MARITAL SATISFACTION AND CONFLICT IN LATIN-NORTH AMERICAN INTERETHNIC COUPLES IN CANADA

by

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ABSTRACT

Do mixed marriages differ in relationship satisfaction and conflict compared to marriages in which both partners belong to the same ethnic group? To address this question, 72 participants (36 males and 36 females), consisting of 7 Latin American couples, 14 North American couples, and 15 intermarried couples, including 12 dyads of North American husbands with Latin American wives, and 3 dyads of Latin American husbands with North American wives, completed the *Marital Satisfaction Inventory – R*, an open-ended questionnaire assessing conflicts in their marriage, and a demographic data sheet. A 2 (Role: husband versus wife) x 3 (Group: Latin American versus North American versus Interethnic couples) analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure with repeated measures on Role was conducted to examine the differences among the three groups of couples as well as gender differences. Results showed no significant differences for intermarried couples in regard to the measures of marital satisfaction and conflict, however a trend towards attributing marital conflict to their cultural differences was observed. Results also showed one main effect on view of finances for husbands and wives, and two group interactions: one regarding differences in gender role orientation for intermarried husbands and wives; and one regarding global dissatisfaction for North American husbands and wives. Implications for counselling interventions with Latin-North American intercultural couples are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

Kalbach (2000) reported that ethnic intermarriage has been on the increase in Canada since 1871 regardless of one's ethnic origin. The 1996 Census indicated that, in terms of ethnic mixing and assimilation through marriage in Canada, those of Northern, Western and Eastern European origins tend to exhibit the highest proportion of ethnic exogamy, followed by more recent immigrant groups such as the Greeks, Italians and Portuguese. Latin (Central and South Americans), Africans/ Caribbeans, and Arabs exhibit about the same levels of intercultural marriage as the more recent European ethnic groups. The least amount of ethnic mixing in Canada is found in the more recent non-European immigrant Asian groups, especially those of East and Southeast Asian origins, of which only 13 percent reported a multiple origin background (Statistics Canada, 1998).

Foreign-born husbands and wives who have intermarried after coming to Canada have exhibited a greater propensity to choose spouses from the populations of British and French origins than from other ethnic groups (Richard, 1991). This tendency seems to be expected given the fact that they are the two charter groups, both of which are numerically and culturally dominant in their respective areas of settlement. They have established the social and economic infrastructure and have defined the nature of the social, economic and political cultural systems in which the minority immigrant groups must establish themselves if they are to successfully integrate into Canadian society. It is not surprising that considerable ethnic intermarriage has occurred during the period of settlement and growth of the Canadian population (Kalbach & Kalbach, 1999).

The literature points to two possible reasons for the increase in interethnic marriage. First, there is obviously a shift toward greater legal equality between ethnic

groups since the 1960s. The post-war years in Canada have seen the emergence of multiculturalism blossom into policies that have had a major effect on the composition of Canada's immigrant stream. This newly emerging multiculturalism is one of the factors that has led to the elimination of the discriminatory aspects of immigration policy in the late 1960s, which could be contributing to a more balanced view of interethnic marriage (Kalbach & Kalbach, 1999).

A second possibility is the change in attitudes displayed by many North Americans, especially the growing tolerance and acceptance of ethnically mixed relationships. Solsberry (1994), explained that given the increased racial integration within educational institutions as well as work and social environments, there are more opportunities for people of different races to establish contact, become involved with, and possibly marry persons of other ethnic groups. This is likely a trend that will continue to grow.

Despite the growing number of intercultural couples and the difficulties they may face, few researchers have studied this population. There does seem to be, however, a growing literature that focuses on multicultural counselling issues (e.g. Pedersen, 1991; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). This body of research primarily addresses the challenges that arise when clients are culturally different from their therapists. Among those writers who have discussed intercultural couples, the focus is often on only one dimension of intermarriage, such as religion or race (e.g. Davidson, 1992; Gleckman & Streicher, 1990; Pope, 1986; Sung, 1990). All too often, the focus has been on describing specific differences between two cultural groups rather than on

developing an approach to working with cultural differences in general, and to strengthening culturally diverse marriages.

Since research in this area has tended to present a more pessimistic picture of intercultural relationships, this study represents a shift in focus toward a deeper understanding of intercultural couples and to developing more proactive ways to support and counsel them. The use of specific tools to assess marital satisfaction and causes for conflict among intercultural couples may help us understand the commonalties and disagreements present in this kind of relationship, giving us a better comprehension of the dynamics of intercultural marriage.

Attitudes toward Immigration in the United States and Canada

Although there seems to be evidence of a growing acceptance of intercultural marriages in North America, public attitudes toward immigration might be different in Canada compared to the United States.

Garcia-Preto (1996) reported that for many Latinos, the United States has represented "a place in the sun, a place to be free, yet upon arrival, they are dismayed by the attitude that non-Hispanics have toward them. Their color, language, and culture, essentials to their being, become cause for oppression. A majority see themselves as victims of discrimination and at the bottom of the social ladder, below Blacks. They often view the American people as cold and the American way of life as hostile to what they describe as their tradition of family unity, personal warmth, respect for their elders, and for their own and other people's dignity" (p. 143).

A Harris Poll (cited in National Minority Politics, 1995) reporting public attitudes toward immigrants in the United States, and measuring changes in these attitudes

between the years of 1992 and of 1995, indicated that the public has become somewhat more hostile to immigration and, presumably, more supportive of policies to cut down on immigration. According to the poll 61 percent of respondents said immigration makes race relations in their cities worse. It also appears, as described by the report, that the U.S. citizens' acceptance of immigration from European countries exceeds their tolerance for Latin American immigration. Fifty-six percent of respondents said there were too many immigrants from Latin American countries, versus only 31 percent who said the same about immigrants from European countries.

On the other hand, Canada, as Kalbach (2000) reported, presents itself as a multicultural society, open to immigrants from any place in the world, and as a country in which those of diverse ethnic origins are encouraged to retain their distinctive cultural characteristics as they seek to become successfully integrated into Canadian society.

A possible difference in attitudes toward Latin American immigrants in Canada in comparison to the United States could raise the possibility that Latin-North American interethnic couples living in Canada might not experience the same level of conflict that similar couples living in the U. S. would experience, if we consider social acceptance as one of the factors related to marital satisfaction of intercultural couples (Crohn, 1998).

The fact that Latin Americans are not represented at the same proportion, or in similar numbers in Canada, as they are in the U. S. – Latin Americans do not account for the majority of immigrants in Canada, as Kalbach (1999) reported – is another factor to be considered when discussing attitudes toward Latin American immigrants in both countries as affecting the level of potential conflict for these interethnic couples.

Over half of the immigrant population arriving in Canada since the 1970s, and 75 percent of those who have arrived during the 1990s thus far, are members of visible minority groups such as the Chinese (the largest of the visible minority group), followed by South Asians and Blacks. These three groups combined account for almost two-thirds (66 percent) of Canada's visible minority population. The remaining third of the visible minority population include West Asians, Arabs, Koreans, Japanese, Latin Americans, Southeast Asians and Filipinos (Kalback, 1999).

In contrast, in the United States, as Zambrana and Logie (2000) reported, growth rates among the Latino population not only exceed those of other minority groups but also exceed the growth rate of the U.S. population as a whole. If projected growth trends continue, they assert, the Latino population will be the largest minority group in the United States, reaching a projected 96.5 million people (24.5% of the total U. S. population) within the next 5 years.

In view of a potential difference between the U.S. and Canada regarding attitudes toward Latin American immigrants, and the fact that most of the research literature about interethnic marriage has originated from the United States, it is possible that some of these findings may not necessarily apply to interethnic couples in Canada, in particular Latin-North American couples.

Findings on Marital Satisfaction in Interethnic Marriage

Researchers have produced copious amounts of literature in the area of marital satisfaction over the past 25 years. The interest and concern in this topic has been the result of increased efforts to delineate the variability within marital relationships (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Marital satisfaction is defined as

an individual's subjective impression of the specific components within his or her marital relationship. Areas pertinent to the study of marital satisfaction include communication, finances, and children, among others (Snyder, 1979).

Despite the increasing number of mixed marriages, few studies have investigated the relationship formed by individuals from two different ethnic groups. In this study, we examined the mixed relationships of Latin American and North American couples living in Canada, and contrasted these marriages with the mono-ethnic, or homogeneous relationships of both Latin American and North American married couples sampled from the same geographic region.

Studies of the ethnic background of medical students and family therapists have confirmed the impression of others that ethnically mixed couples are more likely to get divorced and to have a variety of conflicts (Heer, 1980; McGoldrick and Rohrbaugh, 1987). These studies have also shown that children of interethnic couples reported more personal problems and more relationship problems than did children from ethnically homogeneous families, leading to the conclusion that the diversity of intermarriage is thus often problematic for the children as well as for the couple.

Although it is said that opposites attract, the actual tendency is for people to marry others who are similar to them and who belong to the same group and race (Ahren, Cole, Johnson & Wong, as cited in McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). In general, those who marry outside their group are the exceptions. By and large, the greater the difference between the spouses, the less common the pairing and the greater difficulty they will have adjusting to marriage.

Western society promotes the view that marriages should be based on a romantic foundation, that is, on the experience of mutual love. Some theories maintain that such love has a better chance of flourishing when the partners share similar backgrounds, while others are predicated on the opposite reasoning. According to Reiss (1976), the experience of rapport, so essential to the development of love, is greatly facilitated by commonality of social and cultural experiences: "One's social and cultural background is a key basis from which to predict the range of types of people for whom one could feel rapport. Broad factors such as religious upbringing and educational backgrounds would make one able to understand a person with similar religious and educational background, and thus make rapport more likely" (Reiss, p. 93).

Impact of Cultural Differences in Ethnically Diverse Marriages

Ethnicity is a powerful influence in identity formation. McGoldrick (1996) reported that ethnicity describes a sense of commonality transmitted over generations by the family and reinforced by the surrounding community. It is more than race, religion, or national and geographic region. It involves conscious and unconscious processes that fulfil a deep psychological need for identity and historical continuity. It patterns our thinking, feeling, and behaviour in both obvious and subtle ways. It plays a major role in determining what we eat, how we work, how we relax, how we celebrate holidays and rituals, and how we feel about life, death, and illness.

