracial relationships were overwhelmingly positive, with most stating they could feasibly see themselves in such relationships, and the race of a potential partner held less salience for them than personality. Reassuringly, all participants who were already part of a Black/White couple (there were five altogether) stated that if they 'had to do it all again' they would still enter an interracial relationship, suggesting their experiences had been positive enough for them to consider a similar relationship under different circumstances. Examples of such 'serial interracial dating' have been discussed previously by Craig-Henderson (2006; 2011).

Not all views expressed by participants gave positive evaluations, several citing potential opposition towards interracial relationships and people of colour in North-East Wales. Participants who had previous experiences living in more diverse areas explained that bigotry was much more common, particularly around the Wrexham area, and that these overt racist views were conveyed without reservation. Robinson (2003) observed a similar picture in his study conducted in neighbouring Powys, mid-Wales, where 20% of Black people who moved into the area felt that locals were 'very racist'. Black participants in this study also articulated experiencing these attitudes from the White Welsh population and described being regarded with disdain, or treated as though they were less intelligent; the latter being a typical stereotype deployed against Black people (Bobo *et al.*, 1996; Bobo & Smith, 1998).

In some cases, these bigoted views, based on stereotypes of Black people, made potential interactions between groups an uncomfortable prospect. Nina described the unease during her first encounters with the man who is now her husband and described her concern about his appearance, like that of a drug dealer, and that she was uncertain whether he could be potentially dangerous. This was clearly not the case yet demonstrates the pervasiveness of stereotypes constructing

Black men as dangerous, violent, and criminal (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2001; Childs, 2015; Ramasubramanian, 2013).

It was commonly expressed amongst participants that overt forms of racism, such as those mentioned above, were particularly rare. Several Black participants even stated they had not been subjected to racism during their time in the region. Whilst this may appear indicative that the area is perhaps unusually accommodating and accepting of Black people, it is unclear whether this is the case, or whether these are examples of the phenomena, presented by Phillips and Phillips (1998), where Black people in the UK state they have not been subjected to racism, and continue to assert this even when presented with evidence to the contrary.

Whereas overt forms of racism were less common in North-East Wales, more subtle and ambiguous types were more frequently cited and included examples of behaviours such as staring, subtle changes in social interactions, and indirect questioning that sought to corroborate racial stereotypes held by the questioner. Some examples were also consistent with Colour-Blind racism, as discussed by Bonilla-Silva (2002; 2010) (also see Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000), in which socially constructed inferiority of Black people was justified along cultural lines, rather than physiological or biological characteristics.

More subtle forms of racism, such as those mentioned above, have been widely discussed in academic and personal accounts from a number of sources in the UK (Adjaye, 2015; Barling, 2015; Hirsch, 2018; Olusoga, 2016; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993), including Wales (Race Council Cymru, 2015; Robinson, 2003). This has been described as a more insidious form of racism, as its ambiguity makes it harder to clearly identify and offers a degree of plausible deniability (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000). The virulence of this within the Welsh context was presented by Robinson and Gardner (2006) who found that the racist behaviour of White Welsh people towards Blacks was often de-emphasised through attribution to an ‘innocent, rural mindset’ amongst a population with little experience interacting with people from other races and ethnicities. This veneer of alleged innocence has the potential to deflect blame

from those instigating racist behaviour onto minority individuals who are then presented as 'trouble-makers', as discussed in several historical examples of British race relations in the twentieth century (Gilroy, 1987, Solomos, 1989).

Negative views of minorities translated into similar evaluations of interracial couples, and participants in the study identified the main sources of opposition towards these relationships as coming from White families, particularly individuals from the older generation. Familial opposition was presented as one of the greatest barriers against local people entering intimate relations with individuals from different racial groups, as the difficult choice was presented of showing loyalty to an intimate partner, or to one's family, with the selection of one having a deleterious effect on the other. Examples of familial opposition from White British families have been presented by a number of scholars (Appleyard & Goodwin, 2016; Ford, 2008; Hohman, 2002), with additional support from multiple global sources suggesting the older generation are less tolerant of these relationships than younger members of family groups (Childs, 2015; Djamba & Kimuna, 2014; Oriola, 2008; Pew Research Centre, 2010; Yancey, 2002). The discourses of participants in this study suggested there were similar conditions in North-East Wales.

White families were not the only source of opposition towards interracial relationships, with several Black participants stating that Black families could also have reservations. The oppositional discourses described fell into two broad themes; concerns about the compatibility of cultures between the two groups and potential loss of cultural practices and traditions, whilst the second was related to feelings of animosity towards Whites based on the legacy of trans-Atlantic slavery.

