Interracial Couples Essay, Research Paper

The Social Pressures of Interracial Couples According to Steven A. Holmes, 1996 the number of interracial marriages is increasing in today’s society, more and more everyday. In 1970, a study showed that of blacks who married, 2.6% were to white partners. More recently, in 1993, the percentage rose to 12.1%. Although the numbers are rising, interracial couples still have social pressures. Society imposes many prejudices against interracial couples and their families. First of all, there are stereotypes of dating for status. Secondly, there’s the question of identity for mixed children. Thirdly, there is a general prejudice from both races and confusion on how to treat these couples. Society has not accepted interracial couples as part of the norm. Desiree French,1990 says that even though the United States is known for its’ diversity society still has not come to terms with interracial couples. French also says that society’s non-acceptance of them, is a reason why the numbers of interracial couples are so low. Families, peers, and society still expects people to marry someone of the same race. Paul Glick of Arizona State University, says that interracial couples are not the problem. It is the people they have to deal with. (French, 1990) Glick also states, “When a white man marries a black woman, she usually has a higher level of education than is the norm.” But he states also , “When a black man marries a white woman, she usually has a lower level of education than the average.” (French, 1990) A popular myth according to Candy Mills is that interracial couples marry so that minorities might escape from their oppressed situations. Society looks at white women who marry black men as being of lower status, but a black woman who marries a white man is of higher status. Children of interracial couples tend to be judged as children with no defined heritage or background. People often question which race the children should consider themselves to be. Francis Wardle, 1989, writes that there are various names used to describe children of two races. For example, biracial, multi-racial, interracial, mixed, brown, and rainbow is a few of the common names used. Wardle also states that many interracial parents are still searching for a true identity for their children. Wardle states that in the past children of mixed parentage were identified with the parent of color. If one parent was black, then the child was considered black. Wardle further explains that some parents insist that their children are “human above all else” and the color of their skin does not matter. Wardle also talks about the additional stresses interracial families have, such as, dealing with negative racial comments and harassment from other adults and children alike. These comments sometime bring about hurt feelings of the children. This could lead to emotional problems. Wardle states that “because of racial discrimination in this country the issue of identity in mixed children often becomes an extremely emotional one.” Children of interracial couples are treated very differently than children of a same race couple. Most of this difference is due to racism in America. There might always be some prejudice in America, but relationships between races are improving. The Black people of today have begun to be recognized on a higher level now, unlike years ago. Some people see interracial couples as a testimony to how much racial tensions are changing. (Steven A. Holmes,1996) Although many politicians, civil rights leaders, and other Americans, speak now on how there is a lot of racial tension between groups and intensified group solidarity, more white and black people are falling in love with each other. (Holmes, 1996) A.J. Gordon stated that ” the white man’s suspicion that the Negro is seeking to escape from his own people through interracial marriage is nothing more than the rationalization of prejudice.” (Candy Mills, 1992) Although prejudice will always have an affect on couples, Audrey Chapman states, “people are usually able to weather the storm if they’re committed.” (Desiree French, 1990) In 1967, the Supreme Court decision making antimisegeration law unconstitutional the number of interracial couples are slowly decreasing. (French, 1990) Some families of interracial couples also have a hard time dealing with the relationship. According to Audrey Chapman, the family tends to start making comments when the couple goes past dating. (French, 1990) Some people believe that the couple is being rebellious. If one partner is white, they feel that they are rebelling against the family. (Candy Mills,1992)

Today in American society, an interracial couple raises a lot of questions. People are unsure of how they should be treated. Candy Mills writes that “interracial couples marry for the same reasons as same-race couples marry- love, security, and compatibility.” (Candy Mills, 1992) Some people believe that interracial couples marry for social and or economic status, rebellion, self-hating and sexual curiosity. But there are just as many same race couples who marry for the same reasons. Jacquline Adams states that “too many black men still fear and at the same time are so insecure that they need the thrill that comes along with owning the ultimate trophy, the All-American beauty queen, blonde and blue-eyed.” (Jacquline Adams, 1994) Black women feel anger or resentment when they see a black man in the a white woman. (Jacquline Adams, 1994) A black woman feels threatened by a white woman in a sense that a white woman is of higher status, when really we are all equal. Adams believes that interracial marriage for both blacks and whites have serious racial implications. (Jacquline Adams, 1994) Some black and white people do not agree with the idea of two different races together. They will make it hard for the couple to survive. People are so worried about why interracial couples are together, that they end up judging them and not accepting them in society. In conclusion this paper explains some of the social pressures that a interracial couple might go through. Society may never accept the idea of interracial couples. People will more than likely always be quick to judge a interracial couple. There might always be prejudice in the world no matter how close different races become. The children of interracial couples may one day be able to be identified as a separate race. Interracial couples go through many hard times. The couples, in my opinion, are together because they love each other. If this love is strong enough and the two people are strong as well, they can make it in today’s society. People will always talk about you and give you funny looks, but love is the most important thing. The Social Pressures of Interracial Couples Austen Hemphill November 18, 1997 Marriage and the Family Dr. Ansted Work Cited: Black and White Marriages on Rise Study SaySteven A. HolmesNew York TimesJuly 4, 1996Pg. A-10 Interracial MarriageDesiree FrenchThe Boston GlobeSun-Sentinel (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.)January 25, 1990p. 3E Children of Mixed Parentage-How can Professionals Respond?Francis WardleChildren TodayJuly/August 1989pp. 10-13 Interracial America Opposing ViewpointsDavid Bender and Bruno Leone, Series EditorsCopyright 1996Pg. 197-219