In a similar vein, Crohn (1998) stated that ethnicity, religion, race, gender and social class influence every aspect of how people view the world and what they consider "normal" or "abnormal". He argued that culture moulds attitudes toward time, family, eating, money, sex, and monogamy. And cultural norms affect how anger and affection

are expressed, how children are disciplined and rewarded, how strangers and friends are greeted, and what roles men and women play (Crohn, p. 295).

Considering the influence of ethnicity in our lives, we can anticipate its impact in ethnically diverse marriages. As Biever, Bobele and North (1998) pointed out, cultural differences may affect couples in various ways over the course of a relationship. They described that, initially, couples may face disapproval or social awkwardness with friends and families and, in more extreme cases, they may even face financial and/or emotional estrangements.

Crohn (1998) found that, in cross-cultural relationships, contrasting norms may lead one partner to describe behavior as neighbourly that the other sees as seductive. What he intends to be friendly disagreement, she may be just as sure is a threat; when he says he visits his parents "often", he may mean twice a year, but for her "seldom" may mean twice a week (Crohn, pp. 295-296).

Intermarriage seems to affect every level of a social system: the individual, the married couple, their children, the ethnic groups in which they are involved, and society as a whole. As Friedman (1982) suggested, though, family emotional process also plays an important role in a couple's dynamic. In his discussion of the "Myth of the Shiksa", Friedman (1982) described what he called "cultural camouflage" as "the universal tendency of family members everywhere to avoid responsibility for their feelings, their actions, and their destiny by attributing their cause either to factors in their own background, or to aliens [*shiksas*] from a background that is foreign [*goyische*]" (p. 501).

Friedman (1982) also argued that, rather than supplying the determinants of family dynamics, culture and environment supply the *medium* through which family

process works its art. Rather than determining family dynamics, culture and environment *stain* them, that is, they make them visible. Following this argument, he proposed that, only when we can see culture as a stain rather than a cause of family relational problems, can we devise appropriate strategies for affecting the underlying emotional processes that, rather than the cultural factors or differences themselves, have the real power to destroy that family or keep it together (p. 501-503).

Friedman's point is a very important one when we consider that families may use their ethnic customs or religious values selectively to justify an emotional position within the family or against outsiders. In this sense, we may argue that the disruption of a family caused by intermarriage most often reflects hidden emotional issues in the family.

Challenges Faced by Interethnic Couples: Latin-North American Differences

People who enter into interethnic marriages may discover that their spouses (and families) have quite different expectations and beliefs about fundamental aspects of marriage as a contract, which can lead to clashes. As Harris (as cited in Nave, 2000) described, regarding New Zealand: "The intensity of the conflicts and the amount of adjustment required depends on the degree to which each spouse is committed to the cultural values and customs associated with his or her race [read ethnicity]" (p. 331). And many of these beliefs are subtle and difficult to articulate, such as beliefs about gender roles and hospitality.

Biever et al. (1998) listed some potential conflict areas in interethnic marriages, as being frequently culturally based, such as: sex-role expectations, attitudes towards work and leisure, holiday traditions, expression of affection and problem solving strategies, parenting styles and interactions with extended family members.

McGoldrick and Preto (1984) also pointed out some areas for potential problems in interethnic marriages. One of these areas, as they reported, refers to the different attitudes each partner has to marriage. Attitudes toward marriage vary across cultures. They pointed out that, in North America,[1] for example, marriage tends to mean the beginning of a new unit, separated from the extended family, whereas for Latin Americans,[2] "getting married is more likely to mean adding more relatives to a larger informal family network" (McGoldrick & Preto, 1984, p. 352). North Americans, as described by McGill and Pearce (1996), tend to experience marriage as "a contractual relationship between individuals to meet individual needs. The emphasis is not on fulfilling a religious sacrament or joining extended families. Sex, money, and even the delivery of happiness are seen as contractual obligations" (p. 457). Contrasting to these, for Latin Americans, perhaps the most significant value they share is the importance placed on family unity, welfare, and honour. The emphasis is on the group rather than on the individual. There is a deep sense of family commitment, obligation, and responsibility. The family guarantees protection and caretaking for life as long as the person stays in the system (Garcia-Preto, 1996).

Following this argument, we can speculate that, in interethnic marriages where one partner is Latin American and the other partner is North American, they will have differing attitudes regarding marriage. This difference will likely impact the relationship,

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[1] The term North American will refer to individuals from British descendant families, including: English, Scottish, and Scotch Irish immigrants. North American culture will refer to habits, ideas, and attitudes learned and shared by the above individuals.

[2] The term Latin American culture will refer to habits, ideas, and attitudes transmitted from generation to generation by the learning process and shared by the majority of the population of countries where a Latin rooted language is spoken in South and Central America. The term will also refer to individuals born and raised in South and Central America.

producing conflict between partners.

Another conflict that may become more intense in ethnically diverse marriages is the difference in expected roles of husband and wife as perceived from one culture to another. As McGill and Pearce (1982), reported, in North America, for example, the husband plays a less authoritative role in the family and shares more household responsibilities with his wife. Both husband and wife are expected to find a balance between their job outside home and their duties at home, including taking care of children. Contrarily, in Latin American, the husband tends to be seen as the person with most power in the relationship, whereas the wife has a more submissive role and tends to support the decisions made by her husband most of the time. Her role is often being the family caregiver and housewife, even when she has an outside job (McGoldrick & Preto, 1984). Given these diverse family frameworks, one could anticipate differences and conflicts in interethnic marriages of Latin American and North American partners regarding their gender role expectations.

As previously mentioned by Biever et al. (1998), and Crohn (1998), another area of potential conflict in ethnically diverse marriages is the expression of affection and problem-solving strategies, including patterns of emotional expression and communication.

To summarize the ways of expressing affection and problem solving, McGoldrick and Preto (1984) pointed out four aspects of communication where differences can be seen in ethnically diverse marriages. First, the style of communication that tends to be verbal and dramatically expressive for some, versus reserved or rational for others.

Second, in the handling of conflict some prefer argument and reasoning whereas others often resort to teasing, withdrawal or indirect responses. Third, the attitude toward intimacy and dependence for many is positive and assertive, versus fearful, demanding, and withholding for others. Fourth, as regards grief and sadness some will likely exhibit more controlled responses compared to others who will be more emotionally expressive and perhaps even angry.

According to McGoldrick and Preto (1984), Latin Americans tend to value emotional expressiveness, employing words in a dramatic sense and also making use of physical expressions such as gesticulating, touching, and hugging as part of close personal interactions. For Latin Americans, the sharing of sadness and grief is expected, and talking about problems is experienced as the best cure.

On the other hand, McGill and Pearce (1982) reported that British Americans are distinguished by a tendency toward self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and self-control, and are less likely to enter into relationships characterized by dependency. When upset, they tend to move toward stoical isolation to mobilize their powers of reason. Their tendency is to deny, carry on, and above all, take responsibility for their problems by not complaining or involving other people. Likewise, they would not risk interfering in another person's business.

In discussing cultural emotional strategy of British Americans, McGill (1983) described it as one of self-contained individualism, asserting that British Americans tend to experience themselves as individuals, whole, sufficient, adequate, and contained, within themselves. According to this adaptive strategy, emotional experience is best contained within the individual. Self-contained individualism is the British American

idea of how to live, cope, survive, and thrive emotionally. British American families then meet their own cultural requirements for childrearing by raising their children to be and value self-contained individuals.

With these differences in perspective, we can anticipate potential conflicts also in the area of communication and emotional expression including styles of handling problems between Latin-North Americans interethnic couples.

Different values and attitudes about rearing children can also contribute to some conflicts in interethnic marriages. Although they may love their children with equal intensity, people from different cultures may express love very differently. According to McGoldrick and Preto (1984), in North America children are usually encouraged to live independently and to make decisions early in their lives, including having a job and a place to live outside of the family home in their late adolescent years. Latin Americans, on the other hand, are more likely to reinforce and nurture a relationship of dependence and cohesion, with their children being encouraged to remain at home as long as they are single. In this sense, it can be hypothesized that different expectations in child rearing for Latin Americans and North Americans will reflect in their relationship, and likely create some tension between both partners.

In addition to the potential areas for conflict in interethnic marriages already discussed, McGoldrick & Preto (1984) also suggested that the degree of adjustment in ethnically diverse marriages is a factor that can be influenced by the following variables: a) the extent of difference in values between the cultural groups involved; b) the differences in the degree of acculturation of each spouse; c) religious differences; d) socio-economic differences; e) familiarity with each other's cultural context prior to

marriage; and f) the degree of resolution of emotional issues about the intermarriage reached by both families prior to the wedding (pp. 349-350).

Benefits in Ethnically Diverse Marriages

Despite obstacles that ethnically diverse couples may encounter, which can be overwhelming and place them in a more vulnerable position socially, emotionally, and psychologically (Brown, 1987), it is possible that this type of relationship may also present the couple with an opportunity to gain a type of personal and interpersonal maturity that they would not have experienced separately or in a homogeneous marriage. This latter outcome was recognized early by Bontemps (1975), who indicated it as a type of maturity that demands that everyone be treated as an individual and not simply as a member of a group. Couples who choose to "marry out" are usually seeking to rebalance their own ethnic characteristics, moving away from some values as well as toward others.

Theories that focus on the importance of similarities for marital compatibility seem to regard cross-cultural marriages pessimistically and cite the high incidence of divorce as proof of the difficulties involved in these marriages. In fact, most interfaith premarital counselling emphasizes finding areas of commonality between the prospective spouses. Conversely, other theories about love seem to be based on the importance of differences for the fulfilment of the individuals in a relationship. A widespread belief is that "opposites attract" and compliment each other. Some authors view the cultural differences as mere masks behind which lie the partner's complementary needs (Falicov, 1995).