Preservation of culture was an important consideration amongst the Black interviewees, most of who had African origins, and opined the potential loss of these practices that may occur when an African family member enters an intimate relationship with a White person. This is a recurrent theme in several other studies that have explored attitudes to interracial intimacy in several African countries (Gross, 2013; Madubuko & Kosgei, 2013; Mojapelo-Batka, 2008; Nordahl, 2014; Omari, 1963;

UNESCO, 1974); with similar concerns expressed by African American communities in the USA (Dalmage, 2000; Lantman, 2007; Root, 2001). The only example of directly expressed opposition by a participant towards interracial relationships was grounded in this idea; Victoria's account of her discomfort with her son's involvement with a White woman being based on a perception of cultural incompatibility between the British and her country of origin.

The legacy of the slave trade was also discussed as a powerful deterrent against Black people entering intimate relationships with Whites and has been cited repeatedly in American race relations (Craig-Henderson, 2006; 2011; Kaba, 2012; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995) as a 'betrayal' against one's fellow Black people and as 'sleeping with the enemy'. Similar discourses were described by participants in this study, with cited examples suggesting some individuals from African backgrounds have constructed similar barriers between Blacks and Whites, with transgressions of this barrier (in the form of interracial relationships) being tantamount to a grievous disrespect of what one's ancestors were subjected to, through the institutions of slavery and European colonial rule. This is a typical example of 'border-patrolling' of interracial intimacy, with slavery utilised as a deterrent factor, as discussed by Dalmage (2000; 2004).

North-East Wales, therefore, appears to have a very mixed evaluation of Black/White interracial relationships. Whilst some accounts suggest there is a great deal of acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these relationships, especially amongst the younger generation, there are also accounts suggesting a blatant and unashamed bigotry aimed, not only at interracial couples, but at minority groups collectively. Equally concerning are reports of more subtle, covert racism, which are more ambiguous and harder to identify and challenge, especially considering other research suggesting this form of racism is often deployed behind a veil of alleged 'rural' naivety.

The reservations about interracial relationships, expressed by both groups, resemble the accounts presented by Childs (2005a: 2008) in the USA, with opposition

from White families being more prevalent and based on aversive reactions towards Black people. Similarly, the opposition from Black families, whilst less frequent, tended to be more reactionary towards White racism (contemporary, or historical), or the potential erosion of distinctive culture and traditions.

Culture, Social Exchange and Relationship Mechanics

Social Caste Theory (Davies, 1941; Merton, 1941) discusses the gradients of social exchange in Black/White interracial relationships, whereby White partners with relatively low social class exchange the status attached to their Whiteness (a valuable commodity in a racialised society, with Whites at the top of the racial hierarchy) with the socio-economic status of an upwardly mobile Black partner. It has also been suggested that Black women exchange good looks, or access to sex, with the racial status, or wealth, transferred from a White partner (Sassler & Joyner, 2011).

Exchanges of this particular type, where status is the main exchange resource (Kalmijn, 1993), were absent from the accounts of participants in this study. Rather, the types of exchanges described were more exploitative, one-sided, and dealt with the perception that interracial relationships were the key to material gains, or greater leverage in accessing and navigating immigration systems in Western countries. The latter was expressed by several African participants, who stated that some individuals from their countries had pursued these relationships to attempt to gain entry to the UK, or to help secure more permanent residence here. Others described these relationships as helping to gain access to material wealth that would not have been available in a relationship with a fellow African. These sentiments have been described in previous literature and hailed as opportunities to glean material gains from such relationships (Abbide, 2011; Gross, 2013).

Other examples featured objectification of Black people as little more than sexual objects, trendy fashion accessories, or as badges denoting liberal credentials. The former featured the pursuance of young African men by White women looking for sexual adventure, presumably inspired by racist stereotypes pertaining to Black men's sexual anatomy and prowess (Katz, 1996). The latter examples show a

fascination amongst the gay community with Black men, who, it is reported, are aggressively pursued as dating partners, as men of their race are perceived as more attractive (Lewis, 2012) and are considered fashionable to be seen with in public. Whether the same stereotypes described by Katz (1996) also have an influence in these examples remains unclear and would be worthy of further exploration. Lastly, some examples described young White women entering relationships with Black men as a visible proclamation of their seemingly liberal ideologies. However, the discourse suggested these relationships were transient and based on the desire to project this persona, rather than making long-term commitments, suggesting the Black partner was being used as a mere 'badge of honour', to display one's left-wing sympathies, or to shock conservative-minded parents.

The cited examples sound more exploitative and one-sided than the models of status exchange discussed previously (Kalmijn, 1993), and it remains unclear what the other partners in these exchanges 'gained' from the relationships, if anything. Reassuringly, however, these examples of exploitation were perceived to be the exception rather than the norm, and doubt was cast on whether relationships of this type were in fact genuine. A view was also expressed that interracial couples living locally were often not particularly wealthy, so it was deemed unlikely that exchanges of status were taking place.

Culture, and the expectations from relationships influenced by it, was cited as more important than the exchanges described in social exchange theory or social caste theory. Trust, shared values, and a genuine, romantic love were considered the most important factors in considering a partner and maintaining healthy relationships. These factors are consistent with the commitments and compromises considered vital to the survival of interracial relationships (Donovan, 2004; Killian, 2001) and suggest the type of interdependent relationship, discussed by Thibaut and Kelley (1978), whereby these intangible exchanges are equitable and strengthen the relationship.

Participants, already in interracial relationships when interviewed, asserted the view that they are no different to co-ethnic couples, a view echoed in literature (Childs, 2005a; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1995), and expressed, rather amusingly, by one participant who stated that a friend was surprised to hear that her interracial family did in fact eat jacket potatoes!

Social exchange does appear to be occurring in exceptional cases in North-East Wales, both in the more classical, status-based, form, but also in a more exploitative and materialistic nature too. However, the phenomenon was considered to be rare amongst Black/White couples, who were constructed as not dissimilar to co-ethnic couples and having relationships based on mutual trust, shared values, and romantic love.

Colour-Blind Ideology

One of the identified themes that emerged from interview data was that of Colour-Blindness; ideologies asserting that race and ethnicity are of little importance in society today and that people infrequently think about or allow it to influence their perceptions or behaviour.

These statements were made frequently during the interviews, with ten out of thirteen participants disclosing them in some form. Despite this, the statements were not considered in the resulting analysis, as they did not address any of the research questions directly. Examples of colour-blind ideology that were more racist in nature were included and have been mentioned in the section relating to positive and negative views towards interracial relationships.

The examples given by participants identified race as having little saliency in their interactions with others, including the formation of friendships and potential intimate relationships. A sentiment that was frequently repeated by both White and Black interviewees was that they did not ‘see’ colour and rather just saw an individual as unique, rather than defined by their race. In some cases, these sentiments were not made disingenuously; some of the participants’ discourses described growing up

in racially diverse areas where encounters with other groups formed the fabric of their everyday life and therefore, racial difference was not a remarkable factor in social interactions. Some participants used statements such as 'not seeing' race, which are more indirect means of stating that they do not feel race influences their evaluations of others, rather than being taken in the literal sense.

Whilst many of these statements were made with good intentions, they also reflect examples where Whites tend to avoid directly using racial language in their interactions (Bonilla-Silva, 2002) and de-emphasise its importance in social settings. This has been corroborated in recent accounts by several commentators, who state that the White population of Britain are extremely averse to addressing issues relating to UK race relations and are reluctant to talk about the topic (Adjaye, 2015; Eddo-Lodge, 2017; Hirsch, 2018). The lack of desire to talk about these issues compounds the problems further, as it helps to disguise the racialised power and privileges that society has bestowed upon White people (Frankenburg, 1993). For example, White participants in this study are exercising their racial privilege through stating that race is not a salient issue in the local area, despite many of them admitting they know very few people of colour and do not have an appreciation of their experiences. This contributes to the construction of North-East Wales as a tolerant and accepting region, when in fact the accounts of Black and other people of colour may contradict this view. This manifested in the accounts of participants in this study through the frequent references made to political correctness. Individuals were often unsure of how best to approach situations with racial others and Alan highlighted the insidious nature of this, due to the fact that societal issues related to structural racial discrimination could be masked behind the construct of political correctness. This could provide a convenient defence-mechanism for the dominant (White) group to avoid addressing intergroup inequalities and further perpetuate the issues.