According to these theories the bottom line is whether the union provides the necessary warmth, love, affection, excitement, caring, intimacy, and solidarity all human

beings require. This is the prerequisite behind the masks of two racially different people. "It takes two to tango" and consciously or unconsciously a person selects a marriage partner who compliments a particular dance step and road in life (Jeter, 1982).

Although the complimentary differences referred to are considered personality differences, a similar argument might be used to find value in exposure to cultural differences. As interethnic, interfaith, and interracial marriages become more common, social tolerance seems to increase, and vice versa (Falicov, 1995). Such a view stresses the opportunities open to cross-cultural marriages. For example, the stereotypic task-oriented North American man could benefit from marrying the stereotypic person-oriented woman from a Latin American background. The integration of the two complementary backgrounds may produce a richer or more satisfying whole than if each had married a person within their own culture (Falicov, 1996).

A contemporary and positive view of intermarriage proposes that, like other types of "blended" families (Goldner, 1982), cross-cultural couples represent a newer, more complex form of marriage than the traditional endogamous relationships of pre-industrial societies. These intercultural systems may come closer to what Keeney (1983), borrowing from biology, calls an "ecological climax", a "vital balance" of diverse forms of experience and behaviour in an ecosystem.

Both theories of cross-cultural marriage reported above are valid at a sociological level and offer a broad perspective for the clinician, but they are of limited application when trying to distinguish the successful cross-cultural matches from the problematic ones.

Falicov (1995) presented a hypothesis that links dysfunction to the couple's inability to develop a balanced view of their cultural differences in the context of their multiple differences and similarities. In this way, couples who intermarry enter a form of *cultural transition.* The main developmental task of this process of cultural transition is to arrive at an adaptive and flexible view of cultural differences that makes it possible to maintain some individual values, to negotiate conflicting areas, and even to develop a new cultural code that integrates parts of both cultural streams. Cultural similarities can be viewed in isolation from the complex of a couple's other similarities and differences. Regardless of whether the cultural differences are large or small, what one usually observes is an outcome where difference and similarity stand in a fairly complex and comfortable balance or appear to be unbalanced. In this fashion, couples vary in the degree of complexity and balance with which they view their other differences (Falicov, 1995).

Implications for Counselling

The literature has demonstrated that intermarriage has been accepted as an indicator of assimilation into the new culture (Kalbach, 1983; Richard, 1991). By definition, it means the crossing of some well-defined line such as ethnic origin or religion. Those who marry exogamously, or outside of their own ethnic background, are said to be more assimilated than those who remain ethnically connected through marriage (Richard, 1991).

As McGoldrick and Preto (1984) discussed, "intermarriage breaks the old continuity of a system. It disrupts family patterns and connections on the one hand, but opens a system to new patterns, connections, and the possibility of creative

transformations on the other" (p. 348). In this sense, becoming familiar with a different culture, as they suggested, may be an enriching experience that provides new flexibility to a system, as "complementary ethnic values, patterns, and attitudes may enhance the potential of a marriage" (McGoldrick & Preto, p. 348).

Schwartzman (as cited in McGoldrick & Preto, 1984) has suggested that "intermarriages (or any marriage of two very diverse people) are more likely to produce creative children who can transform the diversity into new and different perceptions of the world, or children who are symptomatic because they cannot reconcile the diversity" (p. 348).

Consistent with an integrated theory of interethnic marriage, the present study suggests that many intermarried couples can offer a complex and balanced view of their relationship. This view encompasses the experiences derived from their embeddedness in the spheres of family, social class, religion, occupation, historical moment, rural or urban setting, ethnic roots, or political ideology (Falicov, 1995). Thus, it is assumed that, within a marriage possessing a balanced framework, cultural differences will be more easily integrated, negotiated, or allowed to remain parallel or autonomous from other areas.

Given the scarcity of research directly relating to ethnically diverse marriages in Canada, it appears that intercultural research in this area would create the opportunity for greater understanding of the cultural motivations found in these marriages. An assessment of the marital differences between Latin and North American interethnic couples would also serve as an important addition to empirical knowledge in the area of intercultural marital studies.

In attempting to address this situation, an investigation was undertaken to examine areas related to marital satisfaction and conflict for Latin American couples, North American couples, and interethnic couples living in Canada. Within this framework, the following questions were considered: (a) Are there differences in factors related to marital satisfaction for North American couples, Latin American couples, and ethnically diverse couples? And what are they? (b) Are there gender differences in factors related to marital satisfaction for these three groups? And what are they? (c) Are there differences in causal attribution for conflict and its severity for homogenous couples compared to heterogeneous couples? And what are they? (d) Are there gender differences in causal attribution for conflict and its severity? And what are they?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are advanced for the present study:

Hypothesis One. Based on research showing that intercultural couples can possess a balanced view of their cultural differences and similarities which will lead them to achieve flexibility and maturity while adjusting to marriage (Falicov, 1995), it is expected that intercultural couples will experience more challenges, but not necessarily a higher level of global dissatisfaction with their relationship, compared to homogeneous couples in this study – Latin American couples and North American couples.

Hypothesis Two. Based on McGoldrick and Preto (1984), and McGill and Pearce (1982) assumptions about gender roles of husband and wife in Latin America and North America being different, it was hypothesized that intercultural couples would disagree more on gender role orientation compared to homogeneous Latin

American and North American couples, and that for these couples, the wives from Latin American background would tend toward a more traditional view of role orientation, whereas the husbands from North American background were expected to hold more egalitarian views of gender role and parenting.

Hypothesis Three. Resting on McGoldrick and Preto's (1984), findings about communication for intermarried couples, seen as an area of potential conflict, as well as patterns of emotional expression and the handling of conflict, it was expected that interethnic couples will disagree more regarding areas of communication and affect, including problem-solving strategies, in comparison to Latin American and North American homogeneous couples, who would likely have more agreement in these areas.

Hypothesis Four. Based on previous research indicating child rearing as an area of potential conflict for intermarried couples (McGoldrick and Preto, 1984), it was hypothesised that differences in terms of values and attitudes about rearing children for North Americans and Latin Americans would impact spouses so that intercultural couples would exhibit more disagreement than homogeneous couples (Latin American and North American couples) regarding parenting styles.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Participants

Thirty-six couples (36 males, 36 females) from Latin and North American backgrounds were solicited through minority student and faculty organizations, churches, cultural communities, and personal networks of the researcher. Three types of couples were selected: 7 homogeneous Latin American dyads; 14 homogeneous North American dyads and; 15 heterogeneous (intermarried) dyads. In the heterogeneous group, there were 12 dyads of North American husbands and Latin American wives and, 3 dyads of Latin American husbands and North American wives.

The Latin American participants were from countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. They had Spanish or Portuguese as their native language and Latin America (South or Central America) as their ethnic background. They were first generations of immigrants in Canada, and had being born and raised in their respective countries. Their number of years living in Canada ranged from 1 to 27 years.

The North American participants were from Anglo-Saxon (British-North American) background, having English as their native language, and had been born and raised in Canada, where they lived to date. There were no participants from French-Canadian, Native Indian, Black, Asian, African, or European backgrounds represented in this group.

Participants' ages ranged from 23 to 68 years (husband median = 46, wife median = 36). Level of education ranged from secondary school graduation to university graduate degree. Yearly income per partner ranged from 1(0 – $10,000) to 10 ($90,000 +), with husbands averaging $40,000 – $49,999 and wives averaging $11,000 – $19,999. Years

of marriage ranged from 1 year to 31 years (median = 8.5 years). Two couples, one from the North American group and one from the Interethnic group, had a partner who had been previously married. Across the three groups of participants, 22 couples had children (61.1%) and 14 did not have children (38.9%). Additional information on religious affiliations revealed participants belonging to Christian denominations, Buddhist, and non-religious (Appendix F contains mean comparisons and standard deviations on age, number of years married, and number of children of participants).

From a total of 50 research packets handed out to 50 couples, a total of 36 were returned completed to the researcher, representing 72% of return rate.

Sampling procedures were identical for all groups and promoted diversity across age, education, and other demographic dimensions. The participants were in a matched group, being previously matched as close as possible regarding factors such as age, socio-economic level, education, and religion, in order to obtain consistency between group comparisons and avoid participant selection confounds produced by the quasi-experimental nature of the study.

Procedure

Materials. A test package was handed to each couple including copies of the following (see Appendices A – E):

1. Two cover letters delineating the purpose of the research and procedures to be followed with regard to completing and returning the research materials.

2. Two inform consent letters.

3. Two demographic questionnaires.

4. Two open-ended questionnaires regarding marital conflict.

5. Two copies of the *Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised* (MSI-R) with attached answer sheets.

6. Envelopes designated "husband" and "wife".

7. One Self-addressed stamped envelope.

Couples were asked to complete the research packet individually and to return all materials to the researcher.

It was noted that 2 couples in the Interethnic group answered that they did not argue with their partners, therefore they did not describe conflicts neither rate the scale-question-items on the Marital Conflict Questionnaire (CONFQ).

Dependent Measures

Two dependent measures were utilized in this study to assess marital satisfaction and marital conflict. Marital satisfaction was measured using the *Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised* (MSI – R), and marital conflict was measured by a self-report questionnaire assessing causal attribution and severity of conflict for each spouse.

The participants were instructed to complete the measures separately, anonymously, and without any collaboration. The couples were provided no feedback regarding their responses, but were encouraged to contact the author if they had any questions, concerns, or desire to obtain a report on the findings of the study. They were then asked to place their questionnaires in the appropriately marked envelopes and to return them to the researcher. Incentives were used to encourage the return of the packets. These incentives took the form of a random gift certificate draw. Participants were assigned a personal identification number (PIN) according to the order in which the

packets were received and scored. Each packet was scored and the data recorded as it was received.

Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised (MSI – R; Snyder, 1997). The MSI – R (see Appendix E) was designed by Snyder (1997), after a complete revision and re-standardization of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) – 1981.