Such views can help disguise, or negate the severity of racist attitudes, such as in Robinson and Gardner's (2006) example from Powys. Rather than being an irrelevant issue, race relations in the UK are more important and sensitive than they

have ever been. In the first thirty-eight days after the EU referendum more than 2,300 incidents of racism were reported to police across England and Wales (Burnett, 2016) and a report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) indicated that Black people in the UK continue to face discrimination and disadvantage in education, employment, and the judicial system, as well as being more likely to be victims of violent crime, and face harsher sanctions when accused and convicted of crimes themselves. These findings were echoed in Wales specifically, where the annual report of Race Council Cymru (2015) indicated that 87% of BAME participants felt racism was still an issue in Wales and more than 80% had personally experienced racist discrimination in the previous five years. Colour-blind ideology can further compound these problems, as the de-emphasis of race can lead to the conclusion that the personal shortcomings of Black and other minority people are to blame for their own disadvantage, rather than the structural factors that contribute to this (Ramasubramanian, 2010). This was evidence in the interview with Mark, where he made the statement that he was more likely to discriminate along the lines of culture than skin colour. This in itself is the very definition of colour-blind racism, as the perceived deficiencies of groups are attributed to their social characteristics (culture), rather than biological ones (skin colour). Therefore, the presence of such ideology, even if deployed with the best intentions, to verbalise one's acceptance of BAME people, or interracial relationships, has the potential to become more insidious when discrimination and disadvantage become salient.

Despite these examples of colour-blind ideology not having addressed any of the research questions directly, it was still felt that they hold an important position amongst the themes identified during analysis, especially given the potential to become a damaging facilitator for racial disadvantage, as discussed above. The thematic map (which can be viewed in Appendix E) places this theme in the centre, with several other themes contributing towards its generation and reinforcement. For example, an individual's cultural upbringing may reinforce the endorsement of a colour-blind ideology, where race is given low importance and discussions of the topic are considered taboo, as has been suggested of contemporary Britain (Adjaye, 2015; Hirsch, 2018). Positive contact between groups, which would be expected to

lead to more positive evaluations, may also contribute to the adoption of colour-blind ideology, as the greater acceptance of others challenges the constructed racial hierarchy in society and makes race and ethnicity appear less salient. Similarly, a lack of contact between groups may encourage others to adopt this ideology, as their lack of experience in interacting with people from other racial groups would preclude them from empathising with various everyday issues from their perspective. Lack of contact may be driven by structural factors, such as the small population of Black people in North-East Wales making it more unlikely for Whites to come across them and have meaningful interactions. However, it could also be the result of negative perceptions of these groups, leading to a reduced desire to interact with them. The resulting lack of contact develops into poor racial literacy, the vacuum of which may be filled with colour-blind ideology.

Several participants made indirect appraisals of race de-emphasis. For example, Christine was inspired to wonder, despite her assessment of race as irrelevant, why were her social circles predominantly White? Mark made the relevant point that people within his White, middle-class, social circles would be very hesitant to openly express any opposition towards people of colour, yet their more implicit views remain unknown. Nina stated that interracial marriages were often more difficult due to the reactions of society towards them. How can that be when race is allegedly not an issue for contemporary British society?

Expressions of colour-blindness appear to be salient factors in the perceptions and attitudes towards interracial relationships in North-East Wales and therefore would be worthy of further exploration in future studies.

Chapter Summary

Scholars have stated that public accounts relating to racial intergroup relations must remain contemporary (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1970) and that attitudes towards interracial relationships act as a barometer for the wider acceptance of various racial groups (Childs, 2008). The image that emerges of North-East Wales is one built upon the same ambiguities that appear in Robinson and Gardner's (2006) study in neighbouring Powys; with a mixture of acceptance, outright intolerance and

a more discreet intolerance that is disguised under a veneer of acceptance. One of the more concerning aspects to emerge from interviews is the lack of meaningful interactions that the local White population are having with people from Black groups. Whilst they may come across Black people during their daily routine, or in their local neighbourhoods, very few of the White participants mentioned having close friendships with people outside of their racial group. Some of this may be attributable to the very small numbers of Black people that live locally, accounting for less than 2% of the overall population. However, the testimony of some participants indicates that overt hostility does still occur frequently in North-East Wales and that, particularly in the Wrexham area, this may be expressed without reservation. Such hostility towards Black and other minority people is unlikely to result in a desire for meaningful intergroup interactions and rather has the potential for Black people to retreat from further contact with the White population, further compounding the problem.

The lack of contact between groups results in a poor racial literacy, characterised by a lack of knowledge about cultural practices, communication styles, and differing perspectives that out-group members may take on everyday situations. These gaps in knowledge can then act to reinforce the perceived 'otherness' of out-group individuals when interactions between groups do take place. Infrequent contact with members of out-groups, and the resulting lack of racial literacy, leads the in-group to rely more upon stereotypes to fill the gaps in their knowledge, many of which are reinforced in negative media representations of particular groups, or through the perpetuation of historical symbolic stereotypes that are attributed to certain groups (such as hypersexualisation of Black men and women). In addition to this, the lack of experience interacting with different racial groups has also manifested in the form of concerns relating to political correctness, as greater sensitivity is required in social interactions between racial groups. Within this study, this was particularly relevant regarding the most appropriate nomenclature to use when referring to Black and other minority people. In the case of mixed-race people, this complicates the issue yet further, with some Black participants admitting uncertainties around appropriate descriptive terminology. This indicates another

issue for the contact scenarios in North-East Wales, as the desire to not appear racist in social interactions may create a feeling of unease, or even fear, at the prospect of interacting with Black people. This may create an aversion towards intergroup contact amongst local White people, who are otherwise accepting and welcoming towards people from other groups but are deterred from meaningful interaction through their fear of being labelled racist as the result of a racio-political *faux pas*.

Racism was, unfortunately, considered to still be present in North-East Wales and was confirmed by both White and Black participants, with the former recalling the subtle and overt racist comments and behaviours of others in their communities, whilst the latter reported being treated with disdain and as lacking intelligence or credibility. Negative stereotypes about Black people also seemed to be prevalent within accounts, with Black men still viewed as potentially violent and criminal, whilst Black women are constructed as sexually alluring 'exotics', a stereotype that appeared to have been internalised by some.

As anticipated in works by Childs (2008), some of the opposition towards racial others was articulated through opposition towards interracial relationships between members of White and Black groups. White participants were, unsurprisingly, quite uninformed in this area, as their lack of experience with other racial groups translated into a similarly poor knowledge of interracial couples. Concurrent with previous research, Black participants expressed their view that White families were more opposed towards interracial unions than Black families and that this opposition tended to be rooted in their aversive reactions towards Black people generally. Whilst this was something that may diminish as White families got to know a Black individual better, in other cases this opposition was stalwartly maintained and had deleterious effects for the White relatives concerned. Opposition was perceived to be more prevalent amongst the older members of White families and their views were often described as outdated artefacts of a less tolerant period.

Black participants did disclose that Black families do sometimes oppose interracial unions with Whites and that these concerns were often based in a sense

of incompatibility between cultures, the threat of erosion or loss of cultural practices, or due to resentments felt relating to the legacy of slavery and the colonial occupation of African states. Noteworthy, and consistent with other accounts in literature, is the sense that White opposition to these relationships tended to be based in racist aversions towards Blacks, whereas Black opposition tended to be more reactionary towards the actual or perceived racism that Whites could potentially expose them to, or had exposed them to previously.

Alongside, and intertwined with, the negative picture constructed of North-East Wales was a more positive view, with descriptions of increasing contact between Whites and Blacks, a general acceptance and integration of minority people into local communities and, as a result, an increasing number of interracial unions. Evaluations of these unions were overwhelmingly positive, with many stating that they could see themselves entering such a relationship, as race was a less salient factor in mate selection than personality. Favour for interracial relationships was perceived to be felt considerably strongly by the younger generation, who were described as more likely to enter these relationships. Black participants particularly agreed with this sentiment, stating that interracial relationships were becoming increasingly common in their communities; some younger participants stating that it was rare to see their contemporaries in co-ethnic relationships.

Many of the Black participants stated that they had rarely, if ever, come across racist behaviour whilst residing in the region, with some recounting stories of local White people showing considerable endearment towards them, or other Black relatives, sometimes going out of their way to offer assistance; something that has been recognised in other historical accounts from Wales. Sometimes these positive views could take more sinister forms however, manifesting as increased sexual interest or, in the case of mixed-race children, an obsession with physical features such as their hair, which was frequently subject to unsolicited touching.

Intimate relationships between Blacks and Whites were seen to offer several specific benefits both to the individuals involved and to wider society. At the dyadic

level, these benefits included the sharing of cultural practices and the accompanying broadening of perspectives. This was particularly beneficial to White partners, who began to appreciate the nature and prevalence of racist behaviours in their communities and either felt a new-found discomfort or began to pro-actively challenge these behaviours and perceptions. At the societal level, it was felt that these relationships help to break down the barriers between racial groups, increasing intergroup empathy, and aiding the smoother integration of minority groups into local communities.

The latter of these points seems to have taken effect within the North Wales region more broadly, as the distribution of Black people across the region suggests dispersal, rather than a concentration into one particular area, which would be expected of more racially segregated societies, such as South Africa, or the USA. This suggests, despite the relative lack of contacts between Black and White groups, that Black people in the region face fewer restrictions in their choice of housing, employment, and other opportunities when compared with the aforementioned countries, or more urban areas of the UK. Therefore, from a structural perspective, it is suggested that the two groups have a smaller social distance, despite infrequently encountering one another in meaningful exchanges.