The MSI – R is a self-report measure of relationship functioning designed to identify both the nature and intensity of distress in distinct areas of partners' interaction. The instrument is designed to assess subjective marital interaction, and conceptualises marital satisfaction as being influenced by several factors, rather than as a monolithic entity (Burnett, 1987; Snyder, 1979). The MSI-R includes two validity scales, one global distress scale, and 10 additional scales assessing specific dimensions of the relationship. The questionnaire consists of 150 true-false items (129 items for childless couples). Scale names, abbreviations, and brief descriptions are as follows:

1. Inconsistency (INC) – a validity scale assessing the individual's consistency in responding to item content (high scores reflect greater inconsistency).

2. Conventionalization (CNV) – a validity scale assessing individual's tendencies to distort the appraisal of their relationship in a socially desirable direction (high scores reflect denial of common relationship shortcomings).

3. Global distress (GDS) – measures individuals' overall dissatisfaction with the relationship.

4. Affective communication (AFC) – evaluates individuals' dissatisfaction with the amount of affection and understanding expressed by their partners.

5. Problem-solving communication (PSC) – assesses the couple's general ineffectiveness in resolving differences.

6. Aggression (AGG) – measures the level of intimidation and physical aggression experienced by respondents from their partner.

7. Time together (TTO) – evaluates the couple's companionship as expressed in time shared in leisure activity.

8. Disagreement about finances (FIN) – measures relationship discord regarding the management of finances.

9. Sexual dissatisfaction (SEX) – assesses dissatisfaction with the frequency and quality of intercourse and other sexual activity.

10. Role orientation (ROR) – evaluates the respondent's advocacy for a traditional vs. non-traditional orientation toward marital and parental gender roles (high scores reflect a non-traditional orientation).

11. Family history of distress (FAM) – reflects the disruption of relationships within the respondent's family of origin.

12. Dissatisfaction with children (DSC) – assesses the relationship quality between respondents and their children as well as parental concern regarding one or more children's emotional and behavioural well being.

13. Conflict over child rearing (CCR) – evaluates the extent of conflict between partners regarding child-rearing practices.

The MSI-R is administered to each partner separately and requires approximately 25 minutes to complete. Individuals' responses are scored along the 13 profile scales and are plotted on a standard profile sheet based on gender-specific norms using normalized

T-scores. Each of the scales, excluding the validity scales (INC and CNV) and ROR are scored in a direction whereby higher scores reflect higher levels of relationship distress. Scores ranging from 30*T* to 49*T* fall in the low category and reflect a good marital relationship. Scores ranging from 50*T* to 60*T* are considered moderate and point to possible problems for the relationship. Scores ranging from 61*T* to 70*T* are placed in the high category and indicate serious problems in the relationship. Coefficients of internal consistency for the 12 scales (excluding INC) average .82 (range = .70 - .93) and test-retest stability coefficients average .79 (range = .74 - .88) (Snyder, 1997).

Previous studies have supported both the convergent and discriminant validity of the MSI-R scales. Actuarial tables linking scale scores to descriptors of the relationship provided by clinicians and both spouses show the MSI-R scales to relate to a broad range of external criteria consistent with their interpretive intent (Snyder, 1997; Snyder & Aikman, 1999). In addition, previous analyses of internal consistency, structural equivalence, and group-mean profiles have suggested the appropriateness of the MSI-R for use with interethnic couples (Negy & Snyder, 1997).

The revised instrument was standardized on a sample of 2,040 persons (1,020 intact couples). This sample was geographically diverse and had a balance that was consistent with the population of the U.S. census regions. The sample was also representative of the U.S. population for such demographic characteristics as ethnicity, educational level (SES), and occupation. Finally, the broad age range of the sample ensured representation of persons in their late teens through those in their 70's and beyond. There was no data available regarding the representation of the MSI-R for the Canadian population.

Standard *t*-scores were applied on the MSI scales. The revised MSI has a high degree of internal consistency for each category (Burnett, 1987). Psychometric studies have revealed point bi-serial correlations in the range of .40 to .95, with a mean of .75. Revised MSI categories have been correlated with independent measures of global marital satisfaction. Results indicate "both discriminating and convergent validity across external criteria of marital functioning" (Burnett, 1987, p. 118).

Marital Conflict Questionnaire (CONFQ). The Marital Conflict Questionnaire (see Appendix D) contains descriptive and scale questions regarding marital arguments reported by each partner. The questionnaire includes fourteen items: two open-ended questions referring to the description of the three most serious and frequent arguments according to the spouse's view, and the causes for arguing. The remaining twelve items consist of statements with responses on 7-point Likert scales with *1* being *not at all* and *7* being *totally*, or *all the time*. This questionnaire was adapted from The Judgements About Transgressions Questionnaire (JATQ), developed by Krebs and Laird (1998) and has the purpose of examining the subject's attribution of fault regarding conflicts experienced. With permission from the author, the JATQ was revised for the purpose of this study to include open-ended marital argument questions. As specified by Laird, this questionnaire was designed to assess, according to the items: 1) seriousness; 2) consensus; 3) consistency; 4) self-dispositionality; 5) partner dispositionality; 6) circumstances; 7) self-justifiability; 8) partner justifiability; 9) stability; 10) self-background; 11) partner background and; 12) influence, related to marital conflict.

Categorizing causes. The author classified answers to the 2 open-ended questions pertaining to the description of the most serious and frequent marital conflicts and, causes

for arguing into five categories. An independent rater classified answers to the open-ended questions as well. There was 84% agreement between the author and the second rater (kappa=.80). The responses were organized into the following five categories: 1) Household issues (e.g. "Children's education", "Housework", "Money"); 2) Relationship issues (e.g. "Time spent together", "Communication", "Sexual relationship"; 3) Personal/Selfish issues (e.g. "Partner's bad temper", "Being late", "Diet, exercise"; 4) Extended Family/Upbringing issues (e.g. "Family visiting", "Relationship with in-laws", "Family politics"; and 5) Cultural issues (e.g. "What to eat for dinner", "Cultural conflicts", "Roles in marriage").

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine Latin American and North American interethnic couples' marital satisfaction and marital conflict and compare them to mono-ethnic, or homogeneous Latin American and North American couples.

Comparisons between Interethnic and Mono-ethnic Couples on the MSI-R

Eleven 2 (Role: husband versus wife) x 3 (Group: Latin American versus North American versus Interethnic) ANOVAs, were conducted on the subscales of the MSI-R, with repeated measures on Role. Mean and standard deviations for the marital satisfaction measures appear in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

These analyses yielded a Role main effect on view of finances, F (1,33) = 5.86, $p<.05$, indicating that wives (M=54.36) perceived finances as a greater source of distress in their marriage than did husbands (M= 51.33) across the three groups; and two Group by Couple interactions. The first interaction was observed on global distress, F (2,33) = 3.76, $p<.05$ (see Figure 1). Tests of within-couples in the North American group yielded an F (1,13) = 4.78, $p<.05$, showing that North American husbands were significantly more distressed with their marriage than their wives compared to Latin American and Interethnic couples.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The second interaction was found on role orientation, F (2,33) = 2.78, $p<.05$ (one-tailed) (see Figure 2). Tests of within-couples effects in the Interethnic group yielded F (1,14) = 6.65, $p<.05$, indicating a difference in how Interethnic husbands (12 North Americans and 3 Latin Americans) and Interethnic wives (12 Latin Americans and 3 Latin Americans) viewed gender roles. The former tended toward a less traditional and more egalitarian view of gender roles and the latter tended toward a more traditional view. The results also showed that all three groups, North American, Latin American and Interethnic couples, obtained scores in the range of 50*T* to 60*T*, indicating that all three groups fell into the moderate category for this measure.

Insert Figure 2 about here

All other main effects and interactions failed to reach conventionally accepted levels of statistical significance.

Mean and standard deviations on the INC (inconsistency) and CNV (conventionalization) subscales were not reported since these are considered validity scales and none of the participants met the criteria to fall outside the cut off line on these subscales.

Comparisons between Interethnic and Mono-ethnic Couples in the Conflict Questionnaire

The results obtained with the Conflict Questionnaire (CONFQ) are presented in Table 2. Twelve 2 (Role: husband versus wife) x 3 (Group: Latin American versus North American versus Interethnic) ANOVAs were conducted on the twelve items of the

CONFQ, with repeated measures on Role. There were no statistically significant main effects or interactions yielded for Role or Group on any of the twelve items of the CONFQ.

Insert Table 2 about here

Qualitative Descriptors of Marital Conflict. The Descriptors of Marital Conflict are shown in Table 3. Five chi-square analyses were conducted on the categories of marital conflict. These analyses yielded two Group main effects in the category of household-conflicts, $\chi^2(2) = 9.77$, $p<.05$, and in the category of culturally-based conflicts, $\chi^2(2) = 23.29$, $p<.05$. The results indicate that North American couples frequently cited general household conflicts as being the most serious and frequent arguments in their relationships (56% of the time). This was significantly more frequent than Latin American couples (43% of the time) and Interethnic couples (28% of the time). Finally, the results reveal that Interethnic couples reported more conflicts based on their cultural differences (19% of the time) than did Latin American couples (6% of the time) or North American couples (0%). There were no main effects observed on the other items, specifically: relationship, personal and, extended family-based conflicts, as these failed to reach conventionally accepted levels of statistical significance. The category of relationship-based conflicts almost approached statistically significant level.

Insert Table 3 about here

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Do Latin and North American interethnic couples experience greater relationship distress than comparable mono-ethnic groups? Despite previous literature suggesting that interethnic relationships are inherently stressful due to inevitable cultural conflicts, this view was not supported by this study. Overall, the interethnic Latin and North American couples in this study were quite similar to the mono-ethnic, or homogeneous North American couples with respect to their satisfaction across a variety of relationship domains.

Hypothesis One

Contrary to the assertion that marital satisfaction is more apparent and enduring for same culture (homogeneous) couples than for heterogeneous (interethnic) couples (McGoldrick & Preto, 1984), and consistent with a more contemporary and positive view of intermarriage, as proposed by Falicov (1995), it was hypothesized in this study that interethnic Latin-North American couples would experience different conflicts and challenges in their relationships but not necessarily higher marital dissatisfaction than homogeneous couples (both North Americans and Latin Americans).