Despite the positive views towards interracial relationships, some scholars have previously suggested that interracial relationships are founded on exchanges of status, whereby Black partners would have to offer increased socio-economic resources in order to off-set the negative connotations of their skin colour, inferred by the norms of a racist society. Despite some support for this theory in the past, more contemporary literature tends not to support this; as did the accounts from participants in this study.

Accounts of such exchanges that were described tended to deal with more materialistic and one-sided exchanges where Black partners gleaned material gains, or extended rights to remain in the UK, whilst White partners expected an interracial

relationship to provide a tangible statement of their liberal and accepting ideology, reducing their partner to a mere ‘badge of honour’.

An interesting example that emerged here was the aggressive pursuit of Black partners amongst the White gay community, with the perception expressed that a Black dating partner was considered particularly en vogue. However, it was unclear whether any additional underlying factors, such as the sexual stereotypes of Black men, had an influence.

Ultimately, however, relationships with these exchange dynamics were not seen as genuine, with participants stating that successful relationships were not based on material factors, and race was broadly seen as irrelevant. Instead, successful relationships were established and maintained based on various positive characteristics, chief amongst which were trust, shared values, and mutual romantic love. Interracial couples did not consider themselves any different to co-ethnic couples.

Colour-blind ideology was also present, and important, in the accounts given by White and Black participants. In many cases, this was articulated as a more ‘politically correct’ way to talk about racial issues and has been shown to be typical of White people in various settings. These ideologies are considered to be more insidious however, as their focus on the de-emphasis of race has the potential to undermine the importance of race relations and the structural disadvantages that Black people face in the UK and other parts of the world. It is suggested that both positive and negative evaluations of race and interracial relationships aid in the generation of these ideologies. The former aiding the break-down of divisions between racial groups, whilst the latter suggests a disassociation from other groups to the extent that they are not seen as important. With evidence indicating racial disadvantage is still an issue in the UK, and evidence that racism is becoming more frequent, it is important that colour-blind ideologies do not create a screen behind which these issues are obscured, for the sake of political correctness.

Based on the accounts given, North-East Wales offers a safe and accepting environment for Black/White interracial couples and for Black individuals, with increasing levels of acceptance and normalisation of intimate relationships between groups. However, racism remains a presence within the region, albeit a rare one, with more oppositional views coming from the older generations and those that they have influence over.

No research is without limitations and, as a qualitative study, it must be noted that the accounts discussed cannot be generalised to any of the racial or gender categories with which the participants identify, nor can the findings be generalised to the North-East Wales region as a whole. It has previously been mentioned that most of the participants came from education or healthcare backgrounds and, as such, the nature of these employment settings, and the associated socio-economic status, may skew the data further from a true representation of the general population; especially in light of the broader socio-economic context of the local area, as discussed earlier. The accounts shared do however provide an insight into the experiences of the participants who live in the region that is detailed and contextualised. Scholars agree that greater generalisability can be gleaned from studies that are quantitative in nature (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). However, with appraisal of the philosophical standpoint of much of the literature concerning race relations, it may be more appropriate to adopt a mixed-methods methodology whereby generalisations can be more easily made, and the simultaneous use of qualitative analysis ensures no loss of the participant's 'voice' (Lund, 2005).

Chapter Eight - Conclusion

This thesis has presented contemporary accounts concerning Black/White interracial relationships, as recounted by White and Black individuals residing in the North-East Wales region. Whilst such studies into societal views towards interracial intimacy are not by any means rare, this seems to be the first study of its kind to focus on such views in this part of the UK. The findings of this study add to the already extensive literature discussing interracial intimacy between members of Black and White groups in the UK, and beyond, with valuable insights into both positive and negative evaluations made from both sides of the socially constructed racial 'border'. Accounts also provide further evidence of the importance that intergroup contact, or lack thereof, has on evaluations of other groups and the growing pervasiveness of modern, or colour-blind, racism across British society.

The qualitative nature of the study has generated rich and detailed data, the nuances of which have been thematically analysed to assess the views that individual participants have of Black/White interracial intimacy and the broader picture of how they perceive these relationships to be received within their local neighbourhoods and across the broader North-East Wales region. A qualitative methodology has been particularly appropriate when considering the views of participants from Black backgrounds, as the semi-structured nature of interviews permitted them a degree of agency over the direction of the interview, such that their views could be comprehensively articulated. This is important, given the limited opportunities granted to Black people to express their views of important race-related issues that can have a considerable impact upon their social world.

All methodologies are not without their limitations, and foremost amongst the limitations of this study is the small sample size of thirteen participants. Whilst the data generated from the study provides rich accounts of individuals' views and perceptions, these findings cannot be generalised to any of the racial/ethnic groups involved, or to the wider population of North-East Wales. Most of the participants were also connected with educational and healthcare institutions, both of which tend

to have more diverse populations and employees who tend to subscribe to more liberal and accepting outlooks. There is the possibility that this could influence the data such that the views expressed appear more positive than those held within the wider population. This influence may have been compounded further as nearly half of the participants reported presently, or previously, having been in intimate interracial relationships. These participants may have been particularly interested in taking part due to the nature of this study and, as anticipated, their evaluations of such relationships tended to be overwhelmingly positive.

Several areas for additional research were identified during the analysis, and discussion of results, and most important amongst these would be a greater understanding of the salience and pervasiveness of colour-blind racial ideologies held by residents in the region. Accounts here suggested that they can have the insidious effect of obscuring issues of racial discrimination behind a facade of political correctness, thereby perpetuating these issues through the de-emphasis of race. Throughout the interviews, several participants attributed much of the oppositional viewpoints towards interracial intimacy as coming from the older generation across North-East Wales. Whilst these oppositional views were evaluated as outdated and much more unacceptable by more contemporary standards, the underlying reasoning or motivation for holding such oppositional views was not clarified. Further insights into the prevalence of negative attitudes amongst the older generation, why these are held in the first place, and whether subsequent generations are influenced by those views would help to build a more comprehensive picture of racial attitudes in the local region. Finally, the phenomenon of social exchange was supported in some participants' accounts, though the instances referenced were based more around the potential for material gains, or navigation of immigration mechanisms, than the more traditional interchange of race and socio-economic status. An interesting insight from this however, was the cited fascination amongst the gay community with Black men and the strongly held desire to enter relations with them, especially in more public settings. Despite the phenomenon being cited as particularly common, the motivations of the individuals involved were not clearly defined. Further investigation of this area would provide useful insights to confirm

this aligns with progressive attitudes towards interracial coupling in the gay community, or whether this is the effect of exposure to sexual stereotypes of Black men.

Previous research has reinforced the importance of maintaining contemporary accounts of racial attitudes, especially given the constantly evolving nature of societies. With the general movement of political views towards the right in the wake of the EU referendum, there is a strong case for more studies of this type to take place across the UK in the near future. With ongoing increases in the BAME population of North Wales, this study was particularly timely in exploring views amongst a population for whom experiences with racial diversity are relatively recent. The rich and detailed insights recounted by participants in this study further augment understanding of a topic that has rarely been explored in this region and it is hoped that the findings herein encourage further discussion and research relating to interracial intimacy and racial intergroup relations across North Wales in the future.

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Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Research Study Title: ***A Thematic Review of Contemporary Accounts of Black and of White Residents in North-East Wales Towards Black/White Interracial Relationships***

Introduction

This research forms part of my MPhil study at Wrexham Glyndwr University. You are being invited to take part in this study. Before you agree to do so, it is important that you understand the purpose and nature of the research and what your participation will involve. Please read the following information carefully and ask if anything is not clear or if you would like more information. Contact details are given at the end of this information sheet.

What is the purpose of the study and how will it be carried out?

The research objectives are:

1. To explore current attitudes to Black/White interracial relationships held by members of the public in North-East Wales.
2. Identify nuances in opinions between White and Black people in North-East Wales towards Black/White interracial relationships.
3. Compare and contrast results with similar research conducted in Britain and the USA.

The research methodology is:

1. To conduct interviews with participants, residing in Britain, who come from the White British, Black British, Black Caribbean and Black African ethnic groups which will explore individual attitudes towards Black/White interracial relationships.
2. Analysis of interview results to identify patterns in the data.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study, as you meet the necessary requirements to be a participant, namely: (i) normally resident in North-East Wales, (ii) over the age of 18 years, (iii) identify as either White British, Black British, Black Caribbean or Black African.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you agree to take part, you may still withdraw, without giving a reason. If that happens, any information or data you have given will not be used in the study and will be destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Once data has been completely anonymised however, withdrawal from the study will no longer be possible.

What will taking part involve?

Participants will be asked to take part in an interview, lasting around an hour, exploring their attitudes towards Black/White interracial relationships. Interviews will be recorded and information transcribed before being subject to further analysis. Interviews will take place at a mutually beneficial time and in a location where the participant feels comfortable. No cost to the participant will be incurred by agreeing to take part in this study.