The results in this study supported this hypothesis that Interethnic couples would not display a higher level of global dissatisfaction with their relationship than would Latin American and North American homogeneous couples, indicating that Interethnic couples do not present a higher level of global distress with their relationships than the homogeneous couples.

Hypothesis Two

Consistent with McGoldrick and Preto's (1984) views, interethnic couples in this study showed a discrepancy toward their view on gender role orientation compared to Latin American and North American couples. According to the definition of the ROR scale (Snyder, 1997, p. 24, 25), low scores suggest a slightly more traditional view on gender role orientation and parenting. It can be noted that, in terms of partners' differences, wives and husbands of the Interethnic group yielded the greatest score difference in this scale, suggesting disagreement regarding role orientation between those two partners. It can also be observed that wives (12 Latin Americans and 3 North Americans) in the Interethnic group scored lower (holding more traditional views towards marriage and parenting) than husbands (12 North American and 3 Latin American) holding more traditional gender views, which was predicted.

Hypothesis Three

Contrary to hypothesis, no group differences were observed on the affective communication (AFC) scale, and Interethnic couples did not score higher than both homogeneous groups (Latin American and North American couples) on this scale; therefore affection and understanding expressed by partners did not present a problem for intercultural couples. It can be noted that husbands of the Latin American group scored the highest on this measure, and fell into the category of moderate scores ($50T - 60T$), whereas all other groups of husbands and wives obtained scores below $50T$, falling into the low scores category. Although interesting, these differences were not statistically significant.

Analyses on the problem-solving communication (PSC) scale did not support the hypothesis that Interethnic couples would score higher than homogeneous couples on this scale. The results show that couples in the Latin American group (both husbands and wives), fall into the moderate scores category (50*T* – 60*T*), whereas the North American and Interethnic groups fall into the low scores category (below 50*T*). Again, this finding was not statistically significant.

According to the author (Snyder, 1997, p. 22), individuals who obtain moderate scores (50*T* to 60*T*), as it was observed with Latin American couples, typically indicate a somewhat protracted history of relationship difficulties characterized by frequent arguments. Individuals who obtain low scores (below 50*T*), as it was noted with North American and Interethnic couples, usually report little overt disharmony in their relationships, and are likely to be committed to resolving differences when they occur.

Hypothesis Four

McGoldrick and Preto (1984) previously reported that child rearing is an area where intercultural couples are likely to disagree. It was hypothesised that differences in terms of values and attitudes regarding rearing children for North Americans and Latin Americans would impact spouses and that Interethnic couples would score higher on the conflict over child rearing (CCR) scale, in comparison to the homogeneous groups of couples.

Despite what the literature suggests, and contrary to hypothesis, there was no statistically significant difference found for the Interethnic group in this measure, and therefore, the hypothesis was not supported by the analysis.

The results in this study also indicate that both husbands and wives of the Latin American group were placed into the moderate category of scores (50*T* – 60*T*), indicating significant level of conflict between partners regarding child rearing, according to Snyder (1997, p. 26). On the other hand, North American and Interethnic couples fell into the low scores category (below 50*T*), representing generally positive interactions between partners regarding their children (Snyder, 1997, p. 26).

Qualitative Descriptors of Marital Conflict

The results obtained in the Marital Conflict Questionnaire revealed that, when asked about the most serious and frequent causes for arguing in their marriage, Interethnic couples seemed to attribute these causes more often to the cultural differences existent in their marriage.

Interethnic couples revealed qualitative differences indicating that the nature of their arguments is largely cross-cultural. In other words, in the CONFQ, assessing the nature and severity of arguments, Interethnic couples reported cultural conflicts more frequently than did Latin American and North American couples. Interethnic couples also reported more conflicts based on relationship issues than did Latin American and North American couples. Relationship conflicts were previously defined as involving issues such as communication, affection, and time together, among others. In this sense, we can speculate that relationship-based conflicts for Interethnic couples could be overlapping with cultural-based conflicts, making the results more complex to interpret. It does seem clear, however, that Interethnic couples brought up culture as playing a role in their conflicts.

Additional Findings

Disagreement about Finances (FIN) Scale. Interestingly, a gender difference was observed on view of finances. The results showed that wives across the three groups expressed greater concern regarding finances than did their husbands, suggesting a difference on how husbands and wives view financial priorities and manage them in their marriage.

There was no hypothesis predicted on this scale, although research has shown that women, as the chief caregivers, are also often the partner who ends up balancing check books and handling the comparison shopping – for fresh produce, for long-distance carriers (Collins, 2000). One could also argue that women, as wives and mothers, know where the money goes on a daily basis, as they are more involved with the everyday expenditures than are men as husbands.

Another research conducted by The National Endowment for Financial Education (as cited in Collins, 2000) reported that women appear "more intimidated by money than men." But women, as the report added, are expanding their comfort zone on money matters, which can mean that they are running a home full time, supplementing household income – or taking the lead in wage earning.

The results also showed that homogeneous groups of Latin American and North American couples (both husbands and wives) scored between $50T - 60T$, falling into the moderate scores in the FIN scale, whereas the Interethnic group scored below $50T$, falling into low scores for the same measure. According to Snyder (1997, p. 24), moderate scores in this measure (as it was obtained by Latin American couples) indicate that disagreement about finances are a significant relationship concern for the couple, whereas

low scores (as it was observed with North American and Interethnic couples) indicate that finances constitute an area of relative agreement in the couple's relationship.

Global Distress (GDS) Scale. Another non-hypothesized finding in this study was the difference found in the level of global distress for the North American group. This study showed that North American husbands scored higher than their wives, indicating that North American husbands seem more distressed than their partners compared to Latin American and Interethnic couples. As the author describes (Snyder, 1997), the GDS scale's item content reflects individual's general dissatisfaction or unhappiness in the relationship, and also negative expectancies regarding the relationship's future (Snyder, p. 21).

The dissatisfaction expressed by North American husbands in this study might be related to the fact that North American women have a more independent view about marriage, and consequently, a more independent view of their gender role. Latin American women, on the other hand, seem to have a more submissive and dependent attitude toward marriage, as previously discussed in this study regarding gender role orientation. Following this argument, it is possible that North American husbands might have different expectations about marriage than their compatriot wives, increasing their (husbands') level of marital distress.

The small number of interethnic couples in which the husband is Latin American and the wife is North American seems to be another factor that can help us analyse some of the differences in gender role expectations for both Latin and North Americans. The trend observed suggests that Latin American husbands hold more traditional views regarding their view on role for husbands and wives, which can influence their choice for

marrying a Latin American woman instead of a North American, consistent with their (husbands') traditional views.

Limitations of the Present Study and Directions for Future Research

In order to summarize the limitations of this study, some areas will be considered such as design, generalizability, statistical power, measurement, test factors, dependent variables, and confounding variables.

Fundamentally, the design of this study is sound. As a 2 (role: Husband versus Wife) x 3 (group: Latin American versus North American versus Interethnic) ANOVA, with repeated measures on Role, its aim was to include all combinations of the levels of the independent variables across all the measures of marital satisfaction and marital conflict, and also to determine whether there were interactions of variables.

Random selection was not possible in this study since the couples that participated were recruited through organizations such as church, school, community centres, and personal networks of the researcher.

If the sample size of this study had been larger, the power of the analysis could have been enhanced, reducing the possibility of accepting the null hypothesis. Given that this study was quasi-experimental, it was more susceptible to problems that can weaken conclusions, such as confounding variables mediating relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Sample size could also explain the large standard deviations that appeared in the data (see Tables 2, & 3). We know that standard deviation is influenced by the nature of the distribution (i.e., skewness) and the influence of extreme scores on small samples (Minium, 1978).

The repeated-measures analysis used in this study introduced a potential problem with the familywise error: the inflated probability of incorrectly rejecting at least one null hypothesis out of all the comparisons that were made within this study.

Another factor to consider refers to the range of the couples' scores, which was narrow; a larger distance between group means might have enhanced the strength of the results. A larger sample size drawn from a more representative population would have improved the score range.

It has been noted that this study is best described as a quasi-experimental design. Inherent to this design is the inability to attribute causation between the independent and dependent variables. The possibility of other explanations such as the presence of a third variable, needs to be acknowledged. In this study the likelihood of a confounding variable being present was very high. Factors such as the acculturation level of the Latin American participants, both in the Latin American group and in the Interethnic group, influencing their level of marital satisfaction, would have to be taken into account. In addition, the presence or absence of children for intermarried couples could be a determinant affecting their level of marital satisfaction (it was noted that only 8 out of the 15 intermarried couples had children, which may have affected the measure of disagreement over child rearing, skewing the results).

These control issues directly influenced the generalizability of the findings since it could not be conclusively known whether or not the observed effects were attributable to the independent variable or some extraneous variable. Therefore, given the lack of controls and the demographic characteristics of the sample population, this study is limited in its ability to inform.

The measures chosen for assessing the dependent variables were relatively well established as instruments either in research or clinical applications and reported moderate to strong estimates of reliability and validity. Nonetheless, the lack of ethnically and culturally relevant marital satisfaction inventories presents a dilemma. The *Marital Satisfaction Inventory - Revised* (MSI-R) is an instrument based on values, beliefs and behaviors of one culture. As a unilateral instrument, it was applied as a measure of marital satisfaction factors for the Latin American group, in addition to North American men and women. Further research would warrant the modification of the instrument to include culturally relevant items as well as the development of culturally sensitive instruments.

Another concern in this study that was not mentioned earlier has to do with the fact that all of the data in this study came from participant self-report. No other data (i.e., observation, clinical records) was used to corroborate results. In this situation, the researcher is at the mercy of participants' subjective moods and biased perspectives. We also have to account for the fact that some of the participants that had English as a second language might not have answered the questions with accuracy due to language barriers, or might have requested help from a third person in answering the questions.

In order to examine more adequately the implications of this study, future research in this area would benefit from the qualitative study of marital satisfaction within intermarried and Latin American groups living in Canada. Such investigations would allow the couples involved to fully elaborate on significant issues affecting satisfaction and conflict within their marriages, as well as their perceptions of problems in marriage, and their attitudes toward them. Husband and wife's definition, perception

and understanding of problems in marriage as well as the influence and consequences these have in marriage should be further investigated. It is unknown how participants perceived problems in their marriage and how they rated severity, whether they considered it a cause of distress leading to divorce or just a routine in life, for example.