Will my participation be confidential?

All information collected during the study will be kept strictly confidential and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Throughout the data your name will be replaced with a pseudonym and any other information that could identify you will be altered to maintain anonymity. All data, whether electronic, paper, or in any other form will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and may be utilised in further studies and publications upon completion of the MPhil.

What will you do with the results of the research?

Results from this study will be incorporated into a MPhil thesis. Recordings from interviews will be transcribed and subject to thematic analysis, which will identify common themes between the views of different participants. Ultimately, results will provide a picture of contemporary attitudes to Black/White interracial relationships from a number of ethnically and culturally distinct groups which will be compared to similar studies from the UK and the USA. No participant will be named in the thesis – pseudonyms will be used in place of real names and other information that may identify a participant will be altered accordingly.

What happens next?

Thank you for reading this information sheet. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete a consent form and a mutually convenient time and location will be agreed for the interview to take place.

You will be given a copy of the consent form to keep.

If you wish to complain about any aspect of how you have been approached or treated in respect of this research study, please contact:

Director of Studies: Professor Mandy Robbins, m.robbins@glyndwr.ac.uk

Contact for further information

If you would like further information about any aspect of the study please feel free to contact me:

Andy Cairns a.cairns@glyndwr.ac.uk

Appendix B – Participant Recruitment Advert

Participants required for Research study

I am a postgraduate research student at Wrexham Glyndwr University, conducting research into contemporary attitudes toward Black/White interracial relationships. I am seeking participants from across North-East Wales to take part in interviews that will explore knowledge and opinions of Black/White interracial relationships in North-East Wales.

Participants would need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Normally resident in North-East Wales
- Over the age of 18 years
- Identify as either:
    - White British
    - Black British
    - Black Caribbean
    - Black African
    - Other Black background

Interviews will take around an hour and will explore knowledge of and opinions towards Black/White interracial relationships in North-East Wales. Information from interviews will be incorporated into a MPhil thesis and contribute towards the knowledge of interracial relations and perceptions the public have of them.

Participants can be assured that views discussed in interviews will be treated in the strictest confidence and any information that may identify an individual will be removed from the final write-up of the study.

If you are interested in taking part, or would like further information, please feel free to contact me at a.cairns@glyndwr.ac.uk

This study has received ethical approval from Wrexham Glyndwr University.

Appendix C – Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Research Study Title: A Thematic Review of Contemporary Accounts of Black and of White Residents in North-East Wales Towards Black/White Interracial Relationships

Name of Researcher: Andy Cairns

Please tick the boxes to confirm each statement:

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study.
If I have asked for clarification, or more information, I have had satisfactory responses. ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw, without giving any reason. ☐

I understand that upon completion of the interviews, once my data has been anonymised,
it will no longer be possible to withdraw my data from the study. ☐

I understand that relevant sections of the data collected from me during the study may be
looked at by the Researcher, Director of Studies and/or Secondary Supervisors. ☐

I consent to interviews being recorded. ☐

I consent to anonymous quotations being used in the research. ☐

I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

I am over 18 years of age. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	*Signature*	*Date*

Appendix D – Interview Schedule

Semi-structured interview schedule

1. Would you say that you have a small, medium or large circle of friends and acquaintances?

2. Where do you know most of your friends from? (work, childhood, etc.)

3. How diverse would you rate the collective acquaintances that you have?

4. How diverse would you rate your close circle of friends?

5. Do you know many people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds to your own?

6. If so, how well do you know them?

7. How much importance do you feel is placed on marriage nowadays?

8. What do you think makes a successful relationship?

9. What factors do you think are important when choosing a partner?

10. What do you think of the way the media represents relationships nowadays?

11. How common is it to see Black/White interracial couples in your community?

12. What sort of reaction do you think they receive in your community?

13. Do you know anyone personally who is in a Black/White interracial relationship?

14. Do you think there are any trends in the type of people who are in Black/White interracial relationships?

15. How do you think the media represent Black/White interracial relationships?

16. Do you think there are any unique experiences that Black/White interracial couples face in particular?

17. What is your personal opinion of Black/White interracial relationships?

18. Do you feel differently towards the prospect of Black/White interracial marriage, when compared with Black/White interracial dating?

19. Would you feel differently towards a Black/White interracial relationship if one, or both, of the partners were from overseas?

20. How would you feel about a friend entering a relationship with someone of another race?

21. How would feel about a close family member entering a relationship with someone of another race?

22. Could you personally see yourself entering a relationship with someone of another race?

Appendix E – Thematic Map