It remains a question for future research whether or not the level of marital satisfaction and conflict is the same in Latin American couples, North American couples, and intermarried (Latin-North American) couples in other parts of Canada and the United States.

Clinical Interventions for Interethnic Couples

Despite the commonality of fundamental issues confronting interethnic couples, Falicov (1995) cautions against generalizations, noting that "facts that make for success or failure, happiness, or unhappiness, in a marriage are extremely complex and cannot merely be reduced to degrees of cultural commonalities and differences" (p. 231). Thus, the therapist's familiarity with common issues confronting interethnic couples must be complemented by an understanding of the unique strengths and challenges confronting a given couple and their strategies for coping with difficulties.

In regards to counselling interventions for intermarried couples, an important point to make from this study is that, although no more distressed overall than couples from mono-ethnic marriages, interethnic couples seeking therapy need their therapist to address their unique concerns with sensitivity. For example, Crohn (1998) emphasizes the importance of exploring couples' own understanding of potential intercultural conflicts, and offers guidelines for eliciting an in-depth cultural history to delineate both

the differences and similarities between the cultural and religious milieus of partners' families of origin.

Ibrahim and Schroeder (as cited in Wehrly, 1999) suggest the use of questions adapted from McGoldrick and Pearce (1982) in working with interethnic couples, after a cultural background and worldview assessment has been conducted. Some of these proposed questions would include: a) How does each partner define the relational problem? b) What does each partner perceive as a solution to the problem? And, how have the partners attempted to resolve things previously? c) Considering their cultural backgrounds and families of origin, what are typical patterns regarding communication rules, expression of intimacy, boundaries, and so on, for each of them? d) How does each partner's culture affect his or her perception of roles and expectations in the relationship? e) How are life cycle stage and transitions defined and dealt with by the cultural groups to which each partner belongs? f) What are the spiritual and religious backgrounds of each person and how do these views affect his or her view of the relationship? g) What are some pros and cons of having a counselor of the same or different background in this particular situation? (p.153-154).

Another valuable recommendation for counselors working with intercultural couples is the importance of helping these couples see similarities and differences that exist between the partners and, in doing so, the counselor can also help them focus on the strengths and weaknesses of their relationship. In other words, helping the couple see that although there are differences between them, there are also similarities, which served to attract them to each other, at first, and also helped to cement the relationship serving as a

foundation. In this sense, the differences pointed out are not necessarily negative, as they have helped in providing some variance in the relationship.

Conclusion

Some conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, given the scarcity of main effects in the results, it is possible that the positive relationship between marital satisfaction and homogeneous couples is not as great as the literature would suggest, at least for the groups who participated in this study. Second, the results for qualitative descriptors of marital conflict suggest that interethnic couples have a tendency to attribute their arguments to their cultural differences. Third, intermarried husbands and wives revealed different expectations regarding gender role orientation, holding different values toward marital and parenting roles. Finally, the study taken as a whole underlines the complexity inherent in understanding marital satisfaction and conflict in the context of interethnic Latin-North American couples living in Canada compared to the United States. Specifically, it is possible that marital distress can be related to a lack of social acceptance and tolerance, and that Latin-North American intermarried couples experience different response in Canada than the U.S., which may be due to the fact that Latin American groups are not as numerically representative in Canada as they are in United States.

Evidence suggests that the incidence of interethnic marriage will continue to increase both in Canada and in the United States in the future. Although there seems to be a trend toward widespread acceptance of these couples and their families in society, there is evidence to suggest racist views will continue to interfere with some families' participation in Canadian and American society – racist views that in many cases will

have a negative impact on the family's identity as well as its patterns of interaction, as Solsberry (1994) suggests.

With the increase in interethnic marriages, more counsellors will likely be called on to provide services for these couples and their families. And, although the counsellor role is essential, it does extend beyond the four walls of the counsellor's office. The role of mental health professionals is also one of education, outreach into the community, and promotion of understanding of the issues faced by interethnic couples in an effort to decrease prejudices and discrimination (Root, 1996).

Finally, greater effort should be made to gain an accurate picture of the role that intercultural marriages play in Canada as a whole; not only the potential problems encountered by such couples but also the strengths that such unions can bring to the whole of Canada. Future research is needed to assess the factors affecting interethnic marriage in Canada in comparison to the United Sates.

This study acts as a starting point for counsellors pursuing a greater awareness and understanding of couples from differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds, in particular intermarried Latin American with North American couples living in Canada. It is suggested that professionals planning to work in the area of cross-cultural counselling note within-group differences, dissenting factors among homogeneous and heterogeneous couples, and the literature pertaining to Latin American couples in Canada.

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Table 1

Group-by-Role Mean Comparisons (and Standard Deviations) on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) Subscales

	Latin American		North American		Interethnic Couples	
Subscales	*M*	SD	*M*	SD	*M*	SD
Global Dissatisfaction						
Husbands	52.71	5.91	50.29	7.62	49.00	7.45
Wives	51.43	2.23	47.36	8.67	51.87	7.23
Couples	52.07		48.82		50.43	
Affective Communication						
Husbands	52.00	6.95	49.36	9.55	47.87	6.73
Wives	49.86	8.65	48.29	9.46	47.87	8.12
Couples	50.93		48.82		47.87	
Problem Solving Communication						
Husbands	51.00	7.19	49.00	6.59	49.27	6.43
Wives	51.14	5.96	50.50	7.30	50.00	6.67
Couples	51.07		49.75		49.63	
Aggression						
Husbands	47.57	7.57	45.70	8.14	45.73	8.38
Wives	44.57	4.28	48.86	8.57	45.47	6.35
Couples	46.07		47.32		45.60	
Time Together						
Husbands	49.57	7.30	50.86	9.34	49.00	8.60
Wives	46.29	8.12	49.71	8.23	50.67	11.27
Couples	47.93		50.29		49.83	
Disagreement about Finances						
Husbands	54.86	8.67	52.00	8.04	47.13	6.28
Wives	55.86	7.86	56.50	6.42	50.73	6.68
Couples	55.36		54.25		48.93	
Sexual Dissatisfaction						
Husbands	49.43	6.80	53.07	10.69	46.53	7.11
Wives	48.29	8.98	49.50	10.85	49.60	11.57
Couples	48.86		51.29		48.07	
Role Orientation						
Husbands	57.00	8.43	54.57	8.36	59.67	8.52
Wives	60.43	6.65	53.00	8.98	55.33	9.22
Couples	58.71		53.79		57.50	
Family History of Distress						
Husbands	53.57	7.89	51.00	5.95	51.00	9.89
Wives	49.57	12.91	51.21	8.72	51.27	10.17
Couples	51.57		51.11		51.13	
Dissatisfaction with Children						
Husbands	47.80	10.40	48.00	9.42	46.50	10.73
Wives	48.20	14.11	47.11	10.79	47.38	7.11
Couples	48.00		47.56		46.94	
Conflict over Child Rearing						
Husbands	52.80	8.61	48.67	8.90	48.50	6.91
Wives	51.20	10.43	50.33	6.82	50.75	9.27
Couples	52.00		49.50		49.63	

Table 2
Group-by-Role Mean Comparisons (and Standard Deviations) on the Conflict Questionnaire (Answers 1=not at all to 7=all the time)

	Latin American		North American		Interethnic Couples	
Items	*M*	SD	*M*	SD	*M*	SD
Seriousness						
Husbands	4.50	1.64	3.50	1.70	3.50	1.74
Wives	4.50	1.76	3.71	1.27	4.21	1.81
Couples	4.50		3.61		3.86	
Consensus						
Husbands	5.83	1.94	5.43	1.55	5.43	1.50
Wives	5.17	.75	5.86	1.29	4.64	1.50
Couples	5.50		5.64		5.04	
Consistency						
Husbands	4.50	1.05	2.50	.85	2.79	1.19
Wives	3.67	1.03	2.57	.94	2.86	1.17
Couples	4.08		2.54		2.82	
Self dispositionality						
Husbands	4.33	2.25	4.21	1.53	3.64	1.69
Wives	5.33	1.63	3.86	1.61	4.93	1.54
Couples	4.83		4.04		4.29	
Partner dispositionality						
Husbands	5.50	1.05	4.21	1.81	4.07	1.90
Wives	5.00	1.67	4.29	1.82	4.14	1.88
Couples	5.25		4.25		4.11	
Circumstances						
Husbands	5.67	1.03	3.86	1.17	4.08	1.75
Wives	5.17	1.60	4.64	1.55	4.62	1.85
Couples	5.42		4.25		4.35	
Self justifiability						
Husbands	5.50	1.77	3.29	1.54	5.07	1.59
Wives	5.50	1.38	4.50	1.29	4.64	1.50
Couples	5.50		3.89		4.86	
Partner justifiability						
Husbands	5.00	1.41	4.21	1.19	4.36	1.60
Wives	4.17	1.47	4.00	1.41	3.86	1.46
Couples	4.58		4.11		4.11	
Stability						
Husbands	5.17	1.47	4.00	1.47	3.57	1.74
Wives	4.50	1.22	3.79	1.89	3.79	1.76
Couples	4.83		3.89		3.68	
Self-background						
Husbands	4.67	1.97	4.29	1.73	4.69	2.14
Wives	5.50	.55	4.00	2.11	4.92	2.06
Couples	5.08		4.14		4.81	
Partner background						
Husbands	5.67	.82	4.43	1.55	4.33	2.15
Wives	5.33	1.37	4.14	1.66	5.17	1.75
Couples	5.50		4.29		4.75	
Influence						
Husbands	6.00	.89	3.85	1.95	4.00	2.27
Wives	5.67	.52	4.15	1.68	4.62	1.71
Couples	5.83		4.00		4.31	

Table 3

Percentage of Qualitative Descriptors of Marital Conflict

	Couples		
Types of Conflict	Latin American	North American	Interethnic
Household/Finances/ Children Education	43%	56%	28%
Relationship	30%	18%	33%
Personal/Selfish	14%	19%	14%
Extended Family/ Upbringing	8%	8%	6%
Cultural	5%	0%	19%

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Group by Couple Interaction for Global Distress (GDS)

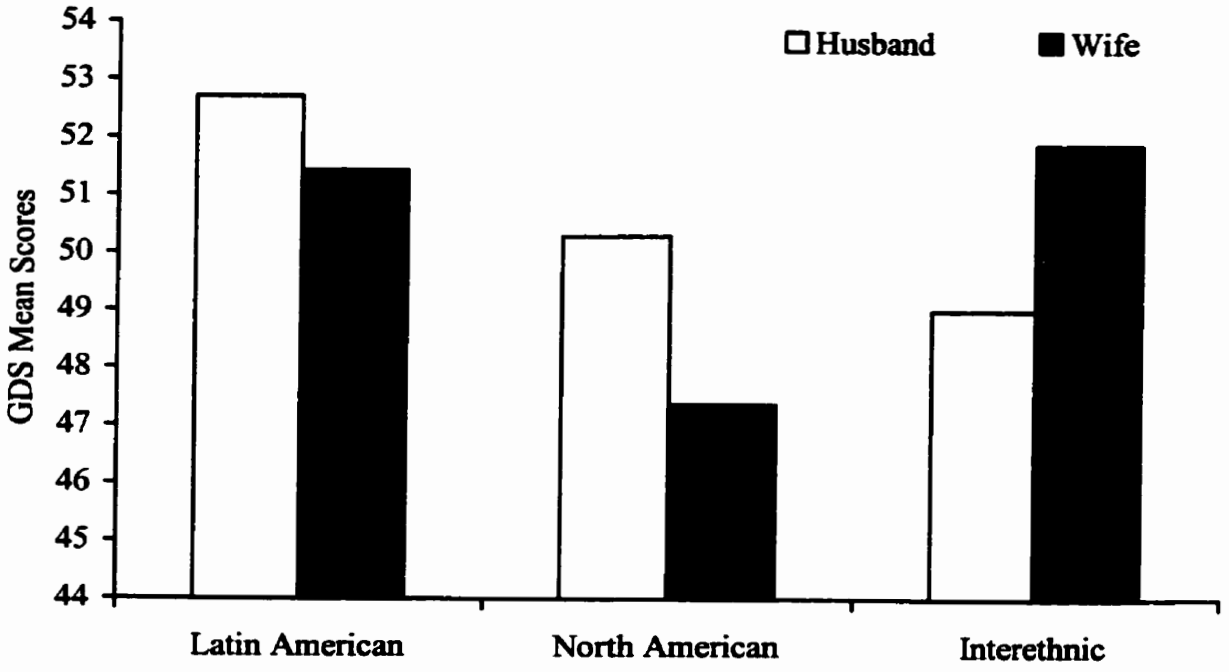
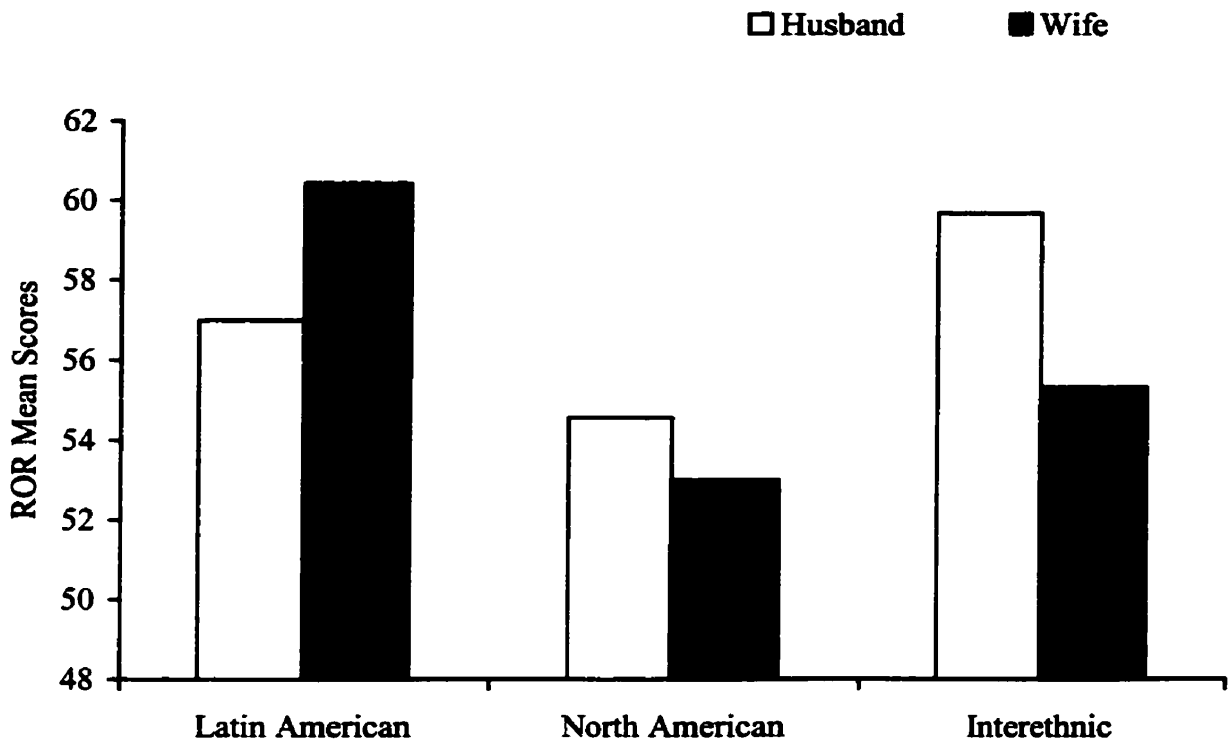

54
53
52
51
50
49
48
47
46
45
44
GDS Mean Scores
Husband
Wife
Latin American
North American
Interethnic

Figure Caption

Figure 2. Group by Couple Interaction for Role Orientation (ROR)


Husband
Wife
ROR Mean Scores
62
60
58
56
54
52
50
48
Latin American
North American
Interethnic

APPENDIX A

MARITAL SATISFACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Department of Counselling Psychology
7600 Glover Road
Langley, B.C., Canada V2Y 1Y1
Tel: (604) 513-2070

March/April 2000

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this Marital Satisfaction research project undertaken at Trinity Western University. This research project is investigating the relationships between marital satisfaction in same culture and cross-cultural couples, and gender differences. The purpose of this research is to then apply the findings to North American, Latin American, and Latin-North American couples. This research will assist us in learning more about the impact of cross cultural marriages, their agreements and disagreements. This project is the research for my M.A. degree and is under the supervision of Dr. Phillip G. Laird PhD. of the department of Counselling Psychology.

Your participation will require approximately 30 minutes and involves completing three questionnaires (one with eleven questions, one with 150 true-false items, and one with information about your background). Your responses are confidential and the forms will be numbered coded for anonymity. You do not have to put your name on any of the questionnaires. You are asked to answer the questionnaires without any corroboration. You have the right to refuse to participate and you may withdraw at any time without consequences. **Please complete the attached Subject Consent Form as your written consent is required to participate.**

Please complete the questionnaires in the order they are presented in the packet. Then, place all of the completed questionnaires in the stamped envelope provided. There is also an opportunity in the packet for you to qualify to win a $50.00 gift certificate for a restaurant of your choice, if you so desire. However, to qualify you must be willing to leave your phone number for contact.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important research. If you have any questions about the study or about how to complete your questionnaires, please call me at 224-7232 and leave me a message. You may also direct any questions about the study to my supervisor (Dr. P. Laird) at 513-2121, ext. 3133

If you are interested in receiving a report of the findings, please call me at 224-7232 and leave me your name, address, and a message indicating that you would like a copy of the report of the findings. I will send you the report of the findings when it is available.

Thank you for your help.

Cristina Moreira

APPENDIX B

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

MARITAL SATISFACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

March/April 2000

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Marital Satisfaction research project being undertaken at Trinity Western University.

Your written consent is required for participation in this study. All identifying material will be destroyed at the conclusion of this research project.

I have read and understand the description of the study and I willingly consent to participate in this study.

SIGNATURE_____

☐ ***I want to be entered in the draw.*** ***PHONE NUMBER***_____

Thank you.

Cristina Moreira

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is your age? ____ 2. What is your gender? Male ____ Female _____
3. Number of years living in Canada_____ 4. Number of years married_____
5. Previous Marriages _____ 6. Number of children____ 7. Age of children_____
8. Native Language _____ 9. Religious Affiliation _____

6. Check the item (items) that best describes your ethnic background?

01____African	05____North American	09____Central American
02____Asian	06____ - Canadian	(Country:_____)
03____Australian	07____ - American	10____South American
04____European	08____ - First Nations	(Country:_____)

7. Check the item that describes the highest level of education that you have completed.

1____Elementary School
2____Secondary School
3____College (2 year)
4____CEGEP/Trade School/Technical Institute
5____University (undergraduate degree)
6____University (graduate degree)
7____Other. Please describe:_____

8. Check the item that best describes your income during the past year.

01___ 0 – $10,000	06___$50,000 – $59,999
02___$11,000 – $19,999	07___$60,000 – $69,999
03___$20,000 – $29,999	08___$70,000 – $79,999
04___$30,000 – $39,999	09___$80,000 – $89,999
05___$40,000 – $49,999	10___$90,000 +

9. Check the item that describes your principle source of income.

01___Employed full-time	05___Investments/Pension	09___Student Loans
02___Employed part-time	06___Social Assistance	10___Savings
03___Self-employed	07___Parents/Family	11___Retirement
04___Unemployed	08___Child Support	12___Other

APPENDIX D

MARITAL CONFLICT QUESTIONNAIRE

Think about the 3 most common (frequent), and significant (serious) arguments you typically have with your partner. Please, briefly list them in order of seriousness.

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

3._____

_____

On the following seven-point scales, circle the most appropriate answer to each of the following questions regarding the arguments you mentioned above:

1.How serious do you consider these arguments to be?
(not serious at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very serious)

2. How many couples do you think have the same arguments that you have?
(nobody) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (everybody)

3. How often do you argue with your partner?
(never) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (all the time)

4. To what extent do you argue because of the type of person you are?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

5. To what extent do you argue because of the type of person your partner is?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

6. To what extent do you argue because of the circumstances you are in?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

7. To what extent do you consider your behavior justifiable in the arguments you described?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

8. To what extent do you consider your partner's behavior justifiable in the arguments you described?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

9. How often do you think you will have these arguments with your partner in the future?
(never) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (always)

In a few sentences, please explain what is the primary cause of your arguments (why you argue with your partner):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. To what extent is the cause you listed above due to your own background (family, culture, etc.)?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

11. To what extent is the cause you listed above due to your partner's background (family, culture, etc.)?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

12. To what extent do you think this cause will influence your relationship with your partner?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (totally)

APPENDIX E

MSI – R

By Douglas K. Snyder

Please begin by filling in the information about your background. When that information has been completed, proceed to the first numbered inventory item.

This inventory consists of statements about you and your relationship with your partner. Read each statement and decide if it is TRUE for you or FALSE for you. Then mark your answer in the place provided beside that statement. If the statement is true or mostly true for you, place an **X** in the box labeled *T*. If the statement is false or not usually true for you, place an **X** in the box labeled *F*. Mark only one response for each statement. If you want to change an answer, you must completely darken the box that contains your old answer, and then place an **X** in the box that shows your new answer.

1. When my partner and I have differences of opinion, we sit down and discuss them.
2. I am fairly satisfied with the way my partner and I spend our available free time.
3. My partner almost always responds with understanding to my mood at a given moment.
4. My childhood was probably happier than most.
5. There are some things my partner and I just can't talk about.
6. It is sometimes easier to confide in a friend than in my partner.
7. My partner seems to enjoy sex as much as I do.
8. I wished my partner enjoyed a few more of my interests.

9. During an argument with my partner, each of us airs our feelings completely.

10. I was very anxious as a young person to get away from my family.

11. I would prefer to have sexual relations more frequently than we do now.

12. Even when angry with me, my partner is able to appreciate my viewpoints.

13. My partner likes to share his or her leisure time with me.

14. There is a great deal of love and affection expressed in our relationship.

15. I am sometimes unhappy with our sexual relationship.

16. There are many things about our relationship that please me.

17. A lot of our arguments seem to end in depressing stalemates.

18. Even when I am with my partner, I feel lonely much of the time.

19. I trust my partner with our money completely.

20. There are some things about my partner that I do not like.

21. Our relationship has been very satisfying.

22. My partner has slapped me.

23. Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large, the man ought to have the main say-so in family matters.

24. The good things in our relationship far out weight the bad.

25. My partner and I decide together the manner in which our income is to be spent.

26. There are times when my partner does things that make me unhappy.

27. Two people should be able to get along better than my partner and I do.

28. I have never worried that my partner might become angry enough to hurt me.

29. There should be more daycare centers and nursery schools so that my mothers of young children could work.

30. Our relationship is as successful as any that I know of.

31. Our relationship has never been in difficulty because of financial concerns.

32. My partner and I understand each other completely.

33. My partner has slammed things around or thrown things in anger.

34. Such things as laundry, cleaning, and childcare are primarily a woman's responsibility.

35. I have often considered asking my partner to go with me for relationship counseling.

36. There are some things about our relationship that do not entirely please me.

37. If a child gets sick, and if both parents work, the father should be just as willing as the mother to stay home from work and take care of the child.

38. My partner and I need to improve the way we settle our differences.

39. My partner and I spend a good deal of time together in different kinds of play and recreation.

40. My partner doesn't take me seriously enough sometimes.

41. My parents marriage was happier than most.

42. My partner is so touchy on some subjects that I can't even mention them.

43. Whenever I'm feeling sad, my partner makes me feel loved and happy again.

44. I am somewhat dissatisfied with how we discuss better ways of pleasing each other sexually.

45. My partner and I don't have much in common to talk about.

46. When we argue, my partner and I seem to go over and over the same old things.

47. All the marriages on my side of the family seem to be quite successful.

48. One thing my partner and I don't fully discuss is our sexual relationship.

49. My partner's feelings are too easily hurt.
50. It seems that we used to have more fun than we do now.
51. Sometimes I feel as though my partner doesn't really need me.
52. My partner sometimes shows too little enthusiasm for sex.
53. Our relationship has been disappointing in several ways.
54. Minor disagreement with my partner often end up in big arguments.
55. My partner and I have never come close to ending our relationship.
56. Our financial future seems quite secure.
57. There are times when I wonder if I made the best of all possible choices in a partner.
58. I get pretty discouraged about our relationship sometimes.
59. I have worried about my partner losing control of his or her anger.
60. Earning the family income is primarily the responsibility of the man.
61. My partner and I seldom have major disagreements.
62. It is often hard for us to discuss our finances without getting upset with each other.
63. My partner occasionally makes me feel miserable.
64. I have never felt better in our relationship than I do now.
65. My partner has never thrown things at me in anger.
66. The man should be the head of the family.
67. The future of our relationship is too uncertain to make any serious plans.
68. My partner is forever checking up on how I spend our money.
69. I have never regretted our relationship even for a moment.
70. My partner sometimes screams or yells at me when he or she is angry.
71. A woman should take her husband's last name after marriage.

72. My partner and I are happier than most couples I know.
73. Trying to work out a budget causes more trouble with my partner than it is worth.
74. The most important thing with a woman is to be a good wife and mother.
75. When arguing we manage quite well to restrict our focus to the important issues.
76. Our daily life is full of interesting things we do together.
77. Sometimes my partner just can't understand the way I feel.
78. My parents didn't communicate with each other as well as they should have.
79. My partner has no difficulty accepting criticism.
80. Just when I need it most, my partner makes me feel important
81. My partner has too little regard sometimes for my sexual satisfaction.
82. My partner doesn't take time to do some of the things I'd like to do.
83. My partner sometimes seems intent on changing some aspect of my personality.
84. My parent never really understood me.
85. My partner and I nearly always agree on how frequently to have sexual relations.
86. My partner and I seem able to go days sometimes without settling our differences.
87. I spend at least one hour each day in an activity with my partner.
88. My partner does many different things to show me that he or she loves me.
89. I have never seriously considered having an affair.
90. I have important needs in our relationship that are not being met.
91. Our arguments frequently end up with one of us feeling hurt or crying.
92. At times I have very much wanted to leave my partner.
93. My partner is a very good manager of finances.
94. My partner has all the qualities I've always wanted in a companion

95. There are some serious difficulties in our relationship.

96. My partner has never pulled me or grabbed me in anger.

97. Where a family lives should depend mostly on the man's job.

98. I might be happier if I weren't in this relationship.

99. My partner and I rarely argue about money.

100. There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my partner.

101. I have often wondered whether our relationship may end in separation or divorce.

102. My partner has left bruises or welts on my body.

103. In a relationship the woman's career is of equal importance to the man's.

104. I believe that our relationship is as pleasant as that of most of the people I know.

105. I feel as though we live beyond our financial means.

106. I don't think any couple could live together with greater harmony than my partner and I.

107. My partner has never threatened to hurt me.

108. In a relationship, a major role of a woman should be that of housekeeper.

109. I have known very little unhappiness in our relationship.

110. My partner buys too many things without consulting me first.

111. If a mother of young children works, it should be only while the family needs the money.

112. My partner has never injured me physically.

113. When we disagree, my partner helps us to find alternatives acceptable to both of us.

114. Our recreational and leisure activities appear to be meeting both our needs quite well.

115. I feel free to express openly strong feelings of sadness to my partner.

116. I had a very happy home life.

117. My partner and I rarely have sexual relations.

118. Sometimes I wonder just how much my partner really does love me.

119. I would like my partner to express a little more tenderness during intercourse.

120. The members of my family were always very close to each other.

121. My partner and I are often unable to disagree with one another without losing our tempers.

122. I often wondered whether my parent's marriage would end in divorce.

123. There are some things I would like us to do, sexually, that my partner doesn't seem to enjoy.

124. My partner often fails to understand my point of view on things.

125. Whenever he or she is feeling down, my partner comes to me for support.

126. My partner keeps most of his or her feelings inside.

127. Our sexual relationship is entirely satisfactory.

128. I believe our relationship is reasonably happy.

129. My partner often complains that I don't understand him or her.

Couples WITHOUT children STOP here. Couples WITH children answer the following:

130. For the most part, our children our well behaved.

131. My partner and I rarely argue about the children.

132. My children's value system are very much the same as my own.

133. My partner doesn't spend enough time with the children.

134. Our relationship might have been happier if we had not had children.

135. My partner and I rarely disagree on when and how to disciple the children.

136. I wish my children would show a little more concern for me.

137. Our children often manage to drive a wedge between me and my partner.

138. My children and I don't have very much in common to talk about.

139. My partner doesn't display enough affection towards the children.

140. Our children do not show adequate respect for their parents.

141. My partner and I decide together what rules to set for the children.

142. Our children don't seem as happy and carefree as other children their age.

143. My partner doesn't assume his or her share of taking care of the children.

144. Having children has not brought all the satisfaction I had hoped it would.

145. My partner and I nearly always agree on how to respond to our children's request for money or privileges.

146. Our children rarely fail to meet their responsibilities at home.

147. Our relationship has never been in difficulty because of the children.

148. Rearing children is a nerve-wracking job.

149. My partner and I assume equal responsibility for rearing children

150. I frequently get together with one or more of the children for fun or recreation at home.

APPENDIX F

Demographic Means, and Standard Deviations

	Latin American		North American		Interethnic Couples	
Demographic Data	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Age						
Husbands	43.4	6.8	37.9	9.8	40.3	11.2
Wives	39.3	8.4	35.6	9.8	35.1	8.0
Years married						
Husbands	17.1	9.6	11.4	8.5	6.8	6.8
Wives	17.1	9.6	11.4	8.5	6.8	6.8
Number of children						
Husbands	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.6
Wives	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.6